

IIT Madras

BSc Degree

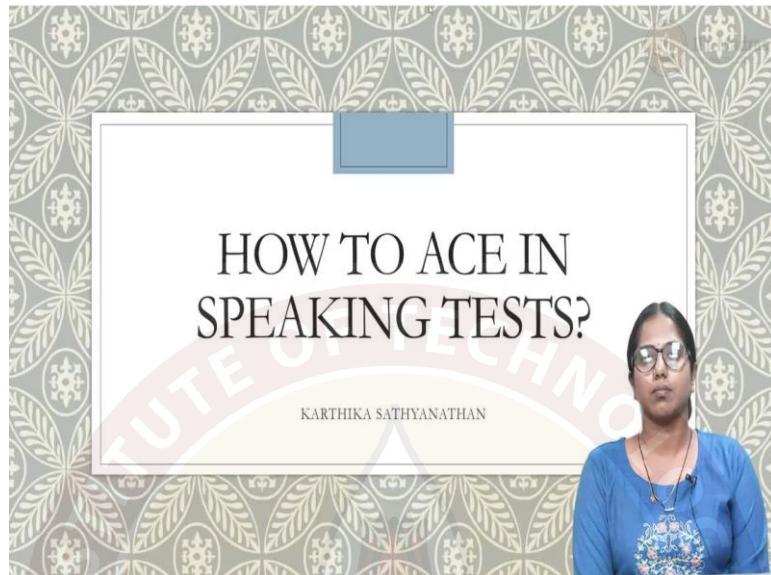
Copyright and terms of use

IIT Madras is the sole owner of the content available in this portal - onlinedegree.iitm.ac.in and the content is copyrighted to IIT Madras.

- Learners may download copyrighted material for their use for the purpose of the online program only.
- Except as otherwise expressly permitted under copyright law, no use other than for the purpose of the online program is permitted.
- No copying, redistribution, retransmission, publication or exploitation, commercial or otherwise of material will be permitted without the express permission of IIT Madras.
- Learner acknowledges that he/she does not acquire any ownership rights by downloading copyrighted material.
- Learners may not modify, publish, transmit, participate in the transfer or sale, create derivative works, or in any way exploit, any of the content, in whole or in part.

English – I (Basic English)
Ms Karthika Sathyananthan
Department of Humanities and Social Science
Indian Institute of Technology, Madras
How to Ace in Speaking Test?

(Refer Slide Time: 00:14)



Hi, welcome all. In today's session, let us discuss this particular question how to ace in speaking tests?

(Refer Slide Time: 00:24)

A slide with a decorative border featuring a repeating pattern of stylized leaves and snowflakes. In the center is a white rectangular frame containing the title 'SPEAKING TEST - THINGS TO KNOW' in black capital letters. Below the title is a bulleted list of points:

- To work or study in Australia, New Zealand, The United Kingdom, The United States of America, Ireland, and Canada, one must take an English language proficiency test.
- One of the most dreaded sections of such tests is the speaking test.
- Components of a speaking test: Introduction, General topic, and Conversation.

Below the list is a cartoon illustration of two men sitting at a desk, one with his hands clasped and the other looking at him. At the bottom right of the frame is a photograph of the same woman from the previous slide, Ms. Karthika Sathyananthan, wearing a blue top and glasses, looking towards the camera. A faint watermark of the Indian Institute of Technology Madras logo is visible in the background.

So, if you are planning to work or study in Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom, USA, Ireland, Canada, then you must take an English proficiency test. And there are different sections to this test, you will have the reading test, listening test, speaking test and writing

test. And out of these 4 components, one of the most dreaded component or one of the most dreaded session is the speaking test. Let us now discuss the components of a speaking test. So, there are 3 components to it, which is first the introduction, then you have a general topic, and then a conversation. So, let us get into the details of it.

(Refer Slide Time: 01:09)

SPEAKING TEST – THINGS TO KNOW

- Part 1 – Introduction (4 to 5 minutes) – Questions on family, work interests, movies and music you like, hobbies, etc.
- Part 2 – General Topic (3 to 4 minutes) – Topic card and one minute for preparation. The topics don't test your knowledge of the topic or current affairs. Examples: Your last vacation with family, your favorite celebrity or sportsman, your ideal life, etc.
- Part 3 – Conversation between you and the examiner (4 to 5 minutes) – Examiner will ask questions related to the topic.
- Total duration of the speaking test – 15 to 20 minutes.

- The four parameters –
 - a) Fluency (Your ability to form complete sentences)
 - b) Vocabulary (How vast is your vocabulary?)
 - c) Grammar (Are the sentences grammatically accurate?)
 - d) Pronunciation (Rhythm with correct pronunciation)

Please note that the Indian accent doesn't necessarily work against your favor.

So, the part 1, which is introduction, usually takes 4 to 5 minutes. Here, the examiner is going to pass the question, introduce yourself? And then there will be a few follow up questions on your family, or work interests, movies, music you like hobbies, etc. In part 2, you will be given a general topic and it will usually take 3 to 4 minutes. So, they give you a topic card, and one minute for preparation.

The topics, don't test your knowledge of the subject or the current affairs. They are pretty simple and straightforward. So, some of the topics that they generally give is your last vacation with your family, your favorite celebrity or sportsman, your ideal life, etc. The final part of it is which is part 3 is a conversation between you and the examiner.

They usually give 4 to 5 minutes and the examiner will ask you questions related to the topic. So therefore, the total duration of the speaking test ranges between 15 to 20 minutes. Now, what are the 4 parameters based on which you will be evaluated? One is fluency that is your ability to form complete sentences. The next parameter is your vocabulary. How vast is your vocabulary, they are going to check you, check your vocabulary while you speak?

Third is grammar. Are the sentences grammatically correct? And fourth, pronunciation that is rhythm with accurate pronunciation. Now, there is one thing that I want you to keep in mind

that if you have a strong Indian accent like I do, then please do not worry about it because Indian accent does not necessarily work against your favor. I did score I did score pretty good in my speaking test. And I have known a lot of people who have strong Indian accent scoring really well in speaking test provided you are fluent and you have used a decent range of vocabulary, a variety in vocabulary and you are grammatically accurate.

(Refer Slide Time: 03:47)

HOW TO PREPARE BEFORE THE TEST?

- What to avoid in your speech?
 - a) Redundancy or repetition of words/ideas.
 - b) Use of cliched words (very, awesome)
 - c) Use of slang (chill, stud, dude, LoL)
 - d) Use of cuss words (shit, damn etc)
 - e) Mémorisé sentences
 - f) Local words/ regional language words (roti, biryani, dahi)
- Know your speaking style (record yourself and analyse your speech).
- Develop your vocabulary; Use a dictionary and find out the synonyms of the words you commonly use. E.g. breath-taking, astonishing, impressive, etc instead of using the word awesome. (The more words you use, the better your band score will be)
- Learn to express your feelings better. (Instead of using the word happy, use a relevant emotion such as hopeful, optimistic, loving, powerful, joyous, etc.)

Now, how to prepare before the test, there are certain things that you need to avoid and there are certain things that you need to do while preparing for the test. So, the first thing I want you to do is to know your speaking style, for which you need to record yourself and analyze your speech. So, while analyzing your speech, there are certain things that you need to avoid. And make sure that you do not repeat those things in future, for example, and what are those things? The things that you need to avoid in your speech.

One is redundancy or repetition of words or ideas. It so happens particularly in this section to where you know they give you a general topic and you are expected to speak 2 minutes. You will also be given 1 minute to prepare. But this is one place where I have seen a lot of learners being redundant and, they end up speaking the same thing in different words. Therefore, I would suggest you to make full use of that 1 minute and jot down points make bulleted points, this will give you a good structure to your speech. And this will also help eliminate repetition of ideas.

The second thing that you need to avoid is the use of cliched words, words like awesome, very, this place is awesome, the food is awesome. For every other adjective, you try and

replace the word awesome. So, this is something that you need to know because it is a very cliched word, and this is something that you really need to avoid in your speech.

The third one is the use of slang, which is words like cool and chill, or LoL, ROFL and things like that in a formal context, because this is an exam in a formal context, even though they are there to check the fluency of your language, the accuracy of your language, you should not use slangs. You should avoid using slang.

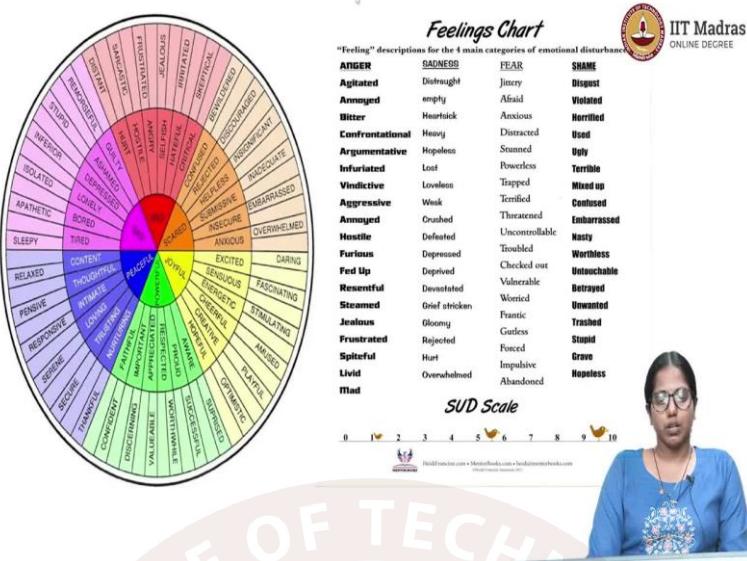
The fourth one very important one is avoid cuss words. I have seen learners use cuss words without meaning them devoid of that meaning using them in a formal occasion when they talk to the prof or when they talk about something in a classroom, you know, using words like shit and damn and things like that. So, try avoiding that. In fact, it is a must, to avoid the use of cuss words.

The next thing that I want you to keep in mind and avoid in your speech is memorized sentences. Do not memorize sentences, particularly because you know what the first question is, which is introduce yourself? I see a lot of learners writing it down like an essay and then memorizing it. So, it is the examiner will very easily find it out and this can lead to either 0 marks or very less marks because they are not there to evaluate memorized words.

And the final thing that you need to avoid is the use of regional language words or local words. For example, instead of using let us say, the sentence I love roti and dahi try saying I love wheat bread and curd. Because the other person might not know what roti or dahi is? And also, as a part of preparing, I would suggest you to develop your vocabulary for which I suggest you to use a dictionary and find out the synonyms of the words that you commonly use.

For example, words like breathtaking, astonishing, impressive, can be used instead of the word awesome. So, the more words you use, the better your band score will be. The next point is to learn to express your feelings better. So, instead of using the word happy, so instead of saying I am feeling happy, you see relevant emotions such as you could say I am feeling hopeful, I am feeling optimistic, or loving or powerful or joyous. I would suggest you to be more specific with your emotion rather than being very general.

(Refer Slide Time: 08:48)



So, I put a feelings chart here. This will help you describe your emotions in a better way. So if you have plans of preparing for a speaking test, I hope this comes to your help.

(Refer Slide Time: 09:09)



In the final point that I wish to make is to speak as much as you can in English, talk to your friends in English. If you do not have friends who can talk in English, then I would suggest you to befriend somebody from a different part of the world. You know, an English-speaking friend through social media and try talking to that person for some time. And if you can make it a daily habit this will definitely help you improve your language and will help you become fluent in general conversations which is what they are going to test.

(Refer Slide Time: 10:00)

WHAT TO REMEMBER DURING THE TEST

- Avoid repetition . Eg: My city is awesome. The people are also awesome here. The food is again awesome. Instead use “My city is magnificent. People are so warm and welcoming. The food here is delicious. These are simple words but they show variety.
- In part 2, when you are given a topic, and one minute to prepare, write down bullet points related to that topic during that one minute. For example : Topic: Your favourite sportsperson and why? Bullet points will give a nice structure to the talk. It also helps you act as a guide in case you go blank while you speak.
- Maintain a steady pace. Do not talk too fast or too slow. Because then we sound nervous, make mistakes or pronounce words incorrectly. You may slightly speed up or slow down in a few places especially if you are narrating/telling a story.
- Do not give one word answers. (I like badminton because ... give details: Why do you like it? Whom do you play with? How does it make you feel?). The examiner wants to know if you can speak in English fluently. So speak up.
- Realx: Don't think of an examiner as an examiner. Think of them as your friend. Because then you will focus on the content and language instead of worrying about how they are going to judge you or what band score they will give.

Now, there are a few things that I want you to remember during the test. And what are these? The first one is to avoid repetition. I have already told you this, this is an example of repetition. Now, if they asked you to talk about your city, instead of saying, my city is awesome, the people are awesome here, the food is again, awesome. Or, if not awesome, I hear people saying, you know, people are really good and food is also great. These are words that are so much overused.

So, instead of saying, or using words like awesome and good and great, I would suggest you to rephrase and say something like, my city is magnificent, people are so warm and welcoming. The food here is delicious. So, these are simple words, but they show variety. And this will definitely help you improve your band score.

In part 2, when you are given a topic, and then 1 minute to prepare, like I have already said, write down bullet points related to that topic during that 1 minute. For example, if you are given the topic, your favorite sports person and why? You could, jot down your thoughts in the form of bullet points, say, when you were introduced to that particular sport, what you like about that sport, or sports person? What your friends think about your favorite sports person? All of this can be used in that particular conversation.

So, when you jot down your thoughts in the form of bullet points, what happens is a nice structure comes out, and your talk will be well structured. So, it will help you act as a guide, in case you go blank while you speak. Now, the next point is to maintain a steady pace, do

not talk too fast or talk too slow, because then you may sound very nervous, and therefore, you might end up making mistakes, or you might end up mispronouncing some words.

You may slightly speed up or slow down when you are narrating something. But otherwise, try to maintain a steady pace. The next piece of advice is do not give one-word answers. For example, this is particularly relevant to particularly relevant to the third section, which is the conversation section. They might end up asking you questions like what is your favorite sport? Do not say badminton and stop with that.

Because they are there to test your language proficiency. If you do not speak, they will not know how good you are at the language. So, instead of saying I like badminton and stopping there, you know, you could say I like badminton, because and then give details. Say why you like it? Or whom do you play with? Or what do you feel? Or how does it make you feel? So, the examiner wants to know if you can speak English fluently, so the best way to help them with that is by speaking up.

And the final piece of advice is to relax. Do not think of an examiner as an examiner. You know, think of them as your friend or a co passenger in a train journey, and they are asking you questions, questions on broad general topics, and you are just answering them. So, because if you do if you try practicing this, what will happen is you will focus on the content and language instead of worrying about how they are going to judge you. What band score will they give you? Are you speaking well? Am I stumbling somewhere? Am I fumbling somewhere?

So, all these things keep coming to your mind and that can distract you from the content. Therefore, it is very important that you be relaxed when you appear for the test. With that we are coming to the end of the session. I hope you liked the session I will meet you with a different topic on a different day. Until then stay safe. Stay cool. Bye