

ORGANIZING AN EXTEMPORANEOUS SPEECH USING UNIFIED ANALYSIS

by Robert C. Carroll

In their influential article, "The Organization of an Extemporaneous Speech," George Grice and L.D. Naegelin argue that "there is no one best organizational pattern" for the body of an extemporaneous speech and that the organizational pattern the speaker utilizes is a function of the question that the speaker selects as the topic. They then suggest seven different patterns that a speaker might use to organize the body of the speech.

With all due respect to Dr. Grice and Mr. Naegelin, I must disagree with their conclusions, and offer a superior alternative to their approach about organizing extemporaneous speeches; in short, I will propose the "one best organizational pattern." My approach is based on another influential article, "Extemporaneous Speaking: Unifying the Analysis," by David Ross. To summarize his conclusions, Ross first argues that the organizational pattern the speaker utilizes is a **function of the answer to the questions and not the question itself**. Ross then argues that the body of the speech **serves as a justification for that answer**, and not merely as "analysis" for the question. This organizational pattern unifies all the analysis offered by the speaker, hence it has been termed **Unified Analysis** by Ross and his disciples, myself included.

Unified Analysis is so far superior to any other alternative that I have encountered in eight years as a competitor and three years as a coach that I must declare it the "one best." In order to prove this contention, I will first, explain Unified Analysis and apply it to a variety of extemp questions which Grice and Naegelin outlined in their original article, and then, argue why Unified Analysis is superior to all other patterns.

Types of Topics

Before preceding further, it is necessary to review the three types of extemp questions. These are: (1), **questions of fact**, which ask for a description of an issue or a prediction of the outcome of an issue based on the facts of the matter; (2), **questions of value**, which ask for an application of personal or societal norms to an issue; and (3), **questions of policy**, which ask for an evaluation of a solution or a prescription for a solution to a problem. The interrogatives used in asking questions of fact are either the descriptive pro-

nouns "is" and "are", or the predictive pronouns "will" or "would". The interrogative pronoun used in asking all questions of value is "should". The interrogative pronouns used in asking questions of policy are "can" and "could". Thus, the speaker can determine what type of questions he or she is answering by examining the interrogative in the sentence.

Closed Questions

In the world of extemp, there are two ways that these questions are asked: the first is through **closed-ended questions**, or closed questions; the second is through **open-ended questions**, or open questions. The closed question uses only one interrogative and asks for an unconditional affirmative or negative answer. With Unified Analysis, the answer is stated immediately after the question, and the major points in the speech are reasons supporting that answer. In other words, the **answer is stated first, and the speech serves as a justification for that answer**; not the other way around, where analysis is offered and then an answer is finally reached. If the speaker does not offer the answer immediately after the question, then the speech does not have a thesis and the speech is essentially without purpose. By offering the answer first, then using the speech to support this answer, the speaker is also better able to decide what material is relevant to the speech. The rule: if the information does not answer the question, then it does not belong in the speech.

Also, with descriptive closed questions of fact, there is only the unconditional affirmative answer of "yes" and the unconditional negative answer of "no"; conditional answers ("sort of", "maybe", "perhaps", or "if/then") are unacceptable. In factual answers, either it is or it is not: there is no middle ground. With predictive closed questions of fact, and closed questions of value and policy, conditional answers are acceptable if the speaker provides the conditions. Conditional answers, while acceptable, should be avoided for two reasons: first, because they bring terms of uncertainty into a speech based upon certainty; and second, because the speech will be spent covering conditions, rather than providing justification.

Examples

Unified Analysis can now be applied to a variety of closed questions dealing with one topic: the possible removal of President Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq. Please note that none of these questions specifies the means of removal. The factual version of this question would read, "Will the United States remove Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq?" This question is only asking the speaker if this event will transpire. The value version of this question would read "Should the United States remove Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq?" This question is asking for the speaker to comment on the benefits and costs of possibly undertaking this course of action. The policy version of this question would read "Can the United States remove Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq?" This question is asking for the speaker to evaluate the potential of the United States to actual remove Hussein from power. An answer would be phrased like this, "We can see that the United States [(will/will not), (should/should not), (can/cannot)] remove Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq for two important reasons: first, because ... and second, because ..."

An outline of several extemp speeches answering closed questions using Unified Analysis follows.

Question: "Is Japan now the most powerful nation in the world?"

Answer: No.

Thesis: Japan is not the most powerful nation in the world.

1. Because it is economically isolated
 - A. does not provide leadership in APEC
 - B. does not forcefully advocate GATT
2. Because it is politically weak
 - A. reform struggles in Diet show internal weakness
 - B. trade struggles show external weakness
 - i. United States
 - ii. South Korea
 - iii. China

Question: "Is Western Europe capable of providing for its own defense?"

Answer: Yes.

Thesis: Western Europe is capable of providing for its own defense

1. Because it lacks a powerful threat
 - A. downfall of the Soviet Union

- B. disintegration of the Warsaw Pact
2. Because it has the resources
 - A. economic stability - EU market
 - B. political will - NATO expansion

Question: "Can the Republicans continue as the dominant national party?"

Answer: Yes.

Thesis: The Republicans can continue as the dominant national party.

1. Because they are fielding winning candidates
 - A. attractive to conservatives
 - B. yet do not alienate moderates
2. Because they are co-opting winning issues
 - A. popular issues
 - i. death penalty
 - ii. tax breaks
 - B. political reform
 - i. term limits
 - ii. campaign financing

Question: "Should tighter controls be placed on political campaign spending?"

Answer: Yes.

Thesis: Tighter controls should be placed on political campaign spending.

1. Because it would recruit better candidates
 - A. candidates need not be personally wealthy
 - B. candidates need not pander to special interests
2. Because it would improve democracy
 - A. candidates need to meet voters
 - B. candidates need to provide substance

Open Questions

The open question, on the other hand, adds another interrogative, either "how" or "what", and asks for sequential steps in proposing the answer. With Unified Analysis, the answer is stated immediately after the question, and the major points in the speech are the steps necessary for the answer. In other words, **the proposal is stated first, and the speech serves as the sequence for the proposal**; not the other way around, where analysis is offered and then a conclusion is finally reached. Once again, if the answer is not stated immediately after the question, then the speech

does not have a thesis. By offering the proposal first, then using the speech to outline this proposal, the speaker is also better able to decide what material is relevant to the speech. The rule: if the information does not support the proposal, then it does not belong in the speech.

Also, with open questions, a positive answer is implicitly assumed in the question; open questions do not ask if something will/should/can be done, they ask **what** or **how** something will/should/can be done. If the answer were not positive, then an open question would not have been asked in the first place.

Examples

Unified Analysis can now be applied to a variety of open questions dealing with one topic: the possible removal of President Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq. Please note that all of these questions assumes the removal is desirable. The factual version of this question would read, "How will the United States remove Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq?" This question is only asking the speaker how this event will transpire: the speaker must answer with the plan he/she thinks the U.S. will most likely use. The value version of this question would read "How should the United States remove Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq?" This question is asking for the speaker to provide the perfect operation for successfully undertaking this course of action: the speaker must answer with the plan he/she believes the U.S. should use. The policy version of this question would read "How can the United States remove Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq?" This question is asking for the speaker to evaluate the potential plans by the United States to actual remove Hussein from power and provide the best alternative: The speaker must answer with the plan he/she thinks the U.S. can best use. An answer would go like this, "The United States [will/would/can] remove Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq by undertaking two courses of action: first, the U.S. must ... and second, the U.S. must ...

An outline of several extemp speeches answering open questions using Unified Analysis follows.

Example: "How should Congress balance the federal budget?"

Answer: Increase revenues and decrease expenditures.

Thesis: Congress should balance the federal budget by increasing revenues and decreasing expenditures.

1. Increase revenues
 - A. raise consumption taxes
 - B. raise personal income taxes

2. Decrease expenditures
 - A. reduce entitlement spending
 - i. Social Security
 - ii. Medicare
 - B. reduce defense spending
 - i. lack of Soviet threat
 - ii. need for smaller, more mobile force

Example: "How serious is the problem of urban decay?"

Answer: Very Serious.

Thesis: The problem of urban decay is very serious.

1. decaying resources
 - A. deteriorating physical resources
 - i. capital
 - ii. land
 - B. deteriorating human resources
 - i. education
 - ii. job training
2. decaying quality of life
 - A. constant violent crime
 - B. widespread poverty

Example: "How did Reagan change the American Presidency?"

Answer: He was responsible for two major changes.

Thesis: Reagan changed the American presidency by his use of the media and the popular image he created.

1. He changed the Presidential use of media
 - A. personal addresses
 - B. campaign commercials
2. He changed the popular image of the Presidency
 - A. populist leader
 - B. partisan leader

Example: "What area of the Middle East is most necessary to U.S. security?"

Answer: Saudi Arabia.

Thesis: Saudi Arabia is the area of the Middle East most necessary to U.S. security.

1. Position makes it necessary of political security
 - A. moderate Muslim state
 - B. friendly with Israel and Arabs
2. A. largest petroleum producer in world
B. largest Near Eastern consumer of American goods

Superiority of Unified Analysis

Example: "What are the major effects of agricultural price supports?"

Answer: Twofold effect on agricultural production.

Thesis: The major effects of agricultural price supports are an overproduction of agricultural goods and an over utilization of marginal land.

1. overproduction of agricultural goods
 - A. contributes to market glut (Government Cheese!)
 - B. contributes to inflated good prices
2. overutilization of marginal land
 - A. contributes to ecological problems
 - B. contributes to inflated land prices

Example: "How can the federal government best meet the needs of the unemployed?"

Answer: Focus on both the short- and long-term needs.

Thesis: The federal government can best meet the needs of the unemployed by providing more workers' compensation and more job-training.

1. more workers' compensation for short-term needs
 - A. universal health care coverage
 - B. food stamps and rent subsidies
2. more job training for long-term needs
 - A. apprenticeships for those underskilled
 - B. skill grants for those displaced by technology

Example: "Who is Dan Quayle?" - obviously, we still wonder

Answer: He is two main things. (understatement)

Thesis: Dan Quayle is a conservative commentator and a Presidential hopeful.

1. He is a conservative commentator
 - A. social policy - family values
 - B. foreign policy - North Korea
2. He is a Presidential hopeful
 - A. solid base with religious right
 - B. appeal to moderate white middle class

Now that I have explained Unified Analysis and applied it to several extemp questions, I will now argue why Unified Analysis is superior to all other organizational patterns. First, understand that **Unified Analysis is more than just an organizational pattern, it is an argumentative strategy that improves the speech.** With Unified Analysis, the analysis in a speech serves a specific purpose: to assist in answering the question. Thus, there is no separate historic, economic, political, social, or religious points within a speech; rather, the ideas incorporated in each of these points are blended together into arguments, each of which is strong enough to stand on its own. Examples incorporated into analysis become evidence supporting argumentation. Logical reasoning skills become more important than accumulated background knowledge, though the latter remains crucial.

Second, Unified Analysis recognizes the uniqueness of each question. Rather than molding analysis into a prepackaged format that treats every question the same, **Unified Analysis allows the speaker to create a new, different, and unique speech for each question.** With Unified Analysis, two speakers might give completely different answers to the same question; in fact, with Unified Analysis, two speakers might even give the same answer to a question, but justify it by using completely different rationale. Thus, a round of six speakers answering the exact same question would still look very different from each other: they would each have the opportunity to give a creative and original speech! Likewise, judges must rank the contestants on their thought processes and not the answers themselves; reinforcing the educational belief that there are no wrong answers, merely unsubstantiated ones.

Finally, **Unified Analysis adjusts to meet the level of analysis required for the answer.** For questions of fact which use the interrogatives "is" or "are", U.A. provides descriptive analysis: describing the facts. For questions of fact which use the interrogatives "will" or "would", U.A. provides predictive analysis: predicting the outcome of an event. For closed questions of policy, U.A. provides evaluative analysis. For open questions of policy, U.A. provides prescriptive analysis: prescribing a policy to resolve the situation. And for questions of value, U.A. provides normative analysis: based on the norms and values of society to substantiate an answer.

Essentially, **the superiority of Unified Analysis rests on the fact that it recognizes that the purpose of the event is to answer the**
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question and justify that answer, rather than to analyze a topic and to draw a conclusion.

Extemp speaking is the event where speakers receive their topics in the form of questions, extemp commentary is the event where speakers receive their topics as topics. Thus, the body of the speech serves no other purpose other than as a rationale for the answer. Granted, history, economics, politics, society, and religion, are all relevant to drawing a conclusion on a topic; however, given the time constraints in the preparation (thirty minutes) and the delivery (seven minutes) of the speech, the body of the speech must serve as a justification for the answer presented. Likewise, **Unified Analysis recognize that without an answer to the question, the speech lacks a thesis** and is therefore not a speech, but merely commentary. A thesis is necessary for an essay or a paper; and necessary for an extemp speech as well.

While I agree with Dr. Grice and Mr. Naegelin that no formula currently exists for the perfect extemporaneous speech, Unified Analysis provides the best organizational pattern and argumentative structure of any communication theory. The soundness of this theory is evident in its success on both the high school and college level in Illinois, where it has produced numerous state finalists and champions and national finalists and champions since its adoption.

Having made my case, I await replies to my article from Dr. Grice and Mr. Naegelin and any and all coaches and judges with suggestions and recommendations for improving this wonderful event.

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