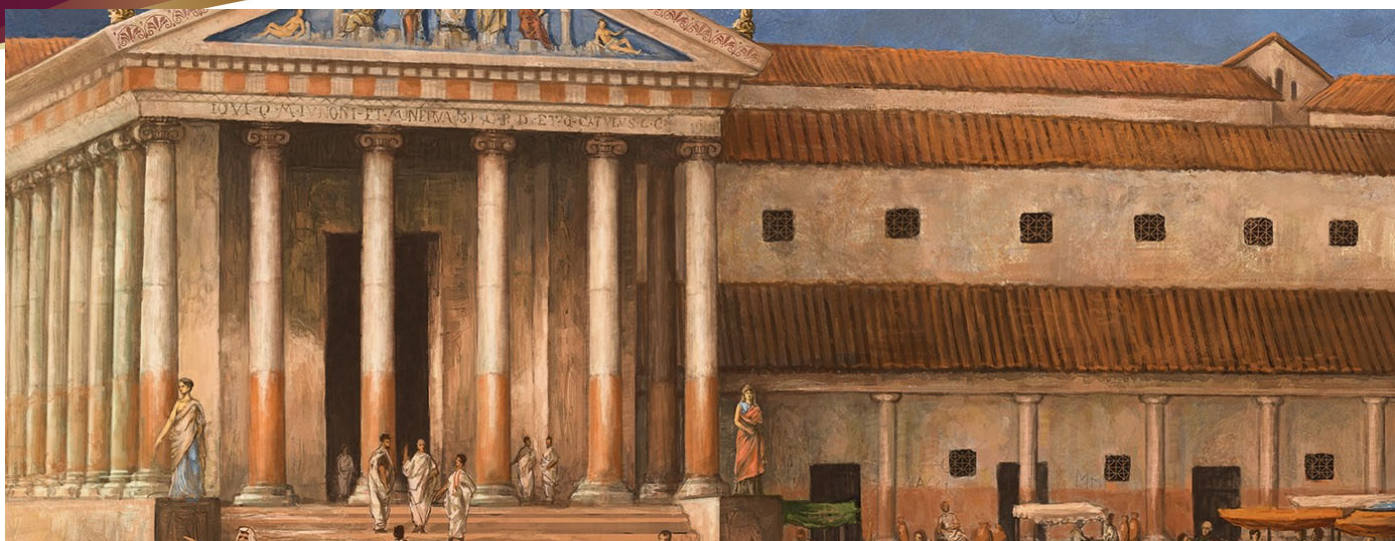


# AGORA VOICE

The official Agora Speakers International Newsletter

Dec 2024





## WELCOME, AGOREANS

Welcome to the very first issue of Agora Voice - the official Agora Speakers International Foundation magazine.

As you probably know, the name of our Foundation comes from the Greek ἀγορά (agora) - market or town square. This nowadays seemingly dull city location transforms when we learn of the critical importance that agoras had in Ancient Greece. Imagine our world without all the means of communication that we take for granted - the Internet, telephones, radio, television, cable, printed press. The agoras were the heart of the city - vibrant hubs of social, political, and intellectual activity where notable orators and thinkers engaged with the public. From monumental philosophers such as Socrates or Demosthenes to influential statesmen such as Pericles or Themistocles - they all relied on the agoras to spread their message.

Despite our name though, we have lacked a "central square", an Agora of our own where we could all feel connected, learn about each other, and grow together. Over time we've tried different approaches - facebook groups, chat platforms, discussion forums... but none of these options fully met our needs as a universal, engaging, and resourceful space for our community.

Sandra Sweetman, from our club 217 in Sydney, Australia, recently highlighted this need. In a message to our support channel - "*at this time we are an entirely stand-alone club. We receive no communication or support*". While we've made great progress in providing educational materials, system reliability, features, contests, etc. Agora remains a relatively loose collection of isolated clubs. Part of it is by design, of course. One of the reasons Agora was created was to run away from the centralized models in which headquarters dictated what everyone else should do. Instead, it chose to provide a lot of freedom to the individual clubs. However, this independence has also left us feeling disconnected as a community.

This magazine is one of the many initiatives that try to bridge this gap.

### *What's in a name?*

When the idea for a regular magazine came around, there were multiple suggestions floated for what the name could be.

There were quite a few proposals and discussions among the Ambassadors, such as "mAgora", or "Agorazine" (those of you that have been with us from the beginning might remember this particular name), "Agora Pulse" and others. In the end, the suggestion "Agora Voice" won decisively in the vote, and thus our common voice was born.

### *What will we cover?*

First and foremost, we want this magazine to connect us together, and to allow us to know about each other better. We want to share the success stories of members and clubs, showcase the talents that live within our organization, share both high points and challenges, and examine new creative ideas and tips. This magazine is mostly about you, our members, officers and clubs.

We also want to share news about what's coming up next in Agora, what Ambassadors are working on, famous speeches that deserve attention, news or research related to our core goals that might be of interest to members, and also share tips or suggestions about how to run your club more efficiently.

### *We want to hear from you*

Agora is a community built by all of us, for all of us, and we are thrilled to hear from you.

Do you want to share an impactful speech that you recently gave? Maybe showcase your unique talents?

Do you want to share tips and experiences on how to lead or speak in public? Or about how Agora has made an impact or has helped you in your life?

Or maybe you even want to participate in the magazine on a more permanent basis and be part of the editorial board?

Either way, we will be happy if you drop us a note at [info@agoraspeakers.org](mailto:info@agoraspeakers.org)!

Let's make this magazine our shared platform to connect, inspire, and grow together!

**Alexander Hristov**  
Founder, Agora Speakers International

## CLUB PROFILE

**We spoke with Carmen Julia Mendoza, founder of club #222, "Club de Oratoria Creciendo con CJ y Agora Speakers."**



Carmen Julia Mendoza (carmenjmendoza@gmail.com) has her personal brand, CJM, through which she pursues her passion as a coach, mentor, team trainer, and speaker on topics of leadership and personal growth. She has her radio program "Creciendo con CJ" on Radio Coaching Mundial since its foundation, where she always seeks to add value to her community of coachees and mentees. She is the president and founder of the "Creciendo con CJ & Agora Speakers" Oratory Club in Bogotá-Colombia.

She is the author of the e-book "How to Network Effectively," released in 2023 at FITCE in the Broward County Business Wheel in Florida, USA, and co-author of the book "Spiritual Leadership," with the LQI team (Leaders Who Inspire), where she discusses a chapter on "Infinite Power: Your Coach 24/7."

Carmen has been connected with John C. Maxwell's ecosystem since 2012 when she represented her country at the One Million Leaders event organized by Maxwell's Equip organization, and her expertise spans over 20 years in various sectors, including real, service, financial, industrial, and educational sectors as a consultant for the public and private sectors, through different leadership development initiatives in Colombia.

She is part of the Global Senate Executive of Women at the Florida Institute of Management, Director of the Latam Women's Network for Colombia, works with the People Of Impact Foundation in the USA, and in Colombia, she is starting a new project with a multidisciplinary team of professionals with the "Colombia Leads" Foundation.

She is a leader, trainer, and speaker, with her great passions in life: adding value to people through influential leadership and genuine faith.

***Carmen, how important do you think the development of communication skills is in today's world? Why?***

It's vital, in a world that is interconnected, but as humans, with the rates of depression and anxiety due to lack of relationships, it is required by companies and communities in general to know how to interact. Indeed, the World Economic Forum has established that by 2025 companies will be demanding new jobs with a greater emphasis on soft skills, which are really powerful tools, necessary across all generations, that help bridge generational gaps and, among other reasons, bring more mental and physical health to the world. For this reason, I am working this vision with universities from the Club of Creciendo con CJ & Agora Speakers, to lower these powerful tools and thus multiply the Clubs. It is a job that demands a lot, but by working as a team and supporting each other, we can achieve it.

***How did you come to know Agora Speakers International?***

Through a colleague from Maxwell Leadership, Rocio Castañeda, who belonged to oratory club 154 of MMC by Martha Magdalena.

***What were your first experiences with the Foundation? What did it bring you?***

Given my mission in life and the gifts I have as a coach, team trainer, and certified speaker by Maxwell Leadership, I immediately connected; the platform seemed very practical and that is leadership, to take knowledge (logos) to action to Rhema, a very practical platform and a very good basic course. Since my entry, it has provided me with constant practice and as I was telling you... that's leadership, you learn by doing: I connected with the evaluation system, which seems very complete.

***Tell us a personal trick or tip you use when you have to make a public presentation.***

One of my tips is to take three deep breaths before going on stage, say a little prayer, and smile as the best introduction.

***Any funny anecdotes?***

On stage, what happened to me this week, is that I received recognition at the university where I studied, I was invited to the meeting but did not know about the recognition they had for me, there I got nervous laughter, but I enjoyed it to the fullest.

***Do you get nervous when you have to present in public? How do you combat this nervousness and what advice would you give to people in the same situation?***

There is a certain level of euphoria when going up, that with a prayer and smiling puts me at ease.

***What is your favorite historical speech and why?***

Since I was a child, at home, I always had President John F. Kennedy in mind, as my dad worked with the American Embassy. His inaugural speech, which mobilized an entire country to action, and his famous phrase: "Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country," have been a constant inspiration for me. It is a phrase with which I identify 100%.

***Which speaker, past or present, attracts you most in terms of style? Why?***

From the past, Barack Obama, a man with eloquence and a calm tone when speaking: simple when connecting with the simplest people, Franklin Roosevelt, I like the way he connected with people, he was direct, energetic, and passionate in his speeches, transparent. And from the present

***What motivated you to create a new club?***

Since I entered, I had that vision the day I presented at the club and that I had toured the platform, albeit superficially, I shared that in the club, that upon completing my Basic Route, I would immediately start my Oratory club, when I saw the platform, I was fascinated and I want to add from where I am, in my country and outside of it, always bringing good news and since part of my life's purpose, this tool came like a ring to the finger to be able to impact and add value to many more people.

***How was the process of constituting it? Did you struggle to find members, convince them? Was registration difficult?***

The process of opening the club was simple. From the first day I entered, Martha Magdaleno knew my vision. At the close of her club and at the end of my Basic Route, I made the decision to continue, in some way, the legacy that Martha began with so much effort and intentionality.

True to my vision from the start, I took the first steps immediately to continue it over time. I started with new members and also with some participants from the previous club who had already started.

As for operational support, I had excellent backing from Pedro and the support team of Ágora Speakers, who made this process much smoother and more successful.

***What is the biggest challenge you face as President of the club?***

Since I began working on issues of leadership and personal growth, one of the biggest challenges I have faced is the lack of commitment from people, especially in Latin America, where cultural factors influence how these topics are perceived. There is a collective unconscious that tends to undervalue programs that do not involve an economic cost, which can be frustrating, but not discouraging.

Before opening the Club, I decided to tackle this challenge proactively. My approach has been to invite new members and, at the same time, socialize with the current ones the importance of understanding that, although participation is voluntary, it does involve commitments. This stems from an observation I made

in a previous club, where I noticed that many people lacked commitment. For me, that makes no sense, because, as my friend and mentor in leadership John C. Maxwell says: "Success is uphill". Achieving it requires dedication, time, and in many cases, an economic investment.

I have learned throughout my life that commitment is key. An international certification of high quality like the one we offer has immense value, and that value must be recognized. That's why I work constantly to foster a mindset that prioritizes commitment and that inspires members to value this process of personal transformation and leadership.

***What do you see for the future of Ágora and what would you like to see in it?***

I see a great future ahead. Indeed, the soft skills or power skills are the ones that will make a difference, and the time to focus on them is now! The World Economic Forum has highlighted that, by 2025, the most demanded skills by companies will be related to leadership and communication. We are at the ideal moment to prepare. I hope to strengthen teamwork with the club presidents and with Alexander. My vision is to expand clubs more and more, not only in Bogotá, Colombia, but also in other countries where I have relationships. It's time to grow and leave a mark!

***What advice would you give to someone who is considering whether it makes sense to join Ágora?***

This is one of my phrases that I share a lot on social networks, and that I would share with you when telling you about the club Ágora Speakers International, the certification, and the possibility of opening your own club with the vision of the Foundation Ágora Speakers International: Change is inevitable, growth is optional and intentional. You decide!. Indeed, it is what I encourage every person who is entering to open their own club, because it is not just about receiving more certifications but about leading, serving others, and growing personally.

***Any words to conclude?***

All that remains is to thank Alexander, the entire team of Ágora Speakers International, the representatives from all countries, and each member of each club for their effort, dedication, and service. That is true leadership: developing the best in oneself, from personal growth and self-leadership, to share it with others. Together, we are a team that gives its best and inspires with its example, authenticity, dedication, and influence, reaching Spanish speakers in any corner of the world. Here's to more in this new year 2025! I also thank the support team for their speed and effectiveness in responses, THANK YOU!!!!

## ECHOS FROM AGORACON 2024



Some events look like stones skipping over a surface of water; the ripples travel much farther than the eye can see.

The annual convention of AGORA SPEAKERS INTERNATIONAL (Agoracon 2024) took place on 24 and 25 August.

Coincidentally, three of these clubs are located in Bacău, Romania. They are linked to two high schools in Bacău: "Ferdinand I" National College (home to the AGORA MANIA club, established in 2019) and DIGITAL ORATORY (founded in 2020 at the "Gheorghe Vrănceanu" National College).

The event was streamed online from Bacău by a group of students from the two high schools, coordinated by their teachers, Gabriela Laslău (Ambassador of AGORA SPEAKERS INTERNATIONAL for Romania) and Diana Popa (VPE at AGORA SPEAKERS Romania).

Over two days, the four sections of the Public Speaking contest took place: the first two, Educational and Social Awareness, on Saturday,



and the remaining two, Humorous and Storytelling, on Sunday. The ten-hour program was not solely dedicated to the contest.

Agoracon 24 was an opportunity for the audience (which peaked at 280 viewers) to learn about Romanian traditions, unique Romanian idioms, myths, and legends (including the story of Dracula), top tourist destinations, and, last but not least, the fascinating history of polenta (a traditional cornmeal dish).

Keynote speeches were delivered by **Alexander Hristov**, the founder of Agora, who spoke about the dangers of dictatorship in the absence of critical thinking, and **Fred Jones**, Agora's Ambassador for Canada, who addressed the two educational levels in Agora (basic and advanced) and the importance of youth clubs.

The program also featured five distinguished guest speakers: **Raluca Bolocan**, a specialist in sociolinguistics and e-learning, who spoke about microlearning; **Lance Miller**, the 2005 Toastmasters International Champion, who highlighted the human need for self-belief; **Frank Elbers**, a Dutch journalist and researcher specializing in Southeast Europe, who shared his fascination with Dacian fortresses and their historical significance; **Diana Popa**, an English teacher and education researcher, who emphasized the need to integrate public speaking skill development into educational curricula; **Cristian Lungu**, a young teacher who uses his martial arts training to create a positive impact in the classroom.

Without a doubt, the central figure of the event was **Fred Jones**, the 80-year-old Canadian ambassador who flew in from Toronto to be present in Bacău for the convention. He attended the Summer School for Public Speaking at "Ferdinand I" National College, was impressed by the students' proficiency in English, toured Bacău County, and spoke in glowing terms about the renowned hospitality of the locals.

Among the 12 winners of the Public Speaking competition, notable mentions include **Theodor-Adrian Lazăr** (First Prize in the Educational Speech category) from National College "Gheorghe Vrănceanu.", **Lorena-Mihaela Bontaș** (Finalist) from the same school, and **Casandra Pavel**, who won the Popularity Award in the Social Awareness category, from "Ferdinand I" National College in Bacău.

We hope to hear these names as often as possible in the years to come!

**Gabriela Laslău**  
Agora Speakers Romania



## My Story with Agora

### Teodora Prisacaru Agora Speakers Romania

I want to tell you a story, one of the greatest I've experienced so far in my life.

A story about passion, courage, talent, leadership, about wonderful friends, about saying YES. The AgoraCon 2024 has come to an end (one week ago, it's true).

And as thrilled as I am that it was a success, I may also say that I'm sad because it's over. For those who have never heard of Agora Speakers International, well, I think I can now call it home...a place of growth, a place where I always feel safe to speak up and speak out, and just like me, there are many other people who join us almost every Sunday.

This year, Agora Speakers Convention was organised by us, by the Romanian Agorians from Bacau. For 8 months, we've been working, meeting, filming, editing...we've been listening and speaking, because that's what great leaders do. And here comes my point of view, that part behind the scenes that people don't usually get to see. When Gabriela Laslau, my beloved English teacher, asked for my help with the very first poster to announce this event, I said YES.

Yes, I can do it. Yes, I want to do it. And so I did. Then I started to animate (frame by frame) - something that I've never done before, but I found myself enjoying the whole process, even if it took me 48 hours to animate a 10-second video. The first shooting we had was one day before my birthday, I can vividly remember that...not because it was my birthday, but because people were looking at us (me and my colleague, Matei) as if we were insane.



Summer finally came so we started meeting regularly, filming more videos, posting on social media...or even painting walls, in my case. The summer school started after a long month of preparation. Our special guest, Fred Jones, arrived in Bacau. And even after (at least) 24 hours of travel, he was there, with us, for the Public Speaking Summer School we organized. I got to learn a lot of new things from him...about people, places, moments...about life. You get to meet a few people like this in your entire life and when you do, you just want to know more about them, to hear their story

and enjoy every single part of it. So in the morning, from 9 to 14, we were at school, speaking, playing, and dancing, and in the afternoon, we were at Uniqube, writing scripts, making plans, and sometimes even editing/filming.

If you were to ask me 8 months ago to speak in front of more than 50 people, I'd probably break out in a cold sweat, but again, when this chance was offered to me, I said YES, and that's how I found myself speaking in front of 280 people from all over the world. It may seem like a piece of cake for some people, but I'm almost sure it was the hardest thing I've ever done. I also know for sure it was the best experience. And the feeling after these 2 days (24-25 August), after the meeting was over after we said goodbye to everyone and I hugged my teacher, the whole team...I'll never



forget that feeling. We did it! Yes, we did it! Together! As a TEAM. That's how great things are usually done. Fred reminded me that night how important it is to say YES to every opportunity you have. Things happen for a reason and maybe I wouldn't be here, sharing this with you if I hadn't said yes at the right time, to the right person. Yes, it was more than hard, tiring, exhausting, but YES, it was also more than wonderful, amazing, brilliant.

Thanks, #teamAGORACON24! Thank you, Fred Jones for being here with us, in Romania and for sharing your story! Thank you, Gabriela Laslau, for believing in me, for supporting me, for reminding me how strong and brave I am...for EVERYTHING!!

# RESEARCH

## Red and blue language: Word choices in the Trump & Harris 2024 presidential debate

For the past few months, it has been impossible to avoid the mayhem surrounding the US elections - the constant bombardment of speech snippets, cut in the most appropriate / damaging ways for the other candidate has been relentless. As the dust has finally begun to settle, research has started to appear analyzing all aspects of the political campaigns of both candidates, including of course their messaging and speeches.

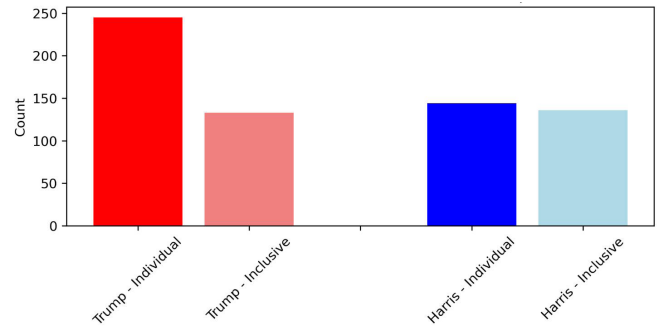
One such recently published [paper](#) by Philipp Wicke and Marianna M. Bolognesi offers some interesting insights about the way both candidates approached their audiences in style, content and emotionality during their presidential debate on Sep 10th.



The paper also summarizes past research on the political discourse of both parties, highlighting some interesting conclusions:

- **Democratic** discourse tends to emphasize compassionate and empathetic traits. These values are expressed by means of figurative frames that point to the concept of nurturant parenthood Democrats' discourse tends to highlight the role of government in addressing inequalities and providing support to disadvantaged groups.
- **Republican** rhetoric frequently highlights strength and personal responsibility. These values can be framed using "strict father" metaphors that focus on discipline, self-reliance, law and order, calls for strong, authoritative responses to crime.

This is reflected in areas such as the inclusivity of the language used by each candidate:



Counts of individual and plural pronouns in responses.

Another interesting chart shows the word cloud of each candidate:



### Messaging Structure

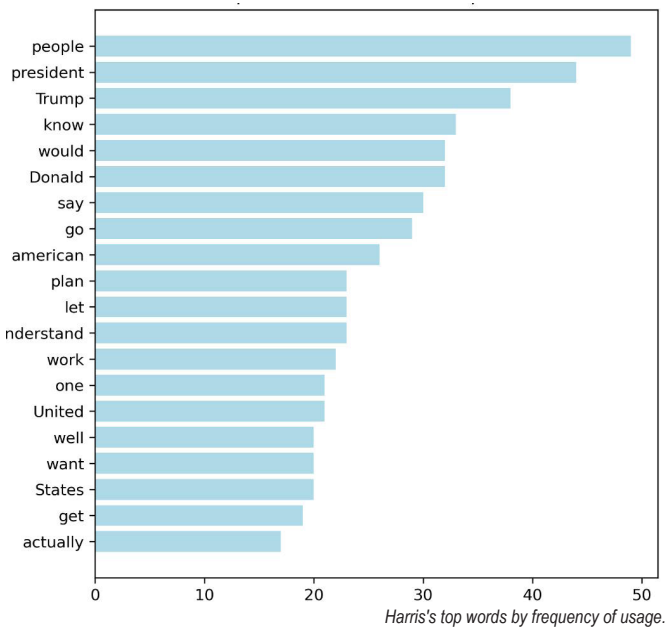
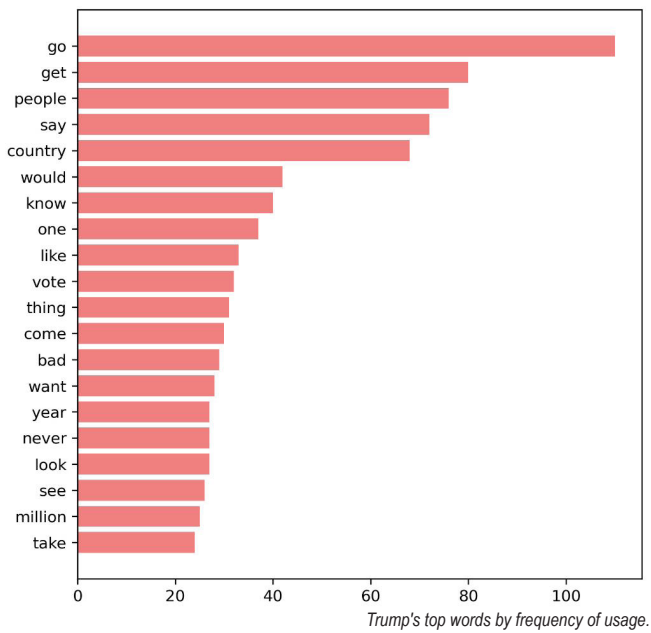
Another aspect highlighted by the paper is the complexity of the messaging.

- **Democratic** candidates appear to often employ rather abstract words, reflecting their focus on addressing systemic issues and nuanced perspectives. This rhetorical style, while intended to appeal to an educated or progressive audience, can result in messages that are less direct and potentially harder for some listeners to follow.
- **Republican** candidates often favor simpler, more direct language that is characterized by the use of concrete words that designate tangible referents, such as in the slogan "Build the Wall" or "Lock her up", to ensure messages are easily understood and resonate with a broad audience. Research shows that this kind of concrete language is particularly effective in political debates, as it enhances memorability and facilitates voter engagement by providing vivid imagery that people can easily recall and relate.

Another examined facet of the political discourses is the concreteness and specificity of the messages. Concreteness refers to use of words that have a clear meaning (e.g. "wall" vs "protection"), and the specificity refers to the amount of detail included in the mention ("stone wall" vs "barrier").

According to the research quoted by the paper,

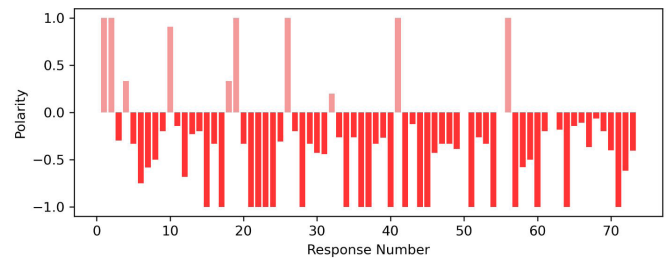
- **Democratic** candidates tend to present policies with a high degree of word specificity, providing detailed explanations.
- **Republicans** instead tend to emphasize broad themes and big-picture narratives in their policy presentations. Their language can be described as more punchy and straightforward, designed to clearly communicate key points by means of clear-cut, impactful statements.



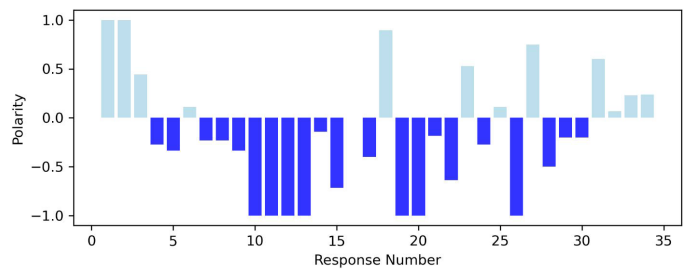
### Apelando a las emociones

Un aspecto interesante del discurso es la "polaridad" o "sentimiento" del discurso, es decir, la cantidad de frases positivas frente a negativas en una respuesta particular. La polaridad generalmente oscila entre -1 y 1, donde -1 significa que todas las frases transmitieron una emoción negativa, y +1 lo opuesto.

A pesar de la representación mediática y las campañas políticas, según el artículo, el análisis de polaridad no muestra diferencia estadística en términos del sentimiento (generalmente negativo) expresado en las respuestas de los candidatos:



Polarity of Trump's responses.



Polarity of Harris's responses



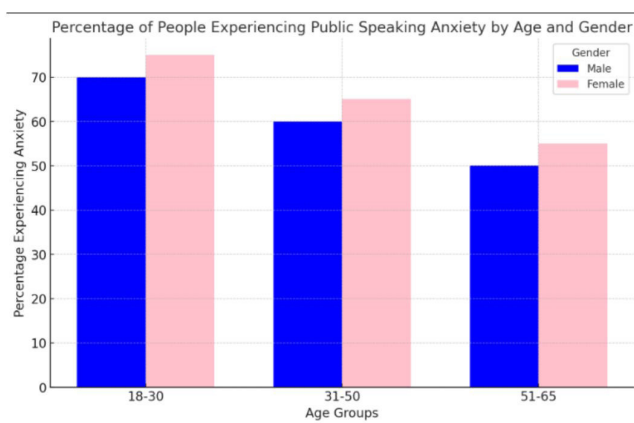
# RESEARCH

## Dealing with Anxiety

Another interesting working paper that was published last month explores the effectiveness of different methods for dealing with public speaking anxiety.

The study is called "[Anxiety Management for Stage Fear and Public Speaking](#)", by Samyukta Menon, who is a 2nd year Computer Science student at the VIT Bhopal University in India, and it was submitted to SSRN - a site for open publishing of pre-prints. Please note that this publication is not peer-reviewed - the papers are not vetted for validity or rigor.

The study gathered 200 participants from various backgrounds - students, educators, business professionals, and even performers. Unsurprisingly, public speaking anxiety was prevalent in all groups, with only a slight decrease with age, and a marginally higher anxiety in female participants. Anxiety was measured by asking participants to complete a standardized test.

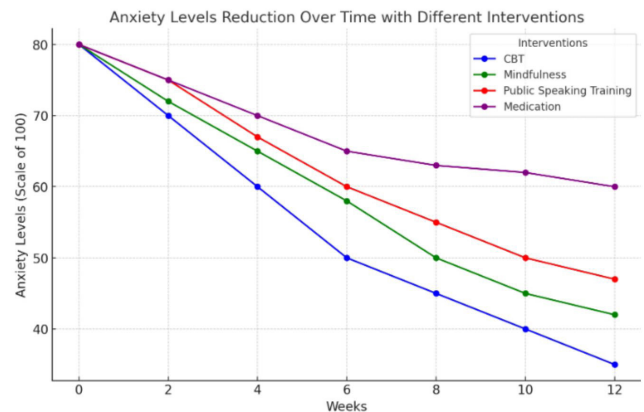


The interesting part of the study was examining which techniques worked best for reducing this anxiety in time. Four strategies were considered:

- **Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT):** CBT addresses negative thought patterns and behaviors associated with anxiety. Techniques include cognitive restructuring and exposure therapy.
- **Mindfulness and Relaxation Techniques:** Mindfulness meditation, deep breathing, and progressive muscle relaxation help in managing physiological symptoms of anxiety by promoting relaxation and present-moment awareness.
- **Public Speaking Training:** Structured training programs, such as the one offered by Agora Speakers International, where members are offered a safe and supportive environment to practice and gradually improve.
- **Pharmacological Interventions:** In some cases, medication such as beta-blockers may be prescribed to manage the physical symptoms of anxiety.

The participants followed one of the above strategies for 12 weeks, and every two weeks their public speaking anxiety was assessed.

The results can be seen in the following chart:



(Note that the anxiety axis does not start at 0).

There are some interesting takeaways from this evolution:

- The pharmacological approach was the least effective of the strategies. Participants experienced an initial reduction of symptoms during the first 4 to 6 weeks, but after that, the improvement was merely marginal.
- The most effective strategy was CBT, which halved the anxiety levels after 3 months and was the strategy to make progress the fastest.
- Except for the pharmacological approach, all other three strategies showed consistent positive results at almost the same speed after the first half of the experiment : indeed after week 6, the progression of both CBT, Mindfulness and Public Speaking Training presents the same slope.
- Age and professional background significantly influenced the effectiveness of anxiety management strategies. Younger participants benefited more from CBT and mindfulness practices, while professionals with frequent public speaking engagements showed greater improvements through structured training programs.

Unfortunately, the study stops here. It would have been interesting to learn which of the strategies also has the most lasting effects - in other words, once the strategy is no longer applied, how the anxiety levels vary in time.

## ADVANCED PATHS

### The first Advanced Educational Paths are coming

After a very long wait, the first three Advanced Educational Paths are finally nearing completion - Storytelling, Educational Speeches and Against All Odds.

#### NOTE

The advanced educational paths will - as always - be available for free to all members of the Foundation. However, they will be only accessible if you have finished the Basic Educational Path, and are member of an active club (a club that is actively meeting). If in doubt, please reach out to the VPE of your club.

In Agora, from the very beginning we decided that our Advanced Paths are really going to mean something. We will not be a "certificate mill" where you complete a few easy projects and earn a shiny badge full of superlatives about your hypothetical narrative or leadership or educational skills, but that has no real value.

The philosophy that drives the development of all Advanced Paths is that when you complete one of these paths, you really have developed a deep and proficient skill in that area, practiced numerous times. We won't go as far as claiming that you have "mastered" the skill, since that is usually a life-long journey, but you're well beyond the level of a mere amateur. We want our advanced educational programs to really train you in depth, and for the certificate that you get at the end to really mean something, both within Agora and in the professional world.

With this in mind, remember that the ultimate goal of all Advanced Paths is to lead you to a point where you can become a professional life in that particular path. You will also get a certificate, sure, but that is merely accessory. Also, don't expect any of the Advanced Paths to be easy. They are not. You will have to work hard, practice a lot, and you will be pushed out of your comfort zone.

The advanced paths will be published initially in English, although we hope we will be able to complete the translation to Spanish a few months later (or earlier if we have volunteers to help - hint, hint).

Unlike the Basic Educational Path, which for a long time was web-only with skeleton content on the site, the Advanced Paths will follow a much more comprehensive approach.

Projects will feature full materials on the web page, and we will simultaneously publish:

- The Educational Materials as an Amazon book in case you prefer to have them professionally printed.
- A Workbook for each path that you can fill as you complete them.
- Reading materials (books, articles, media) to accompany each project

### Storytelling



Storytelling will be the first path to be published, and this is no coincidence. Storytelling has always been a fundamental supporting skill in many professional areas. Lawyers, politicians, sales and marketing people, entrepreneurs, teachers, educators, journalists all use storytelling in one way or another. Most persuasion, in fact, happens through storytelling.

And storytelling can be a profitable career on its own - writers, film directors, showrunners, screenwriters, playwrights can earn literally millions of dollars via good storytelling alone.

The Storytelling Educational Path consists of 20 learning projects and a capstone project, divided in four different blocks.

#### Block 1 - Basics of Storytelling

- Basics of Storytelling.
- Personal Stories.
- Worldbuilding.
- Character Development.
- The Hero's Journey.
- The Basic Archetypes.
- The Basic Archetypes II.
- The Basic Archetypes III.

#### Block 2 - Storytelling on different subjects

- Storytelling Genres.
- Storytelling about People.
- Storytelling about Objects.
- Storytelling about Places.
- Storytelling in a Global World.

#### Block 3 - Applying Storytelling

- Storytelling in Politics.
- Storytelling in Sales.
- Storytelling in Professional Interviews.
- Storytelling in Education.
- The Entertaining Storyteller.
- Improvisational Storytelling.
- Storytelling for Children.

#### Block 4 - Storytelling Capstone Project

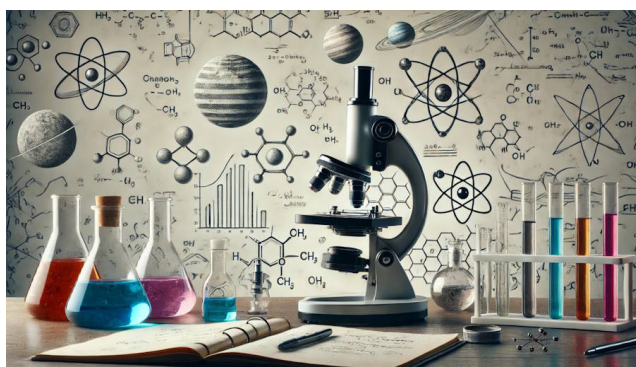
## Educational Speeches

Science allows us to explore and understand the natural world, from the smallest particles to the vastness of the universe, It touches all areas of our life - from helping develop vaccines and treatment for the deadliest diseases to enabling new forms of art. It encourages and fosters international cooperation bringing the best minds together to solve existential problems.

But science cannot exist in a vacuum, and science is not cheap. It requires people willing to push the boundaries of the unknown, it requires a society that understands the need for always exploring further, and the costs associated with that endeavor.

And this is precisely where educators come into the picture. Educators have an extremely important role in society - they push people to look further than the limits of their own mundane existence. They inspire the younger generation to become scientists, engineers, doctors. They connect the dots and show to the general population the enormous benefits that science brings to our everyday lives.

The Educational Speeches Educational Path is designed to help you become a master educator - Someone that will be able to transmit the beauty of science and the thrill of scientific discovery to the wider audiences and especially - to inspire and help bring forward the next generation of researchers.



While in many other paths you can talk almost about whatever you like, in the Advanced Path for Educational Speeches, topics are subject to the same restrictions as the Educational Speech Contest. Specifically, speeches can only be about topics from the formal, natural or social sciences.

This path will also require for you to measure your effectiveness, by checking with the audience whether your speech made a topic clearer or it merely obfuscated it more.

As in the case of the Storytelling path, it has 20 learning projects distributed in four blocks, plus a final, capstone project.

### Block 1 - Fundamentals of Educational and Science Speeches

- Basics of Educational Communications.
- The Scientific Method for Educators.
- Fundamentals of Research.
- Presenting Facts.
- Establishing Credibility.

### Block 2 - Basic Educational Speeches

- Using Presentations.
- Using Objects.
- Data and Infographics.
- Demonstrations.
- Addressing Misconceptions.
- Tailoring to an audience.
- Handling Q&A.

### Block 3 - Advanced Educational Techniques

- Educating Online
- Storytelling in Education
- Abstract Subjects
- Education and Passion
- Interactive Online Classes
- Educational Outreach
- Workshops and Seminars
- Recorded Courses

### Block 4 - Educational Speeches Capstone

- Lighting a Candle In the Darkness

### Against All Odds

Last but not least, the Against All Odds advanced path will be probably a lot of fun - This path will allow you to successfully forge ahead regardless of the problems and issues you may face during a presentation.

This is a shorter path, containing just 9 projects and a capstone



one. In each project, you will learn to deal with very specific failure modes, and for the capstone, you may expect anything to happen :-). Your fellow club members will make sure that something will.

- Failure.
- Hecklers.
- Twisted Geometry.
- Time Warp.
- Duplicates.
- The Silent Towns.
- Emptiness.
- Who stole my cheese.
- Late to the party.

# WEBSITE CHANGES

A major website overhaul has been carried away, in order to simplify the system and make it easier to maintain and faster to evolve.

Many of the changes were showcased at the recent AgoraCon 2024 convention in Romania, but here's a quick summary:

- **Massive simplification and unification.** The wiki, the website, the club registration system and the services have been merged into one single system. As a result, everything should feel much more integrated, much faster, and it should provide a better and more fluent experience. Also, this has helped slash our hosting costs by 50% by decreasing the number of independent servers.
- **Single domain - [www.agoraspeakers.org](https://www.agoraspeakers.org).** All previous pages that of the type <https://wiki.agoraspeakers.org/Basic+Educational+Path> will now be hosted at <https://www.agoraspeakers.org/pages/Basic+Educational+Path> instead. The system should transparently handle the redirections for now, but at some point the [wiki.agoraspeakers.org](https://wiki.agoraspeakers.org) subdomain will disappear. This will help decrease the confusion especially when new people want to learn about us - they used to go to the old [www.agoraspeakers.org](https://www.agoraspeakers.org) that barely had any content on its own.
- There have been many **enhancements to the Basic Educational Path** - in particular, we're greatly augmenting all projects with lots of useful content, and we're committed to providing a full upgrade of that path. Gone are the "bare-bones, skeleton projects" with barely any useful information. Check out one example such project: [Speech Message](#).
- **No more errors on login (hopefully).** Previously, whenever you logged in as a member, you were sent back to the wiki usually with an error, and had to go back manually to wherever your original destination was. This is no more, and now everything should work fluently.
- **Easy registration.** Previously people had troubles learning how to actually register in Agora. Now there's a clear "Register" button visible right next to the "Login" one. Since the wiki is gone, the "Login as Admin", which was a wiki function, is gone as well. Depending on the permissions your user has, you will see different functionality available.

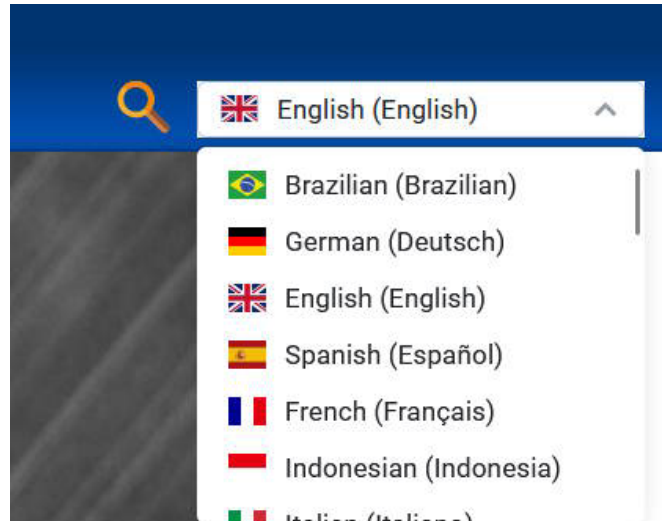


- **Better use of the screen** - the header is now much more compact and saves precious screen estate space.
- **Better menu.** The horizontal menu has been made much more comprehensive, covering almost all existing documents, and is now click-based instead of hover-based, which makes it friendlier for devices that lack a mouse (tablets, phones, etc.)
- **Member distinctions.** When you login, you can see the clubs you belong to and your titles next to your name. For example,

if you finished the Basic Educational Path, you will see a "QS" (Qualified Speaker) distinction. If you founded a club, you will see "CF" (Club Founder), if you have an officer role such as VPE, you will see that reflected as well:



- **Language selection is clearer.** There's a much better-looking and better and faster-working dropdown in the header itself that instantly allows toggling between supported languages.







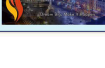
- **Full text search.** Although this functionality is not new, it was buried in the menus of the wiki before and it was difficult to find. Now there's a clear search icon at the top of every page so that you can easily locate whatever information you're looking for.
- **Easier access to your profiles.** This is also not new, but was also buried previously in the different menus. Now from "Club Members" -> "Resources and Tools" you can access:

Your Agora Console

Your system account, where you can change your email, password, etc.

Your Agora account, where you can see the clubs you belong to, how your name will appear on certificates, your contact information and many other goodies that we will keep expanding.

- **No more captchas.** You no longer need the annoying captcha test to generate evaluation forms or any other assets.
- **Past conventions.** You can now access all of the past conventions information from the main menu, selecting "Club Members" -> "Agora Conventions" -> "Past Agora Conventions". We will soon improve that page to include all the winners and recordings of the past conventions.

PAST CONVENTIONS					
YEAR	LOCATION	TAGLINE	LOGO	RULEBOOK	GENERAL INFORMATION OFFICIAL PAGE
AgoraCon 2024	Romania	Our Way		<a href="#">Rulebook</a>	<a href="#">Link</a>
AgoraCon 2023	Indonesia	Unity in Diversity		<a href="#">Rulebook</a>	<a href="#">Link</a>
AgoraCon 2022	India	Diversity and Leadership: Endless Possibilities		<a href="#">Rulebook</a>	<a href="#">Link</a>
AgoraCon 2021	Nepal	New Leaders for a New World		<a href="#">Rulebook</a>	<a href="#">Link</a>
AgoraCon 2019	Portugal	Dream Big, Make It Happen		<a href="#">Rulebook</a>	<a href="#">Link</a>

- **New suggestions engine (English only).** If you have to deliver a speech, be the hot questions master, or host a debate and are out of ideas, you can use our embedded suggestion generator to suggest topics and questions, straight from the pages themselves.

FOR WHAT AUDIENCE? Suitable for both adults and kids (mixed audiences) | SELECT A CATEGORY: History | [Generate](#)

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**Hot Questions** History

If you could participate in any historical festival, which one would it be?

- **New tools for Ambassadors.** Ambassadors have now a specific page that gathers all the tools (such as mailing list management) and other resources that was previously scattered around. It can be accessed from "Agora Ambassadors" -> "Tools for Ambassadors"
- The new option "**Agora Awards**", accessible from the "Club Members" menu, shows "Agora's hall of fame" - All possible awards, number of people that have won each award and the specific people that did it, and you can access the award details by click on the serial number of the award.

## SPEECHES

### Tom Hanks Commencement Speech at Harvard University



Creator: Kris Snibbe | Credit: Harvard University

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Thank you. On behalf of all of us who have studied for two years at Chabot Community College in Hayward, California, two semesters of California State University, Sacramento, and forty-five years at the School of Hard Knocks, earning a Bachelor of Arts Degree in One-Damn-Thing-After-Another, – yeah, appreciate being here, thank you, Harvard, about time...

Some of us here can recite by repetition the preamble to a television show we might have seen five days a week about a strange being from another planet with powers and abilities far beyond those of mortal men. Superman, who, disguised as a mild-mannered reporter for a great metropolitan newspaper – there were many metropolitan newspapers once, some of them were great – who could change the course of mighty rivers and bend steel with his bare hands. He was faster than a speeding bullet, more powerful than a locomotive and able to leap tall buildings in a single bound. Those are all very impressive super-powers, no?

What was most impressive about his powers was how he chose to wield them. Yeah, cats were saved from trees. Innocent folks were rescued and crooks were banished to the Phantom Zone – with reliable and assuring regularity. But in those half-hour adventures – which have since grown to many full-length movies and multiverses – was the on-going struggle for not just the protection and safety of the world but the re-balancing of what is very wrong with what needs to be righted. Superman, you see – and his proxies: Wonder Woman, and Captain America, a black panther and widow, Avengers, Fantastic Four and my god there are a million of them, they are all enlisted in that never-ending battle for Truth, Justice, and the American way. In such a struggle, being a Superhuman is a plus. But, alas, there ain't no Superman, nor anyone else in his Justice League.

On occasions such as this, beware of any orator who resorts to using sage quotations from historical figures, the words of legends of literature and the arts, or the name dropping of famous friends as a claim to wisdom or super abilities. Few people standing at this podium should be considered much more than lucky sots who were in the right place at the right time with the right goods, and the right attitude. Or as a man named Marlon Brando once said to me...

Could you pick up that name, I just dropped there. That's right... Marlon Brando... once left a message on my phone answering machine – "Tommy Tommy Hankerchief this is Marlon Bran Flakes wondering where you are..." Later he told me that when he registered for the draft he filled out the form for his name and age, but when it came to race he wrote: Human. "For what are we all, but human."

Yeah, we are all but human. As an armchair-historian who reads non-fiction for pleasure, the books divine that there has never been a graduating class that has not faced the greatest challenges of all time; come every spring the maelstrom of history swirls so wildly that no matter the year, the era, or the generation there is always an atmospheric river of events that makes right now the hinge upon which our fate is turning. And we here in the stands look at you all in the caps and gowns and hope – at last, help is on the way. Somewhere, under one of those caps and gowns, is a suit of iron, a woman of steel – a superhuman – and just in the nick of time. This is not because we have failed in our duties or are spent. We've done some very super things over generations. It's because we are in a cage match, mixed martial arts battle royale with agents of intolerance, ignorance, and braying incompetence, the malevolent equals to Imperial Storm Troopers, Lex Luther, and Loki. And we could a superhero right now.

Looking out at the flowing colors of Harvard Yard, we see beings who are young and restless, with energy, imagination, righteousness and enlightenment, joy and compassion. We celebrate your proclaimed wisdom, your work-ethic. We know no one is faster than a speeding bullet – proved too often, every day, too often – but we can still summon more power than a locomotive, and we are all able to leap tall buildings at a single bound if we have the right gizmo. We can change the course of mighty rivers, if such a thing should be done and make machines that bend steel as easily as using our bare hands.

And, we know that to each other, we often seem like strange beings from another planet – in habits and tastes and languages, with holidays and even names for the days of the week all varying. We all have special powers and abilities far beyond the reach of other mortals... some of us can repair a screen door with ease. Take care of a five-year old kid and a toddler for 24-hours a day and never stop loving them... make sense of physics, of economics... survive somehow on minimum earnings... Graduate from college despite years of lock-down... achievements that are all stellar even though, yes, we are all but human. Still, we'd like to look up in the sky and see not a bird, not a plane, but, well, someone young, strong, and super, who'll fight the never-ending battle for Truth, for Justice and for the American way – someone who will take on that work.

A kooky uncle once said we should all stay in school as long as we can because the moment we graduate we have to work every day for the rest of our lives. That man was, you know, a bit bitter, but he was not wrong. We all get to complain about The Man, and we all have debts we gotta pay, but the work that is called for is the construction of our 'more perfect union', a job that will never, ever be completed, one that requires rigorous attention and unfading wherewithal. The work is the keeping of the promises of our promised land, the practice of decency, the protection of freedom, and the promotion of liberty for all – with no exceptions. Man, that takes a lot of work on multiple job sites every single day – call each of them a battle for truth, justice, and the American way.

Yes. The American Way, exemplified in both plain sight and in subtle attitude, in routine moments of exchange, in broad expectations, in places of historic weight and import, and in the small spaces in which we all stand. The American Way is exemplified when you respect the law and the rights of all because if you don't, who will? When your food is brought to you and you thank the server, because if you don't, who will? When you pick up the litter that missed the recycling bin, because if you don't, who will? When you vote your conscience and make sure your neighbor has the opportunity to do the same with theirs, because if you don't, who will? When you savor your victories and when you accept your losses because both are the result of proud and noble efforts. If you don't, who will?



Photograph: Brian Snyder/Reuters

The American Way came about not far from here when subjects of a King demanded more control over their lives than that dictated by someone else's definition of providence. At the same time an entire segment of the population had been taken from their homeland, enslaved to work as chattel regardless of their age. And the original inhabitants of this continent, from sea to shining sea, the only ones who carried the DNA of America were considered sub-human.

Even with such paradox, was written down the how-to, how to establish justice, and ensure domestic tranquility, and provide for the common defense, and promote the general Welfare, and secure those Blessings of Liberty for ourselves and our Posterity no matter, as time and conflict and the institutions of our Democracy would determine, our gender, race, ethos, color, chosen deities, or who we love for it is our manifest destiny to pursue our own of happiness. All of us, no exceptions, are entitled to inalienable rights of liberty and freedom because... we live in the United States of America.

The vocabulary of the American Way- of the law and the rights we share is some part philosophical musing, some part the answering of a question with a question, and the rest is all practical, even physical, and certainly tangible – it is the language of telling the Truth. It is in the vision-quest for Truth that we look to you newly incorporated members of the Justice League of Avengers to come to the rescue, for the Truth to some, is no longer empirical, no longer based on data, common sense, or even common decency – telling the truth is no longer the benchmark for public service, no longer the salve to our fears nor the guide to our actions. Truth is now considered malleable, by Opinion, Narrative, by Zero-Sum Endgames. Imagery is manufactured with audacity, with purpose to achieve the primal task of steering the Truth via mock logic – “I'm just saying... I'm just asking... I'm just wondering...” Now, literally, you cannot believe your eyes. Your ears help others lie to you.

Someone will report the world to you exactly as you wish it were, full of alternative facts, of conjured Narrative meant to buttress the Status Quo or deny its offenses depending on where one is on the food chain and the moral spectrum.

The American Way can be demonstrated without ceasing, as a perpetual prayer. Justice can be an everyday pursuit, case by case, with both lightning speed and the slow, inevitable effect of gravity. Truth, though, oh, truth feeds up in the High Country – as elusive as serenity, yet as certain as the North Star and the Southern Cross. Truth is mined at the intersections of our chosen behaviors and our fixed habits. Truth has synonyms such as honesty, honor,

transparency – and yet the common practice of so many is to play fast and loose with those words – to create enemies, to claim victimhood, to raise the mediocre into merit, and to make cloudy a vista that is actually crystal clear. Likewise, Truth has many opposites. Omission. (You don't need to know that!) Distraction (That's not the real story! This is!) Opinion masquerading as clairvoyance (Here's what is going to happen!) and influence peddling (you know, a lot of people are saying...)

Truth, too, has a nemesis, equal to any colored Kryptonite, that, like a feral hound, is never too far off the path, in the weeds and shadows, lying in wait for the lethal opportunity to bring Truth down. That beast is Indifference, which will make moot all the permanence found in Truth. Indifference will rust away the living promise of our promised land. Propaganda and Bald-faced Lies will erode. Idolatry and Imagery lose luster and effect over time. Ignorance and Intolerance can be replaced by experience in the wink of an eye. But Indifference will narrow the vision of Americas people and make dim the light of Lady Liberty's symbolic torch. Indifference makes citizens into indentured servants held in labor by the despots and tyrants who hold onto their power until they die, enabled by the subterfuge of their co-conspirators, rewarding the rationale of the complicit, and surging into the vacuum caused by the Indifference of a people who have been made weary by struggle, so weary that they lose hope, left to yearn to be saved by the fiction of superheroes.

Every day, every year, and for every graduating class there is a choice, the same option for all grownups to make: to be one of three types of Americans – those who embrace liberty and freedom FOR ALL, those who won't, or those who are indifferent. In the never-ending battle you have all officially joined as of today, the difference is in how truly you believe, in how vociferously you promote, in how tightly you hold to the Truth that is self-evident – that of course we are all created equally yet differently, and of course we are all in this together. Justice and the American way are within our grasp no matter our gender, our faith, our station, our heritage, our genetic makeup, the shade of our flesh, or the continental birthplace of our

ancestors. Why is that truth so hard for some to accept? If you live in the United States of America, this Truth is sacred, unalterable, chiseled into the stone of the foundation of our republic. When it comes our race, there are many models but only one chassis. None of us are super, but we are the Americans, unique in our willingness to admit that when it comes to our race, we are all but human. So said Marlon Bran-flakes to Tommy Tommy Hankerchief.

Congratulations. Godspeed. May goodness and mercy follow you – all the days – all the days – of your lives.

## SPEECHES

Gabriela Laslau, Agora Speakers Romania



EMMA BOVARY

Dear Agorians, Dear Father Confessor,  
Good day to you all.

My name is Emma Bovary, I was born in Rouen, France. My father is Gustave Flaubert. Some of you may know and admire him, as he's a famous writer, the creator of Realism in Europe, a master of literary craftsmanship. I'm here to tell you the ugly, naked truth about him. This man is a monster who pushed me to commit suicide, and this is what I'm going to do here and now, with you as my witnesses.

It is true that Gustave Flaubert had a miserable childhood. He was the son of an eminent surgeon, a maniac and workaholic who forced the poor boy to watch him perform dissections on dead bodies. He lived in that sombre atmosphere, in addition to being forced to read the romantic books that were the height of fashion at that time.

I didn't know my mother. Actually, I don't remember anyone talking about her in my house of fiction, and this is why my father sent me to the convent initially, to keep me away from the worldly, vulgar obsession with love the whole society was sick with. There were the famous novels Paul and Virginie, Walter Scott's books, in which knights in armours saved damsels in distress and, in general, men were devoted to continually worshipping women in the most chivalric way. Only the reverse happened, like in stories.

The more you fear something will happen, the sooner it will happen. Like in Sleeping Beauty, for instance. You can't stop the inevitable. There was a maid at our convent, who came to do the cleaning twice a week. She secretly brought us books to read that were so different from the Scriptures and the Fathers of the Holy Church that all the girls devoured them. I was one of them. This was real life, I thought. A life of romance and passion. Men and women in search of each other and finding their significant selves. That's what life should be about. Love, love and love.

At this point in my life, My father became obscure. I didn't feel his presence at all. He was either busy with other siblings of mine or

simply gave me the freedom I needed. He wasn't even there when I married Charles Bovary, a young doctor, on a beautiful Sunday in July. I thought I was in love with him. He was shy, well-mannered and loved me. When we moved to his practice in the countryside, things weren't so glamorous anymore. It was the two of us and my mother-in-law who was a constant, nagging presence. We went to church on Sundays, ate together, paid visits to our distant neighbours. Terrible!

Charles decided I needed a change of scene so we moved to a nearby town. Life was slightly better, but then our daughter Berthe was born. Was I supposed to care of this creature for the rest of my life? I had no memories of my mother doing that. I didn't know what motherly love was. And then, what was the point of it? Just another woman being brought into the world to live another insignificant life?

When I realised that was the end of it all, my heart sank. Where was the glamour? Where was the romance, the men fighting for your love?

There were such men. Leon was one of them, but he was too young so I pushed him away and he left. And then Rodolphe. Oh, how I loved Rodolphe! for the first time in my life, I loved a man and was loved back, according to all the canons of romantic love. But he broke my heart when he left me. I couldn't speak or get out of the bed for weeks. Poor Charles was devastated. I thought I would die. My life made no sense without Rodolphe. Where was my father, with his stupid theories, about this unrealistic kind of emotions described in books that would bring people to suicide? This was just infatuation, not love, he said. Love was accepting reality, fighting for it and making it better. Accepting weaknesses, not chasing illusions. The old man knew nothing.

When I met Leon at the opera house, his passion for me rekindled. I was loved again. I started spending more and more money on clothes, gifts, luxury goods. What was money? Nothing. What was important was to seize the day and be with your loved one. Only I was very wrong here. I borrowed more money than Charles' property was worth. We were deep in debt. I begged both Rodolphe and Leon to lend me money to help me get out of debt, but they turned a cold shoulder. I meant nothing to them. I was an adulteress, a bad mother and a narcissistic woman in love with her idea of cheap romance. There was a name for that, a disease they gave my name: bovarism.

So here I am, in front of you, ready to kill myself. The arsenic is prepared and I'll swallow it. I know it hurts, but there is no other way out. There is no place on earth for women like me. Or Anna Karenina. We are misfits in a world where women should know their place.

But you see, someone should teach them That's why I hate you, Gustave Flaubert. After I die, you will say "Madame Bovary c'est moi". It's easy for you. At least Pygmalion fell in love with his creation. You should have followed in your father's footsteps and become a surgeon. You're still the little boy, standing in the dissection room, operating on dead bodies. You will never be forgiven!



## MEET OUR MEMBERS



Since its very inception, Agora has always had a specialized Youth Program targeted at the very young. They represent our future and embody our hopes. By helping them develop strong communication, critical thinking and leadership skills and providing them with a wide exposure to a multitude of different cultures and beliefs, we hope to contribute shaping a future generation of citizens and leaders that engage in dialogue, tolerance, and peaceful coexistence.

**Rochristiany Ed Livpya Siahaan** – or **Christi** is nine years old and lives on a small remote island, Kurimun, in Riau Islands Province, Indonesia. One of Indonesia's 18,504 islands. Christi attends Santu Yusuf Tanjungbalai primary school, Karimun, and is a member of the Tunas Karya Agora Virtual English Club in Indonesia.

### *How did you learn about Agora?*

From my teacher, Miss Gloria, at Santu Yusuf primary school Karimun and our weekly meeting leader Mr. Mike, the Agora Ambassador for Indonesia, in Jakarta.

### *What motivated you to join Agora?*

I want to speak English fluently as I hope to become a doctor or pediatrician, and I will need good English for my training.

### *Tell us about your club experience.*

I first joined Agora three months ago. I am very pleased with Agora. I have made many friends at our Virtual Club meetings, and the teachers help with my studying, give me feedback on my prepared speeches and make me feel comfortable.

### *How has Agora helped you in your development?*

Agora is where we support each other in talking, learning from each other, and growing together. The talkative me feels that my talents and ideas have been channeled to learn to speak better and gave me confidence to deliver speeches. Although I have been learning English since I was three years old in kindergarten, I lacked confidence and thought my English was bad. Agora has shown me that I can improve my English speaking skills with a little effort.

### *How do you find subjects for your speeches?*

From my Mum, Uncle Google, and at the moment, Christmas themes. My Mum and Uncle Google have lots of exciting ideas. My Mum always helps me improve my communication skills.

### *Who suggested your choice of a "Christmas Speech"?*

My wonderful Mum and maybe Santa.

### *How long did it take you to write your video script for the Tunas Karya - Virtual English Club's YouTube Performance?*

I spent three days preparing my Special Christmas Speech.

### *What did you find most difficult?*

I found that by combining interesting Santa Stories it was easy.

### *What did you enjoy most about making the Christmas video?*

I enjoyed being able to sing during my speech and delivering a Joyful Speech Message.

### *How did you feel after you delivered your Christmas video speech?*

I felt very happy and hoped that listeners got the Christmas Message and are able to love each other.

### *What did you learn?*

I learnt that I CAN DO IT and have FUN at the same time.

### *Do you get nervous before a speech? How do you cope?*

Yes, I feel nervous. But I am not anxious when I speak now. I relax myself by Deep breathing. I Inhale and Exhale a few times.

### *What would you tell someone considering joining Agora - is joining worth it?*

Yes don't worry. Agora will support you. Everything will be fine and you will have FUN.

### *What tips can you offer to beginners?*

I get relaxed by deep breathing just before I deliver my speeches. I Inhale and Exhale. Praying and practicing my speeches also helps.

I would share my experience of telling and listening to stories. I would hope that they are also excited by preparing speeches.

### *Do you have any concluding remarks?*

In Agora, we can improve our English, gain confidence in life, and make friends. I am thrilled to be in Agora, where everyone supports each other. Thank you, teachers and Agora, for helping me. I hope to remain in this club for many years. I hope that Agora continues to support and develop many more children worldwide.

The Agora Speakers International Foundation is a European secular educational charity that empowers people to become brilliant communicators and confident leaders who will be actively building a better world.

We provide a specialized educational program focused on developing leadership, public speaking, critical thinking, and debating skills.

Our training system does not involve teachers or classes. To learn and improve, our members use our online training materials and join one or more Agora local clubs where they meet, practice, and receive peer feedback regularly in a friendly and supportive environment. At the same time, they participate in and lead real-world projects that leave a lasting effect on their communities.

Founded in 2016, we now have an active presence in over 70 countries through over 150 clubs worldwide.

As a true charity, for clubs that are open to everyone all our activities and educational materials are totally free, with no sign-up, membership, or chartering costs of any kind, nor any kind of mandatory purchases. Starting a local club is also free.

For more information, contact us at [info@agoraspeakers.org](mailto:info@agoraspeakers.org)

