

A Guide for Language Evaluators And Grammarians in Selecting “WORD” or “WORDS OF THE DAY”

I have been taking on the appointment of the Language Evaluator or Grammarian at numerous Toastmaster meetings for the past 18 years. Each time I am assigned this role, I always consider it a privileged role and an opportunity to equip myself properly to meet the assignment objectives. In doing so, I consider essentially what the role requires of me. Primarily there are 3 tasks:

- to listen intently to the use of language
- to spot and highlight correct and incorrect use of words and sentences and
- to summarise my thoughts on how to improve the language of communication based on what I have heard

The ‘WORD’ or ‘WORDS OF THE DAY’ is an important component of any Language Evaluation segment. It is to highlight a particular word or phrase and to illustrate how it is correctly used in a specific context. Very often, the different ways the word is used are highlighted with specific examples. Usually it is presented as an adjective, a noun or a verb or variation of these. It must be chosen carefully to ensure as wide a variety of uses as possible. The role is to select words that encourages application in as many forms as is practiced. My personal choice is to use simple words used every day to highlight the richness and versatility of the written and spoken word.

I will share how a specific ‘word’ of the day may be used to encourage use and application in a speech.

The word “gregarious” is commonly used as an adjective meaning “living in groups”, “like to be with others”. Example:

- The honeybee is a gregarious insect whose home is a colony that it shares with as many as 80,000 bees
- Gregarious people like to socialize each time they are in a group.

The adverb is “gregariously” by adding the suffix “ly”, although strictly gregarious has no verb form. There is a noun “gregariousness” meaning social and friendly behavior. Toastmasters by nature are characterized by their gregariousness at every Toastmasters meeting.

Another word is used in its participle form ending with “ing”. An example is highlighted:

From August 1959, until his death in January 1961, Dr. Tom Dooley suffered almost continuous excruciating pain. The lines of Robert Frost kept reverberating in his mind during those anxious days. These two words have origin as verbs “excruciate” and “reverberate” but are used in a different form.

Excruciating means agonizing, torturing, painful

Reverberating means recurring, resounding, repeating

A word such as rejoice has many forms.

- Used as a verb: We rejoiced in the many successes of our Toastmaster Club in past speech contests.
- Used as a noun: There was a time of great rejoicing when two Toastmasters who met each other at club meetings were married.

Every language evaluator needs to be able to comment and suggest how language is understood and improved in these areas in an evaluation:

1. Correct pronunciation with proper stress on and attention given to phonetics, stressors and silent vowels.
2. Proper diction and enunciation in each sentence
3. Use of alliterations, highlight metaphors, idioms, anaphora, triads, repetition, rhetorical devices,, similes, proverbs and others
4. Proper correct use of grammatical terms, subject-verb relationships, simple, past and present tense, singular and plural
5. Use of beautiful and simple descriptive adjectives with , some significant examples of expressing the same emotion:
 - Astounding
 - Surprising
 - Speechless
 - Amazing
 - Incredulous
 - Unbelievable
 - Incredible
 - Life-changing
 - Impactful
 - Wonderful
 - Memorable