Characteristics of spoken language

1. Use of personal pronouns
   I, you, he, she, it, we, they, me, him, her, us, and them. These create a sense of relationship between speaker and audience.
   Eg. “You and I. We’re in this together. It’s us against the world!”

2. Shorter sentences
   Smaller units of information are easier to follow than larger ones. In a live setting a listener will hear your words once. There is no replay button for them to push or text for them to re-read.

3. Familiar vocabulary
   The words used need to be readily understood by everybody in your audience. That means avoiding jargon.
   Eg. “You’re going to have to push the envelope if you want to escape the cubicle farm.”
   Translation: You are going to have to do something out of the ordinary if you want to work in management.

4. Use of colloquial words & contractions
   These give a conversational tone, adding a sense of immediacy to a speech.
   Eg. “Gidday! How are ya? How’s it goin?”

5. Ideas, words & phrases are repeated
   Repetition emphasizes your main ideas and makes it easier for the audience to remember them.
   Eg. “We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender.”
   Extract from British Prime Minister Winston Churchill’s June 1940 speech

6. Use of transitions, signaling and summary statements
   A good speech lets an audience know what’s happening, whether it’s new information coming up, moving from one topic to another or summarizing.
   Eg. “We’ve explored one scenario for the ending of Block Buster 111, but let’s consider another. This time…”

7. Use of vocal variety and body language
   Vocal variety is using the voice to convey meaning and/or feeling. The same is done with body language - gesture or movement. They work together to enhance your speech.