

## ***Speeches of Presentation and Cultures***

Cultures differ in the extent to which individualism is regarded favorably. The most individualistic cultures in the world speak English. Speakers of English place such great emphasis on the individual that they capitalize the pronoun "I" in writing, but interesting enough, not eh "Y" in the pronoun "you." English is the lonely language that does this. In collective cultures such as Native American, Indonesian, Panamanian, and Pakistani, commitment between individuals in a group is very strong. In fact, Apache Indians do not use a pronoun equivalent to "I" at all in their language. They use "dene," which is equated to mean "we." They are a collective culture. They view everything as happening to the group, not to one particular person.

As far as special occasion speeches are concerned, collective cultures do not like to single out one individual to praise over other members of the group. In New Zealand, they have a saying: "The tall poppy gets mown down." A similar saying exists in Japan, "Deru kugi wa utareru" when translated means: "The nail that sticks up is hit." Compare these sayings to the one used in the United States, "The squeaky wheel gets the grease." In other words, in an individualistic society, if you speak out, you are taken care of--your problem is solved. In a collective culture, if you speak out, there are negative consequences. Consequently, the members of collective cultures feel uncomfortable having their personal characteristics (good or bad) publicly acknowledged. Therefore, speeches, or presentation are most likely to be made to an entire group as opposed to one individual.