

Poetry

Reading poetry is certainly one of the more difficult skills to master but not impossible with practise. Two attributes are needed for the successful reading;

1. Judging where to place the emphasis.

The trap that catches most people with reading poetry is being caught by the rhythm of the rhyme.

The reading very quickly becomes monotonously repetitive. For example, poetry by A.B.

Paterson is particularly strong with this rhythm. The words in the following stanza that would trick speakers are 'craze, days, seen and machine.

It was Mulga Bill from Eaglehawk that caught the cycling craze.
He turned away the good old horse that served him many days.
He dressed himself in cycling clothes, resplendent to be seen.
He hurried off to town and bought a shining new machine.

The stanza is now repeated with dots underneath to convey pace and the words underlined that should have emphasis. (The following is derived from a recital by Leonard Teale.)

T'was Mulga Bill from Eaglehawk that caught the cycling craze.

He turned away the good old horse that served him many days.

He dressed himself in cycling clothes, resplendent to be seen.

He hurried off to town and bought a shining new machine.

2. Judging how to place the emphasis.

Note in the above example how the emphasis for specific words is often achieved with changes in pace. Pitch and Volume should also be used. The high skill required to control all three characteristics of the voice demanded by poetry is outside most peoples normal speaking range.

To improve, it is suggested that speakers seek exercises to practise enhancing their voice range which will also have a positive impact in their normal speaking skills.