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Creative Language for Presentations

INTRODUCTION: **There are different 'modes' you can be in when using English in business situations.**

'Survival Mode'
This is when you have no chance to prepare and are speaking spontaneously, maybe about a new subject. Keep your sentences short and simple. Focus on key expressions and linking words to structure what you are saying. Use intonation and stress to make your meaning even clearer.

'Expert Mode'
You are so familiar with the subject and are so used to talking about it that you can make what your are saying more interesting to listen to, even if you are speaking spontaneously. So you can use, idiomatic expressions, humorous asides and numerous examples to clarify what you are saying.

'Creative Mode'
In this case you have time to prepare, have a need to influence people, or make a particularly good impression. You may be quite passionate about the subject, or it may be something you have been working on for a long time, or a strategic issue. In this case you can use creative language and sentence structure to make your points memorable and to be persuasive.

Today we are going to talk about this **'Creative Mode'** and give you some hints, tips and examples of how to spice up your language for presentations and meetings!

ACTIVITY ONE: Questions:

1. In French do you use creative language?
2. When you contribute to a meeting, 'webex', or conference or make a presentation, how do you prepare?
3. Do you make an effort to make your language creative?
4. Do you find certain people more interesting to listen to than others in meetings and conferences?
5. Do you sometimes need to make a good impression or persuade people of something?
6. Do you believer that you can be creative with your English.

ACTIVITY TWO – **Some ideas to make your sentences more interesting and creative.**

There are many ways in which the same combination of facts can be 'packaged' in sentences. Although we encourage you to use short sentences, there are also simple ways to draw attention to certain important parts of what you are saying, show relative importance or indeed to make it sound more interesting.

Let's study some of the options:



Complex or Compound Sentences:

A longer, complex sentence lets you show which ideas are more important to you and which are linked. A complex sentence also allows for variety. It's still very important to keep things simple and clear, especially in an international context, but using complex or compound sentences does allow for more creativity.

Simple

My boss invited me to attend the conference. I do not want to go.

Compound

My boss invited me to attend the conference, but I do not want to go.

Complex

Although my boss invited me to attend the conference, I do not want to go.
I do not want to go even though my boss invited me to attend the conference.

Here are some examples of the variety in meaning that can be gained from using this type of structure:

Sentence structure reflects importance. A simple message might consist of two facts:

- She was working - the '**working fact**'
- She was feeling discouraged - the '**discouraged fact**'.



You can -

- Give them **equal** importance by using **co-ordination**:

  She was working **and** she was feeling discouraged.

  She was working **but** she was feeling discouraged.

  She was feeling discouraged **but** she was working.

- Make one fact **less** important by expressing it in a **subordinate clause** or a **prepositional phrase**, and probably **earlier** in the sentence. The subordinated fact could be:
  - The **discouraged** fact:
    - **Although** she was feeling discouraged, she was working.

      Although feeling discouraged, she was working

      In spite of the feeling of discouragement, she was working
  - The **working** fact:

    Although she was working she was feeling discouraged.

    Although working she was feeling discouraged.

    In spite of working, she was feeling discouraged



Give an example of two conflicting facts or emotions you are experiencing at the moment….

While working, she was feeling discouraged.

More about the COMPOUND sentence: a compound sentence will emphasise balance: A compound sentence consists of two or more independent clauses (or simple sentences) joined by co-ordinating conjunctions like *and, but,* and *or*:

Simple
France is a rich country.
Simple
Still, it has many poor people.
Compound
France is a rich country, but still it has many poor people.

Compound sentences are very natural for English speakers. However, if you over-use compound sentences you will sound childish and confused.

A compound sentence is most effective when you use it to create a sense of balance or contrast between two (or more) equally important pieces of information:

France has a stronger economy, but Spain has a better lifestyle.

CONJUNCTIONS – You will need to know these in order to use more complex sentences;

In the earlier example, when we use the subordinating conjunction although at the beginning of the first clause, we make it clear that the fact that your boss invited you is *less important* than, or subordinate, to the fact that you do not want to go.

A subordinating conjunction introduces a dependent clause and indicates the nature of the relationship among the independent clause(s) and the dependent clause(s).

The most common **Subordinating conjunctions** are:

After, although, as, because, before, how, if, once, since, than, that, though, till, until, when, where, whether, and while.

Correlative Conjunctions

Correlative conjunctions always appear in **pairs** -- you use them to link equivalent sentence elements. The most common correlative conjunctions are:

both...and,
either...or,
neither...nor,
not only...but also,
so...as,
whether...or
whether… or not

With your partner write three sentences about work using complex sentences and one exampe of a subordinating conjunction and two correlative conjunctions.

REORGANISE CLAUSES

Ordinary main clauses and subordinate clauses offer a convenient range of different solutions to the problems of signalling importance, but there is also a range of special patterns that expand the range of possibilities even further.

Subject delay:

In your office is a large rat.

In this pattern the basic subject is delayed till the end of the sentence where it can have **greater importance**.

Front-shifting:

Make a statement twice using front shifting to change the emphasis. We'll discuss how it impacts on our understanding.

Front shifting is best explained by an example:

Some things you forget. **Other things** you always remember.

The emphasis in this front shifted example is on *forget,* and *remember*. The effect of this word order is noticeably different from the more expected:

You forget **some things.** You always remember **other things.**

Front shifting reduces the importance of the front-shifted element, which then provides a context for the rest of the clause and may link back to the preceding sentence.

Passive:

Talk about some things which have gone wrong at work, or mistakes, without blaming anyone.

The rat is being chased by a cat.

Passive verbs allow their basic object (*the rat*) to become their subject.

This change has several effects on the flow of information: it makes the cat seem more important in the sentence as it's the last thing you hear. It also links the rat to the preceding sentence.

- Alternatively it can have exactly the opposite effect, allowing the active subject to be **omitted** altogether:

The rat is being chased.

In this case passive verbs make the style 'impersonal'.

Parallel Structure:

Parallel structure adds impact to what you are saying. It shows that each idea has the same level of importance. And parallel structure adds focus and balance. Parallel sentence structure (also called parallelisms) involves using the same pattern of words or phrases for a series of connected ideas.

An example of parallel sentence structure is this:

To carry out this research, I will 1) conduct an audit, 2) carry out a needs assessment survey, 3) develop an appropriate intervention, and 4) pilot test the intervention.

Other types of sentence you can use to add variety:

- A short simple sentence will grab a person's attention.
- A loose sentence will tell the person in advance how to interpret your information.
- A periodic sentence will leave the person in suspense until the very end.
- A declarative sentence will avoid any special emotional impact.
- An exclamatory sentence, used sparingly, will jolt someone.
- An imperative sentence will make it clear that you want the reader to act right away.

Find New Words



http://www.onelook.com/
http://thesaurus.com/

A picture tells a thousand tales:

Use images and comparisons. Evoke the future, get people to imagine a scene, compare the outcome of your project to a positive image:

- It will be like…
- It'll be the equivalent of…
- It will be as if…



- It'll be just like…
- Imagine a day when…



Add musicality:

Play with the rhythm of your speech or presentation by combining short sentences, parallel ideas, repetition and even rhyming words.



YOUR TIME TO SHINE

Now put together a presentation about one of the following subjects, using as many of the techniques outlined above as you can to make it interesting and exciting to listen to!

1. You propose a plan to re-locate the entire office to Hawaii. You first outline serious problems with staff morale; with the building you are located in and with commuting time and environmental issues. You then explain why Hawaii is the solution.
2. You have been working with George Clooney and Brad Pit on a new motivational training method. You explain the revolutionary methods and propose a seminar to be organised for all the women in your company.
3. You have decided that there should be no more hierarchy at all in your company. You explain how individual motivation depends on shared responsibility and how everyone should work hand in hand, at the same level, earning the same wage.
4. Having assessed recent fashion trends you realise that 1980's style is a big influence on the younger generations. From now on all women should dress like Madonna and all men like Bruce Springsteen. You explain your justification offering proof from serious market research.
5. You have tested a special pheromone based perfume on the male office workers. Over a period of 12 months it proved to increase productivity amongst female employees. You outline the results of your research and propose implementing its use at work in the future.