Lesson Plan © Easy Access English

Silence the French Voice!



EAE Learning objectives for this lesson

Learn a technique for avoiding translating from French to English. Learn and practice new linking words and expressions. Practice explaining work related subjects using this method.

Activity One - Answer the questions.

1. In what situations do you find yourself hesitating in English?
2. Do you try to find translations for your French thoughts?
3. How do you structure your ideas when you speak English?

Activity Two - Read the article.

Many French people have the same problem when speaking English. They want to find the perfect translation to their French thoughts.

Of course this is not the best strategy to adopt when speaking a foreign language, for many reasons.

First of all, you will be too hesitant. You have been taught, at school that there is a right and a wrong way to say something in English, and that you will have failed if you chose the wrong way, so you often find yourselves at an imaginary crossroads, blocked and petrified, not knowing which way to go, which word to choose.

Furthermore, your thoughts in French rely on a much wider vocabulary. Clearly you need to use more simple sentence structures and words when you are not using your native language.

In addition, as you have probably noticed by now, it's impossible to translate directly. Idiomatic usage of French and English are different so there will be certain things you can say in French that you simply can't translate directly into English. In fact the whole way we express our ideas is very different.

In English we tend to use a series of short sentences and linking words to compare and contrast our ideas or indeed to proceed with a sequence of ideas. We then conclude.

Not only will you be easier to understand if you refrain from translating, but you will also sound more idiomatic.

Finally, in an international context, where people are all deriving a different meaning from what you say, and coming from a different cultural background, you need to simplify. You need to clarify. You need to leave as little margin for misunderstanding as possible.

So, how are you going to stop translating? It's much easier than you think. It's about focus. If you focus on something else, and stop listening to the French voice in your head, you can silence those French words and concentrate on ideas.

J. Franklin

Activity Three - Read the advice.

In order to silence that French voice you will have to concentrate on something other than the French words. So really focus your mind on the message that you want to convey and on the way you will structure that message.

FOCUS ON STRUCTURE - Here are some simple steps to follow.

1. **Decide what you want to say in answer to a question, or as a presentation or explanation of an idea.**

2. **Decide how you want to structure your answer. (Problem, solution, conclusion, Beginning, middle end, Background, update conclusion.... Etc.)**

3. **Decide on the linking words that go with your chosen structure.**

4. **Focus on the structure and keep your sentences short.**

5. **Clearly illustrate the end of a sentence and the beginning of the next one, with a pause, with the rising and falling pitch of your voice.**

Remember some other tips....

A. The word 'and' is your enemy – don't be tempted to put it between sentences and end up with one long sentence!

B. *'Ummmmm errrrrrrr, ahhhhh'* – these sounds should not be voiced. It's better to stay silent between sentences and let people think about what you are saying.

C. Remember that it's OK to use really simple sentences – subject verb object, especially when you are using linking words and idiomatic expressions which make what you are saying easier to understand.

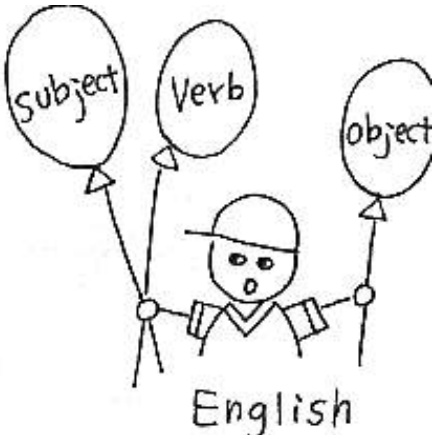
D. To make yourself clearer and more interesting to listen to – use

- **Stress** – emphasize key information by saying certain words more slowly or louder than other less important words which you can say very quickly or even only sound partly. Remember that English is a stress timed language so intonation and stress is very important.

- **Pitch** – your voice goes up (rising pitch) at the beginning and down (falling pitch) at the end of sentences and also sometimes goes up and down on an important word or expression to emphasize it further.

There could be a **variety of structures** and to each the linking words, which correspond. Here are some examples: (Review them before the lesson.

Sequence - beginning middle end
- First of all
- Secondly
- Furthermore
- In conclusion



Cause and effect - The fact - consequence - conclusion
- The fact is that...
- This means that...
- Therefore...
- So, to sum up

Problem - solution - Objectives
- It seems that
- Essentially
- One way of dealing with this is...
- We would aim to
- Basically this means that

Introduce - explain - conclude
- The issue is....
- This is essential/ important because...
- Therefore...

Introduce idea - Give examples- make proposal
- The question we have to deal with is
- For example
- What I would like to suggest is



Introduction, for, against, conclusion...
- Regarding the question of...
- On the one hand
- On the other hand
- In conclusion

Reference – question – answer
- As we have just said...
- The question is...
- My suggestion is

Introduce give several points and conclude
- In order to explain...
- I'd like to talk about three points
- First of all
- Secondly
- Finally
- In conclusion

Activity Five - Practice Questions:

Now let's try out the technique, practice with the following questions:

ONE – **Explain a problem you had at work and a solution you found**.

TWO– Now again choose the appropriate structure to **answer** this **question**. Who are the main stakeholders in facilities management at IKEA and who are you providing a service to?

THREE– **Introduce an idea for improving the lifecycle of a building.**

FOUR – **Outline** the way in which you plan the activities of an in store facilities management team, use a **sequential structure.**

FIVE – Choose a structure to **explain why** you chose this job.

SIX – **Outline** your plans for the immediate future in your department.

