



MODULE 7 PRESENTATION SKILLS

UNIT 4 Talking effectively 1:

Style

Task sheet

The aim of the lesson:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Raise awareness of the effects of stylistic devices2) Examine the use of static and dynamic language3) Explore the features of formal and informal language4) Learn features of positive, convincing language
Language level:	B2 and up

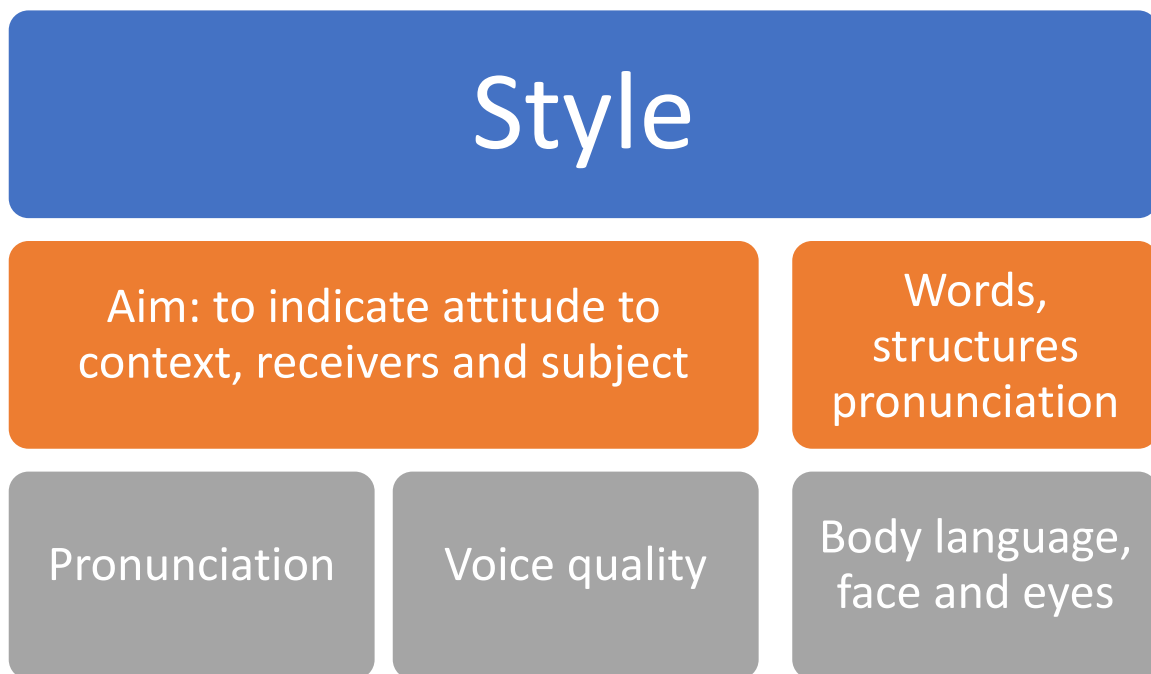


TASK 1 Making an impression

No matter when, where and why we give a presentation, besides communicating information, we want to make a lasting, personal impression on the audience. While it is a basic human desire to be liked and acknowledged, it is also clear that our message will sink deeper if it appeals to the audience. Our style and rhetoric are powerful tools to create appeal and reinforce our messages. Let us explore how they work!

Style is the aspect of our speech which expresses our attitude to the communicative situation (context), conversational partners (receivers) and the subject we are talking about.

Figure 1 Aspects of style



Style is the composite of a variety of components including

- our choice of words (should we be *determined*, *stubborn* or *obstinate*?)
- structures (*We have concluded* vs. *It has been concluded*)
- pronunciation (can a TV reporter speak a regional dialect on TV?)
- intonation, volume, tone of voice (varied vs. monotonous, loud or low-key)
- body language (e.g., open or closed).

Consider the above examples and discuss the distinctions with your partner.

TASK 2 Style

TASK 2/A Be concise

Read the following lines from a presentation.
Why is it difficult to understand the message?
Mention minimally 3 problems.

Rewrite the sentence and eliminate the
stylistic shortcomings.

*„Words are like leaves;
And where they most abound
Much fruit of sense
Beneath is rarely found.”
(Alexander Pope)*

„The matter at hand is that, as it has been underlined in the above chapters, and was also clear from the presentations given at a recently organised conference at the University of Miskolc, the introduction of new products at our companies does not seem to be a viable alternative in the present time.”

Write here.

Task 2/B Be dynamic

Speech can become very heavy and redundant if it is too wordy and contains many nouns.

The key to a lively style is

- not to use two words to say something that you could express with one:
to give a lecture → to lecture, to refuse to accept the offer → to refuse the offer
- avoiding passive structures heavy on nominalisation:
After long reflection, his decision to confess was made.
↓
- He reflected for long, then he decided to confess.

Keeping this in mind, make the following sentences more dynamic.

1. Finally, it was decided that the offer should be accepted.

.....
.....

2. The partners failed to understand the exact nature of the legal background of the project properly.

.....
.....

3. Before signing the contract, our business partners made the claim that the framework of our cooperation had not been outlined comprehensively.

.....
.....

4. Their initial intention for cooperation was based on an incorrect assumption they had made of the distribution of work and budget.

.....
.....

5. A complaint was submitted by a client to the effect that we had failed to provide a refund for a faulty product.

.....
.....

TASK 2/C BE POSITIVE!

The same message can be formulated in different ways: besides communicating a fact, we can imply invisible messages between the lines as well, which reflect how we feel about the message, the context or our partners. Consider the following examples:

Figure 2 Negative message

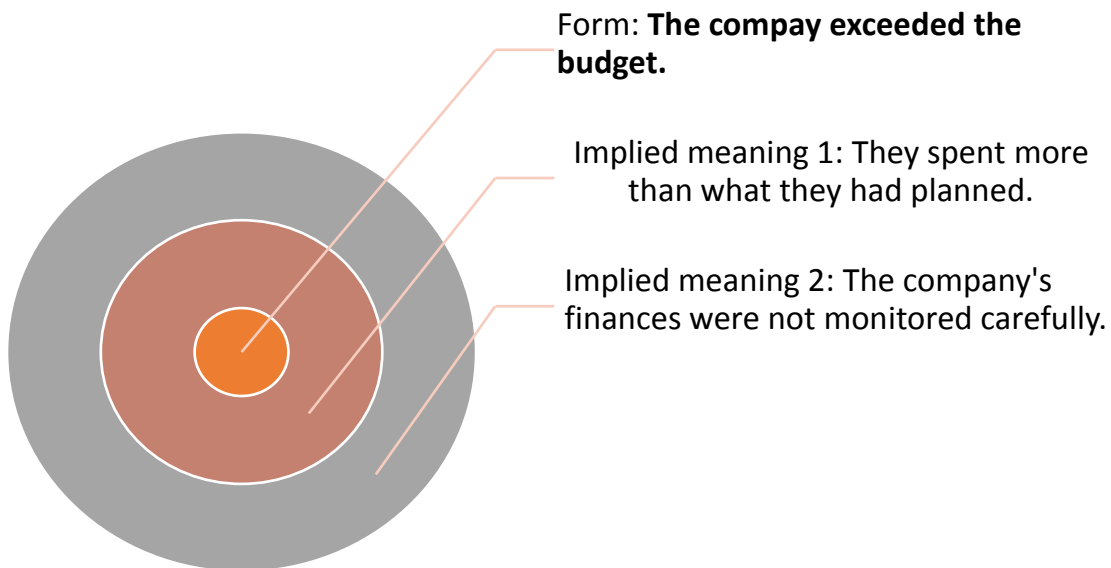
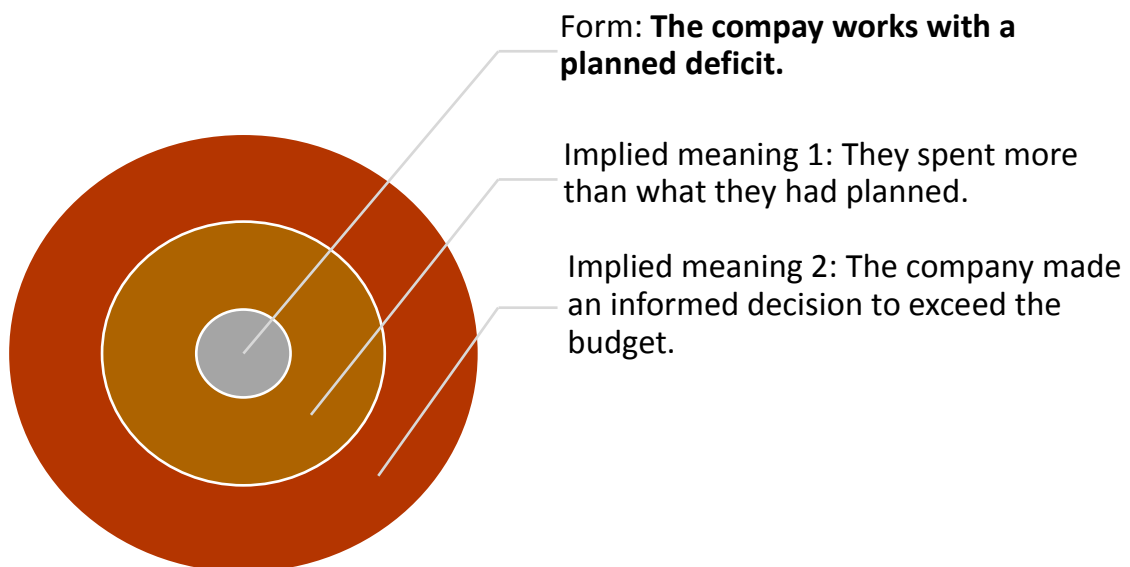


Figure 3 Positive message



The basic message (implied meaning 1) is the same in both cases (The company spent more than what they had planned.). However, the choice of words in the two sentences implies different evaluations of the same situation:

- “exceeding the budget” implies a negative judgement: the company was careless and thus to be blamed for the potential loss, while
- “working with a planned deficit” suggests that the company kept things under control and made an informed decision to exceed the budget.

Read the following negative statements and reformulate them to reflect a more positive orientation. You can find useful key words in the first two tasks.

1. You neglected to specify the expectations towards the hosting institution when receiving a visiting professor. (need, provide, information)

.....
.....

2. We failed to include a proper SWOT analysis in our action plan. (yet, add)

.....
.....

3. The truth is that we have overestimated our potential; at the moment, we have no capacity to undertake a new contract.

.....
.....

4. Our application was turned down because we were simply incompetent to write it up properly.

.....
.....

5. I don't think it was a good idea to limit our product range.

.....
.....

TASK 3 Observe the expert

Watch Tom Flick’s short talk on leadership versus management.

Source:

Tom Flick: Leadership vs. Management
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tewWjyCStRk>

What is the purpose of using positive and negative examples in the talk?

.....

.....

Give some positive - negative phrasal pairs.

Positive phrase	Negative phrase

TASK 4 Formality – informality

A key aspect of style is the level of formality demanded by the topic, context and participants. We use a different speech style (choice of words, grammatical complexity, voice quality, body language, etc.) when we talk to our colleagues at our company’s meeting room, or when we talk to an audience of unknown people at a large conference.

In this task we shall address this issue from two angles:

- word choice, and
- personal - impersonal structures.

TASK 4/A Word choice

Longer verbs of Latin origin (such as *utilise*, *exploit*, *generalise*, etc.) sound more formal than shorter Germanic verbs and phrasal verbs (such as *end*, *show*, *look into*, *make do with*, etc.).

Make phrases from the following words: first, match the corresponding formal verbs to the informal verbs, then add an appropriate noun phrase to make an expression. Use arrows, as in the example.

Informal verb	Formal verb	Noun phrase
think up	incorporate	an action plan
make use of	accelerate	the problem of distribution
build in	establish	new recruitment strategies
break into	conduct	new South Asian markets
speed up	formulate	our economic growth
set up	investigate	a client survey
carry out	exploit	our multicultural experience
look into	explore	the possibility of direct marketing
work out	penetrate	new routines of communication
think about	calculate	the next quarter's budget

Informal verb	Formal verb	Noun phrase
move	consolidate	new translation software
combine	substantiate	employees according to performance
buy	demonstrate	our office to the capital
strengthen	amalgamate	our natural resources
show	re-locate	our position in Central America
pay	utilise	our ideas into actions
send	purchase	the order tomorrow
use	collaborate	our two Central European offices
work together	remunerate	awareness of world trends in online gaming
turn	dispatch	on the new promotion plan

TASK 4/B Personal – impersonal style

Technical and scientific presentations call for a more objective and complex style than informal company meetings. The objective style in such cases represents impartiality and reliability, as well as a focus on processes and results. In contrast, an informal style might come across as more personal and subjective, which can help presenters connect with the audience more easily.

Read the following sentences, which are formulated in a formal, impersonal style. Rewrite them using a more personal style based on the clues.

1. It is debatable if this ambitious plan can be realised within a year. (We, can't, sure)

.....
.....

2. It is widely believed that printed media will be completely replaced by online resources in the next ten years. (Many, us)

.....
.....

3. It is a popular misconception that the largest turnovers are created by direct marketing. (People, wrong, believe)

.....
.....

4. It is generally agreed that the unprecedented increase in the number of new covid infections can only be curtailed by vaccination. (We, all)

.....
.....

5. It is not known what the long-term effects of large-scale vaccination will be. (We, no, know)

.....
.....

6. It has been proved that staff loyalty is significantly correlated with the quality of internal corporate communication. (They)

.....
.....

In sum

- **Style is the composite of verbal and non-verbal devices to reflect our attitude to the context, message and participants.**
- **Choose your words carefully to create more dynamic, concise and positive messages.**
- **Avoid too complicated sentences with multiple subordinations.**
- **Match your level of formality to the requirements of the context, but avoid impersonality whenever possible.**

MODULE 7 PRESENTATION SKILLS

UNIT 4 Talking effectively 1:

Style

Key

TASK 1 Making an impression

Should we be *determined*, *stubborn* or *obstinate*?

- While these words are synonyms, *determined* has a positive connotation (someone who has made a decision and is resolved not to change it), whereas *stubborn* and *obstinate* have increasingly negative connotations (referring to someone who won't change their views even when faced with negative evidence)

What is the difference between *We have concluded* vs. *It has been concluded*?

- *We have concluded* is more personal, focusing on our role in making the decision, while *It has been concluded* is impersonal: looks more objective, focusing on the conclusion and not who drew that conclusion.

Can a TV reporter speak a regional dialect on TV?

- It is a statement if a TV reporter speaks a dialect in mainstream media. It indicates a general inclusive approach, a positive attitude to minorities, ethnicities, and other social groups.

How can varied vs. monotonous, loud or low-key voice make a difference?

- Voice quality is a strong indicator of our feelings and attitudes. Increasing volume and intonation can indicate confidence, while heavily accentuating our speech can imply dominance. In contrast a monotonous, low-key voice suggests the we don't feel comfortable in the situation, and/or we lack confidence.

How can body language indicate an open or closed attitude?

- With our body, we can actually perform the act of opening or closing: by standing straight, opening our arms and standing firmly, without crossing our leg, we communicate that we feel safe and confident in the situation, ready to connect to the audience. However, if we fold ourselves in every possible way (bent back, folded arms, clutched fist, crossed legs), we will come across as intimidated, embarrassed and closed.

TASK 2 Style

TASK 2/A Be concise

Suggested answer:

„The matter at hand is that, as it has been underlined in the above chapters, and was also clear from the presentations given at a recently organised conference at the University of Miskolc, the introduction of new products at our companies does not seem to be a viable alternative in the present time.”

As the presentations held at the conference at the University of Miskolc also proved, the introduction of new products is not beneficial for our companies at the moment.

TASK 2/B BE DYNAMIC!

1. Finally, it was decided that the offer should be accepted.

- Finally, they accepted the offer.

2. The partners failed to understand the exact nature of the legal background of the project properly.

- The partners did not understand the legal background of the project.

3. Before signing the contract, our business partners made the claim that the legal framework of our cooperation had not been outlined comprehensively.

- Before signing the contract, our partners claimed that we had not outlined the legal framework of our cooperation properly.

4. Their initial intention for cooperation was based on an incorrect assumption they had made of the distribution of work and budget.

- Initially, they wanted to cooperate because they misinterpreted the distribution of work and budget.

5. A complaint was submitted by a client to the effect that we had failed to provide a refund for a faulty product.

- A client complained that we had failed to refund him for a faulty product.

TASK 2/C BE POSITIVE!

1. You neglected to specify the expectations towards the hosting institution when receiving a visiting professor. (need, provide, information)

- You need to provide more information on the expectations ...

2. We failed to include a proper SWOT analysis in our action plan. (yet, add)

- We are yet to add a proper SWAT analysis ...

3. The truth is that we have overestimated our potential; at the moment, we have no capacity to undertake a new contract.

-, we need to reconsider our capacity to undertake a new contract.

4. Our application was turned down because we were simply incompetent to write it up properly.

- To submit a successful application, we need to learn how to write it up properly.

5. I don't think it was a good idea to limit our product range.

- I think we should reconsider limiting our product range.

TASK 3 Observe the expert

What is the purpose of using positive and negative examples in the talk?

- To compare and contrast leadership and management

Give some positive - negative phrasal pairs.

Positive phrase	Negative phrase
plain offence	defence
seize opportunities	avoid hazards
where do you want to go	what you know already

TASK 4 Formality – informality

TASK 4/A Word choice

Informal verb	Formal verb	Noun phrase
think up	formulate	an action plan
make use of	exploit	our multicultural experience
build in	incorporate	new recruitment strategies
break into	penetrate	new South Asian markets
speed up	accelerate	our economic growth
set up	establish	new routines of communication
carry out	conduct	a client survey
look into	investigate	the problem of distribution
work out	calculate	the next quarter's budget
think about	explore	the possibility of direct marketing

Informal verb	Formal verb	Noun phrase
move	re-locate	our office to the capital
combine	amalgamate	our two Central European offices
buy	purchase	new translation software
strengthen	consolidate	our position in Central America
show	demonstrate	awareness of world trends in online gaming
pay	remunerate	employees according to performance
send	dispatch	the order tomorrow
use	utilise	our natural resources
work together	collaborate	on the new promotion plan
turn	substantiate	our ideas into actions

TASK 4/B Personal – impersonal style

1. It is debatable if this ambitious plan can be realised within a year. (We, can't, sure)

- We can't be sure if this ambitious plan

2. It is widely believed that printed media will be completely replaced by online resources in the next ten years. (Many, us)

- Many of us believe that printed media ...

3. It is a popular misconception that the largest turnovers are created by direct marketing. (People, wrong, believe)

People wrongly believe that the largest turnovers ...

4. It is generally agreed that the unprecedented increase in the number of new covid infections can only be curtailed by vaccination. (We, all)

- We all seem to agree that the unprecedented increase

5. It is not known what the long-term effects of large-scale vaccination will be. (We, no, know)

- We don't know what the long-term effects ...

6. It has been proved that staff loyalty is significantly correlated with the quality of internal corporate communication. (They)

- They have proved that staff loyalty ...