

## Presentation Skills

### A. Signposting

**1. Watch five short clips from Extracts 1 and 2 of the lecture. Indicate the new topic introduced in each case and the phrases the lecturer uses to introduce a new topic / indicate a transition between topics.** *Adapted from Oxford EAP B2 de Chazal and Rogers. OUP 2013*

- a) What I'd like to focus on first of all is a brief history of how the process of classifying information has developed, and look at one or two key figures in this process.
- b) So, let's start by taking a brief look at the history of classifying the world. If we go back to very early history...
- c) OK, moving on to one of the most important figures in the development of Western thought...
- d) Right, so now that we've got an idea of the importance of Aristotelian classification, I'd like to look at a more recent figure, who was hugely influential in the eighteenth century.
- e) So that was classification in terms of the natural world. If we can turn now to classification systems...

**2. Watch two more clips and note down the phrases used to sequence information.**

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**3. Signposting language. Try to divide the phrases into three groups: a) introducing a new point b) indicating a transition c) indicating sequence or order**

*OK, moving on to ...*

*What I'd like to focus on first of all is...*

*So, let's start by taking a brief look at...*

*Finally this brings us to...*

*If we can turn now to...*

*So that was...*

*So that was all about...*

*After that comes...*

*If we can turn now to...*

*Next is....*

*So now that we've discussed...*

*We'll then turn to...*

*And lastly we'll...*

**4. Explaining connections between phenomena.**

a) In pairs discuss how fast you think the world is moving towards a cashless society where all payments are made electronically by cards or phone. What are the advantages and disadvantages of such a development?

Pros

Cons

b) Think about a presentation on the topic of cashless society. You would like to mention these points, suggest appropriate signposting language:

- a reduction in travelling time and costs – mobile tickets for planes and trains
- increased business activity and productivity
- freer movement of people
- fraud is easier
- an increase in revenue
- a decrease in employment rates – fewer workers are required
- increased employment – more jobs are created
- a reduction in control of finances

## B. Delivery

Read the article below and find out what it says about

*Memorizing*

*Filler words*

*Body posture*

*Eyes*

*Non-native audience*

*Reciting*

*Tone & volume of voice*

*Gestures*

*Knowing your slides*

*Mispronouncing key terms*

Delivering effective oral presentations involves three components: what you say (*verbal*), how you say it with your voice (*vocal*), and everything the audience can see about you (*visual*). For all three components, maximize the signal-to-noise ratio: Amplify what helps, filter out what hurts.

Verbally (and as a general rule), do not write down and memorize or read your full text, because then your presentation will sound like what it is: a recited written text. Instead, memorize the outline of your presentation — that is, a tree structure of main points and subpoints — and speak extempore, reinventing the words as you go along. As you do, you will occasionally need to think about what to say next and find the most appropriate words to say it. Instead of using filler words (*um, er, you know, I mean, etc.*), simply pause. If you say *um*, you get about half a second of thinking time and the audience is likely to notice the *um* and be irritated by it. If you keep silent, you can get up to two or three seconds of thinking time without the audience noticing anything. Even if attendees do notice the silence, they will simply think that you are choosing your words carefully — and there is nothing wrong with that.

Vocally, vary the tone, rate, and volume of your voice as a function of the meaning, complexity, and importance of what you are saying. You need not invent a new intonation pattern: You simply need to amplify your normal pattern.

Visually, control your body. Adopt a stable, confident position; move only when you have a positive reason to do so (for example, move closer to the audience for taking questions), not when your body seems to ask for it. When you make a gesture, make it large and deliberate; between gestures, bring your hands down and do not fidget. Establish eye contact: Engage the audience by looking them straight in the eyes.

At all times, make sure you address the audience. Even if you have slides, tell the audience your story in a stand-alone way; do not just explain your slides. In particular, anticipate your slides. You should know at all times what your next slide is about so you can insert an appropriate transition.

As a non-native speaker or when speaking in front of a non-native audience, consider supporting your presentation with slides. Effective slides get the message across on their own, so if attendees do not understand what you are saying, they can still get your point from your slides. If your spoken English is imperfect or if their understanding of English is limited, attendees are more likely to get the point from the slides (verbal statements, illustrated visually) than from your spoken text. If you have a strong accent or are prone to mispronounce key terms, you may want to include these terms on your slides, integrating them as naturally as possible with the rest of the slide content. Then, as you say a term for the first time, you might point to it casually on the slide so the audience makes the connection between the term and how you say it.

**Exercises.**

- 1) Watch two versions of the video. As you watch, make notes on Dr Linden's presentation. Use this checklist to help you.

	Version 1	Version 2
<b>Eye contact</b>		
<b>Language</b>		
complexity		
sentence length		
use of pauses		
(im)personal		
<b>Manner</b>		
open or closed		
(un)interested		

- 2) What are the differences between written and spoken language? Divide the statements into two groups.

*long sentences*                      *simpler arguments*                      *personal style*  
*complex vocabulary*                      *shorter sentences*  
*impersonal style*                      *complex arguments*                      *simpler vocabulary*

- 3) Decide whether these extracts are spoken or written.

- a. You can see here, 35% of the group of managers classified as participative reached senior management positions. On the other hand, 74% of the more individualistic managers achieved senior management status.
- b. An individualistic style appears to be closely associated with rapid career path progression, whereas a group or participative style, despite its evident attractiveness to all members of staff, is correlated with a relatively slow career progression.
- c. Although lip service is paid to the concept of participative management, their real perception of leadership qualities completely contradicts this view. It can be further seen that such surveys...
- d. So, we find there is a massive contradiction. Good managers are supposed to be participative – to make sure they consult and discuss. Good leaders are supposed to be strong individuals – able to make decisions on their own.

- 4) *Grammar revision. Make these sentences more personal by using the active not the passive.*
- The issue of restructuring was discussed. We .....
  - Research is being conducted on the development of nanomaterials. Scientists .....
  - The agreement will be signed later this month. Both institutions .....
  - It has been found to be rather unreliable. I .....
  - It is reported that the emissions are due to rise. The press .....
- 5) *Now try to do it the other way round.*
- I favour a different approach to this problem.....
  - The department head forced him to resign. ....
  - They have obtained new data from this experiment. ....
  - We are planning a new research project. ....
  - Prof. Smith will reorganize the Research Department. ....
- 6) *Match the more formal verbs with their less formal (spoken) equivalents.*
- |    | formal         | informal             |
|----|----------------|----------------------|
| 1  | to acquire     | a to put into action |
| 2  | to reduce      | b to pull out        |
| 3  | to access      | c to get worse       |
| 4  | to appreciate  | d to buy             |
| 5  | to capture     | e to pay             |
| 6  | to deteriorate | f to cut down        |
| 7  | to implement   | g to get into        |
| 8  | to rationalize | h to take            |
| 9  | to remunerate  | i to understand      |
| 10 | to withdraw    | j to make simple     |

### Word stress

1. *Stress can be used to gain maximum impact.*

Examples:

So, for starters, let's look at the history of the telephone (the word stress implies that other aspects of the telephone are going to be discussed, not just its history)

So, for starters, let's look at the history of the telephone (the word stress implies that the history of other items will be discussed, as well as telephones)

2. *Try to predict where the word stress will fall.*

OK, let's start by looking at where paper was actually invented.

Now, I'd like to move on to the next part of my presentation, which is how Hitler got the support of the German people.

Next, I'd like to look at my second point today: some of the ways in which mobile phone technology has developed.

This leads us to my next point: suggestions for improving your English speaking.

Right, I'm going to finish off today by looking at Alexander Fleming and the antibiotic penicillin.

This brings us to the final part of my presentation today: what countries can do to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.