

Adaptation and the Selection of Words

Issue: Two

Adaptation

Adaptation is the strategy, which is applied to fit every side of the sender's communication to the intended recipients.

Clear writing begins with adapting the message to the contexts of the readers/receivers.

Adaptation: Example

Target receiver/audience: **Shareholders**

“...last year the company’s total sales were Taka 12,000, which was slightly higher than the Taka 11,250 total for the year before. After deducting all expenses, the company had Taka 9,500 as profits. Since the profit increased significantly last year as compared to that of the year before, the company increased the annual dividend...”

Adaptation: Example

Target receiver/audience: **Investors**

“...the excess of the investments in certain companies over net asset value at dates of acquisition was taka Taka 15,000. The company's equity in net assets as of December 31, 2005 was Taka 25,000 and in the results of the operations...”

Simplicity in Writing

Three reasons justify the use of simplicity in writing:

- Many of us tend to write at too difficult a level.
- The writer usually knows the subject of the message better than the reader.
- A wide range of research supports simplicity in writing.

Selection of Words

- Using familiar words
- Using slang and popular cliché with caution
- Choosing short words
- Using technical words and acronyms with caution
- Using concrete language
- Using active verbs
- Selecting words with precise meanings

Using Familiar Words

Using the simplest words that carry the meaning without offending the readers' intelligence.

Unfamiliar Words...

- Ms. Smith's idiosyncrasies supply adequate justification for terminating her employment.
- If liquidation becomes mandatory, we shall dispose of these assets first.

Familiar Words...

- Ms. Smith's peculiar ways justify firing her.
- We shall remove these assets first in case of financial collapse.

Using Slang and Cliché with Caution

Cliché is an everyday expression, often a figure of speech whose effectiveness has been worn out through overuse and excessive familiarity.

Examples of Cliché:

- in today's society
- pros and cons
- winds of change
- long arm of the law
- all walks of life

Choosing Short Words

Short words communicate better than long words, though all short words are not easy to understand.

Long Words...

The decision was predicated on the assumption that an abundance of monetary funds was forthcoming.

Familiar Words...

The decision was based on the belief that there would be more money.

Using Technical Words and Acronyms

Technical Words: The words that are used in any specific field or area. For example, words or terms in finance, medicine, architecture, law; etc.

Direct Cost is the technical word, which is more familiar to individuals working in the area of accounting.

Acronyms: Acronym is the brief version of a collection or set of interrelated words.

BIDS is the acronym of the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies.

Using Concrete Language

Concrete words are those, which form sharp, clear, and specific meanings in the mind of the readers.

Abstract words are vague and have more generalized meaning.

Abstract Language	Concrete Language
The leading company	First among 50 companies
The majority	68 percent
Substantial amount	Taka 10,000,000
A large number	50,000 thousand student

Using Active Verbs

Overuse of the verb “to be” and “Passive voice” take away the strength of the language.

“To be” Verb...

“...customer service officers’ main tasks are to receive complaints, and to give answers to questions.”

Active Verb...

“...customer service officers receive complaints, and give answers to questions.”

Using Active Voice

Passive...

The policy has been supported by our country.

The product will be introduced by the XYZ Company.

An increase of 20.50 percent was reported for hardware sales.

Active...

Our country supported the policy.

The XYZ Company will introduce the product.

Hardware sales increased 20.50 percent.

Avoid Overuse of Camouflaged Verbs

A verb describing the action in a sentence takes the form of a noun is termed as camouflaged verb.

<u>Action Verb</u>	<u>Noun Form</u>	<u>Camouflaged Verbs</u>
Appear	Appearance	Make an appearance
Appraise	Appraisal	Make an appraisal
Discuss	Discussion	Have a discussion
Liquidate	Liquidation	Effect a liquidation

Camouflaged VS Clear Verb Form

Camouflaged Verb

An arrangement was made to meet for breakfast.

Clear Verb

We arranged to meet for breakfast.

Camouflaged Verb

Acceptance of all orders must be made by the chief.

Clear Verb

The chief must accept all orders.

Select Words for Precise Meanings

Words might have same denotation, but different connotations.

Example:

- Money, funds, cash, dough, bread, finances
- Thin, slender, skinny, lean, slight

Use of correct *Idioms*:

Faulty Idiom

Comply to

In search for

Superior than

Correct Idiom

Comply with

In search of

Superior to

Nondiscriminatory Writing

Using Gender-Neutral Words

If a customer pays promptly, *he* is placed on our preferred list.
(Gender-Biased)

- A customer who pays promptly is placed on our preferred list. (Gender-Neutral)
- If customers pay promptly, *they* are placed on our preferred list. (Gender-Neutral)
- If a customer pays promptly, he or she is placed on our preferred list. (Gender-Neutral)

Avoiding Masculine Pronouns

Three Ways Can Be Applied...

- Reword the sentence to eliminate the gender-biased words.
- Make the reference to any gender plural.
- Substitute any of a number of neutral expressions such as he or she, he/she, you, one, and person.

Words Derived from Masculine Words

Gender-Biased

Man-made

Manpower

Businessman

Policeman

Salesman

Gender-Neutral

Manufactured

Personnel

Business executive

Police officer

Salesperson

Avoid Stereotypes

Words depicting minorities in a stereotyped way are unfair and untrue.

Example:

- Italians are Mafia members.
- Africans can do only unskilled jobs.

Words that present members of minorities as exceptions to stereotypes are also unfair.

Example:

- A well-dressed Hispanic man.

End of Session