

# How Words Can Work for You

A Short Guide to Using Language Effectively in Your  
Speeches

By Crispin Rodrigues

# Outcomes for this Session

- To understand the importance of language in communication
- To understand and apply simple language construction devices to your speeches to enhance the effectiveness of your message:
  - Word choice
  - Imagery
  - Jargon
- To identify sources of learning for improving your descriptive skills
- To analyze the importance of code-switching in language

# Did You Know...



Both Plato and Socrates hated rhetoric.

“[The] lies and deceit told by men to men to embellish tales of fancy.”

(Plato's *Republic* Book X)

# What is the purpose of language?

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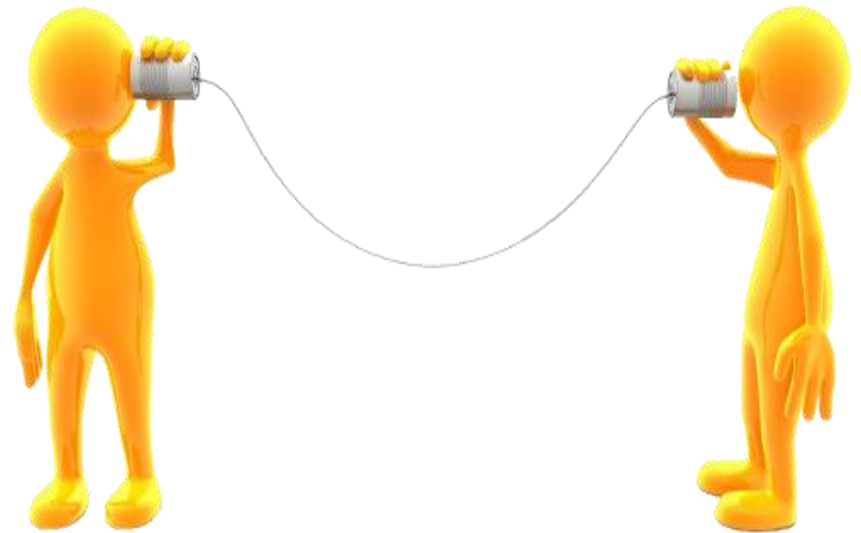
“A common code for the purpose of storing information” – Charles Babbage, 19th century mathematician and founder of modern computing

“The capacity of expressing oneself in society” - Honoré de Balzac, 19th Century French author

“Language is a cathedral to which we all bring a stone” – William Wordsworth, 19th Century English Poet

# In short, language serves the following functions:

- Expressing your views, opinions and ideas.
- The way in which we send and receive information.
- A reflection of a particular society's constituent makeup.



# So why do we learn English?

- The language medium for information
- The language of acceptance
- The language of globalization
- Are there fields in which we do not require spoken language?

**YES!**

# Word Choice

- He looked at her.
- He quickly looked at her.
- He glanced at her.
- He stared at her.
- He glared at her.
- He gazed into her eyes.
- He found comfort in her eyes.



# A Hierarchy of Expressions

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Happy

Joyful

Elated

Glad

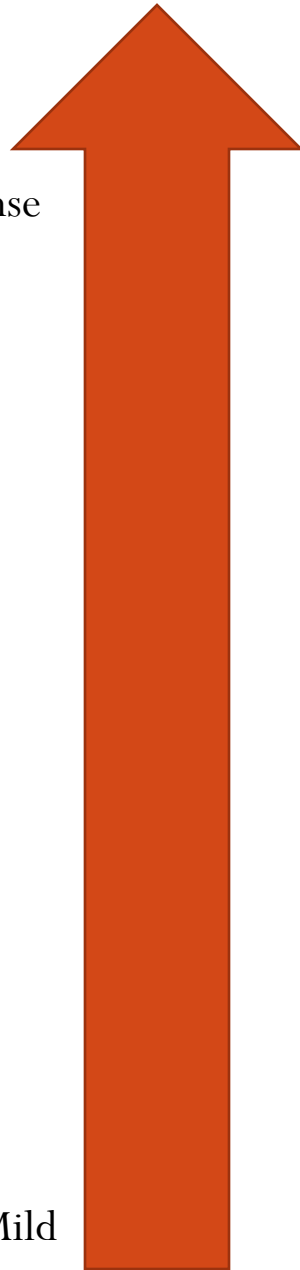
Delighted

Contented

“Every word has its use, and therefore must be used in its proper degree, or it will cease to exist” – Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889 – 1951), Philosopher, Linguist, Logician, Mathematician



Intense



Elated

Joyful

Delighted

Happy

Contented

Glad

Mild

# Let's Try a Little Exercise

Group the following words into a hierarchy of expressions:

Inspired

Motivated

Captivated

Encouraged

Moved

Activated

# Imagery

- Humans are naturally sensual creatures
- Show, not tell.
- Make the intangible tangible.
- Engage the senses, not just sight!
- Similes, metaphors



# Let's Try a Little Exercise...

Describe your ideal holiday destination. Use your senses to tell the audience what is there rather than just telling us where to go and what you can do there.

Take 5 mins to write it down on a piece of paper and we will share it as a group.

# Jargon

- Aim to reduce jargon – “technical-speak” unless absolutely necessary.
- “The multiplier effect derived from gross stockhousing among chain stores results in diminishing returns for the more modest mom-and-pop stores.” - *The New York Economic Journal*
- Write with your audience in mind.



# Let's Try a Little Exercise

What do these words mean:

*Ceteris paribus*

*Sine qua non*

Recapitulate

What is the difference between these words:

Regardless

Irregardless

Without regard

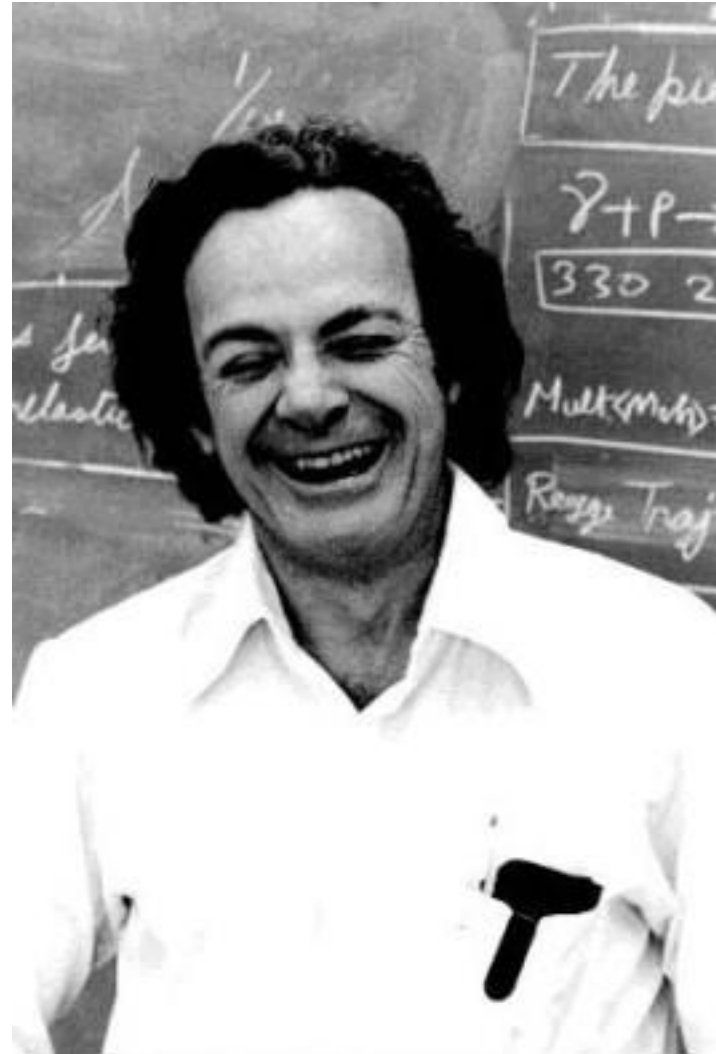
Can you tell me what these acronyms represent:

ROI

w.r.t

OS

“Communication is never abstract. Physics, that’s abstract. But physics, when told in a language we can all understand, that’s science.”- Richard P. Feynman, Quantum Physicist and Nobel Prize winner (1965)





# How do I improve my language skills?

- BBC!
- “The dryness of the news worries me these days. We will have an entire generation growing up not understanding what adjectives, adverb and turns of phrases are for. In short, they will not have an opinion.” – Jonathan Safran Foer, author, columnist
- Commentaries!
- Reviews!

# English: A Global Language?

- Is there a right way of speaking English?
- We live in a world of local Englishes rather than a common English language.
- Code-switching.



*Go raibh maith agat!* (Thank You!)

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