

MEETING 6

REDUNDANCY

A. Learning Objectives

In the end of this lesson, the students are able to:

- Know and understand what redundancy is
- Create effective sentences
- Avoid unnecessary repetition in creating sentences both in spoken and written

B. Material Description

Redundancy is very important discussion because it is very often used both in conversation and in the writing of English. In learning redundancy, we can see there are two or more words that say the same thing and make it sentences not effective. However, most students have problems in identifying and producing the appropriate words in sentences.

When something is redundant, it means that it is excessive, unnecessary, or superfluous. Redundancy usually involves repeating something or adding in information that is completely unnecessary. A good way to taste whether or not something is redundant is to see if the phrase in questions could have something removed from it. Redundancy means that excess or waste. A sentence is said redundant if there is a word or group of words that do not need additional sentences that make it is not effective, because a word or group of words that also means additional remains the same. In other words, the sentence guns ineffective and redundant.

Example 1:

- If all of us cooperate together, we will succeed.
 - In this sentence, the word cooperate and together have been used. But both these words convey the same meaning.
 - One of two words should be dropped in order to make the sentence correct one.
 - If all of us cooperate, we will succeed.
 - If all of us together, we will succeed.

Example 2:

- The accused was guilty of false misstatement
 - The sentence uses false and misstatement, both these words convey the same meaning.
The correct one is
The accused was guilty of misstatement

Unfortunately, many writers use sentences that are too wordy. This is not to suggest that lengthy sentences can never be used (because they certainly can), but most of the time writers make the mistake of using more words than necessary to get their message across. Take this sentence, for example:

- “Michelle was supposed to have her car’s oil changed every 3,000 miles, and since it had been 3,000 miles since her last oil change, she took her car to the mechanic.”

This sentence is okay and makes sense, though the statement could be more precise if the author phrased it a little differently. Describing the action first, followed by the reason, would improve it:

- “Michelle had the mechanic change her car’s oil because it had been 3,000 miles since the last one.”

This sentence conveys the same message and is more succinct and direct. True, the sentence omits that Michelle “was supposed to have her car’s oil changed every 3,000 miles,” but we should know this already (or can presume so) from the word “because.” The first sentence is acceptable, but some of the words are superfluous, which can disrupt the flow of your research paper. Just as a machine should not have extra parts, a sentence shouldn’t have any extra words.

According to William Strunk and E.B. White, writers should also strive to put statements in the positive form (19). Readers prefer to be told what is, as opposed to what is not. For example, saying “He was late” is usually better than saying “He was not on time. Or, “She forgot” is usually more effective than saying that she “did not remember.” Though these alterations are subtle, they make your writing bolder and more concrete. The authors state, “Use the word not as a means of denial or in antithesis, never as a means of evasion” (19).

Redundancy Reduces Conciseness

Writing concisely also involves avoiding redundancies. Redundancy is when you use more words than necessary to express something, especially words and/or phrases in the same sentence that mean the same thing. Many writers are guilty of violating this rule at times, especially in their daily conversations. However, as you proofread your papers, try to double-check them for unnecessary phrases that you can omit or edit.

Here are some common examples of redundant phrases:

- Small in size or large in size
- True fact
- Basic fundamentals
- Past history
- Smiled happily
- Evolve over time
- Consensus of opinion

Think about it: if something is small, it's small—you don't need to tack on "in size" for clarification. If an event took place in history, then you wouldn't need to specify that it took place in "past" history" (as opposed to what, "present" or "future" history?). If something is a "fact," by definition it's true (unless the writer is using it for sarcasm or irony). If a person smiled, it can be assumed, in most cases, that the individual was happy; there's no need to preface the verb with the adverb "happily." This could depend on context—for example someone could "smile nervously" if they were shy—but in most cases the extra word is unnecessary.

Be Careful of Overusing Adverbs

Adverbs are often the source of egregious redundancies, and writers should be careful not to overuse them. Stephen King, one of the most successful novelists out there, is certainly not a fan of them: "I believe the road to hell is paved with adverbs, and I will shout it from the rooftops" (118). If you notice that your writing includes an inordinate amount of "–ly" adverbs, then you might need to examine your documents more closely.

Here are some examples of unnecessary "ly" adverbs:

- Shouted loudly
- Race hurriedly

- Whispered softly
- Finished completely
- Jumped quickly

Of course, adverbs are not always a bad thing and can in fact be useful when you want to emphasize something to carefully convey meaning. For instance: “Steve drove crazily down the highway, putting every other driver at risk.” In this case, drove, by itself, doesn’t imply anything other than the act of driving. But crazily describes the way in which Steve was driving, so the adverb here is informative and makes sense if the reader knows that other drivers were at risk. By contrast, when someone shouts, it’s already implied that he or she is doing so loudly, so there’s no reason for this description because it doesn’t add any extra information. Likewise, you wouldn’t need to inform your reader that someone raced hurriedly (does anyone race slowly?) or whispered softly (does anyone whisper loudly?).

Sometimes writers have a habit of overusing adverbs, even if they do make sense. For instance, “Steve drove crazily, chaotically, and wildly down the highway, putting every other driver at risk.” In this case, only one of the adverbs is necessary since they all have the same essential meaning. Because the reader gets the point with just one adverb, the additional ones (i.e., chaotically, wildly) are redundant.

Also, you can improve how well you get the message across by eliminating the adverb and choosing a better verb in the first place. For example, “The geologist looked closely at the volcanic rocks that she had found.” This sentence is fine, but here is a different way to say it: “The geologist examined the volcanic rocks that she had found.” Because the geologist examined the rocks, we can assume that she looked at them closely. This is just a subtle change, but it reads a little better. Here’s a rule to keep in mind: weak verbs usually depend on adverbs.

Redundant words and phrases make your sentences sound repetitive, so do your best to avoid using them. A good exercise to try is to go through the first draft of your next paper and circle every adverb that you spot. Then, look at each of them and determine which ones are needed and which ones you can throw out. Usually, the more adverbs you can eliminate, the stronger your paper will be. You want your arguments to be cogent, of course, but you don’t need to go too far with flowery writing. As Strunk and White say, try to keep it simple and don’t fall into the trap of overwriting: “Rich, ornate prose is hard to digest, generally unwholesome, and sometimes nauseating” (72). You can become a better writer by avoiding redundancies and learning to construct your sentences more concisely.

C. Exercises**I. Rewrite the following sentences so that they are no longer redundant.**

1. Carlos gets up at 6 a.m in the morning
2. The paper clip attached the papers together
3. Kelly Clarkson is modern singer of today
4. Many students protested against the new dress code.
5. Eric split the cookie into two halves

II. Choose the word that correctly completes the sentence.

1. Can you reread/again for the first paragraph for me, because I can't hear your voice before.
2. Everybody just back/returns from their vacation in their own home towns.
3. No new/innovation that is invented for the bad thing
4. For around/approximately thirty thousand students joint to study in Pamulang University.
5. One of the chief/main vision and mission of Pamulang University is to help young people to have an opportunity to go to a university.

D. References

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