



Today we're going to talk about businesses, and different ways to discuss economic information.

We're going to listen to an interview with the head of a large clothing company.

Then we're going to look at how he describes the success of his company.

Here's Derek O'Neill.

Well, we've said before that we've had consistent growth over the last four to five years. We've delivered EPS growth in excess of 20% over the last three years. You know, growing earnings at 25, 30, 35% forever becomes impossible. I think we end up owning US GDP in about 2023 with 25% growth.

We've registered that 15 per cent is our plan and we think that's a good target.

We're very happy with our level of sales. We grew sales in the US in girls' wear at 50 per cent and we think that's a fantastic performance, so we'll stand by those numbers.

We've had solid momentum in that market for four or five years and we expect that momentum's going to continue.

OK. So today we're going to look at the language of description, particularly describing economic information.

In formal academic writing, it's important to use impersonal, objective language when describing things.

Notice that in the interview, Derek O'Neill often begins his sentences with 'We've', short for we have.

Using phrases like I've or we've is very common in spoken English.

Well, we've said before that we've had consistent growth over the last four to five years. We've delivered EPS growth in excess of 20% over the last three years.

He says:

'We've had consistent growth'.

'We've delivered growth in excess of 20 per cent'.

'We've had solid momentum in that market'.

How would you turn these sentences into more formal descriptions?

Take the first sentence: we've had consistent growth.

Generally the first person forms of 'I' and 'we' are not used in more formal writing, or when describing economic data.



We'd use an objective form: there is, there are, there has been, or there will be.

So 'We've had consistent growth' becomes 'There has been consistent growth'.

Look at this one: We've delivered growth of 20%.

That becomes: There has been growth of 20%.

Now listen to him again ...

*We've had solid momentum in that market for four or five years and we expect that momentum's going to continue.*

He said:

We've had solid momentum.

We expect that momentum is going to continue.

We've had, we expect.

How could you write that information in a formal way?

We've had solid momentum.

There has been solid momentum.

We expect that momentum is going to continue.

It is expected that momentum is going to continue.

So looking for the use of the first person is a good way to tell whether someone is discussing information in a formal or informal way.

You should remember that in an academic context, you always need to include evidence to support your opinions or descriptions.

You should try to always include data to explain and support what you're saying.

Data is information, especially facts and figures - numbers, percentages, and dates.

In formal language, you need to include data to support your arguments.

Listen to the data Derek uses...

*We've delivered EPS growth in excess of 20% over the last three years. You know, growing earnings at 25, 30, 35 per cent forever becomes impossible. I think we end up owning US GDP in about 2023 with 25% growth.*

*We've registered that 15% is our plan and we think that's a good target.*

He mentions a variety of facts and numbers, but he also describes how the data has changed – that is, the degree or type of change.

To describe data, there is a variety of word choices.



You can use both adjectives and adverbs – words that describe.

Of course, adjectives describe things, and adverbs describe actions.

So you'll need both nouns and verbs for your descriptions.

For example, you might use nouns like the rise, the increase, or the growth.

Listen to Derek again...

Well, we've said before that we've had consistent growth over the last four to five years.

They've had consistent growth.

He uses an adjective, consistent, with a noun, growth.

Let's look at a table.

To describe numbers going up, we can use nouns like the rise, the increase, or the growth.

And to describe numbers going down, we can use the drop, the decrease.

Then we've got adjectives to describe those nouns – like rapid, slow, slight, dramatic, sudden or consistent.

And we can put these together – a sudden rise, a slight decrease, a sudden drop, a consistent growth.

But, there's another way of describing these changes.

We can use verbs and adverbs.

Many nouns like the rise, the increase, the growth can be used as verbs - to rise, to increase, to grow, to drop, to decrease.

And many adjectives can become adverbs – rapidly, slowly, slightly, dramatically, suddenly, consistently.

By using these new words, we can describe data by using verbs and adverbs.

We can say to rise suddenly, to decrease slightly, to drop suddenly, to grow consistently.

So look how these phrases change:  
a sudden rise, becomes to rise suddenly.

A slight decrease, to decrease slightly.

<i>verbs</i>	<i>adverbs</i>
rise	rapidly
increase	slowly
grow	slightly
drop	dramatically
decrease	suddenly
	consistently



A sudden drop, to drop suddenly.

And look at how sentences can be changed to fit these different phrases:

It has grown consistently.  
There has been consistent growth.

It's important to always use a variety in your written work. Sometimes use verbs and adverbs to describe data, and sometimes use adjectives and nouns. It will make your English sound much better.

OK, listen to the clip again, and then we'll try to put together all the things we've looked at today. Listen for personal descriptions, simple verbs, and descriptions of data.

Well, we've said before that we've had consistent growth over the last four to five years. We've delivered EPS growth in excess of 20% over the last three years.

We've registered that 15% is our plan and we think that's a good target.

We're very happy with our level of sales. We grew sales in the US in girls' wear at 50% and we think that's a fantastic performance.

He finishes by commenting on the data, and its significance for the company.

OK, let's go back over the steps we've looked at today.

When you're making an argument, it's important to support your case – you must include data or facts.

Make sure you discuss this data - use objective, impersonal language.

Describe changes to data by using a variety of noun/adjective, and verb/adverb combinations.

And finally, comment on the data, using formal objective language.

And that's all for Study English today. Don't forget to keep reading, writing, speaking and listening to English as much as you can. And why not try to rewrite some conversational English into more formal academic styles.