

Business English

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What is communication?

- Verbal? Or can it be non-verbal?
- There are two types of skills: Productive and receptive
- Productive communication: *“the imparting or exchanging of information by speaking, writing, or using some other medium.”*
- Receptive communication: listening and reading:
- <https://youtu.be/H3mDOHGBRs8>
- SENSORY INFORMATION: We use our eyes, as well as our ears to receive information:
- <https://youtu.be/G-IN8vWm3m0>

What is Business English?

- Lingua franca /ˌlɪŋgwə ˈfrɑːkə/:
 - Adopted as a common language between speakers whose native languages are different
 - Historically: a mixture of Italian with French, Greek, Arabic, and Spanish, formerly used in the eastern Mediterranean
 - Why? Historical and current worth: so people can effectively conduct business
 - Ok... we all speak English. So why is this important to you?

What is the difference between English for Business and General Purpose English?

- Context:

- Specificity: When are you and your team going to use English?
- Who are you going to talk to? Who do you conduct your business with?
- What are your clients' expectations of your contextual English?

- Function:

- Reasons for communication:
 - Goals and targets: SMART
 - Perceived V actual needs
 - Different entities will have different needs
 - Engagement (small talk) cultural awareness — the coconut V the peach. *Activity: Mingle and conduct Smalltalk with at least three other people. Try to find out three things about them in 3 minutes*
 - Best value for money for your organisation

Needs Analysis

- TRUE OR FALSE? (jot down your answers)
 - Business learners have a very specific purpose for learning English
 - The sense of purpose and need is much lower for a business English learner, than for a general English learner
 - The specific purpose for learning business English may change on a lesson by lesson basis
 - The business English learner's motivation is likely to be lower than the general learner because they already have a job
 - A knowledge of English business jargon is a great advantage for the non-native speaker
 - https://youtu.be/1m2QM4p_KEo

The Teaching/Learning Process 1

- So... you want me to improve your staff's Business English. How does this work?
 - Where?
 - In company staff training/conference room
 - My apartment
 - Learner(s) home
 - Even bar or café
 - When?
 - During the working day
 - Before or after work, or during a break
 - At the company/learner(s) convenience
 - How?
 - Learner(s) complete a Needs Analysis (Handout 2)
 - I interview the learner(s) to construct my own Needs Analysis
 - Ideally, I spend some time in the learner(s) workplace, observing their work responsibilities, monitoring how they use language
 - Learner(s) are asked Open and Probing questions (Handout 3)
 - I construct Actual Needs (as opposed to Perceived Needs) Inventory

The Teaching/Learning Process 2

- How to cater for the different needs of learners within your company or organisation:
- Having conducted my Needs assessment I refer this to Head of HR:
 - Establish and agree goals & targets (SMART)
 - Establish and agree how reporting & monitoring will be done (so your company can see that you are obtaining value for money)
 - Baseline the various levels of current ability
 - Establish when and where lessons will take place
 - I offer to sign confidentiality agreement
 - Establish and agree boundaries (internal/external)
- I develop a syllabus based on macro & micro goals

The Teaching/Learning Process 3

- Syllabus design based on:
 - Top down/bottom up?
 - Time allocation
 - Accounting for mixed ability levels
 - Functional language:
 - General needs (small talk)
 - Specific needs (technical language specific to your business)
 - Flexibility — BUSINESS ALWAYS COMES FIRST!
 - Measurable results for accurate monitoring and reporting of learner(s) progress
 - Practicalities:
 - Environment
 - Materials/resources
 - Class size

Debunking Jargon

- Debunk: /diːˈbʌŋk/ (verb) *‘to expose the falseness or hollowness of an idea or belief’*
- Jargon: /ˈdʒɑːɡ(ə)n/ (noun) *special words or expressions used by a profession or group that are difficult for others to understand*
- <http://maverickwriter.co.uk/how-not-to-wrongside-the-employability-demographic/>
- Read this (handout 1) and consider if any of this English has a useful part to play in the business you want to conduct! Is this what you want your employees to learn? Discuss this with the person sitting next to you
- Let's play a game of match the sentence!
 - Work with the person next to you
 - Match the 'jargon' with the appropriate sentence that explains what it means
 - Let's see who has got the most correct answers!
- So... is a knowledge of English Business jargon going to help you communicate in the market place?

Business English as Lingua Franca

- The importance of pronunciation?
 - Spanish is a syllable-based language
 - <https://youtu.be/sUMM5eCvi8w>
- Consistency of pronunciation is important
- Lexical accuracy — it must make sense
- Awareness of pronunciation differences (American/English) i.e. Tomato, garage
- Awareness of regional differences (particularly in UK)
- Be careful with names! ('Telephone call for Seymour [see more] Butts, Michael Hunt)
- In Business English, poor pronunciation is only corrected when it hinders communication and understanding (walk-ed or talk-ed) or causes cultural offence

Practical Session: Phone Calls

- Telephone calls often tend to be the most difficult area for the business learner
- Common phrases and lexical chunks:
 - i.e.: 'I can make an appointment for you to meet senor Butts on Friday at 2pm'
 - 'I will see if he is available now'
- Problems:
 - Noise interference
 - No visual effects (think McGurk Effect on telephone)
 - Pace, volume, intonation, stress of speaker
 - Increased pressure for accuracy
- How to 'grade' a conversation:
 - Listen for gist (general meaning) and clarify with speaker
 - 'Could you repeat that please?'
 - 'I'm sorry, I didn't catch that.'
 - Repeat key information (amounts, dates, times and spelling of names etc. using English alphabet)
- Role-play activity:
 - In pairs, sit back-to-back. A is a client/supplier/enquirer and B is the employee whose job it is to deal with this request. You have a paper which contains brief instructions as to the objectives of the phone call. If time allows, swop roles.