

Overcoming barriers in business communication – summary slides

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References and resources

Badger, I English for Life 'Listening' B2 Collins (May 2014)

Badger, I English for Life 'Listening' B1 Collins 2012

Badger, I English for Business 'Listening' Collins 2011

Badger, I English for Business Listening App for Ipad Collins/Red River Press 2012

Badger, I Everyday Business English Pearson 2003

Dignen, B and I McMaster 'Effective International Business Communication' (pp22-31) Collins 2013

www.collinselt.com/businesslistening

www.collinslanguage.com/collins-elt-learners-of-english/english-for-life/listening

Further recordings of 'Business Listening' and Listening B1 speakers

<http://accent.gmu.edu>

People from around the world recording the same paragraph in English

<http://sounds.bl.uk/Accents-and-dialects>

Examples of regional UK accents and dialects

<http://www.languagebyvideo.com>

Video examples of English accents around the world

(Funny videos: 'Four Candles' + (as recommended by Liz Jolliffe) 'My blackberry is frozen')

Cartoons from 'Business English Phrases' BMES Kindle edition 2013)

To cover...

Drivers for improved communication skills

Four main barriers + others...

Planning training which helps our learners overcome communication barriers

Importance of using authentic listening materials

Improving our learners 'active' listening (and spoken) skills

Some drivers for improved communication skills

New technology = communication challenges

Global English-speaking networks = need to make sense of English however it is spoken and communicate clearly

English needed at all levels within organisations = career progression halted by poor English skills

Younger learners - good levels of general English but knowledge of language needed to work/study effectively may be poor

Main barriers?

Unfamiliar native/non-native accents

Jargon and idiomatic language

Different cultural practices

New (and old?) technologies

Others??

Unfamiliar accents and pronunciation

We have gross mill buyers

There's been a rabbit increase in feeber use

What are the interpaces with IT support?

How ve dollop de project?

Bike fishing

Key Pee Eyes

Jargon and idiomatic language



Idiomatic and colloquial language

Fancy a sausage roll?

A Podunk town

The mind boggles!

Once everyone is sat down we'll be on our way

Cheerio!

Some business jargon and abbreviations

Bug fixes

Release management

Boxes (containers)

Asset optimisation

Dedicated assets

VMI = Vendor managed inventory

SMEs = Subject matter experts

SPOC = Single point of contact

Different cultural practices



A recent case:

Polish IT expert working on global applications helpdesk with excellent general English (Cambridge Advanced Certificate level)

Main training need: to develop cultural (and linguistic) of her colleagues (principally in India and China)

Opinion of previous English training in terms of equipping her for her work: 'useless'

Some cultural barriers

Attitudes to acknowledging and responding

Perceptions of what is 'polite'

Attitudes to humour

Attitudes to silence

Attitudes to time-keeping and punctuality

New

(and old?) technologies?



Communication channels

Web conferencing (video/audio)

Telephone conferencing

1 to 1 telephoning

Voicemail

Online chatting

Texting

Emailing

Other barriers??

Deciphering

'incorrect' language?

Trainer competence?

Also 'gender' and 'company hierarchy'
mentioned by audience

Mistakes, prejudices or ignorance?

- We hope you are loving Outlook. If you have any feedback send it our way
- Please arrange our accommodations
- Did you do it already?
- I come here yesterday and I says, what's going on?
- I done it already
- I'm gonna see Jodie tomorrow
- In the summer we'll often go out for a long bike ride

What are 'our' barriers to becoming better trainers?

Linguistic prejudice

Poor/no knowledge of languages other than English

Lack of teaching skills

Lack of business knowledge

Lack of cultural awareness

Overcoming barriers in business communication – part 2



Using authentic listening materials

Why use authentic listening materials?

Producing our own materials

Teaching with authentic listening materials

Features of authentic materials compared with scripted materials

Aiming to be understood and to understand

Using authentic recordings in our teaching

Do you use authentic listening materials in your teaching?

If so, why? If not, why not?

Do you make your own authentic listening materials?

If so, why? If not, why not?

How do your learners respond to working with authentic listening materials?

Why use authentic listening materials?

- help learners to communicate in English in real settings
- build sensitivity to a range of accents and improve awareness of pronunciation, stress and intonation differences
- develop everyday vocabulary
- build awareness of the language/grammar which speakers really use (Fragmented sentences, standard and non-standard forms, 'mistakes', false starts)
- widen cultural awareness

Grammar in authentic recordings

Some uses of 'will'

Occasionally I will take a client out for lunch.

The rear garden is south-facing so you'll get the sun most of the day.

You have somebody to cook for you. A lady will come in the morning to wash your clothes.

I will recommend you the Peking duck.

Idioms in authentic recordings

I put up with the hassle of the day-today commute

I'm sat on the M25 doing no miles an hour.

They look after the nitty-gritty

I may have been cc'd or forwarded

There's a whole mix of making sure you don't drop any balls in the process, 'cos you can't let anything slip.

'Mistakes' in authentic recordings

Italian people is really people with a good fantasy – happy people

I explain structure of the building. Then I take them down to canteen.

I called a manager in German. Because his English is not very good because he's not English native speaker so his pronunciation is maybe hard for me to understand.

I would say if somebody care of what you are doing, he will probably challenge you and ask you a lot of question.

Building sensitivity to a range of accents (sample of the range of recordings in ‘Collins English for business: Listening’)

Gosia from Poland

Chris from South Dakota, USA

Xianwen from Wuhan, China

Andrea from Southern Italy

Graham from Dublin, Ireland

‘Active’ listening

Ask the speaker to clarify when you do not understand

Ask the speaker to slow down

Ask the speaker to speak up

Ask the speaker to be more specific

Be empathetic

Rephrase what the speaker says

Helping the listener

Don't speak too fast

Give people time to think/respond

Be aware of who you are talking to

Avoid unnecessary idiom and complex grammatical structure

Explain acronyms and abbreviations when necessary

Check others have understood your points

Don't overwhelm the listener with information