

Unit 1: Communicating clearly

Getting started

1. Write the quotation on the board.
2. Ask your learners to discuss it in pairs and then report back for a whole class discussion. (They might make a link between 'the language of the people' and 'the language of business people' – encourage them in this direction.)
3. Extend the discussion and ask them 'What makes a good communicator?', 'What makes a good verbal communicator?', and 'What makes a good verbal communicator in an international business context?' (They might talk about speaking clearly, reasonable speed in speaking, ideas that are structured and organized, avoiding colloquial expressions, etc.) Adjust the discussion to the level of your learners.

Part A

Exercise 1

1. Before playing the recording, ask your learners to read through the questions and anticipate what Seamus' answers *might be*. For example, with question 1, they might say that people don't understand him because of his dialect, as he may use words that are only local to Northern Ireland. Write one possible answer suggested by learners for each question on the board.
2. Play the recording to the end of the first paragraph (00:54) and explain any difficulties, for example 'score'. Draw learners' attention to the *Did you know?* panel about this. Adjust your explanations to the level of your learners, and avoid getting into too much detail.
3. Ask your learners to answer question 1. (People think he's asking questions because of his rising intonation, when he is not.)
4. Do the same with the other questions.
5. Ask your learners to look back at their ideas for what the answers to the questions might be, to see if any of their guesses were correct.

Exercise 2

Play the recording again, but this time stop the recording just after each of the sentences shown. Ask learners to familiarise themselves with how Seamus says the underlined words, and then ask individual learners to read them aloud. Correct any errors of pronunciation.

Exercise 3

Play the recording again, stopping for each item, and ask your learners to complete the gaps.

Clear usage: *I have changed* ('I've changed')

1. Ask your learners to look at the panel on *contractions*. They will hopefully have heard a lot about these in their learning careers.
2. Ask them if they have had the experience of native English speakers talking to them without using contractions, because the speaker thinks that this will be easier to understand. If they have, ask them for their reactions to this.
3. Show how contractions are *not* used when you want to emphasise something. Write on the board, and, in pairs, ask your learners to say:

A: *I'll talk to you later.*

B: *So you won't talk to me later?*

A: *No, I will talk to you later.*

4. Tell learners to have similar exchanges using the other three utterances in the box.

A: *I've modified the way I speak.*

B: *So you haven't modified the way you speak?*

A: *No. I have modified the way I speak.*

5. Ask your learners to follow the usual parallel pairs and whole class performance procedure described in the introduction.

Part A continued

Exercise 4

Do this as a quick-fire whole class activity. Ask learners to work in pairs and to have exchanges like these. A uses the numbered words and B uses the lettered ones. Do this as parallel pair work and then whole class performances:

A: *Seamus doesn't drop the R at the end of words.*

B: *That's right, he doesn't leave it out.*

Get your learners to pronounce *mellowed*, *pronounced*, *modified* and *reverted* with the correct stress. You could ask them to point their fingers at the same time as they say the stressed syllable. (It's interesting how stress and physical gestures often go together like this.)

 **Part B**
Exercises 1 & 2

1. Ask learners to look through the questions, again anticipating what the answers might be.
2. Do the exercises and, above all, discuss issues that arise. For example, at the level your learners now have, do they like native speakers to simplify their language, or do they feel that they are being patronized?
3. After Exercise 2, as an extra activity, get learners to concentrate on *compounds* (=word combinations) by writing on the board 'complex clauses', 'critical part' and 'business obstacle'. Ask the class which compounds are adjective+noun (the first two) and which are noun+noun (the third).
4. Ask your learners to turn to the transcript for track 2 on page 103. In pairs, ask them to identify all the examples of each type of compound. Assist if necessary.
5. With the whole class, go through the answers. adj + noun: *first (few) months, important thing, complex clauses, simpler language, subordinate clauses, incorrect grammar, critical part, important thing*. Noun + noun: *export market, subjunctive clauses, word order, language skills, product knowledge, business obstacles*.
6. Point out the importance of listening out for compounds as part of overall listening comprehension.

Clear usage: subjunctives and subordinate clauses

1. Go through the material in the panel. Emphasise that the subjunctive is very rare in English compared to some other languages. (Ask if learners have the equivalent of the subjunctive in their own language.)
2. Go through the examples for subordinate clauses.
3. If you would like learners to work further on this, get them to look at *Collins Intermediate Business Grammar & Practice*, Unit 38, and to complete the exercises there, perhaps for homework.

 **Part C**
Exercises 1 & 2

1. Ask your learners to look through the questions. Point out that it's much more difficult than it was to anticipate what the answers might be for tracks 1 and 2. However, ask learners to say what they think the answer to question 3 could be.
2. You could ask the class to suggest words they might hear Jude use, e.g. *difficult, difficulty, hard, easy, complex, straightforward*, etc. They then have to listen out for these words and say which of them were actually mentioned.
3. Play the recording and do the exercises. Explain any difficulties, e.g. *expats* (=expatriates) and *UAE* (=United Arab Emirates); in the Gulf; capital: Abu Dhabi; largest city: Dubai. Point out that UAE is an example of an acronym; this is one where the letters are said individually as letters, rather than one pronounced as a single word, e.g. NATO.

COBUILD CHECK: the language of language

Get learners to look at the vocabulary in the box on page 7. Point out that these examples are not made up but taken from the COBUILD Corpus – a huge database of real written and spoken English. Get them to read the examples aloud and to explain the meanings of words in bold.

Further study

Encourage learners to listen to the other recordings of Seamus and Jude on the website.

Homework task

For homework, ask your learners to prepare a short (3–5 minutes) presentation on 'Communicating Clearly' using ideas from this unit as well as their own.

Depending on available resources, they can do this as a PowerPoint presentation (with a maximum of 3 slides) or on OHP transparencies, ready to present in the next lesson.

To make it more communicative you might like to suggest that they interview their colleagues on the topic and report back on their findings.