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ECONOMICS
AND BUSINESS



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Language Awareness at and for work: Professional and Educational Contexts

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Overview of Talk

- 1) Language Awareness and Business/Workplace Communication
- 2) How much/What kind of LA do (business) students need?
- 3) LA in the workplace
 - Naturally-occurring business/workplace interactions
 - Interviews
- 4) Developing LA for business students
 - Some examples from teaching practice

Language Awareness

ALA website:

“explicit knowledge about language, and conscious perception and sensitivity in language learning, language teaching and *language use*.”

Types of Language Awareness

- Knowledge of more than one language (bilingualism, multilingualism)
- Metalinguistic knowledge (grammar, lexis)
- Metapragmatic knowledge
 - Rhetorical/Genre knowledge
 - Sociocultural/Sociopragmatic awareness (politeness, power, culture)

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English Business Communication: *The Language of Work*

Learning outcomes: After completing the course, students should be able to...

- *demonstrate a level of English competence equivalent to C1 on the Common European Framework*
- *understand essential concepts related to the language of work and use related language and terminology appropriately*
- *demonstrate an awareness of how and for what purposes language is used in real life work situations*
- *combine these abilities to competently and critically discuss issues of workplace language use*

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Metalanguage in Workplace Communication

- I've got a couple more queries actually, Mary, then I'll leave you to get on.
- Uh, just wanted to tell you about my conversation with Tony.
- Uh... I got a suggestion... by the way with this
- Something *very* important I need to tell you

Metalanguage in Workplace Communication

- I've got a couple more *queries* actually, Mary, then I'll leave you to get on.
- Uh, just wanted to *tell you* about my *conversation* with Tony.
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→ **Goal Orientation**

Talking about 'Conversation Stoppers'

- Chris, the president of a small family-run business, is talking to his a sales manager, Joe. They are discussing a document that Joe has drawn up to use in training his sales force. It contains a list of 'conversation stoppers' - a list of things the sales reps should NOT say to begin their conversations with prospective customers.

Conversation Stoppers

invites the prospect to
A conversation stopper is a question or a statement that ~~limits~~ or ~~shuts~~ down conversation.

Here are a few examples of conversation stoppers:

- Did you get the media Kit?
- Have you had a chance to look over the info I sent you?
- What do you think of the media kit I sent? (Could be sample issue, etc.)
- I am calling about our August issue. Is that of interest to you?
- *I was wondering... are you looking for sales leads?*
- *Small type* → You don't mail nationally, do you? (could be any other qualifying question).
- I am calling to see if you are interested in receiving a media kit on our direct response program.
- We ran your ad in the May issue. I am calling to see if you wanted to continue in July?

Conversation stoppers have these statements in common:

- They are usually stated in a negative way.
- *→* They are usually CLOSE^D ended questions requiring a single answer instead of an explanation.
- They are usually a short cut to saving an in-depth discussion where more probing is needed and layered questions are required.
- They are usually a reflection of a lack of skill and preparation in what to say.
- They are usually used around or in conjunction with sending information and/or seeking renewal business.

NOTE: Open-ended questions spark conversation. Be sure *to* use them frequently.
inhibit
Ask yourself: Is this question an "invitation" for the prospect to *inhibit* the conversation?

1. Chris Uh... I got a suggestion... by the way with this,
2. Joe Okay,
3. Chris Two things, uh I presume that this was a- [beep on intercom] a a a... typo

[Interruption]

4. Joe So what you w- you were saying...
5. Chris [referring to list of "conversation stoppers"] Uh... I don't know why this is... large. Isn't this the same as all the rest of these? It's just another... example?
6. Joe Yeah. It should be, [1.5] Yeah that's just another example.

7. Chris [I was thinking this also... the: 'I was wondering' approach? Heheheheheheheheheheh
8. Joe [Yeah 'I was wondering'
9. Heh yeah I like that, okay,
10. Chris U:hm... an' a- an' maybe just a note at the end here, that says to the person ↑ Ask yourself is this question... a: an indirect invitation for the prospect to end the conversation [Joe: Yeah] because... I mean if they really answered that honestly, almost all of these are.
11. Joe Yeah. That's right.
12. Chris So. An' you *might* include- what I had here was some conversation *starters* or approa- you know,
13. Joe .hh Okay I hadn't even *thought* about that yet.
14. Chris [??
15. Joe But good I'm glad you have a... ↓ a note on that
16. Chris Okay

[some turns ellipted]

17. Chris [They gotta be... they *gotta* be involved in it.
It won't- it won't work as a lecture.

18. Joe No I'm not trying to do it as a lecture ↑ My
problem though is that they're not- I'm not getting
a lot of *feedback* from them, an' it's like pulling *teeth*,
to get them to... to:... /*admit*/

19. Chris [Well *yeah*, because they're
embarrassed about it

20. Joe *Yeah!* Heheheh So...

21. Chris [Heheheh

22. Chris But- but you know, you can- after you've
presented this to `em, you can *always* listen to the
conversations, an'- an' say. ↑ Here's that
conversation starter, it's right here on the *list*. ↓
conversation stopper yeah ↑ It's right here on the *list*.

23. Joe (Yeah)

24. Chris [And you wonder why that conversation went
nowhere. Here's why.

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Negotiating

New Sales rep (S2) talking about his negotiating technique to his boss (S1)

- S1 = Division Manager
- S2 = new Senior Accounts Manager

1. S2: But erm ... the other thing I I th= I mean
2. I love it when it gets to negotiation stage cos you know they wanna buy.
3. S1: Well =
4. S2: If they start to negotiate with you ... they want you.
5. S1: Absolutely.
6. S2: So it's a case of = And and what I tend to do as well is [clears throat]
7. if it if it really comes down to it.
8. Someone says "Look we really really really and Miles here's all the evidence
9. in the world. Really wanna deal with [company name]. We want you to be our supplier ...
10. but you're five K out ... and I can't justify it ... to my group F D".
11. "Well shall we go together and go and talk to your group F D?" "No".
12. [1 sec] Erm and [1 sec] that's it. Is he just looking at the bottom line. Okay?

13. S1: You've done everything that you can take.
14. [16 turns ellipted]
15. Yeah and I've done absolutely everything.
16. Gone through+
17. S1: Yeah.
18. S2: +every negotiation angle and he said "I'm honest.
19. Personally I would pay that five thousand but my group F D won't blah blah blah".
20. S1: Yeah.
21. S2: Okay? Fine I've showed him all your documentation+
22. S1: Yeah.
23. S2: +justifying why you are more you are you are /?/+
24. S1: Yeah.
25. S2: +and it comes down to price.[0.5 sec]

26. S2: What I tend to do when people want and they start mentioning the word discount+
27. S1: Yeah.
28. S2: +the way I tend to do it is I tend to throw it back at them
29. "Well fine.[31 sec] We can probably do something [0.5 sec]
30. erm [2 sec]you know what are you gonna do for me?
31. Because it is a two way street+
32. S1: U - huh.
33. S2: +I can't go back to my my manager and say [0.5 sec]
34. I've given them a ten percent discount because+
35. S1: U - huh.
36. S2: +I felt like it".
37. S1: U-huh.

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Sociocultural/Socio-pragmatic Awareness

- Interpersonal functions of language
- Power
- Politeness
- Cultural Awareness

Sociocultural/Socio-pragmatic Awareness

Interview with a branch manager

'I mean that was [name], I mean I've known the guy twenty years, I know he's just come back off holiday, I know he's been to Scotland, you know; and I'll rib him, I mean I probably would have done... more with him today- than I did today, but normally I just "Hey what you doing up in Scotland, it's cold up there!" Uhm... But I mean I know about him, I know his- his kids and, I mean *that's* the sort of relationship we- and quite often I can phone him up and go "We are dead quiet down here", uhm... "Do your old mate a favour, any orders that you'd normally give to, you know, Fred Bloggs and Joe Soap, sling them my way this week cause we're..." And you get *that* close to your customers...`

Language at Work → Language for Work

How much/What kind of LA do (business) students need?

Metalinguistic/Metapragmatic awareness for language at work:

- Knowledge of genres (e.g. meetings, negotiating, business correspondence)
- Workplace training involving communication
- Sociopragmatic awareness in workplace interactions and relationships