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**Intellectual Output 1**



**The Language of Negotiations for Engineering Students**

**A guidebook for English learners with theoretical and diverse hands-on activities focusing on innovative cross-cultural communication practice for engineering schools and technical universities. The course embraces diplomatic language, bargaining, active listening, self-assertion practice, and much more. It is based on authentic sources.**

**IO1: LANGUAGE OF NEGOTIATIONS**

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***SECTION SIX***

***DIPLOMATIC LANGUAGE PRACTICE***

***DIRECT AND INDIRECT EXPRESSION***

**STUDENTS**

**I. DID YOU KNOW?**

Diplomatic language could be interpreted simply as “more polite” language, since the terms “diplomacy” and “politesse” both relate to the skill of holding discussions and negotiations in a polite manner.

The English language, being used worldwide by billions of native, second and third-language speakers, has many variants on **the spectrum from very high (Ireland), through quite high (the UK) to quite low-context ones (Australia and the USA**).

Here arises the concept of language **REGISTERS, or levels of formality** in the language: from the highly formal style, through semi-formal, neutral and informal to quite colloquial or familiar.

In this respect English is one of the richest languages in the world, with infinite shades of meaning, only suggested or implied by a discourse marker or a slight change in the intonation. Coupled with boundless vocabulary items, originating from **German, Latin and French, and loan words** streaming in from all the languages spoken by its global users, the final product is a language of unrivalled complexity, depth and potency.

English uses a variety of means **to express criticism**. Naturally, in every culture, among friends and at home, one is verbally more direct and honest than in public places or in the work environment.

Throughout our education and process of socialisation, we try to learn how to be honest without hurting anyone’s feelings. When feeling uncomfortable or embarrassed, more often than not English-speaking people will resort to humour, which definitely helps to diffuse tension and take the sting out of criticism.

In this Section we are going to practice paraphrasing low-context direct expressions into higher- context, more subtle and sophisticated ones. Bear in mind that the latter are used more in situations of **conflicting interests, such as complaint, apology, negotiation, making objections and expressing criticism**.

**II. ACTIVITIES. DIRECT VERSUS INDIRECT LANGUAGE**

**A. NEGOTIATION PHRASES. Match the direct, less polite phrases with their more diplomatic counterparts:**

**DIRECT EXPRESSIONS**

1. I’m not ready to decide yet.

2. This project is totally unrealistic!

3. I’m sick and tired of all this! Let’s finish the meeting now!

4. We won’t pay for shipping unless you give us a bigger order.

5. This is far too expensive.

6. Your terms of trade are unacceptable!

7. You don’t have much to offer.

8. This lunch leaves much to be desired.

**INDIRECT EXPRESSIONS**

a. I am not prepared to make a decision at this point. We might need more time to explore all the implications.

b. Let’s break for coffee now, shall we? Perhaps we should talk again in a couple of days?

c. I’m afraid we cannot afford the full price. Do you happen to have any large-order discount policy?

d. I’m afraid there are far too many issues to be addressed in this project, aren’t there?

e. I feel you might wish to widen the range of products on your offer.

f. Wouldn’t you like to make your terms of trade a little more customer-friendly?

g. Next time we could lunch at a different place, don’t you think? Some vegetarian or Oriental food restaurant, for instance?

h. We would be very happy to quote better terms if you were in a position to place a larger order.

**B. COMPLETE THE SUMMARY OF DIRECT AND INDIRECT EXPRESSION, PROVIDING EXAMPLES FROM EXERCISE A. POINT ONE OFFERS AN EXAMPLE:**

**DIRECT LANGUAGE MAY:**

1. often sound rude, come across as brutal, crude and inconsiderate, e.g. “we won’t pay unless you give us…”, “totally unrealistic”, “unacceptable”

2. use ……………………………….. language or overly emotional statements, e.g. ……………………………, “Let’s finish now”

3. often sound threatening, critical or accusatory, e.g. “we won’t pay unless…”, “leaves much to be desired”, or …………………………….

4. use too short statements, without providing any ……………………………., e.g. ”Let’s finish the meeting now!”

**INDIRECT, DIPLOMATIC LANGUAGE, ON THE OTHER HAND, MAY:**

1. use veiled, phrases and concepts to milden criticism or complaint, e.g. “if you were in a position to”, “explore all the implications”; “we could lunch at a different place”, “make your terms a little more customer-friendly”

2. use ………………….. expressions, such as “perhaps”, “if you were”, “am not prepared yet”

3. use qualifiers, like “a bit”, “a little”, ………………………… or…………………………

4. when introducing a negative piece of information, use introductory warnings, e.g. …………………. or ………………………………

5. use positive or ……………………………. questions, like “don’t you think”, ………………………………….., “do you happen to”, as well as question tags, e.g. ……………………………..

6. use …………………………… verbs, such as “could”, …………………………… or ……………………..

7. be honest, yet polite and unemotional, e.g. “we cannot afford the full price”

8. use expressions describing feelings, to make the statement sound less judgemental or harsh, e.g. “I am not prepared to”, …………………….

9. provide some additional explanation or suggestion in order to render a negative expression more acceptable, e.g. “We might need more time to explore all the implications”, “Let’s break for coffee now, shall we?”

10. use some more formal grammatical structures so as to sound more polite, distanced and less critical, e.g. second ……………………….., as in “We would be very happy to quote better terms if you were in a position to place a larger order”, or …………………….. voice: “many issues to be addressed”.

**C****. WORK IN PAIRS AND TRY TO WORK OUT THE MISSING COUNTERPARTS TO THE SENTENCES QUOTED IN THE TABLE BELOW. Use the input from exercise B and in the “Diplomatic” expressions underline any phrases that render the language less direct. Then compare your results with another pair. The first sentence offers an example.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **DIRECT** | **DIPLOMATIC** |
| **THAT’S A BLATANT LIE! I NEVER SAID THAT.** | **I don’t think I actually used those words and I am sorry if you misunderstood my meaning.** |
|  | **COULDN’T WE PERHAPS START A LITTLE EARLIER THAN 10 AM TOMORROW? WE MIGHT BE MORE EFFECTIVE AND TAKE LUNCH OUT AS A REWARD?** |
| **SO YOU DON’T WANT TO DO BUSINESS WITH US ANYMORE?** |  |
|  | **I WAS WONDERING WHETHER YOU WOULD BE READY TO RECONSIDER YOUR POSITION ON THIS ASPECT OF OUR PARTNERSHIP?** |
| **I DON’T WANT TO RISK LOSING THIS ACCOUNT! EVEN THINKING ABOUT IT DRIVES ME MAD!** |  |
|  | **I RECKON BOTH PARTIES IN BUSINESS MUST BE OPEN TO NEGOTIATION TO STRIKE A DEAL, WOULDN’T YOU AGREE?** |
| **I CAN’T GO LOWER THAN THIS, COME ON! LET’S NOT EVEN TALK ABOUT IT!** |  |
|  | **COULD YOU POSSIBLY GRANT US A 10% DISCOUNT? WE ARE PLACING A TRULY LARGE ORDER HERE, AREN’T WE?** |
| **YOU HAVE MISSED THE DEADLINE AGAIN, BROWN! WE ARE GOING TO CHANGE THE SUPPLIER.** |  |
|  | **YOU SEEM TO HAVE SOME RESERVATIONS AS TO OUR CREDITWORTHINESS (SOLVENCY)** |

**D. EXPRESSING CRITICISM IN A HIGH-CONTEXT MANNER**

**PAIR WORK:**

**DRAWING ON A VARIETY OF DISCOURSE MARKERS PRACTICED IN EXERCISES A-C, “TRANSLATE” THE EXPLICIT, DIRECT PHRASES INTO MORE IMPLICIT, INDIRECT ONES. COMPARE THE RESULTS OF YOUR EFFORTS WITH ANOTHER PAIR.**

**YOU MIGHT WISH TO ADD A TOUCH OF HUMOUR TO YOUR EXPRESSIONS.**

**Example:**

**DIRECT: She is perfectly evil.**

**INDIRECT: ADMITTEDLY, SHE IS NOT THE KINDEST SOUL IN THE WORLD. / SHE MIGHT TRY TO BE A LITTLE KINDER TO OTHER HUMANS. / IT SEEMS TO ME SHE COULD DO WITH SOME TRAINING IN KINDNESS.**

1. I hate global corporations. They want to suck the life out from small, local organizations.

2. He is such a bore!

3. This year’s sales have been really tragic! What with Covid 19 and all!

4. The colour scheme in your study is quite off-putting!

5. Your ideas always end in a disaster!

6. I’m good for nothing! I’m such a loser!

7. After her sickness she looks awful, don’t you think? Off colour.

8. But you pushed me! It’s your fault I dropped the vase!

9. Ok, ok, sorry! But you stuck out your foot. You are to blame!

10. Have you met the new CEO yet? Doesn’t he look confused?!

**III. FURTHER PRACTICE. E-MAILS OF COMPLAINT, APOLOGY, ENQUIRY AND INFORMATION.**

**LOOK AT THE LIST OF WORDS BELOW.**

**A) UNDERLINE THE MORE DIPLOMATIC DISCOURSE MARKERS**

**B) COMPLETE THE SENTENCES WITH THE MISSING WORDS. MAKE SURE THEY ARE GRAMMATICALLY CORRECT.**

*IN VIEW OF/BECAUSE CONSIDERING/WITH REGARD TO*

*ENQUIRE/ASK ABOUT ALLOW/LET APOLOGIZE/SAY SORRY*

*UNPAID/OUTSTANDING WANT/WOULD LIKE TO ASK/REQUEST*

*LOOK FORWARD TO/WAIT FOLLOWING/FURTHER WARN/REMIND*

INFORM/LET KNOW OVERJOYED/PLEASED FAST/PROMPTLY

APPRECIATE/THANK YOU MISTAKE/OVERSIGHT HAPPEN AGAIN/RECUR

1. *In view of* the increase in our volume of business, I am writing to …………….. whether you could possibly improve our credit terms.

2. …………………… to your email of the 20th  of August, we are ……………………. to ……………………you that we approve your terms of contract. We ……………… ……………. to hearing from you …………………...

3. Please, let me ……………………. you that the sum of $100,000 is still ………………… on your account. We would ……………………… your prompt settlement of the outstanding balance.

4. We …………… ……………. to ………………………. for the delay in the delivery of the last batch of IT accessories you ordered. This was a(n) …………………………. on our part and we assure you it will not ………………… in the future.

5. …………………………. to your………………….. for extended credit terms, I am afraid that our policy does not ………………….. us to extend more than 40 days.

**IV. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES**

**Some of the material in Activities II and III was inspired by The Business 2.0 B1+ Intermediate Student’s Book, John Allison with Paul Emmerson, pp. 107 and 109, MACMILLAN, 2017**

***SECTION SIX***

***DIPLOMATIC LANGUAGE PRACTICE***

***DIRECT AND INDIRECT EXPRESSION***

**TEACHER’S**

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5. This is far too expensive.

6. Your terms of trade are unacceptable!

7. You don’t have much to offer.

8. This lunch leaves much to be desired.

**INDIRECT EXPRESSIONS**

a. I am not prepared to make a decision at this point. We might need more time to explore all the implications.

b. Let’s break for coffee now, shall we? Perhaps we should talk again in a couple of days?

c. I’m afraid we cannot afford the full price. Do you happen to have any large-order discount policy?

d. I’m afraid there are far too many issues to be addressed in this project, aren’t there?

e. I feel you might wish to widen the range of products on your offer.

f. Wouldn’t you like to make your terms of trade a little more customer-friendly?

g. Next time we could lunch at a different place, don’t you think? Some vegetarian or Oriental food restaurant, for instance?

h. We would be very happy to quote better terms if you were in a position to place a larger order.

**Key: 1a 2d 3b 4h 5c 6f 7e 8g**

**B. COMPLETE THE SUMMARY OF DIRECT AND INDIRECT EXPRESSION, PROVIDING EXAMPLES FROM EXERCISE A:**

**DIRECT LANGUAGE MAY:**

**1. often sound rude, come across as brutal, crude and inconsiderate, e.g. “we won’t pay unless you give us…”, “totally unrealistic”, “unacceptable”**

**2. *use inappropriate language or overly emotional statements, e.g. “I’m sick and tired… , “Let’s finish now!”***

**3. *often sound threatening, critical or accusatory, e.g. “we won’t pay unless…” “leaves much to be desired”, or “you don’t have much to offer”***

**4. *use overly short statements, without providing any explanation / justification, e.g. ”Let’s finish the meeting now!”***

**INDIRECT, DIPLOMATIC LANGUAGE, ON THE OTHER HAND, MAY:**

**1. use veiled, phrases and concepts to milden criticism or complaint, e.g. “if you were in a position to”, “explore all the implications”; “we could lunch at a different place”, “make your terms a little more customer-friendly”**

**2. *use softening / mildening expressions, such as “perhaps”, “if you were”, “am not prepared yet”***

**3. *use qualifiers, like “a bit”, “a little”, “rather” or “quite”***

**4.** ***when introducing a negative piece of information, use introductory warnings, e.g. “unfortunately”, “I’m afraid”***

**5. *use positive or negative questions, like “don’t you think”, “wouldn’t you like”, “do you happen to”, as well as question tags, e.g. “…., shall we?”, “……….., aren’t there?”***

**6. *use modal verbs, such as “could”, “might, “may”***

**7. *be honest, yet polite and unemotional, e.g. “we cannot afford the full price”***

**8. *use expressions describing the speaker’s feelings, to make the statement sound less judgemental or harsh, e.g. “I am not prepared to”, “I feel”***

**9. *provide some additional explanation or suggestion in order to render a negative expression more acceptable, e.g. “******We might need more time to explore all the implications”, “Let’s break for coffee now, shall we?”***

**10. *use some more formal grammatical structures so as to sound more polite, distanced and less critical, e.g. second conditional, as in “We would be very happy to quote better terms if you were in a position to place a larger order”, or passive voice: “many issues to be addressed”.***

**C. WORK IN PAIRS AND TRY TO WORK OUT THE MISSING COUNTERPARTS TO THE SENTENCES QUOTED IN THE TABLE BELOW. Use the input from exercise B and in the “Diplomatic” expressions underline any phrases that render the language less direct. Then compare your results with another pair.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **DIRECT** | **DIPLOMATIC** |
| **THAT’S A BLATANT LIE! I NEVER SAID THAT.** | **I don’t think I actually used those words and I am sorry if you misunderstood my meaning.** |
| ***If we get our act together earlier than noon tomorrow, we might actually make some progress at last!*** | **COULDN’T WE PERHAPS START A LITTLE EARLIER THAN 10 AM TOMORROW? WE MIGHT BE MORE EFFECTIVE AND TAKE LUNCH OUT AS A REWARD?** |
| **SO YOU DON’T WANT TO DO BUSINESS WITH US ANYMORE?** | ***You seem a little dubious about continuing our business relations?*** |
| ***If you want to remain our partner, you must do better than that!*** | **I WAS WONDERING WHETHER YOU WOULD BE READY TO RECONSIDER YOUR POSITION ON THIS ASPECT OF OUR PARTNERSHIP?** |
| **I DON’T WANT TO RISK LOSING THIS ACCOUNT! EVEN THINKING ABOUT IT DRIVES ME MAD!** | ***We cannot possibly afford to lose this account – ShineCo. is our best regular client.*** |
| ***Look! Talking to you is a waste of time if you are not ready to negotiate.*** | **I RECKON BOTH PARTIES IN BUSINESS MUST BE OPEN TO NEGOTIATION TO STRIKE A DEAL, WOULDN’T YOU AGREE?** |
| **I CAN’T GO LOWER THAN THIS, COME ON! LET’S NOT EVEN TALK ABOUT IT!** | ***I’m afraid we cannot reduce the price any further. It is not subject to negotiation.*** |
| ***Our order is huge! If you don’t give us at least a 10% discount, we’ll take our business elsewhere!*** | **COULD YOU POSSIBLY GRANT US A 10% DISCOUNT? WE ARE PLACING A TRULY LARGE ORDER HERE, AREN’T WE?** |
| **YOU HAVE MISSED THE DEADLINE AGAIN, BROWN! WE ARE GOING TO CHANGE THE SUPPLIER.** | ***You seem to have been unable to meet the deadline again, Mr Brown. I’m afraid we cannot extend it any further, so you must supply the parts asap. Next time you must ensure that our cooperation is your top priority, or we’ll have to look for a more reliable supplier.*** |
| ***So you don’t trust us to pay? You think we are dishonest?*** | **YOU SEEM TO HAVE SOME RESERVATIONS AS TO OUR CREDITWORTHINESS (SOLVENCY)** |

**D. EXPRESSING CRITICISM IN A HIGH-CONTEXT MANNER**

**PAIR WORK:**

**DRAWING ON A VARIETY OF DISCOURSE MARKERS PRACTICED IN EXERCISES A-C, “TRANSLATE” THE EXPLICIT, DIRECT PHRASES INTO MORE IMPLICIT, INDIRECT ONES. COMPARE THE RESULTS OF YOUR EFFORTS WITH ANOTHER PAIR.**

**YOU MIGHT WISH TO ADD A TOUCH OF HUMOUR TO YOUR EXPRESSIONS.**

**Example:**

**DIRECT: She is perfectly evil.**

**INDIRECT: ADMITTEDLY, SHE IS NOT THE KINDEST SOUL IN THE WORLD. / SHE MIGHT TRY TO BE A LITTLE KINDER TO OTHER HUMANS. / IT SEEMS TO ME SHE COULD DO WITH SOME TRAINING IN KINDNESS.**

1. I hate global corporations. They want to suck the life out from small, local organizations.

***Global corporations seem to have no mercy on local producers. / Apparently, globalization is a killer to small producers, favouring mostly multinationals.***

2. He is such a bore!

***He might not exactly be a maverick, but… he can be a loyal friend.***

3. This year’s sales have been really tragic! What with Covid 19 and all!

***We haven’t been doing very well in the last Quarters, have we? And Covid certainly hasn’t helped.***

4. The colour scheme in your study is quite off-putting!

***The colours in your study seem to be rather mismatched, don’t you think?***

5. Your ideas always end in a disaster!

***Take your time. First think, then research and only then put your ideas into practice. Does that make sense? / Try not to make rash decisions.***

6. I’m good for nothing! I’m such a loser!

***I tend to get a little messy / impatient / unpunctual. / I might be a little distracted sometimes. But give me a second chance.***

7. After her sickness she looks awful, don’t you think? Off colour.

***She looks a little under the weather after this last bout of flu. But it will pass and she’ll soon be her usual self.***

8. But you pushed me! It’s your fault I dropped the vase!

***Please! You could be a little more careful – stop scampering about like a little imp. Now you’d better help me collect those pieces.***

9. Ok, ok, sorry! But you stuck out your foot. You are to blame!

***Ok, I apologize. But next time warn me when you are carrying a thousand-year-old Chinese vase. Let me help with that mess.***

10. Have you met the new CEO yet? Doesn’t he look confused?!

***Have you met the new CEO? He does seem at a loss here, doesn’t he? A bit out of his depth.***

**III. FURTHER PRACTICE. E-MAILS OF COMPLAINT, APOLOGY, ENQUIRY AND INFORMATION.**

**LOOK AT THE LIST OF WORDS BELOW.**

**A) UNDERLINE THE MORE DIPLOMATIC DISCOURSE MARKERS**

**B) COMPLETE THE SENTENCES WITH THE MISSING WORDS. MAKE SURE THEY ARE GRAMMATICALLY CORRECT.**

***IN VIEW OF/BECAUSE CONSIDERING/WITH REGARD TO***

***ENQUIRE/ASK ABOUT ALLOW/LET APOLOGIZE/SAY SORRY***

***UNPAID/OUTSTANDING WANT/WOULD LIKE ASKING/REQUEST***

***LOOK FORWARD/WAIT FOLLOWING/FURTHER TO WARN/REMIND***

**INFORM/LET KNOW OVERJOYED/PLEASED FAST/PROMPTLY**

**APPRECIATE/THANK YOU MISTAKE/OVERSIGHT HAPPEN AGAIN/RECUR**

**1. *In view of* the increase in our volume of business, I am writing to *enquire* whether you could possibly improve our credit terms.**

**2. *Further* to your email of the 20th  of August, we are *pleased* to *inform* you that we approve your terms of contract. We *look forward* to hearing from you *promptly*.**

**3. Please, let me *remind* you that the sum of $100,000 is still *outstanding* on your account. We would *appreciate* your prompt settlement of the outstanding balance.**

**4. We *would like* to *apologize* for the delay in the delivery of the last batch of IT accessories you ordered. This was a(n) *oversight* on our part and we assure you it will not *recur* in the future.**

**5. *With regard to* your *request* for extended credit terms, I am afraid that our policy does not *allow* us to extend more than 40 days.**

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