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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**

**Written by MAŁGORZATA TOMAL**

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***SECTION NINE***

***ACTIVE LISTENING***

***SOFT SELL: LET YOUR CUSTOMER DO THE TALK***

**STUDENTS**

**I. OBJECTIVES – HOW YOU WILL BENEFIT FROM THIS SECTION:**

ONCE YOU HAVE COMPLETED ALL THE TASKS CONTAINED IN THIS LESSON YOU SHOULD:

* *Expand your theoretical and practical knowledge of active listening and how it may affect the outcome of negotiations*
* *Improve your capacity of anticipating potential objections that can be raised by your opponent or client*
* *Improve your ability to use active listening techniques, such as expressing understanding and empathising with your opponent’s feelings*
* *Understand the difference between soft and hard sell techniques*

**II. WARM-UP QUESTIONS**

1. How would you define “active listening”? What might be the difference between listening and hearing?

2. How do you think active listening could be connected with the ability to anticipate potential objections in a negotiation?

3. Would you agree that a successful salesperson is above all a good communicator – and an active listener?

4. Can you think of any linguistic tools that could be practised and employed during a negotiation?

5. What could be the difference between soft and hard sell?

Read the “Did you know” and the Reading sections to check if you were right.

**III. DID YOU KNOW?**

Successful professional negotiators – be it salespeople, judges, mediators, diplomats or arbiters - are all well-trained communicators.

Communication involves a variety of soft skills, which need to be practised and honed: articulation, self-expression, empathy, self-control (conscious manoeuvring one’s emotions), and, last but not least, active listening.

**IV. READING**

**READ THE TEXT BELOW AND DECIDE WHETHER THE STATEMENTS BELOW AND TRUE OR FALSE (correct the false ones).**

Active listening is a skill that can be acquired and developed with practice.

It implies giving one’s full concentration and attention to the speaker, as well as taking a conscious decision to hear out one’s partner in negotiation and to make concessions when necessary.

Active listening involves listening with all senses. Interest can be conveyed by using both non-verbal and verbal messages: by maintaining eye contact, nodding one’s head, smiling, providing feedback, asking relevant questions and giving the other person the time they need. It all boils down to empathising with the speaker: giving them one’s affirmation, positive reinforcement and deferring judgement.

However, not all signs of active listening will be the same in all cultures and contexts. It takes much intercultural knowledge, sensitivity and a lot of training to become an expert active listener.

A good communicator must be an articulate speaker, but, above all – an active listener. It is imperative for a negotiator to master these communication skills in order to be effective.

Some of the linguistic techniques used by active listeners will be: paraphrasing the words used by the speaker, reflecting their feelings, clarifying the implied meanings and checking understanding, echoing their words, making encouraging sounds, summarizing their message and focusing on the next step.

Being part of the process of negotiation, active listening belongs to soft sell skills, characterised by creating a friendly rapport with the customer and aiming at generating win-win business outcomes.

Conversely, hard sell involves touting and less sophisticated persuasion techniques, with the customer as the ultimate loser, and the seller – the winner who takes it all.

1) Active listening is an ability one is born with.

2) By making concessions the author means that both parties must both gain and lose something.

3) “Maintaining eye contact” means looking in the eye.

4) Providing feedback can be only done verbally*.*

5) “Deferring judgement” means being altogether non-judgemental.

6) Active listening skill is a must-have for negotiators to be effective.

7) The skill of listening means making a serious effort.

8) The phrase “linguistic techniques” implies that active listening is a strategy.

9) “Creating a friendly rapport” suggests that the negotiator must write a final report of their dealings with customers.

10) Hard sell leads to a win-lose situation.

**V. ACTIVITIES**

**ACTIVE LISTENING**

**1. USEFUL EXPRESSIONS BANK**

Fill the gaps in the sentences:

Paraphrasing the speaker’s words:

If I understand correctly / ***…………………………..***, you’re saying that…..

Correct me if I’m ***……………………***, but I **…………………………** what you mean is that…..

If I’ve got that ***………………….*** you are saying that…..

Reflecting the speaker’s feelings and showing understanding:

I see. My **…………………..** that it’ll be too time-consuming for you to rewrite the full text, ***…………………………………?***

It ***………………………..*** to me that you ***……………………..*** stressed out by the very idea….

I know exactly how you ***……………….*** about it / what you mean. I would ***………………………*** feel the same if…

Clarifying the message implied by the speaker:

I’m not ***……………………….*** about this. What margins on the goods do you have exactly in ***……………….***?

I’d like to ***……………………*** I know exactly what you’re ***………………………..*** at. Could you be more ***……………………..*** as to the figures?

I don’t quite ***……………….*** what you mean by saying… Could you ***…………………***?

Echoing what the other person has said and providing a counterargument:

(That’s far too expensive) Too **……………………**? Not if you consider…

(It’s impossible for me to make a decision) Too soon? It won’t be ***……………………….*** if…

Nodding and making encouraging sounds:

Yes…. Well, I know.

Uhm… Uh-huh…

Recapitulating what has been said

Ok, so let me **……………………………**. What we’ve ***………………… / …………………..*** so far is that…

Do you mind if I ***…………………….*** sum up what you’ve told me?

Focusing on the follow-up:

What I would ***…………………………*** is that we go over…

Shall we ***…………………………*** the bureaucratic side of business first?

**2. IN PAIRS IMPROVE THE NEGOTIATOR’S RESPONSES (AND NAME THE ACTIVE LISTENING TECHNIQUE USED).**

**Example:**

Customer: Too me this product is totally overpriced.

Negotiator: What are you talking about? That’s quite ridiculous!

**Improved version:**

**Negotiator: Overpriced? For the quality it is not at all too expensive. I am convinced it’s value for money. (Echoing and providing a counterargument)**

1) C: Why should I consider buying a new telephone? Mine is still good enough!

N: What, this junk?

**Improved version:**

**Negotiator:**

2) C: I’m not sure if I want to change my car for a new one in the next several months.

N: What? Several months? So why did you come to my parlour?

**Improved version:**

**Negotiator:**

3) C: I’m not sure about my small son being exposed to this much violence in this game.

N: Don’t be such a neurotic parent!

**Improved version:**

**Negotiator:**

4) C: This whole idea of a total overhaul seems so overwhelming. I don’t know where to start!

N: What? You call this minor redecoration an overhaul? I tell you it’s nothing!

**Improved version:**

**Negotiator:**

5) C: … With all those travel agents going under left and right. I’m not sure I’d be ready to pay down half the price for the holiday and then lose the deposit.

N: Oh, yes, our competition are no good, you’re quite right. But not us! We’re stronger than ever!

**Improved version:**

**Negotiator:**

**3. MATCH EACH OVERLY DIRECT PHRASE (1-7) WITH ITS MORE NEGOTIABLE COUNTERPART (a-g):**

1) You what? You confused the batches again?

2) You are contradicting yourself! Think before you say something, will you?

3) Our supplies are coming in late? I don’t know what you are talking about!

4) Relax! There is nothing to worry about!

5) You are always interrupting me! Let me finish!

6) Oh, you English people. Always so phlegmatic.

7) I told you! You cannot take a break. We must see the last presentation first.

a. I see you need more time to reflect. Take your time.

b. Let me understand what’s happened here. You seem to have some issues with our orders.

c. I can see that you are worried about your production deadlines. We will ensure we meet our delivery deadlines, I promise.

d. I’m not sure I understand your terms. Could you be more specific?

e. I can tell that you do need a coffee to perk up before we finish the meeting.

f. I understand how you are feeling. I too would be a little anxious when taking a risk like that.

g. Hm, I see. … I know… Let me recap what we’ve just established.

**VI. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES:**

**Part IV, Reading, was based on the text to be found under the link:**

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***SECTION EIGHT***

***ACTIVE LISTENING***

***SOFT SELL: LET YOUR CUSTOMER DO THE TALK***

**TEACHER’S**

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3. Would you agree that a successful salesperson is above all a good communicator – and an active listener?

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5. What could be the difference between soft and hard sell?

Read the “Did you know” and the Reading sections to check if you were right.

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However, not all signs of active listening will be the same in all cultures and contexts. It takes much intercultural knowledge, sensitivity and a lot of training to become an expert active listener.

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Some of the linguistic techniques used by active listeners will be: paraphrasing the words used by the speaker, reflecting their feelings, clarifying the implied meanings and checking understanding, echoing their words, making encouraging sounds, summarizing their message and focusing on the next step.

Being part of the process of negotiation, active listening belongs to soft sell skills, characterised by creating a friendly rapport with the customer and aiming at generating win-win business outcomes.

Conversely, hard sell involves touting and less sophisticated persuasion techniques, with the customer as the ultimate loser, and the seller – the winner who takes it all.

1) Active listening is an ability one is born with. ***F (it can be acquired)***

2) By making concessions the author means that both parties must both gain and lose something. ***T***

3) “Maintaining eye contact” means looking in the eye. ***T***

4) Providing feedback can be only done verbally*.* ***F (a smile is positive feedback, and it is non-verbal)***

5) “Deferring judgement” means being altogether non-judgemental. ***F (deferring means postponing – until one has more data to base judgement on)***

6) Active listening skill is a must-have for negotiators to be effective. ***T***

7) The skill of listening means making a serious effort. ***T***

8) The phrase “linguistic techniques” implies that active listening is a strategy. ***T***

9) “Creating a friendly rapport” suggests that the negotiator must write a final report of their dealings with customers. ***F (“rapport” means relationship)***

10) Hard sell leads to a win-lose situation. ***T***

**V. ACTIVITIES**

**ACTIVE LISTENING**

**1. USEFUL EXPRESSIONS BANK**

Fill the gaps in the sentences:

Paraphrasing the speaker’s words:

If I understand ***correctly / your view / your standpoint***, you’re saying that…..

Correct me if I’m ***wrong***, but I **guess / reckon** what you mean is that…..

If I’ve got that ***right***, you are saying that…..

Reflecting the speaker’s feelings and showing understanding:

I see. My ***feeling*** is that it’ll be too time-consuming for you to rewrite the full text, ***won’t it* / am I right?**

It ***sounds / seems*** to me that you ***feel*** stressed out by the very idea….

I know exactly how you ***feel*** about it / what you mean. I would ***probably*** feel the same if…

Clarifying the message implied by the speaker:

I’m not ***too sure / certain*** about this. What margins on the goods do you have exactly in ***mind***?

I’d like to ***make sure*** I know exactly what you’re ***getting / driving*** at. Could you be more ***specific*** as to the figures?

I don’t quite ***see*** what you mean by saying… Could you ***specify***?

Echoing what the other person has said and providing a counterargument:

(That’s far too expensive) Too **expensive**? Not if you consider…

(It’s impossible for me to make a decision) Too soon? It won’t be ***impossible*** if…

Nodding and making encouraging sounds:

Yes…. Well, I know.

Uhm… Uh-huh…

Recapitulating what has been said

Ok, so let me **recap / summarize**. What we’ve ***decided /established / agreed on*** so far is that…

Do you mind if I ***briefly*** sum up what you’ve told me?

Focusing on the follow-up:

What I would ***suggest / recommend*** is that we go over…

Shall we ***tackle / deal with*** the bureaucratic side of business first?

**2. IN PAIRS IMPROVE THE NEGOTIATOR’S RESPONSES (AND NAME THE ACTIVE LISTENING TECHNIQUE USED).**

**Example:**

Customer: Too me this product is totally overpriced.

Negotiator: What are you talking about? That’s quite ridiculous!

**Improved version:**

**Negotiator: Overpriced? For the quality it is not at all too expensive. I am convinced it’s value for money. (Echoing and providing a counterargument)**

1) C: Why should I consider buying a new telephone? Mine is still good enough!

N: What, this junk?

**Improved version:**

**Negotiator: *So what you’re saying is that your old telephone meets all your needs? (Paraphrasing)***

2) C: I’m not sure if I want to change my car for a new one in the next several months.

N: What? Several months? So why did you come to my parlour?

**Improved version:**

**Negotiator: *I’m not sure I got it right. Could you be more specific about the time frame? (Asking for clarification)***

3) C: I’m not sure about my small son being exposed to this much violence in this game.

N: Don’t be such a neurotic parent!

**Improved version:**

**Negotiator: *I see that you are worried if your son can handle the stress. But the game is marked “6+” so it should be fine. (Reflecting feelings)***

4) C: This whole idea of a total overhaul seems so overwhelming. I don’t know where to start!

N: What? You call this minor redecoration an overhaul? I tell you it’s nothing!

**Improved version:**

**Negotiator: *Now then, what I suggest we start from is draw up an action plan. (Focusing on the follow-up)***

5) C: … With all those travel agents going under left and right. I’m not sure I’d be ready to pay down half the price for the holiday and then lose the deposit.

N: Oh, yes, our competition are no good, you’re quite right. But not us! We’re stronger than ever!

**Improved version:**

**Negotiator: *I know what you mean, the times are hard. But tourism is still thriving and your destination is very popular. And we guarantee excellent back-up terms. (Showing understanding of the speaker’s feelings)***

**3. MATCH EACH OVERLY DIRECT PHRASE (1-7) WITH ITS MORE NEGOTIABLE COUNTERPART (a-g):**

1) You what? You confused the batches again?

2) You are contradicting yourself! Think before you say something, will you?

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f. I understand how you are feeling. I too would be a little anxious when taking a risk like that.

g. Hm, I see. … I know… Let me recap what we’ve just established.

**KEY:**

**1b 2d 3c 4f 5g 6a 7e**

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