

Mastering Business English in an Intercultural Setting

Mauritius Wijffels
m.wijffels@reginacoeli.nl

Sabine Mueller-Heijmans
s.heijmans@reginacoeli.nl



60+ Years of Language Training

60+ Years of Cultures

Intercultural Knowledge Centre:
18 Components



Ethnocentrism is the human tendency to assess and judge other cultures by applying the standards and norms of one's own culture.

Ethnocentrism checklist:

1

**Check your initial reaction
and judgment**

**An immediate sense of discomfort,
disapproval, labelling or even
superiority?**

2

**Check your handling of
cultural critiques**

**Your first response when your
own culture is critiqued or
challenged?**

3

Check the language you used

**Your verbal qualifications e.g.
weird, bizarre, strange or even
stronger?**

How can English help a *LOCAL company* culture
transition to a *GLOBAL* one?

Intercultural challenges in using business English



Diversity in language proficiency

The elephant in the room
Even with AI and digital nomads, non-native speakers feel less comfortable expressing themselves, especially in challenging situations or when dealing with authority, depending on their culture type



Cultural misunderstandings

Diversity within the English language
Non-native but also native speakers bring their own cultural perceptions, communication styles and ethnocentrism to the table



Integration into the corporate culture & team

Motivation and trust are reached differently in different cultures
Transition from a culture to a more global culture is challenging



Talent Acquisition and Retention

Current market trends in HR
High potentials may be currently avoiding non-global work environments



Adapting your use of English to different cultural contexts

1

Active Listening

Pay close attention to the speaker's words, tone, and body language to ensure you understand their message

2

Clarification

Don't hesitate to ask for clarification if you are unsure about something. It's better to ask than to misunderstand

3

Respectful Language

Use polite and respectful language to allow others to space to express themselves, create distance, to bring someone closer. Or even to persuade others

4

Cultural Sensitivity

Remember to park your ethnocentrism

HOW CERTAIN ARE YOU?

0-25-50-75-100%

The time factor could be a very important aspect of the project	?
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You know, the chances of finding life on Mars is very improbable.	?
---	---

The recent advertising campaign is bound to attract new customers	?
---	---

There is always the possibility of a promotion next year.	?
---	---

Our sales figures might not be as high as the figures first indicated.	?
--	---

The Board will never accept the proposal.	?
---	---

DO YOU AGREE?

0-25-50-75-100%

Well, you could be right.	?
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I agree with up to a point, but what about the other departments?	?
---	---

I'm inclined to agree with George on this issue, Jane.	?
--	---

With regard to his performance you could be right	?
---	---

Absolutely, he's had more than enough chances.	?
--	---

I think that is a good idea.	?
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How to go from direct to indirect in English?

BEER



WINE



CHAMPAGNE



Mastering Business English in an Intercultural Setting

1 TAKE AWAY

Remove the elephant from the room by explicitly and verbally acknowledging diversity in English language proficiency and culture types

3 TAKE AWAY

Recognise the different ways in which trust & motivation are built and expressed verbally

2 TAKE AWAY

Raise awareness of cultural diversity even inside the English language area

4 TAKE AWAY

Transition from a local to a global company by avoiding monoculture and finetuning the lingua franca: business English



LANGUAGE INSTITUTE REGINA COELI

*Fostering effective
cross-cultural
collaboration*

