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[Evan Frendo]

Hello everybody. What a great debate that was and really nudges in quite nicely into my topic, which is looking at how we work with university learners who will in the future have to go and work in the real workplace around the world. And a lot of what the, all those wonderful debaters were talking about is very much in, in line with what I'm saying. I'm hoping I can add something to it. I'm going to bring a little bit of my own experience, my own stories.

I've been in this game for just over 30 years, working mostly in corporate language training, so not working so much in universities. I have worked in universities, but mostly working on the other end, in other words, receiving the people from universities and having to work with them in the real workplace. Now if we, if we look at general academic English or whatever we call it, it's called different things in different parts of the world, we very much. Most universities will offer something like this certainly at the beginning of a course, maybe the first year, they'll be focusing on academic communication skills. So things like study skills, you know, how to take notes, how to attend lectures and understand lectures, how to take part in discussions, how to focus on, on their assignments which they have to do.

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That's one type of academic English in the university. And then of course in many, many universities because people are, are working in very, very different disciplines. And we know from years of research that disciplines, academic disciplines use English in very different ways. And even the way essays are done, articles are done, research articles are done, they're all very different. And so universities tend to then offer some sort of discipline specific training and that is really learning the vocabulary perhaps in English of the, of the target discipline and a few other things like genre, perhaps types of texts and so on.

But when they leave university they're going to go into a company somewhere and this is not any specific company, this is just a general company. And we saw already how specific people's workplaces can be. But let's say they move into a general sort of company and a typical day will look at, look something like this. They might have a formal meeting with some clients, they might have an online team meeting with their own colleagues, they might be doing some small talk at the water cooler with other team leaders, they might be doing project updates on site, so they might have to travel on site to, to visit something that's going on. And of course there's, there's all the other stuff that's going on in between like emails, chat messages, trello project software and so on so a typical day is looking at types of situations which are a little bit different to what most universities target.

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And so what we're going to look at here is how can we help people move from that university into this sort of focus? And one of my favorite quotes in all of the world of business English is this one. Michael Mike Nelson, some of you will, I'm sure, have come across this, and he

pointed out in his PhD 26 years ago now that the language used to do business and the language used to talk about business are quite different. And I'd like you to think about that for a moment. The language to do business and the language to talk about business.

Because we do a lot of talking about business in universities. You know, if we read a newspaper, we're talking about business. But the language of doing business is, is the meetings, it's the cut and thrust of a negotiation, it's standing up and presenting in front of 300 people and so on. That language is quite different to the language of talking about business in terms of an MBA course or specific topics in a business context.

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So if we look, for example, at somebody going through university and doing chemical engineering and then coming out into the real world, you can see on the left in the university, the purpose of learning that language is demonstrating understanding, passing the assessment. Perhaps the audience will be the lecturers, the tutors, examiners, peers, quite a very specific audience. And the focus of their language is on understanding, theory, explaining, trying to be correct in what they say, trying to be precise. Academic language very much. If they have to do academic type assignments, as soon as they go into the real workplace, of course they're doing something else.

In this cartoon, the same student might be standing in front of a group of visitors, perhaps. And here, safety is important. Efficiency, production, collaboration. You can, you can see my list there. The audience will be completely different to who they're talking to in the universities operate operators, managers, technicians, clients and so on.

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So a whole load of different people to talk to with very different reasons for being in the communication scenario, very different reasons for being there at all. And so the focus is actually quite, quite different. It's about clarity, it's about getting things done, it's about dealing with risk, outcomes, practicality. So it's a very different emphasis. So what we're going to do in this talk is I've been asked to do two things really. First of all, I'm going to talk about how do people really speak English in the world of work? And we've already seen quite a lot of discussion about that in the debate. And I'd really like to build up, build a little bit on. On that. So that'll be the first 10 minutes, and then after that I'll offer some suggestions.

And we don't have a lot of time, but I'll offer some suggestions of what can we do to help prepare our learners for this world of work. So how do people really speak English in the world of work? I'll give you an example. This is a group of people I was working with last year in southern Germany, a bunch of software engineers, software developers in a big, big company, one of Germany's biggest companies. And, you know, these people are working together all day.

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They're working in different teams and different meetings all over the world. But in this particular situation, they had somebody coming in from India, so an Indian developer who they had worked with, and he's flown in from Bangalore to Germany. And his English, you know, he's a native speaker of English, he grew up speaking English, and, and all the Germans are well educated in school English and so on. And they all speak good English, maybe C1 or C2, or they've got good competence, they know what they're doing, and they use English almost every day at work. And so you'd expect this meeting to go quite well.

But what happened was that the meeting ended up not being very good at all. And in the feedback sessions afterwards, some of the Germans told me that it was too fast. So the Indian person was perfectly fluent at English, but was speaking too fast in his own way of speaking, in his own accent and so on for that audience. And it was far too technical. He.

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He was a specialist in one area, but not everybody in the room was a specialist in that particular area. And so they didn't really manage to communicate particularly well. Now, I'm not suggesting for a moment that the fault lay only on the Indian side, because here are the German engineers who could have easily put up their hand and said yes, but or ask questions. So on both sides, it was the communicant communication strategies which failed, rather than their ability to speak English, their ability. They would have all passed, you know, high grades in any international language test.

That wasn't the issue. We're talking about real workplace communication and the ability to change the way you speak and use these strategies in order to get what you need out of a particular situation. Here's another one. This is a German guy, and on the right you can see his Chinese counterpart. And this is only planning a business trip, so very, very simple, nothing special about this at all.

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And so Bernd the German writes a short message and says, hi Lynn, just to let you know, the visa came through today, all successful. See in Wuhan, very, very typical type of short message or email or whatever we call it nowadays. Could be done by anybody, anytime. And there's an emoji there and everything's happy. And here comes the answer from Lynn, good news.

So he's happy with the news. I have booked my train tickets back and forth. I will meet you at Wuhanji train station. I will arrive the station at 20,000 I around earlier than you. You will arrive Wuhan station at 2040 around.

Now look at that. There are some ways of using English in that message which are not perhaps standard English, let's say maybe the word order is a bit different, some of the lexis might be a bit different to what a native speaker might use. But is there anywhere in this email where, where there's any miscommunication, where there's any chance that Bernd will not understand what the message is about? Well, I got to know Bernd quite well and he told me all about this. Of course he understood the, the, the message.

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But what he didn't understand is Wuhan Ji train station. Because in Wuhan, like many, many German Chinese cities and if you've had the chance or the luck to go to China, you will know some of these train stations are massive and so different exits and entrances are marked by letters. And in Wuhan, you know, there's A, B, C, D, E, F, G and you arrange to meet people at a specific letter exit so that you can meet amongst all these thousands of people walking around. But in Europe we don't do that on train stations. And so Berndt got this email, he thought, okay, I know where to meet him, I'm going to meet him at Wuhan, expecting him to meet him on the path, on the platform, as you would do in, in perhaps in Germany.

And of course they took an hour to meet because they were in completely different places, wandering around the station looking lost. This was not a language problem, this was a cultural problem. This was something else. And it could have easily be avoided if they had both used communication strategies to explain what the issue was.

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I go to a lot of meetings and my, my job normally in meetings and I've got hundreds of recordings of meetings over the years is to sit with a company. Perhaps some of them are my students. Perhaps I'm just there as a consultant listening to the conversation and then providing language feedback afterwards or Coaching individuals and so on. And so I've got lots and lots of examples of the type of English that are used in real meetings and what makes them work and what makes them not work so well. And in fact I was writing down some of the non standard English in the debate.

I won't embarrass anybody or let's or mention it, but it's interesting that in a normal speech situation there's lots of language which can be analyzed afterwards and said, oh, that's terrible, that's not standard, that wouldn't pass an international exam. And here are some examples. These are from real meetings. I use the before reference, not the previous reference. I ask for a quick glance for this paragraph.

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See par the preposition's all wrong. Okay, I note it. We will think later on. Any idea where is. Can I get back to you later?

I need more thoughts for that. That's wonderful. It sends the message perfectly. But it's not standard English. I would like listen comments from experts here.

I would like listen comments not to listen. So some of the things that we worry about in ELT and in this accuracy debate actually don't cause any miscommunication at all. None of these in this real situation prevented communication. What did prevent communication was the stuff, sort of stuff we were talking about. I talked about in my previous two messages.

Things which are very difficult to foresee, as it were.

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Now we're very lucky in our business because the world of English in the workplace has now been investigated thoroughly for many, many years. One of the big research areas is called English as a Business Lingua Franca. It used to be called DELF Business English as a Lingua Franca. Now it's called English as a Business Lingua Franca to show that it's a domain we're talking about, not a type of English. It's not a variety of English.

And there are thousands of articles and books and people writing their PhDs and masters focusing all analyzing how people actually use English in the workplace all over the world. It's not something which we don't know much about. There is a lot of work out there. A lot of work has been done, very detailed work. And what's interesting, if you do start looking at the BELF research, which is one specific type of research, you'll find that a lot of these articles aren't written in ELT journals.

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They're written for example, in International Journal of Business Communication. In other words, things which are not necessarily things which English teachers would necessarily read and look at. So There's a lot going on. People in the workplace are very interested to find out how to make their English more effective, more efficient. And there are lots and lots of people researching this and doing a lot of work researching it.

That's really good news for us because even if we can't get into the workplace ourselves, we can see what other people have done. And a lot of the comments that come out of these articles have been discussed in this, in this, in the debate which we've just listened to. You know, things like Will's point that aviation English is very, very specific type of English. And I worked in maritime English for several years and it's exactly the same. Coming in as an outsider, you would not understand it.

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It's not a general sort of English. But actually going into many companies, you wouldn't understand what was going on. So, you know, the right answer to the question I think, I think Louise hinted at this is it's not either or, it's not right or wrong. It really depends on the context. And I think all of the four speakers actually made that point.

Let's look at this BELF thing. The focus in BELF is getting the job done. And here's one definition of belf which is very, very common. You'll see it oft cited. As they say, it's used a lot.

Belf is perceived as an enabling resource to get the work done. So it's a tool since it is highly context bound and that word is really important. Context bound. Everything depends on context. It does not depend on is the English right or wrong.

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Some English is right in a particular context, some English is wrong in a particular context. It might be the same English. So it's context bound and situation specifically. And so it's a moving target, defying detailed linguistic description. So we cannot actually, according to this definition, say this is right English and this is wrong English.

This is correct and this is not correct. It's not as simple as that. When we get into the real world, what is correct English? What is the right English is what works effectively, efficiently in that situation. And in fact, I've been in companies where the worry was about spending too much money over training people to be too good at their English because it wasn't actually necessary.

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And so when you start looking at this belt research, you find articles like this one, this is a well known one, Susanna Ehrenreich, and she went into multinational and interviewed a lot of managers about what they thought about English. And these are the sorts of comments she got. Conformity with standard English is seen as a fairly irrelevant concept. The managers don't care if you're speaking standard English or non standard English. It's not important.

Can you do the job? I don't actually care whether something is correct or incorrect as long as the meaning is not distorted.

So you see this, this whole debate on accuracy or non accuracy or proficient or non proficient, it doesn't actually matter. What actually matters is can you get the job done. That's what the Belf people say anyway. Now when you go into this belfry search a little bit more, one of the well known articles is this one here which talks about, uses the Goffman idea. You may have come across Goffman's idea of front stage and backstage.

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So imagine a theater and the picture on the left is the front stage. That's the part of the company which is open to the public, which is showing itself to the public. So there we might have official press releases, official language. We're talking to external partners, it might be quite formal, we might be looking at standard English there. And this is in some ways reflective of what we heard from Nathan about the gatekeepers and so on, the power structure in companies.

So on this side it might be that in some companies it's important to get as close as possible to whatever we decide is standard English and people want the company to give a good impression. On the other side in the backstage, this is the part that people outside the company might not see is the backstage communication. Much more messy, much more informal, much more emergent, just getting the job done but not worried about giving a formal impression in the same way. So you see, it's not either or, it can be both. Now I talked about communication strategies and communication strategies is one of the things which comes out over and over again in this BELF research.

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BELF research, remember, is not looking at how to learn English, it's looking at how people actually use English in the workplace. It's about users of English, not learners and it's not looking at it in a deficit way. In other words, to say, oh you, your English isn't very good, you're only C1, you're only B2 or whatever. You still need to do this, this and this. What it's saying is you are using English and you can achieve all this.

And what we're going to try and do is find ways to make you achieve what you want to achieve with your English in, in more effectively, more efficiently. And as I say, communication strategies are very, very common in BELF research as ways of Getting this job done. One of the ones that come out comes out. All these things are very common, but one of them is accommodation. Accommodation is the way you adjust your language depending on who you're speaking to.

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Rather like a mother might speak in a very different way, different tone, different vocabulary to a small child than to a colleague at work. We accommodate naturally. I remember doing some accommodation training in a. In a big German. Funnily enough, it was another German company and they had to work in China in a factory in China.

These were German engineers, highly skilled, very good speakers of English, international players. They traveled a lot. But the people they had to interact with had not been trained particularly well in English. Their English wasn't as good. And so the Germans had to learn how to simplify their English, how to accommodate to that particular audience.

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Accommodation comes up time and time again in BELF research. This idea that we have to train people not to sound super duper and oh, I speak C2 English because I'm clever, but to try and make their English as simple as possible. Another feature is very common is translanguaging and multilingualism. I'm not going to go into these in any great detail, but it's the idea of using different language resources. You might be multilingualism.

For example, Very often in a company scenario, people are explaining or talking to each other in two or three languages. It's all happening at the same time. People are clarifying. You hear more than one language. Translanguaging is this idea that you use the rules and the grammar perhaps of your own language as you interpret this new language of English.

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And so you're using different resources in your language ability. Non verbal communication the research is now beginning to come out over the last five, 10 years. How important waving your hand about is in communication? Incredibly important. As language teachers, we seem to have ignored it for most of our lives.

But actually non verbal communication is part and parcel of any communication. Negotiation of meaning, co construction of meaning. Both sides in interaction have to come together to understand and to. To confirm that the message is being. It's not.

I send a message and that's the end of it. Has that message been received and can it be interpreted in the way I mean it? I meant it to be interpreted. Lots of pragmatic strategies. This is very common again in BELF research.

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The idea of we have to train our learners to keep repeating if they're talking to people from their own background, their own culture, their own language ability. They don't need to repeat because people will say why are you repeating why? Why are you talking slowly? But we formally have to give our learners practice in repeating and clarifying when they don't think they need to clarify. Like for example, Wuhan Ji train station.

That Chinese person should have said Wuhan Ji is the exit. And Bern should have said, is G a typo or does it mean something important? Both of them didn't use a clarification strategy. Redundancy. Really important in international workplace English, this idea that you use language which you wouldn't have to use normally just to keep saying the same thing over and over again in slightly different words and confirming, always asking, is this what you meant?

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Even when you think you're not sure or you think you did understand it. Even the simplest words can mean different things in different scenarios. Contract. Contract has so many different meanings around the world. And if one party says, I have a contract here, the other party should say, okay, let's clarify what we mean by this word contract.

And you can do that for many, many words. And finally, of course, intercultural communication, which is a big part of, of the BELF research, and it's all this idea of building rapport using appropriate language. That's a. Politeness is appropriate language in the scenario. So using the, of speaking is just as important sometimes as, as, you know, the phrase you use, it's, it's how you say it and, and which version of that phrase you might use.

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So we're not talking about communities of practice. And I think they, the speakers touched on this as well in, in the debate a little bit without using the word cop. COP comes up a lot in, in workplace English. And this is this idea that people belong to different communities, groups of people. So all of us belong to many, many different communities of practice.

We might be in a, in a football team and the people in that group use language in a certain way. Our family uses language in a certain way. Our workplace, maybe in school or university or language school, uses language in a certain way. And when you come in from the outside to join these communities of practice, you very often feel at a loss. It's the same as when you have a

class and you've been working with a class of learners or a group of learners for, I don't know, six months.

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And then another teacher comes in, that class has a way of using language. They laugh at words which the outsider doesn't quite understand. And this is very, very normal in communication. So what people find when they start researching the workplace is that people learn English through these communities of practice. Of course, they do.

They can't learn it from us, the teacher, because we're not members of those communities. I mean, the whole irony is none of the students are members of the community of practice. The teacher isn't. And yet somehow in the classroom, we have to prepare people to work in a community of practice. We can't give them the language necessarily, but we can make them aware of what is happening.

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Here's another study, more recent out of Japan, and she looked at this whole idea of how people become BELF users. Note the word user, not learner. I illustrated how heavily their learning was sourced from their own experience of using English at work rather than from a systematic study of English. In other words, when you get into the workplace, you start learning other stuff, which you can't really learn very easily in the, in the university context. Here's another one.

Hamad Process Engineering, attributed his strengths in English to his time in the reservoir field in the United States and Norway, where he learned to communicate in what he called the company way. And there are many, many articles on this thing called company speak. So companies, groups of people, communities of practice, have ways of using language. And we need to give our students, our learners, the strategies they need, the awareness they need, so that they can go in and become members of these communities of practice, even though we ourselves are not members of these communities. Okay, so that's the first 10 minutes.

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How do people really speak English in the world of work? What can we do to. To help people? Well, I think there's lots of things we can do. The first thing we need to do is really speak.

We need to become experts in this ourselves. If you're a university teacher and you've never been in a workplace, then you're not really doing your job particularly well. We have got to become familiar with different stakeholders in the companies our students go to. We have got to speak to expert insiders. These are the people in the companies who are already doing that job, which our students will have to do later.

Somebody who's negotiated for 10 years in that company will be much better than anything we can offer in terms of helping a new learner coming into the company. We do need to read the research. There's a lot of research out there. It doesn't take long, especially with new AI ways of

summarizing this research. It's our job as teachers, I think, to read and become familiar with this research.

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We need to get in practice of going into these meetings, going in and listening and observing these workplace interactions. This is our job, and understanding them. Analyzing them. It's not taking part in a meeting as part of the meeting. That's a completely different thing.

What I'm saying is sitting on the side and watching and, and analyzing and trying to work out where the problems are. Because unless you do that, you can't really help people break those, those barriers of miscommunication. And of course, I think we need to help people then work on those communication strategies which we've just talked about. If you look at the Macmillan books, I mean, this is the recently published Elements, there's a whole series, different levels. You can look into it.

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We won't have time to go into it here, but, you know, course books are quite useful in that they give awareness, they help build awareness of these things. This is in Elements. Every unit has something called vocational skills, which specifically helps to people to understand what they're going to be dealing with when they go into the workplace. So here is an exercise or activity all about different types of meetings. I talked about intercultural communication being key.

Remember, intercultural does not mean national culture. That's one type of culture. Different companies behave in very different ways. Different professions behave in very different ways. Everything is different.

It's not only about, oh, I'm going to India or I'm going to Japan, or I'm going to Germany. It's not as simple as that. There's many, many layers of culture in, in all of these interactions. You go into a meeting in one country in the same company and it might look completely different if you hop on a plane and have the same people doing the same meeting in a different country. So understanding the way we do things around here is a particularly important thing for our learners to be able to do.

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Again, Elements offers articles and things which help build our students awareness on this. You can look in on this stuff. Critical incidents are a great way of practicing intercultural communication. You give people a situation like this, you are attending a team meeting with colleagues from different countries. The meeting is being chaired by the team leader who you've just met for the first time.

Everything is in English. You can see some people are struggling. What do you do? Could happen in any meeting. There's no right or wrong answer here.

Critical incidents, just look at a scenario and say, something is happening here. Let's analyze it. And these critical incidents, very, very common in intercultural communication training. And they really make our students move away from these grammar exercises and accuracy and all that into using the sort of language which they would have to do in the real world, while at the same time becoming much more aware of what's going on in the, in the, in the intercultural perspective.

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Task based learning, another very, very common thing in corporate language training, you learn by doing so. For example here a needs analysis might say, ah, these people need to do a presentation to give a very simple example. So we do a presentation. They get language feedback from the group, not only from the teacher. They get task feedback from the group, not only from the language teacher.

The language teacher can't, we're not in the game of this. And then they repeat the task and they might do this over and over again until the presentation is at the level they need it to be. And it's the, their peers in companies who can actually say whether or not it's a good presentation. The teacher very often can't. But the point is task based learning does not start off with saying today we're going to learn the present simple, today we're going to learn these words.

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It's not as simple as that. Give them the task to do which replicates what they need to do and let them practice it and practice it and practice it. Storytelling is another type of task. Here's one. I've used variations of this many, many times from my own experience of going to China.

Social situations in China, for example, dinner with Chinese colleagues and party dignitaries say you're coming from another country, very, very common on business trips to China. And people naturally have to tell stories and you know, build rapport and get on with each other. So why not practice that as a task lesson in your own, with your own students? Then they have, they're ready to go when they travel.

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The next thing of course is focusing on learning skills. Now we talked about community of practice and this idea that learning, becoming member of a community of practice is about learning how to you take part in the communication of community of practice and that's what makes you learn. And of course with students in universities we've got internships, workplace shadowing, mentoring, real work tasks. That's the important thing. It's not.

Here's an article from the Harvard or from financial or whatever. Let's read it out of context. It's all going to fit in with this whole idea of building people's awareness of what they're going to meet. And when they do get into companies, they should be aware that learning is quite different nowadays. People don't get taken out and put into classes like they used to 10, 15 years ago.

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People don't go on English courses anymore like they used to. They may have a Tutor online to help them a little bit. But most companies are very much pushing towards this idea of learning happens at work while people are working, learning on the job, learning informally, learning English from those around them. It might be that they get some coaching on the side, but the whole move is away from our structured, formal type of training unless it's very specific, like the aviation English Will was talking about. These are three quotes from people I spoke to this year.

My Bulgarian partners use AI so they don't have to learn English. That's the reality, guys. My company asks us to check everything through the AI assistant before we send it out. The AI assistant will pick up most accuracy, grammar problems, change the tone, change the language, and so on. My AI language tutor is great.

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I hardly need a teacher anymore. Our whole role of how we teach in companies is changing incredibly dramatically. I know lots of people have lost their jobs, lots of people who are changing their roles and becoming much more guides, helping people to reflect, becoming coaches, as it were, rather than the traditional teacher with a group of people teaching them in lockstep. Altogether the same thing. But of course, this whole idea of lifelong learning is something which our students need to be aware of.

And Elements does have articles on this and these are great articles to get the debate going, to make people build up their awareness of what they're going to meet when they reach the real workplace. So very quickly. I know it's been a rush through. We could talk about this for hours. How do people really speak English in the world of work?

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Well, I said the following. It's about doing business, not talking about business. Think about English as a business lingua franca, not English. There's no such thing as English in this context. Delf.

English as a business lingua franca is context specific, intercultural, messy, hybrid. All the things we talked about. It's not neat and tidy like you get in an international standardized test. It's about getting the job done. So those communication strategies are more important in some ways than the language people use.

And it's about understanding how communities of practice work. So what can we do to help them? Well, we have to understand the context our learners are going into or help them understand their context. We have to develop these strategies which we've been talking about intercultural communication skills. We do have to get people focused on task based language teaching, in other words, focusing on outcomes, task outcome, not language outcomes.

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Language is just the tool. Can they do the presentation, not have they got brilliant English, but they fail at delivering the message in the presentation. And finally what we have to do is help our learners learn these ongoing learning skills which they're going to meet after they have left university. It's been a rush through. Guys, thank you very much for listening.

Thank you for being patient and I look forward to. We've got a couple of minutes, I think Will, if we want to or. Gabriela, Gabriela, are you there? If we want to ask any questions or discuss or maybe we don't have time. Oh, sorry.

[Louise Connolly]

Thank you very much, Evan. Wow, that, that was amazing. You covered an awful lot and a lot of, you've, you've inspired a lot of people to really think quite deeply about this question. I mean, I've taken away that you, the, the focus that you're not doing. You, you're, you're not learning about business.

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It's, it, it, it's, it's. The focus is on doing. Yeah. Being able to do in a future context and that we need as teachers to facilitate or give them, give learners the strategies, put them in situations. I think, you know, as, as you say, anybody can study a language and all the rules and.

But the question is what is it for? What is the purpose? And those purposes can vary depending on the community of practice. It varies. Okay.

[Evan Frendo]

I think you can pass any language teacher exam by answering any question with it.

[Louise Connolly]

Absolutely.

[Evan Frendo]

It depends.

[Louise Connolly]

Well, that's just life, isn't it?

[Evan Frendo]

Yes.

[Louise Connolly]

Okay. There are. I'll just ask a quick question. We don't have a lot of time. I know we don't have a lot of time.

[Evan Frendo]

Sorry.

[Louise Connolly]

Let me just think. Yeah.

Okay. From Victoria, they comment that I feel like the both communication strategies you listed. So we're talking about negotiation of meaning, pragmatic strategies, accommodating, all require a minimum level of proficiency. Would you agree with that?

00:37:24

[Evan Frendo]

It depends.

[Louise Connolly]

I knew you were going to say that.

[Evan Frendo]

I've seen people and many people have observed this where you can actually have people with pretty low levels of English and they manage to get whatever it is they need to get done. Yes. So, you know, what is an adequate level of proficiency really depends on the situation. You know, especially nowadays when people have language apps which can do real time translation.

If you're in a one to one situation, I've seen many, many times where, you know, a Japanese engineer talks to a French engineer, they're using an app and they understand, they're both engineers, so they understand when the app doesn't make sense and they just clarify. And if they use these communication strategies, they don't actually need English at all. So yeah, it Depends. It really, really depends.

00:38:13

[Louise Connolly]

Absolutely.

[Evan Frendo]

It's so much more complex than we think. No, yes.

[Louise Connolly]

And, and, and I thought it was interesting your point about, you know, that nowadays in the workplace people are not sent on courses necessarily but that, you know, they're encouraged to learn by doing. I'm just thinking of a colleague who does quite a number of international global meetings who is studying English at the same time but he's learning so much as he's doing. Yeah, sure, yes.

[Evan Frendo]

The job.

There's no, there's. Yeah, there's no easy answer to any of this. It's a fascinating, really interesting area to be in. I mean I've loved it for the last 30 odd years.

[Louise Connolly]

Yeah, I can see that. And it's constantly. And it's developing and evol. Yes, yes.

[Evan Frendo]

But the day, you know, I. In the 90s I spent a lot of time in hotels, week long course doing negotiation skills. Complete thing of the past.

[Louise Connolly]

Yes.

[Evan Frendo]

Never again are companies going to ask English teachers.

[Louise Connolly]

No, no, absolutely. Well, we move on. Yeah. And we adapt to the context. Thank you so much, Evan.