



Knowledge Transfer

Voices That Work

EDITED BY CHARLIE CUNNINGHAM

Module 5

The Importance of Spoken English
Skills Training in the Business Setting

BY PHIL BLISS

Introduction

The ability to communicate effectively in all areas of our lives can be dependant upon how confident we are as users of our voice. As individuals we possess a broad array of skills and talents but the inability to get our thoughts, our feelings, our desires and our messages across effectively to our “audiences” can hold us back. The ability to retrain our own voices and the voices of others can be challenging, empowering and creatively very exciting.

In the article that follows, an experienced voice and professional development trainer offers advice on techniques and strategies that will allow you to develop your own style of training to be most effective for the groups you are working with. We hope that by studying and putting into practice the approaches described, you will be able to enable your trainees/learners/clients to benefit from coaching that is integrated into personal and professional development programmes.

There are some important messages and caveats to bear in mind as you approach the material and work practically on your own voice and the voices of others. The following is a bullet point list of things to consider when you begin to integrate elements of voice coaching into your practice.

1. **Accessibility** – An understanding of the voice and the physical and psychological factors that effect how well we communicate is accessible to all trainers and can be incorporated into any training delivery. However, professional voice coaches undergo a significant amount of training. It is recommended that the practitioner undergo specific training before seeking work as a “voice coach”.
2. **Health and Safety** – Voice training is a physical process. As such, you must ensure that the health and safety of your group is supported. Those whose voice is damaged by prolonged misuse should be referred to a medical professional or speech therapist in the first instance.

3. **Making it your Own** – The theory and practice of voice training has been evolving for many years. There are no perfect or ideal exercises for any one group or situation. Take the exercises you think would work for you and make them your own.
4. **Being Patient** – The way we speak and communicate is hard wired by our experience. The muscles of speech and some of our thought processes therefore must be retrained. This process will take time and may happen in small increments or larger steps. Make sure you record progress and keep your trainees moving forward through feedback and encouragement.
5. **Reflecting on your Practice** – As a trainer, it is important that you reflect on your methods of delivery, how you connect with your training groups and what works/what doesn't. Again, take the material presented and use it so it suits your own development as a trainer to the benefit of your learners.

Approaching the Material

- > All modules contain questions to prompt reflection and discussion of issues raised in the text.
- > Symbols in the margin show where listening (ear) speaking (mouth) and physical (body) exercises are featured.
- > If you wish to obtain other modules in this series of articles about voice training, please refer to other titles shown in the inside front cover and contact kt@cssd.ac.uk for copies.

If you have any questions or comments about the material or ideas presented, please contact Charlie Cunningham or Paul Nicholl at The Central School of Speech and Drama (CSSD) on 0207 559 3936 or email kt@cssd.ac.uk.

A blurred, high-angle portrait of a man in a suit and tie, looking slightly to the right. The image is overlaid with a solid olive-green color, which serves as the background for the text.

Module 5

The Importance of Spoken English
Skills Training in the Business Setting

BY PHIL BLISS

Introduction

Why Spoken English skills training is so important in today's marketplace.

***lingua franca* – a language used among people of different mother tongues.**

In the worldwide market place English has emerged as the *lingua franca*. There is a huge, and growing demand, for training in Spoken English skills from individuals and companies in all sectors and in all parts of the world.

I recently worked, for example, with a large European manufacturing company who used English to communicate between their workers based in England, Spain and France. The management identified problems with communication, particularly with everyone understanding the company's '*lingua franca*': English. Some standard of clarity, it was felt, might need to be rolled out across the workers.

At home too there is a large and growing demand for this type of training. This is particularly so (though not exclusively) in London, where people from all around the world come to work. Some are only in the capital for a short placement, e.g. six months. However, they value highly the opportunity of taking home greater skills in Spoken English. Others come to stay and settle. For them the importance of having skills in Spoken English is paramount. I have had many clients who come for training citing lack of clarity in English, as a major source of stress at work and an inhibitor to advancement. As Lara Lopez, a Spanish student of mine put it, "(I was) missing a clear delivery (in English). This impacted badly on my employment search, as companies thought that I could not put across an argument or explanation of their products and ideas." (See appendix III).

Lara's lack of clarity in English was having an economic impact, both for her, as she was unemployed, and for the British economy, as we were not harnessing the skills of someone highly educated, enabling her to contribute to the workforce. Spoken English skills, in this instance, meant the difference between money flowing in to the exchequer, or out. There is also the personal impact upon Lara to consider.

This then, for me, is the most potent argument for Spoken English Skills Training; that for relatively little outlay the economic and even social benefits can be enormous.

Despite these arguments however, I sometimes detect a little reticence to embrace the training of Spoken English Skills in the general voice teaching community. I think that this is due to two misconceptions;

1. Associations with outmoded practises.
2. A belief that it is wrong to alter the native dialect or accent of a speaker.

Let's deal with each separately. First of all, outmoded practises;

There have been some exciting advances in the field – it is no longer a few "biberty-bobertys" followed by a "how now brown cow". Any voice-coach who has had the good fortune to work with Annie Morrison, for instance, will realise that there is a whole new world of creative and very physical approaches to voice coaching. Annie certainly revolutionised my approach with her Creative Articulation classes at the 'Central School of Speech and Drama' (CSSD). It is less now about telling people how to speak, and more guiding students to find their own clarity. Using new methodology, combined with some of the old, can produce impressive results and help the learner take ownership of English.

To the second point; namely that it is wrong to alter native or local ways of speaking. For last few decades Spoken English skills, or to be class-specific: elocution, went out of fashion in post-colonial Britain – what right have we to tell people how to speak, after all?

However, contemporary Spoken English is much more malleable than the rigid notion of RP (received pronunciation). That's not to say that the educated southern mode of English isn't what most clients want. It is. However we are after clear not posh. However, if I have a corporate client who wants to get rid of the V in his pronunciation of FATHER, that's his choice.

When it comes to teaching non-native speakers, they just want to sound clear in English – usually the hegemonic southern brand. Again that's their choice. I firmly believe that non-native speakers can achieve clarity in English without compromising their native sound identity. It's just that I have never had a non-native client who just wanted to tweak – they want to be understood in English by the largest possible audience. Ultimately it's up to the learner, not us, to decide what sort of English they want to speak. Our job is merely to enable choice.

Teaching a client to achieve greater skills in Spoken English is an exciting journey. The advantages to the learner are more than simply economic. As a Chinese client put it, "It is not just for more efficient communication at work, but also more importantly, it is a skill for life. It can bring so much joy and pleasure for the life in England". (See appendix I).

We as voice-coaches should take every opportunity to communicate the advantages, both economic and social, of Spoken English skills training.

How Voice Coaching and a Phonetic approach deals with Spoken English Skills Training

All voice practitioners have a duty of care to teach the fundamentals of speech, no matter what the training is aimed at. This particularly applies to Spoken English training. The client needs to understand how the voice works and particularly how tension can rob them of target sounds. Spend some time on posture, alignment, breath and relaxation at the beginning of every course, and have a warm-up at the start of each class. Specifically for the non-native speaker of English the dynamics of tension, particularly jaw tension, need to be understood.

The learner needs to comprehend that sheer mental effort can impact on their voice and their clarity, through associated tension and posture/alignment issues.

Therefore, constantly check for things such back slumping, chin jutting and jaw clamping. Remind clients to take a diaphragmatic breath and commit to the sound.

I find the best remedy for bad practice is to encourage the client to have fun and explore the sounds in English, in other words, discovery through play. Just as we all learn to speak in our native tongue – think of junior clapping his hands as he discovers plosive sounds – so the non-native speaker will take ownership of the learning through playing with sounds. Learning a new language is not just an intellectual pursuit, there are physical and sensual elements too.

I had a client for instance who, as he had a medical background, taught himself the exact position of English consonants. This resulted in most of our time together spend undoing the tense positioning of his tongue. Learning has to be the right sort of effort – focused not forced. After all, you can't make a clear sounded T by pushing your tongue hard on your alveolar ridge, or make an efficient B with tense pursed lips.

Many who seek Spoken English skills training come with ambitions that translate to tensions. Help them to understand that all vocal activity is best achieved through relaxation and then remind them that a light physical, even humorous approach is how they first discovered sound. This original method should then be applied in part to the learning of an additional language.

This method of delivery has another beneficial spin-off; as mentioned above it helps clients take ownership of the language. The play attitude helps connection to the sensuality of English. The physical, sensual and pleasurable aspects of sound in English often surprise non-native speakers. Embracing these elements leads to a greater attachment to English sounds. The learner's discovery becomes their possession.

The use of Phonetics has one self-evident advantage for the client – they will be able to check pronunciation in a dictionary. It cannot be underestimated what a useful tool and important life skill that is to the non-native speaker of English.

For teachers and trainers, the advantages of using phonetics are manifold. In class they can use the symbols to compare different pronunciations, even decide target sounds. Phonetics help the teacher get to the nitty-gritty of mispronunciation. For instance, it helps a Polish person to understand that there are two L sounds in English, not one, and that each has a distinct sound. It helps a Yoruba Nigerian to understand more fully the concept of the voiced and unvoiced consonant.

The use of phonetics helps all nationalities compare the English sound with their own native sounds and those of others. It also explains specifically why they sometimes cannot understand us. It gives learners a framework, trains the ear and frees them from the confusing tyranny of spelling in English. If you show that the word WOULD, for instance, has just three sounds, that can be a very liberating and empowering experience for the learner.

In the study of vowels, it lightens the learner's load to be shown that there are just twelve basic sounds to practice. Vowel 'slides' are more easily understood if the learner knows whether the particular sound is heading for a schwa, for instance. Diacritics (marks added to a letter to alter their phonetic pronunciation) can illustrate length. They show a Russian, for example, the extra length of some of their own native vowel sounds compared to English vowel lengths.

In short, basic voice principles and phonetics are, to my mind, core to spoken English Skills training.

Some case study examples

I'd like to focus on a group I have recently taught at the YWCA Central Club in the West End of London. The course is delivered in two stages. Stage I deals with muscularity, placement and phonetics, while Stage II deals with connected speech, intonation and stress. Each stage is comprised of seven 3-hour sessions.

The feedback and comments that follow were taken after the completion of Stage I on 21st July 2006. All eight of the participants rated the course and its delivery as excellent. There were no negative comments. All of them want to sign up for Stage II. In other words, it was effective and worked for them. A Polish and a Chinese learner both suggested there would be great demand for this subject were it to be taught in Warsaw or Beijing, proof that over and above TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) there is international demand for this type of work.

I asked the learners a question, **"Has a lack of clarity in spoken English ever had an economic impact upon you here in the U.K.?"** The question garnered some interesting answers and below is an abridged version of what they said.

All the full hand written statements, and feedback forms are available at CSSD. Some appear as appendices to this chapter.

Jinsong, a Chinese professor in London for a few months, working for The Beijing National Accounting Institute.

"I have contacted several city firms that (are) interested in Chinese business, of which I have some advantage. But because of my bad English, they think it would be hard for them to communicate with me. So regretfully I did not get opportunities as much as I could. During the period of the English course, my English has improved and it made it possible to provide some information and advice to British firms, and of course, that had an economic impact".

Barbara, a Polish administrator in London, speaking of a common Polish experience.

"They come to England, apply for the job, they don't get it...their education is good, but not their spoken English. I think they are paid less than English people just because (they're) not perfect speaking British".

Georgina, training as a TEFL teacher in London.

"My sister-in-law, who is Spanish, has a first class degree in computer studies from Madrid University, but because her English was not clear, was only able to obtain work as a waitress".

Edita, Polish administrator in London.

"I believe that at the beginning, clear Spoken English would (have) helped me get a better job and a higher position".

Laura Wang, a Chinese surveyor in London.

"In 1998 I had my first RICS APC interview – a professional membership assessment for surveyors, which involved a one hour official interview. I failed that first attempt just like 60% of other native speakers. However because of this failure, (the) Home Office refused to extend my training visa, with a comment that it was my English that could have hampered my

progress in professional development. At the time, the condition of the extension for my visa was passing (the) APC". (See appendix I for full text).

Marta Graczk, Polish unemployed in London.

"I had an interview with a bank.. he said he would prefer to have someone whose English is not causing problems at work...I did not get the job. Probably there was someone with no lack of clarity in spoken English"
(See appendix II for full text).

John, civil servant with the DoE (Department of the Environment), an English observer of the class.

"I know many people who have spent years learning English and still can't be understood. They have never learnt how sounds in English are produced, whatever language school they have attended.

Defrim; Kosovan finance executive working in London.

"Yes, it has had (an economic impact), this especially on getting the job that I am aiming at. Not having the clarity on your voice means you have difficulties in being understood by the people who are interviewing you. I have lost many jobs opportunities only because having difficulties in communication, even though I had all the right qualification, experience and the other skill required to do the job. Most of the jobs in UK, especially London, are based on service sector, where communication is the most essential skill that one must have. Therefore having a foreign accent or not being clear on what you saying does not help what so ever."

Some guidelines/recommendations of how to implement the training

I have come to the conclusion that this type of learning is best tackled in two stages; each stage comprising about 20 hours, delivered in roughly 3-hour classes. The ideal number of participants would be 6-8. This allows for frequent individual focus which acts as a learning experience for all – comparisons in class can be very useful.

The gap between the two stages allows the physical and phonetic elements time to bed in, before this is applied to connected speech in Stage II. Ideally, the teacher should leave a gap of couple of months or so between stages. This promotes focus, giving the learner a deadline to aim for. The odd chase up email doesn't go amiss, either.

This forty hour model would be much reduced for one-to-one clients and possibly extended were you to teach groups larger than ten. It is always best to be realistic about how long the training may take and what you can achieve in the time and with the numbers given. Be clear about what is ideal with the client. But in reality, you may need to be flexible around the specific needs of the client group.

Of course, there is not always the budget or the time for the forty-hour ideal. You have to be creative and deliver as much as you can, given constraints. One model involves having two trainers. I recently delivered a Spoken English Skills course to twelve local council workers in three, half-day sessions with a colleague. We both taught a group session for two hours, then each taught two, one hour individual

sessions. This 1-2-1 tutorial was followed up with a bespoke email to the individual. That way we covered consonants then vowels then connected speech over the three morning sessions (12 hours total), and each individual had their specific issues addressed. Not ideal – but they seemed pleased.

On any timescale, the process depends on a degree of home practice. Progress will be very much slower if the learners just rely on the classes. The homework targets each week should be simply and clear, outlined in handouts, even CD's, and rehearsed in class. Each week too, check that the home exercises are being practiced correctly. Constantly reiterate, particularly at the earlier stage, that little and often should be the practice regime.

To give you some ideas for delivery here is a rough learning trajectory;

- Explain speech fundamentals – how it works. Focus particularly on head/neck, tongue and jaw tension.
- Face muscle and tongue exercises.
- How consonants are made and learning their phonetic symbols.
- Voiced / unvoiced consonant exercises.
- 'Consonant after vowel' exercises for word end practice.
- The muscularity and sensuality of sound explored through given exercise and practice sheets.
- Focus on troublesome consonants – give specific exercises.
- Placement. Compare where each native sound present is placed.
- Vowels – up, down, back, front, open or lip-rounded. Phonetic symbols.
- Vowel slides and length comparisons. With phonetic symbols.
- Basic single word phonetic transcription.
- Intonation and stress.
- Word endings in connected speech.
- Shakespearean sonnet to explore all elements and entrench ownership of the language.

Exercises that can be used to address some common issues

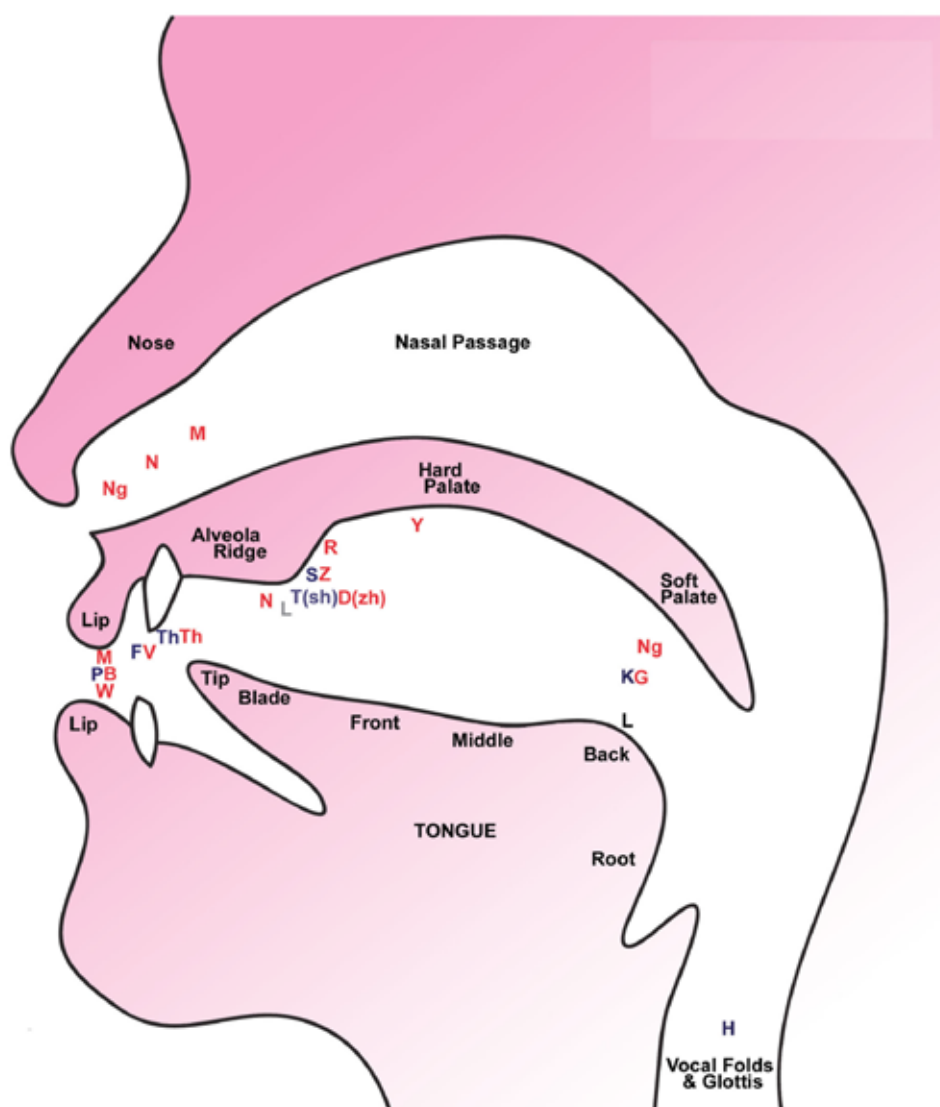


THE TONGUE CAMERA

Done in the early stages this introduces the client to the physical and sensual nature of speech. It also provides a memorable picture of the surfaces of articulation.

- With eyes closed think of a camera in the tip of your tongue.
- Now feel as you see, through the little imaginary lens.
- Explore the lips, front teeth edge, alveolar ridge, the hard then the soft palate.
- As you explore the surfaces and muscles think of what sounds are produced using those particular surfaces.

SURFACES OF ARTICULATION



Illustrator Alice Martin 0208 245 27981
Alicemartinvo@blueyonder.co.uk

Consonants

Voiced
Unvoiced

PLOSIVES	FRICATIVES	AFFRICATES	NASALS	FRICTIONLESS CONTINUANTS
P B	F V	(Church) T(sh) D(zh) (Judge)	M	W
T D	(Thing) Th Dh (The)		N	R
K G	S Z		Ng (Sing)	Y
	(Ship) Sh Zh (Measure)			(Lucky) L L (Goal)
	H			

CONSONANTS – THE THREE STEPS.

This progression, based on the work of Annie Morrison and Cicily Berry, is designed to replicate in some manner the easy, fun and physical way we discover sounds as infants. The use of the hands moves the focus away from the organs of speech, leading to less tension. It is very interesting to note that the amount of tension in the hands, during the exercises, is unconsciously mirrored by the amount of tension in the tongue and lips.



1. Bouncing

Designed to produce a more clear definition between a voiced and unvoiced consonant – this is one of the most common issues for the non-native speaker. It can make all the difference.

- Imagine the consonant you are working on as a little ball you can bounce in your hand.
- In your right palm – if that's the one you write with – is the voiced consonant as a little red ball.
- In your left hand is the unvoiced twin consonant as a little blue ball.
- Bounce the ball three times as you say the sound in each hand. For instance PPP – BBB.
- Repeat triple bounce in each hand three times.
- Then bounce each ball hearing the difference becoming greater all the time.
- It is important to really focus on the image – the hand/eye coordination seems to really root the work in the brain and the musculature.

2. Flicking

This produces clearer, more precise consonant creation. Here the thumb and finger are mirroring the surfaces of articulation.

- Think of the consonant as a pea, sitting on the pad of your thumb.
- Decide precisely where you want to flick the pea.
- Flick the pea as you make the consonant sound.
- Notice that if the flicking finger is loose and floppy so is the consonant creation.
- Experiment with the amount of muscular tension in the finger to produce the desired target sound.

3. Connecting

A traditional exercise, but highly effective, particularly as part of the three consonant steps. If, for example, you find you lose precision with a consonant placed on the end of the vowel, you can go back to step 1 or 2 to regain target sound. Have fun with it. Notice how the sound becomes better the more relaxed you are.

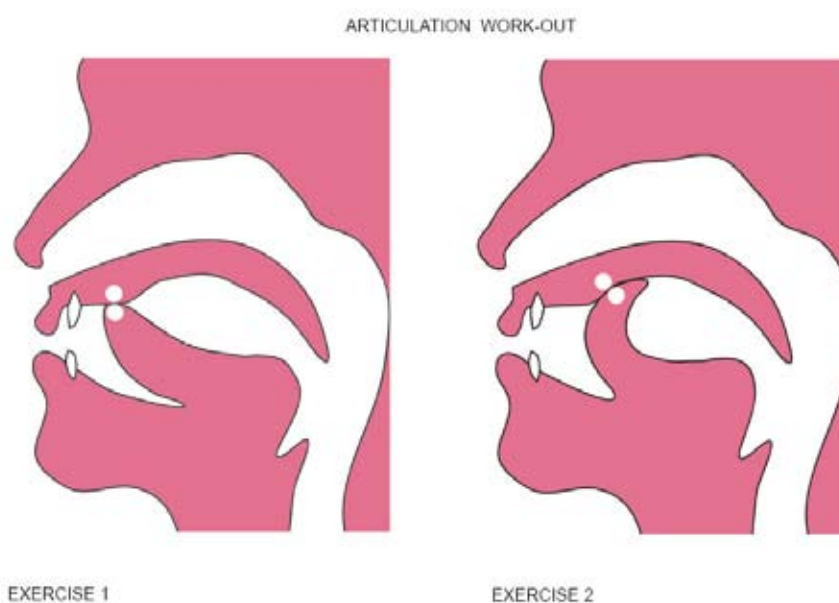
OO – OH – OR – AH – AY – EE

- Place the consonant before each vowel – BOO, BOH etc.
- Place the consonant after the vowel to practise word endings – OOB etc.
- Explore the sensuality of the sounds particularly on voiced consonants and dark L's.

Double check; make sure that you don't lose the voiced or unvoiced quality when you put the consonant after the vowel. Be careful that you don't cheat with schwa's OOBA, OHBA etc.

THE HELD TONGUE

A miraculous catch-all of an exercise. This was originally an Annie Morrison exercise to establish correct tongue placement, for the R sound and T,D,N,L – and it works very well for that. However I noticed it also really brought the sound forward and greatly exercised the lips and surrounding muscles. This lets the sound really fly out. It's powerful stuff – don't over do it. Another benefit is that it allows you to really explore jaw tension, and to realise that jaw tension recedes as the lip muscles take over responsibility for sound. It even helps those with a stiff upper lip.



Join the dots, as illustrated, for each exercise. Gently keep the dots in contact as you say the days of the week and then the months of the year . Repeat. (Remember to exercise the lips and release the jaw)
Now let go and say the days of the week as normal.

1. Curl the tongue back and hold against the alveolar ridge as shown on diagram 1.
2. Keep the tongue and the alveolar ridge connected whilst you mouth the days of the week.
3. First time through, do it through the jaw and notice how that feels. How difficult it is.
4. Now go through the exercise, letting just the lips have responsibility for mouthing the words. Notice as tension fades the exercise becomes easier and the lips free up.
5. Keeping the connection say the months of the year.
6. Still keep the connection going and say the days of the week again.
7. Let the connection go and freely say the days of the week. Feel and hear the difference.
8. Place the tongue tip against the alveolar ridge as shown on diagram 2.
9. Hold together and repeat the exercise steps 2-7.

I hope that this brief chapter has provoked thought and interest in Spoken English skills training. This is a subject that to my mind should be taught as widely as we have the resources to cover. The need is there both economically and socially as I have tried to show. For me it is rewarding beyond measure to teach spoken English Skills. I hope the same goes for you. Good Luck.

1. Write your response to the statement, "Ultimately it's up to the learner, not us, to decide what sort of English they want to speak."

2. The teaching of phonetics is a skill that requires study and practice. Try out the exercises outlined in this module. Record your impressions of how effective each exercise was. Record learner feedback on each exercise.

Notes

27. Bruce Wooding, Head of Professional and Community Development, Central School of Speech and Drama.

28. See Appendix for complete text of interviews conducted.

Appendix I

Benefits of Clear Spoken English Course Laura Jia Wang

Recently, my career in London started to take off and moved towards management following years of experience. I started to work on supervising junior staff and get involved more on client facing. There are many meetings and discussions throughout the working days. It is frustrating; however, I notice how struggling sometimes I can be just to make myself understood easily and rightly. Most of time, I conclude, it is not due to bad grammar or lack of vocabulary, but the way how I deliver the message – how I talk!

Being a non-native English speaker, verbal communication has always been a major hurdle in my job in the UK. As a construction project cost consultant, my work involves many preparation of cost reports of which include lots numbers rather than words. Skill in wording and language were seemingly rather secondary to me. However, all these were changed after a small incident in my current project.

Perhaps, I have always been 'lucky' previously. I have been working with people who are so patient with my broken Chinglish and I was able to get away with lots of mistakes without receiving much criticism. Now, in my current project, this seems a thing of the past. Having lived and worked in the UK for nearly a decade, it was shocking when my line manager recently made a comment to me: 'Your English is

appalling!'. I can not recall what exactly I said. But I believe it was due to how I said which prompted this rather appalling remark (at the time I thought). Ironically, put his perhaps limited patience aside and the fact he is a Scottish himself, I actually appreciate his comment now. It really woke me up and made me determined to do some thing about my voice and spoken English – seeking professional help.

Since joining the 'Clear Spoken English' course at Central Club, I learned how to control speech and how to pronounce the vowels and consonants in a proper English way. Being one of the Chinese from mainland China, I started learning English in American accent since my teens. It is not natural for me to speak English as English do. However, what Clear Spoken English course has taught me is that although old habit dies hard, people can still improve or change their pronunciation within a short period of time, given a professional coaching and guidance. However, all the changes must come within. What I finally realise is that it makes so much sense to talk in English accent when working with English! It makes me more easily understood and even makes me just friendlier to my colleagues.

Almost immediately, I noticed some interesting changes in office communication. First, people seem to pay more attention and interest to what I say. Second, I do not have to repeat what I say as often as I did before. Third, I start to make more constructive comments during meetings.

Because of all these improvements, my confidence has increased and I become more spontaneous in terms of problem solving and more proactive in terms of taking action. I believe these positive changes are the direct result of some small exercises I learned from the course and the professional voice guidance especially some honest constructive criticism given by the coach.

Following this recent incident, more memories flashing back in regard to my English. Back to year 1998, I had my first RICS APC interview – a professional membership assessment for surveyors, which involves a 1-hr official interview with a panel of 3 assessors. I failed that first attempt just like 60% of other native speakers. However, because of this failure, Home Office refused to extend my training visa with a comment that it was my English that could have hampered my progress in professional development. At the time, the condition of the extension for my visa was passing APC. Luckily, I was working on an Asia project therefore my firm managed to provide a unique reason to extend the visa.

Looking back, I REALLY wish I had been such course earlier. Or perhaps ideally my British firm could have organised such course as part of my professional training programme during my earlier years in the UK. If so, I could have been able to make my presentation more clearly and sail through the APC interview in the first attempt. In the profession of surveying, passing APC and becoming chartered is the biggest milestone for career development and recognition. Being a mature trainee from overseas, the earlier I could pass APC, the quicker I could catch up with my peers in the UK in terms of career development. It has been a massive learning curve for me.

After all, to me, there is something else about being able to speak English more clearly. It is not just for more efficient communication at work but also more importantly it is a skill for life. At personal level, it can bring so much joy and pleasure for the life in England. It creates a new dimension to life if not a change of life itself.

Wow!

Laura Jia Wang, July '06

Appendix II

Marta Grazyk

I have been in England already 2 years and I can feel that I am being treated differently due to my lack of clarity in spoken English.

I am now attending a lot of interviews as I am looking for a job and I am being exposed to different environments and different people. I feel that many times I am not being given the job due to my English.

Recently I had an interview with a famous bank and already in the beginning of the interview the man made it clear that he was happy that I came but I had to be aware that they were looking for someone with native English. He said that he did not have anything against international people coming here to work but he would prefer to have someone whose English is not causing problems at work.

I have to admit that the position I was applying was basically to book restaurant, make simple phone calls and to photocopy. He was asking me questions about how I feel with their jargon at work and if I could cope with many questions from different people. In the end I did not get the job. Probably there was someone with no lack of clarity in spoken English.

My husband felt that he is being treated differently at his work as well.

He was given a very good offer to work for an IT company and he has accepted it. After sometime he said that he was not feeling very comfortable at work. He said that some English (as they have different nationalities as well) people were trying to give him the feeling that they did not understand what he was saying, although he was clear. Then, the next time someone was on purpose trying to have a discussion with my husband and in the end said that my husband was speaking different and that he did not understand a word. My husband can speak English as he went through the interview and got the job so I do not think that his English is not to be understood.

Marta Grazyk, July '06

Appendix III

Lara Lopez

At the time of finishing my studies in the UK, I could write but I spoke too quickly and therefore, missing a clear delivery. This impacted badly on my employment search as companies thought that I could not put across an argument or explanation of their products and ideas. For 1 year after graduation I really struggled finding a job that suited my studies and ambitions. This directly affected the British economy as either I did not work for a while or my wages were low and, as a consequence, so were my tax contributions.

Lara Lopez, July 06

