



Advance your career with professional English

Hi, I'm Vera from FluentBiz!

I'm a certified English as a foreign language (EFL) teacher with additional **certifications in teaching Business English** and Academic English.



I have **3 years of experience** teaching languages in **Duolingo Classes**, where **my lessons were rated 4.9 out of 5** by students, and at the **Wall Street English** language school in Italy.

Not only have I learnt how to teach English, but I have also worked in an English-language work environment. For this reason, **I truly know what skills are needed** for work and **how to apply them in practice**, for example, to write reports, lead and participate in meetings, or prepare and deliver engaging presentations.

I offer Business English courses, which can be beneficial when applying for your first / next job or when starting to work in an English-speaking environment or when you need to talk to foreign colleges and clients.

I hope you find this guide useful in improving your English for work meetings.

You can find my upcoming **online courses on my website**, fluentbiz.it. If you don't want to miss new courses, you can **sign up to my newsletter** following this link.

If you have any **questions or requests** about my courses and workshops, please feel free to send me an email at info@fluentbiz.it.

I look forward to seeing you at my lessons!

Vera



Effective communication in work meetings is essential for success in any business environment. This guide highlights common mistakes non-native English speakers often make during meetings and provides practical corrections to improve communication and show professionalism.

1. Direct vs. Polite Language

Direct language can sometimes sound rude or aggressive. Softening your language helps you sound more polite. To show that you are open to different opinions, use expressions like “I’m not sure”, or “I think”, and include modal verbs like “may”, “would” and “might”. You can also add a question.

✗ **Mistake:** “You’re wrong.”

✓ **Correction:** “I see your point, but I’m not sure I agree.”

✗ **Mistake:** “We must do this now.”

✓ **Correction:** “It would be a good idea to prioritize this.”

✗ **Mistake:** “This is a bad idea.”

✓ **Correction:** “I’m afraid this approach may not achieve the desired results.”

✗ **Mistake:** “We need to do this my way.”

✓ **Correction:** “I think my idea might work better. What do you think?”



2. Misusing Vocabulary

Be careful when trying to translate words from your own language without knowing if they work in English! They may mean something completely different. Here are a few common mistakes to avoid.

✗ **Mistake:** Saying “actual” or “actually” instead of “current” or “currently”.

✓ **Actual** means *real* or *existing*, often emphasizing a fact. Example: “*The actual cost was higher than expected.*”

✓ **Current** means *happening now* or *ongoing*. “*The current project deadline is Friday.*”

✗ **Mistake:** Saying “eventually” instead of “possibly.”

✓ **Eventually** means *after some time* or *in the end*. “*Eventually, we completed the project.*”

✓ **Possibly** means *it might happen*. “*We could possibly finish this tomorrow.*”

✗ **Mistake:** Saying “argument” instead of “topic”.

✓ **Argument** refers to a *fight* or *disagreement*. “*We had an argument and shouted bad things at each other.*”

✓ **Topic** means *subject*. “*The topic of today’s meeting is our new marketing campaign.*”

3. Interrupting Without Softeners

Using polite phrases to interrupt shows respect while allowing you to communicate your ideas effectively. Add an apology, a polite softener, or turn your sentence into a question to avoid sounding rude.

- ✗ **Mistake:** “No, that’s not true.”
- ✓ **Correction:** “If I could just add something here...”
- ✗ **Mistake:** “We must consider...”
- ✓ **Correction:** “Sorry to interrupt, but I think we need to consider...”
- ✗ **Mistake:** “I want to add something.”
- ✓ **Correction:** “I’d like to add a quick point here if I may.”
- ✗ **Mistake:** “Let me clarify something.”
- ✓ **Correction:** “Could I jump in to clarify something?”



4. Poor Pronunciation of Key Words

Here are a few key terms often mispronounced in business settings. The CAPITAL letters indicate the stressed syllable in the word. Stress means that the syllable is a bit louder and often longer.

Data

- ✗ **Mistake:** Pronounced as “DEIT” as in “date”.
 - ✓ **Correction:** “DAY-ta” (American) and “DAH-tah” (British).
- Example sentence: “We need to check the data before the meeting.”

Colleague

- ✗ **Mistake:** Pronounced as “koh-LAYG.”
 - ✓ **Correction:** “KAH-leeg” (American) or “KOL-leeg” (British).
- Example sentence: “I’ll talk to my colleague about the project.”

Schedule

- ✗ **Mistake:** Pronounced as “SHED-ool” or “SKED-ool” incorrectly.
 - ✓ **Correction:** “SKEJ-ool” (American) or “SHED-yool” (British).
- Example sentence: “Let’s confirm the schedule for next week.”

5. Overly Complicated Words and Sentences

Using overly complex words in an attempt to sound professional can leave a bad impression on others. Always prioritize clarity both in speaking and in writing. Short and clear sentences always work better in work situations than long and overly complex ones.

- ✗ **Avoid:** “We will endeavour to rectify the erroneous data.”
 - ✓ **Correction:** “We will fix the incorrect data.”
- Using “endeavour”, “rectify” and “erroneous” together makes the sentence unnecessarily complicated.

✖ **Mistake:** “We will fabricate a new report for the client.”

✓ **Correction:** “We will create a new report for the client.”
“Fabricate” implies falsifying or making something up that is not true.

✖ **Avoid:** “Regarding this matter, we need to make sure to write a response as soon as we possibly can.”

✓ **Correction:** “We must reply without delay.”
The sentence is unnecessarily long and complicated. Shorter sentences and common words like “reply” make it more natural and easier to understand.

✖ **Avoid:** “Our sales numbers have been augmented this quarter.”

✓ **Correction:** “Our sales numbers have increased this quarter.”

To “augment” something means to make something larger or improve it, but in this sentence it may also mean that the speaker manipulated or inflated the data to present false results.



Final Tip:

Professional English isn't about knowing fancy words; it's about clarity, politeness, and precision. Practise these strategies, and you will notice a positive difference in your communication during meetings.