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APSS – Online classes

Activity 10

Description

Materials	Workbook. Module 3. 3.2 Language functions Discussing and negotiating
Learning objectives	Discussing topics related to computer science appropriately. Using the correct kind of language for different communicative functions in English
Method and objectives	Answer Key / self- correcting + submission
Assesment	Self- assessment and teacher's assessment

To - do
- To revise expressions for discussion and debate:
  - Read 5.1, 5.2, 5.3 carefully.
  - Do exercises 1, 2 and 3. These exercises are self-correcting (I'll post the key).
  - Submit the folllowing task: Speaking Activity 5. Role Play (p.67). In pairs
    - Choose one of the statements in A).
    - React to express agreement or disagreement.
    - Then expand a bit to give your opinion.
    - Record the role play (no more than 2 min).

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5. Discussing and negotiating

[to-do item] Read 5.1, 5.2, 5.3 carefully.

5.1 Expressions used for giving opinions

Asking for opinions	Expressing opinions
What do you think of...? How do you feel about...? What's your opinion of...?	I think… I believe… + STATEMENT In my opinion,… In my view,… It seems to me that… I'm convinced that… (formal) I'm of the opinion / view that… (formal) I consider... (formal) From my point of view, I think… + STATEMENT As far as I'm concerned… If you ask me,… (informal) I'd say… (informal)

5.2 Agreeing/disagreeing

[to-do item] Do exercises 1, 2 and 3. These exercises are self-correcting (I'll post the key).

Exercise 1

Read the following transcript of a meeting and underline those expressions used by the speakers to:

• state opinions
• agree
• disagree

Klaus Ehlers: OK, first of all … er, could I ask if anyone has any questions, er, on this survey the working party has carried out in the Madrid office?

Andrea Thompson: Er, yes. Can I just check the figures? Were there really 2,560 sheets in one month?

Klaus Ehlers: Oh yes, absolutely. They were carefully counted.

Andrea Thompson: Could you say what sort of papers they were?

Klaus Ehlers: Er, well, they varied. There were memos, questionnaires, instructions, up-dates, letters, reports, surveys. All kinds of paperwork.

Mariluz Rivera: Yes, it's quite true there were over two and a half thousand sheets of paper. But before we begin our discussion, Klaus, I think the vital thing to point out is the number of copies included in that figure. In fact there were 720 original sheets, the rest were copies.

Peter Wang: It seems a fantastic amount of paper, but I have always understood that company policy stressed the importance of internal communications.

Klaus Ehlers: I agree, Peter. It has. But we must find a balance which is practicable. Madrid is clearly drowning under a sea of paper.

Andrea Thompson: So what recommendations has the working party come up with?

Klaus Ehlers: We feel that the emphasis should be moved to face-to-face communication. Departmental managers should be encouraged to hold more meetings. Video-conferencing could also be more widely used between branches and subsidiaries. This would radically cut the number of fourth and fifth copies in circulation.

Peter Wang: Don't you think this would be expensive? Especially for routine messages. Why not use fax?

Mariluz Rivera: But excuse me, Peter. I can't agree with you. They just create more paper. In my view it's since the wide use of fax machines that the paper problem has got out of hand. It's too easy …

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5.3 Taking part in interaction: interrupting, questioning, getting clarification

Interrupting
Sorry to interrupt (you) but...
May/Can I interrupt (you) for a second...
May/Can I break in for a second...
I'd like to make a point...
Hold on a moment! (informal)

Questioning
If you want to ask a question politely, make a request to ask a question or express your desire to ask a question rather than asking directly:

> May / Could / Can I ask a question?
> I'd like to ask a question.

Speakers are also expected to allow time for questions and discussion at the end of a presentation. This question-and-answer stage can be considered a very important aspect of the presentation. Often the speaker misunderstands a question, because the point is lost in an over-long sentence. A practical solution is to keep your question short. Don't forget that the presenter may not be sure, when you start to speak, that you are asking a question.

So you need to make clear:

A. that it's a question
B. what the topic is
C. what the point is

e.g.
> 'I have a question…   …about assessment on the course.
> What is the overall balance between the examinations and the project work?'

- It is sometimes suggested that the speaker should repeat or summarize each question from the audience, before beginning to give an answer. Why is this advice given?
- Questions and answers are not always straightforward. The speaker who is asked a question may understand the question but be unable (or unwilling) to give an answer, in which case, they may avoid giving a direct answer. Below are some examples.

- If you want to avoid an answer
  - (X) is important but it's too complex for us to deal with here.
  - I think we have to focus on (Y)rather than (X)
  - It's too early for us to say whether…
  - We don't have enough evidence to show that...
  - That's not something I've had time to deal with, but...
The listener may also want to say that the answer they have received is inadequate:

- If another question follows up
  - That's not really what I was asking. My question was about...
  - Perhaps I didn't make my question clear. In fact what I asked was...
  - I think you've answered a slightly different question.
  - I've understood that but what I actually had in mind was...

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These expressions are relatively polite and formal. What words could you omit from each example to make them more direct? What type of words are they?

Getting clarification
When using a foreign language, we have to get used to dealing with situations where we do not understand, or partly understand, what the speaker has said. If you are taking part in a seminar or meeting, where time may be short, it is important to make it clear to the speaker precisely what your problem is. If you ask a very general question, you may find that the speaker simply produces a repetition of what s/he said before.
There are several ways of getting clarification, and you may use these common expressions:

- Non-comprehension:
  - I'm sorry, I didn't understand/catch what you said about (X).
  - I'm sorry, could you repeat what you said about (X)?
  - What does (X) mean?
- Partial comprehension:
  - What (exactly)did you mean when you said (X)?
  - Could you be more specific about (X)?
  - Could you expand a little on what you said about (X)?
  - Could you give an example of...?
  - Could you explain in more detail what you said about (X)?
- Getting confirmation:
  - So you're telling me that I can't…?
  - So what you're saying is that...?
  - So you mean that...?

Exercise 2
[to-do item] Do exercises 1, 2 and 3. These exercises are self-correcting (I'll post the key).
Decide into which group (stating, agreeing, disagreeing) these expressions would fit best.
1. I couldn't agree more.
2. In my opinion it's too late.
3. Of course.
4. Quite so.
5. I'm not at all sure.
6. I really can't agree.
7. I'd go along with that.
8. Exactly / Absolutely.
9. Not entirely.
10. Correct.

Exercise 3
[to-do item] Do exercises 1, 2 and 3. These exercises are self-correcting (I'll post the key).
Match the expressions on the left with the expressions on the right that have the same meaning:

I think we should	In my opinion, we should…
What do you think about this?	What's your opinion on this?
How about?	I suggest
Good idea	I agree
I'm not sure about that	I need more time to think about that
I'm afraid I have to disagree with that	I'm sorry, but I can't agree with that
I'm afraid I'm not sure what you mean	I'm sorry, I don't quite follow you

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Speaking Activity 5. Giving an opinion

[to-do item] Submit the folllowing task: Speaking Activity 5. Role Play (p.67). In pairs
- *Choose one of the statements in A).*
- *React to express agreement or disagreement.*
- *Then expand a bit to give your opinion.*
- *Record the role play (no more than 2 min).*

A) React to the following statements by giving your opinion.
1. "Mobile phones are being abused and are annoying. They were intended for communication, but have invaded every aspect of society. Individuals cannot have a face-to-face conversation without someone having to use his or her mobile phone!"
2. "I think that developers should concentrate their attention on educational software more than they do on computer games and game consoles."
3. "Information provided on the Internet cannot be trusted since anyone can publish anything without having to verify facts."
4. "It is not the hacker's fault; the computer designer should work harder on computer security."
5. "I don't think computers control our lives; and they never will"

B) Discuss the following. The use of computers in the classroom (secondary school / university)

"I think that developers should concentrate their attention on educational software more than they do on computer games and game consoles."

I: Hi?
J: Hello Isma! I was calling to ask you what's your opinion as a developer of one statement I heard last week.
I: Of course! Tell me.
J: Textually: "I think that developers should concentrate their attention on educational software more than they do on computer games and game consoles.". How do you feel about it?
I: Mmmmmm… If you ask me, I say that I really can't agree. In my opinion, both education and video games are very important in the development of a child. On the one hand, children have to be educated, and on the other hand, they also have to be able to play and be distracted.
J: So you mean that developers have to concentrate their attention equally on educational software and computer games?
I: Quite so, but I'd say that they could concentrate their attention on educational games. This way, children will learn while they are having fun!
J: Oh, I couldn't agree more with you. Thanks for your opinion Isma!
I: You're welcome Júlia! Have a nice weekend!
J: You too!