

## INTRODUCING PEOPLE

(Adapted from: Štěpánek, L., deHaaff, J.: Akadmeická angličtina, Grada, Praha, 2011)

Read the dialogues below and decide which form of introducing would be appropriate for small talk in formal (F) or informal (I) situations.

1)

A: Oh, Doctor Fischer, have you met my colleague, Ms Carraro? Doctor Fisher is the Head of our Department. Ms Carraro is the Director of the Office of International Studies in Padova.

B: Hello, Ms Carraro, pleased to meet you.

C: Hello, Doctor Fischer, very nice to meet you too.

2)

A: Professor Colwell, there's someone I'd like you to meet, it's Mr Sanz. Mr Sanz is our National Contact Point in Spain. Professor Colwell is responsible for the UK section.

B: Hello, Mr Sanz, it's a pleasure to meet you.

C: The pleasure is mine.

3)

A: Hi, this is Garry. Garry, it's Eva. Garry is the crazy guy I met in Morocco last year. Eva studies Law and is Mark's best friend.

B: Hi. How're you?

C: Hi.

4)

A: Anybody going to introduce me?

B: Sure. This is Andrea, my room mate. And here's Clara, Steve and Johann, we all met at Erasmus in Barcelona.

A: Hi guys!

C,S,J: Hi!

5)

A: Hello, excuse me ... I'm sorry, I don't mean to interrupt ... I just wanted to introduce myself, I'm Bob Font from the University Press.

B: Oh, hello, nice to meet you. I don't believe we've met before.

A: No, no we haven't. I saw your presentation this morning and I think it is great what you are doing and I just wanted to know if I could ask some questions.

6)

A: Good evening, Mr Siddall, isn't it?

B: That's right, yes, hello.

A: Hi, it's a very nice party you have put on here.

B: Oh, well, glad you're enjoying it!

A: I don't think we've actually met formally yet.

B: No, no I don't think we have.

A: My name's Linda Osborne and I work in our Research and Development Office.

7)

A: Sally, I think you've met Mr Lomell.

B: No, I haven't actually.

A: OK, Mr Lomell is the colleague from Birmingham I told you about. They've been doing more or less the same as us, you know the OPAL Project. Sally is my colleague, Sally is responsible for the quality assurance management.

L: Hi, nice to meet you. And, call me Mark.

S: Hi, Mark. Nice to meet you.

## SMALL TALK

*I'm being quiet now. That means it's your turn to talk. – I'm trying to think of what to say.*  
(Cagney & Lacey, 1982)

**Task:** Match the phrases with their turn taking functions.

- 1) Stating an opinion
- 2) Asking for an opinion
- 3) Agreeing with an argument
- 4) Offering an alternative
- 5) Clarifying
- 6) Requests to repeat
- 7) Finishing a discussion

a)  
Sorry, I didn't get that.  
Pardon me, you were saying what?  
What was that she said?

b)  
Of course.  
I agree completely.  
You're absolutely right.

c)  
Personally I think it is obvious.  
In my experience, this has never been easy.  
Well, speaking for myself, I would not do it.

d)  
Sorry, I am afraid, we should be going now as the sessions are about to start.  
Oh, we could have something to eat now.  
Excuse me for a sec, there's a colleague of mine I need to talk to and I do not want to miss him.

e)  
Well? What do you think?  
Isn't that true?  
How would you react?

f)  
No, no, what I said was just the opposite.  
Well, I am afraid I have been misunderstood.  
Yes, but I was only referring to that particular case.

g)  
On the other hand, it does not have to be that straightforward.  
OK, but when I come to think of it, there could be some different solutions, too.  
Actually, now that I've thought about it more, I wouldn't say it is the only way they could proceed.

**Task:** *How would you react to the sentences below so that the conversation could continue smoothly?*

a) I don't like coffee it's too bitter for me. How do you find it?

b) A friend of mine is now in Slovenia doing some paragliding. I couldn't do such a thing. I would be too scared. How do you get on with extreme sports?

c) No, public transport is terrible in this place. It's almost non-existent so everybody needs to have a car. I presume it must be better where you come from?

d) We had a terrible winter last year, loads of snow and -17°C for a few weeks. It was really unusual. Was it similar in ... sorry, where, did you say, you come from?

e) Oh, I love it. Half my family lives in the country and I love visiting them. Do you often get out of the city?

f) We are planning to go to Barcelona. We were there four years ago and we really enjoyed it. Have you ever been?

g) The key note speech was really excellent. I loved the part about English as lingua franca. What do you think of their suggestions about future development?

h) Yes, the film Avatar was a great success, but I think it is mostly thanks to the technology. Do you like 3D movies?

i) We've seen some real changes recently. You know, the crisis and government cuts, but the pressure on project work is still the same. I think it is the same everywhere, isn't it?

j) I am going to give my talk tomorrow; actually I am the very last speaker of all. Any advice?

*Match the sentences and conversation samples with the situations:*

- a) Interview (for media)
- b) Small talk
- c) University work discussion
- d) Panel discussion
- e) Job interview
- f) Presentation Q&As

1.

A: Hi, how're you?

B: Back at yeh. Where are you up to in the book? That lecture was hmm ... mind-numbing.

A: What did you think of that last bit about the CZ being a masculine culture? Don't know I buy into all that 'male attributes being positively reinforced' stuff.

B: Well, I don't know Prof Smith gave some good examples of - you know ... ,

A: I'm sure I can get just as much convincing stuff for the other side.

B: Yeh, OK let's go and find the others and see what they think.

A: Well, I need to go to the library first and pick-up the books I put on order. Can I join you all later? Where are you all going?

B: Hmm, we were thinking of going to the pub on Bridge street, but text me when you're finished to find out where we've ended up.

A: OK see ya, Bye

2.

A: Hello, my name is Mike Campbell. I'm the CEO of Ajax Human Relations Industries. You must be Sally Thomas? Please come in. How are you?

B: Hello, I'm pleased to meet you.

A: Did you have a hard time finding us?

B: No, not really, though I did need to ask someone where 38b was.

A: Uh-huh, please sit here. Now, why don't you begin by telling me a little about yourself. You wrote in your application that you had just completed a Masters degree?

B: Yes. Well, I began my higher education at Open University in 2005 where I earned a Bachelors Degree in Social Work. I then went on to The London School of Economics to complete my MBA.

A: OK. Your social work degree is interesting because the position calls for someone with an understanding of our business community. But can you tell me why you feel you might be the best candidate for this post?

B: Yes, well, I'm interested in a career in corporate finance however I also want to be involved in the social side of business so I believe something in human resources, which is what you are advertising for, will suit both of these interests.

3.

A: My guest today has been called a rare commodity. He left prison in better shape than when he arrived. Welcome to the programme Wilbert Rideau.

B: Thank you –good to be here.

A: You have spent 44 years in a USA prison. Can you tell us a little about yourself and how you ended up on death row?

B: Yes, in 1961 I robbed a bank and subsequently killed one of the hostages I had taken with me as I escaped.

A: Are you sorry for what you have done?

B: Most certainly – I mean of course. If there is one moment, one thing – event in my life I could change it would be that –it is the most shameful thing ...

A: I need to know how you dealt with the self-hate.

B: I had to get over that or else I would have been gone myself. I began to write it out ...

A: But before we get into your writing I would like to explore how you live knowing how you are living while your victim had the most horrendous last minutes on earth.

B: I feel now I am living for two ...

4.

A: The subject of your dissertation needs to be carefully thought out, you understand. Teaching and research are complementary in influencing what universities do: they're equally important and interdependent, so I think your idea that learning and teaching should be considered analogous is correct in your paper but I suppose what I'm saying is make sure you give both equal weighting.

B: Well, if I need to add anything to balance the two sides I hope you'll be brutally honest, because I need this thesis to be elegant enough for me obtain a scholarship.

A: If you complete and reorganize your chapters according to what we've discussed I believe you'll stand a chance. Universities are looking hard at ways of recognising people who are very good contributors to the development of teaching. Though competition is fierce, university departments recognise not only good teachers but actually teachers who are innovative in their practices.

B: So, should I mention the new, innovative pedagogical approaches and add more student centred approaches in the student learning section?

A: By all means, yes. More and more universities are keen to recognise people who have flexibility in performance profiling to carve positions that fit the skills of individuals.

B: Have I covered enough in that part then?

A: Maybe you should add that universities are hugely motivated around their duty of care to students with all institutions now having in place student evaluation processes that are being taken very seriously.

B: But, Professor Larkins says those processes were set up gradually before the existence of a national learning and teaching body or a learning and teaching performance fund.

A: Let's deal with that in the next chapter. For now, continue editing what you have completed to date.

5.

A: So, are there any questions? Yes.

B: Could I ask? Did you actually study if athletes with high self-esteem were winners, who had already won something, or if those with high self-esteem tend to win more?

A: Thanks for that question. It would be great to compare those two things as well. I did not explain my methods fully today, I am sorry, but I focused on the second case, meaning whether or not high self-esteem helps you win. Yeah?

B: OK.

A: Anybody else? Yes.

C: You carried out the research in three different schools in three different towns. Could you explain why or how you chose those places?

A: Yes, that was interesting. Actually, there were more criteria but I went for those with the best results at international competitions.

D: Please correct me if I am wrong, but isn't it clear that people who are good at sport have high self-esteem?

A: Good point. I completely agree. Yes, that was a hypothesis which was confirmed. But also, what I was trying to find out was the exact relationship between performance and self-esteem.

6.

A: Overall your talk was well presented, especially your relationship with your audience and the visuals you chose. Some of the things you should pay attention to are the people who are engaged with activities other than listening. For example, some in the audience were practicing their own talks, and were not interacting with you. What do you think you could do about this?

B: I saw that and I think I should have given the people in the audience a task while watching to engage them more with the presentation.

A: That is a very good strategy, you can also question specific people in your audience. This puts all your audience on the alert that they may be called on to produce something.

B: I will remember this, thanks. Is there anything else I need to know?

A: Your timing was off because you had to repeat some of your delivery when your audience couldn't hear you because you turned away from them to read the text on your Power Point. I was getting ready to guillotine you when you concluded, but then you left no time for questions. Questions are the most important part of a talk as they give evidence of audience interest and understanding.

B: I understand but there were no hands up when I asked for questions.

A: That was because they were tuned out.

7.

A: Enjoying the party, are you?

B: Yes, it is a lovely place, great atmosphere. By the way, I really liked your colleague's speech this afternoon. Are you working together on that project?

A: In a way, yes, I've been actually living in the States. I have just moved back and I am going to join Miles in the project for the next stage, in two or three months We'll see how it goes.

B: Oh, so you've just come from the States. Which part of the States?

A: Boston.

B: Well, it must be quite a change – coming back here.

A: Well, yes, it is, but I'm glad to be back and seeing my friends again.

8.

A: There are really a lot of tough issues we face related to academic freedom. And we have to talk about them in much more detail and specificity. We have to make clear what the conflicting interests are, about how to weigh conflicting aspects of our mission.

B: OK, so to the point, as we move forward in talking about how to look at our mission and how we interact with industry. Jeremy, would you like to start?

C: Yes, of course we have some classic examples, like the Brenda Lo case. Not only did she sign the contract she shouldn't have signed, the company asked her to sign the contract they shouldn't have asked her to sign, and this University agreed to take that money while they shouldn't have. And of course, all those contracts and agreements were confidential.

B: David, do you wanna speak on that?

D: I do. Isn't there a difference between having confidential agreements - which I agree, are problems - and taking money in the first place? I mean, can someone do professionally competent scientific work with funds, regardless of where they come from or how they were raised? Shouldn't it be evaluated traditionally, through peer review?

9.

A: Well, Sir Ken, can we talk today about the future of our education system?

B: Yes, of course. The kids starting school this year will be retiring roundabout 2070. I don't know anybody who has got the faintest idea of what the world will look like in three years, let alone 2070. Now, when I was growing up as a kid in England in the 50's and 60's, there was a reasonable expectation of what your working life might be like. That's why we had an education system that was shaped the way it was.

A: Predictable.

B: Yes, roughly predictable. By the way, about 80% of people in the industrial economy were doing manual work.

A: Do you think that was in retrospect? We think it was predictable but they had no idea what the future would bring, just as we have no idea today?

B: I think there was a reasonable expectation.

A: More so than today, you are saying.

B: Yes, for example, if you just look at the declining value of the university degree. In the 60s and the 70s, even into the 80s, a university degree was complete guarantee of a secure job, it isn't now. Kids are leaving college now, I think they are better off having a college degree, there is no question about it, but it doesn't guarantee them a job for life at all.

10.

A: You are going to make the speech next month and I am really struggling how to write about you in the little flier.

B: Well, what's the struggle?

A: Well, I saw you speak and I'm going to call you a researcher, I think, but I'm afraid if I call you a researcher no one will come.

B: Why wouldn't they come?

A: Because they'll think you're boring and irrelevant.

B: OK. Fair enough.

A: But the thing I liked about your talk is you're a storyteller. So, I think what I'll do is just call you a storyteller.

B: You are going to call me what?

A: A storyteller.

B: Let me think about it. OK, I'm a qualitative researcher, I collect stories, and maybe stories are just data with a soul, and maybe I am a storyteller. You know what, why don't you say I am a researcher-storyteller. (Brown,2010)

### **3. Presentation Follow-Up Discussion Principles**

#### **4. Structure**

The following points can make your handling questions more effective. Explain why?

INVITE QUESTIONS

LISTEN CAREFULLY RIGHT TO THE END

WELCOME THE QUESTION

REPEAT, PARAPHRASE, OR CLARIFY IF NECESSARY

TAKE TIME TO THINK BEFORE ANSWERING

ANSWER THE QUESTION RELEVANTLY

CHECK WHETHER THE QUESTIONER IS SATISFIED

#### **5. Functions**

It is important to identify a purpose of the question in order to apply an effective strategy for your reaction. What would you do or say if a member of the audience:

1. disagrees with you
2. pays you a compliment
3. questions the accuracy of your sources
4. interrupts you
5. asks for clarification
6. asks an irrelevant question
7. asks for repetition
8. asks for some proof
9. is showing off
10. asks strings of questions

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4F-S6rgf1-E>

<http://www.business-spotlight.de/language-skills/videos/socializing/listening-skills-0>

<http://www.business-spotlight.de/language-skills/videos/socializing/ending-the-conversation-0>