



Social English Power


Effective social communication skills for
advanced English learners

Peter Clarke

INTRODUCTION

The objective of this book is to help English learners improve their speaking skills. It is particularly focused on social speaking, and does not cover workplace English or skills for debating, interviews, presentations etc. It addresses a wide range of everyday situations, introduces commonly-used vocabulary and phrases, and demonstrates how they are used by native speakers. Throughout the book, the user is exposed to skills needed to speak in an up-to-date, native-like way.

The English taught is meant to be “correct” in the sense of grammatically accurate, while recognising that fluent spoken English often takes grammatical shortcuts (such as dropping “I” at the start of the sentence, and using adjectives in place of adverbs (*Did I understand it right?*)). The aim is to present a reasonably international form of English, with a slight bias towards British English. Fillers and vocalisations such as “So,” and “um” are used to create a native-like atmosphere throughout the book. British English spellings are used.

Since practice is critically important for developing language competency, every chapter is rich in speaking tasks for students to perform in small groups. Answers are provided in the book’s website. Further supplementary material, including some resources such as flashcards, links and audio recordings, are also available there, along with a glossary of words and phrases taught. The ‘world’ icon  indicates topics for which online material is provided at www.SocialEnglishPower.com

Many typical men’s and women’s names are used, and these are labelled as male ♂ and female ♀ to help learners with this aspect of English culture.

In order to create a comfortable learning atmosphere, the book uses as little grammatical and linguistic terminology as possible. It also strives to be culturally neutral (to the extent that is possible), and tries to avoid assuming knowledge of customs, personalities or places associated with any one country or region.

WHO IS THIS BOOK FOR?

The level of the material is upper intermediate. It is suitable for more able senior high school students and above. Students can use it by themselves, for self-study, or as a class textbook. It is also designed to be suitable for adult learners outside an academic institution, for example, in a workplace English club. Teachers will hopefully find it a useful resource. It will be helpful for students preparing for the IELTS and other English speaking tests.

It is intended to be suitable for all non-English L1 (native language) speakers, although there is a slight bias towards the needs of Chinese L1 students (for whom Chapter 4 is specifically intended).

WHY THIS BOOK WAS WRITTEN

The idea to write a book focused on social English speaking skills grew out of a need that became apparent during the author's time spent teaching at The Chinese University of Hong Kong. The author would like to thank all his colleagues and students for their encouragement and positive response to the ideas and methods presented here. Any error reports or suggestions for improvement are welcome, and can be sent to info@SocialEnglishPower.com

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Each chapter and section of this book can be used separately. There is no particular need to follow the sequence in which the material is presented. In a few cases, a later chapter will assume knowledge acquired during an earlier chapter, but cross-references are presented to make it easy to refer to the earlier material if necessary.

For many topics, multiple practice exercises are provided. It is recommended that the exercises are used in the sequence given, because they are intended to build up confidence step by step.

*Hong Kong
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 Go to www.SocialEnglishPower.com for lots of additional material, including:

- Glossary of words and phrases introduced
- Answers to practice exercises
- Audio recordings of conversations in the book
- Useful links
- Background information on the author