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Gail Forey and Jane Lockwood

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Talking Across The World



What Causes Communication Breakdown in the Call Centres? The Discrepancies in the Communications Training and Research

Jane Lockwood

The Hong Kong Institute of Education, Hong Kong

This chapter explores causes of communication breakdown in the call centres in the Philippines and how these are reflected in the training programmes offered in the Business Processing Outsourcing (BPO) workplace. The training programmes capture common perceptions about the causes of communication breakdown when the second language speaker (L2S) customer service representative (CSR) tries to resolve the problems of the first language speaker (L1S) customer on the phones. In this chapter, the content of some training programmes are first described and then evaluated against the current linguistic research which discusses where communication has been seen to be problematic in the call centres. Interestingly, there appears to be a gap between what the workplaces are doing in their communications training programmes and what the applied linguistic research suggests they should be doing. The main discrepancies seem to relate to the priority given by the call centre trainers to teaching discrete grammatical and phonological items in an attempt to eradicate first language interference, rather than to train for improved discourse and interactive ability, which, current research is increasingly showing to be the key source of communication breakdown. These discrepancies will be described and exemplified in the present chapter. These discrepancies will be for improving current call centre communications training programmes based on current research and improved understanding of applied linguistic frameworks for planning, delivering and evaluating training.

Introduction

The outsourcing and offshoring (O & O) of business processes from developed countries such as the UK, USA, Australia and New Zealand to cheaper

destinations in developing countries such as India and the Philippines has been rapidly increasing over the last decade (McKinsey report-NASSCOM 2005). Furthermore, there is at least one school of thought that predicts with the latest global financial upheaval this industry is set to escalate as businesses become even more preoccupied with their bottom lines and search for cheaper ways of working (BPAP 2009).

This chapter looks specifically at how the call centres, in these new second language English-speaking call centre destinations are coping with the level of English language service they are expected to provide to first language English-speaking customers on the phones, and how training departments support this. I then look at what the applied linguistic research, including research into call centre interaction, can tell us about what frustrates smooth communication with customers and how this can be better integrated into the training. The final section of the chapter will look at suggestions for change and further areas of research and development that are needed to enhance communications training provision in the global business processing outsourcing (BPO) workplaces.

The Methodology

The data for this chapter has been collected over a number of consultancies carried out by FuturePerfect Business English Specialists* in the Philippines and India (2004–2009) when working with call centres. The consultancies have included carrying out complete 'language audits' for the businesses and reporting on the quality and impact of existing communications training programmes and assessment processes on the business. Typically each 'language audit' encompasses multiple methods of collecting data including:

- (i) Focus group discussions with key stakeholders
- (ii) Observation of training programmes and assessment processes
- (iii) Collection and analyses of key documents such as assessment tasks, training materials and policy statements
- (iv) Collection, transcription and analysis of calls to highlight areas of communication breakdown on the phone.

For privacy reasons the identification of these call centres cannot be made, but they do represent a cross-section of captive offshored, as well as 3rd party outsourced, businesses and also a variety of industry types including IT, retail, telecommunications, banking and insurance.

* FuturePerfect Business English Specialists is a BPO communications consultancy firm based in Manila and Hong Kong.

What is the Business Expectation of the Language and Communication Ability of the CSR?

A colonial legacy left both India and the Philippines with English language competencies that have helped position them as favoured BPO destinations in Asia. While both countries are considered 'outer circle' (Krachuk 1985) countries with their own unique varieties of English, businesses positively view these destinations for outsourcing and offshoring their work, precisely because of their belief that the English language skills are good. However, are these varieties of non-standard English sufficient to meet the English demands of speaking with native speaker customers on the phones when they contact the call centres? Up until the advent of this BPO industry, the standard of these varieties has been acceptable for those seeking work overseas evidenced by overseas employment success. This has been corroborated by the international benchmark levels (e.g. IELTS and TOEFL scores) being attained by nurses, teachers and engineers working overseas. Workers from the Philippines employed as professionals (and indeed domestic workers) around the globe have been welcomed world-wide as 'globally intelligible' in their ability to use good spoken English (Gonzalez 1997, 2004). As well, IT specialists and postgraduate students from India have flocked to the USA over the last 2 decades and have found success in their studies and employment in this new land of opportunity (NASSCOM 2009). However, with the growth of the BPO industry and the movement of call centres overseas in particular, the levels of spoken English have come under much closer scrutiny. There are undeniably convincing business reasons for this new concern. For example, Western businesses do not want to upset their customers with a lower quality communication service, nor do they want to upset their customers with the unpopular decisions of taking jobs out of countries such as the USA and UK to cheaper destinations in Asia (BPAP 2009). The demand therefore for 'native speaker-like' oral competency is now common in the call centre industry in Asian destinations. A corollary of this new concern has been the development of little tolerance for first language interference which many key business stakeholders in the BPO industry believe to be the main cause of communication breakdown. These businesses also have very high expectations for soft skills, intercultural and linguistic performance on the part of the CSR. But how realistic are these expectations? And how are these high order communications skills being sourced at recruitment, supported by training and evaluated for quality?

Unfortunately, the business expectation of strong communication skills operates one way in the call centre interaction, i.e. the business mantra is 'the customer is always right' dominates:

As customers, the native English speakers ideally should also learn to accommodate the language and culture based limitations to the CSR.

Unfortunately, because of the inherent dynamics of customer service and the political and economic implications involved in the outsourcing of US jobs, the burden is left to the non-native English speaking CSRs to support customers efficiently and avoid constant miscommunication in order to sustain the status quo of outsourcing outside the US mainland. (Friginal 2007:335)

Many call centres are currently struggling to meet the native-speaker levels of English required for work and required for the stringent quality assessment benchmarks that form part of the service level agreements (SLAs) signed by the businesses. Subsequently businesses and governments are investing heavily in the assessing and training of both near and pre-hire call centre CSRs in the hope that these solutions will provide a reliable pipeline of CSRs onto the floor. But how successful are these call centre training departments in the communications assessment and training solutions they have created? Communications assessment in the call centres is highly problematic. The lack of language assessment expertise within the BPO, coupled with commercial language tests that are expensive and not tailored to the need of the industry, have resulted in poor recruitment processes and problematic quality assurance processes (Hamp-Lyons and Lockwood 2009; Lockwood 2008; Lockwood, Forey and Eliss 2009). Such limitations negatively impact recruitment rates, which vary between the very low levels of 1–5% (BPAP 2009). In addition, these limitations also negatively affect success and threaten compliance with the SLAs, which in many cases require extremely high levels of language competency. Furthermore, there is an absence of valid and reliable assessment measures which are capable of having a positive washback effect on the training programmes. This chapter focuses particularly on content (e.g. language, culture and soft skills) decisions, made for inclusion as training materials in the programmes.

The Nature of the Call Centre Near- and Pre-hire Training Programmes

It has been observed in the BPO industry in the Philippines that although trainers are degree holders, very few of them have qualifications in the disciplines of education or applied linguistics/TESOL (Lockwood 2004). In addition, this business sector is currently poorly served by the English for Specific Purposes published communications materials. So who currently assumes responsibility for planning, implementing and evaluating the BPO communications curriculum? This burden most often falls on the shoulders of the underqualified trainers in the BPO workplace.

Apart from the trainers lacking the qualifications to develop such a specialized curriculum, a further issue that negatively affects the quality of the communications training programmes is that the solutions are often imported

from call centres abroad (Friginal:2007). These 'transferred solutions' are problematic because they are either imported from native speaker call centres in the USA, UK, Australia or New Zealand or they are imported from other L2S call centre destinations such as India. Those coming from English-speaking countries are problematic because the communication needs of native, as opposed to non-native speakers of English are very different. Flying in native English speaker soft skills trainers from the USA to run English language communication courses for CSRs is common in the Philippines. In one training session however, it was observed that the USA soft skills trainer, who was on a 2-week secondment from the Head Office in Dallas, was instructing the pre-hire agents on the importance of 'apology and empathy'. The workshop provided a lot of input and was very USA ethno-centric. During one training session, the trainer showed a slide that simply said 'Never say - "Sorry"'. The Filipino participants were mystified as to what the implied message was, but as a native speaker I understood it to be that the CSR should perhaps be more effusive, and make careful word choices in their way of apologizing, by saying something like 'I really am terribly sorry about this, how about I . . .?' or 'I do apologise Ma'am'. This level of explicit deconstruction of language points, with simulated practice and feedback, is a standard approach when training for language and communication with second language speakers (L2S), but is uncommon in current soft skills training in the Philippines being conducted by non-language native English speaker specialists. Subsequent to this particular training session, a CSR was heard to say to a grieving insurance claimer whose husband had just died . . . 'I do apologise for your loss'. Soft skills programmes designed for L2Ss need to be substantially revised to incorporate the linguistic and intercultural needs of the L2S CSR. An equally problematic approach is where 'transferred solutions' from other L2S speaker call centre destinations (such as India) are simply picked up and dropped in another L2S O & O destinations (such as the Philippines). This is problematic for two reasons. First the cultural and linguistic needs vary. For example, the wholesale transfer of Indian call centre training programmes, where 'accent neutralization' programmes proliferate, has not been helpful in the Philippine context where current research shows that accent is not a major cause of communication breakdown (Lockwood, Forey and Price 2008). The second reason is that in the call centre industry there is a great deal of swapping and imitating bad 'best practice' models pedaled by large multinational training departments. Such practices relate to for example, the very long recruitment assessment procedures that rely on 'counting' phonemic and grammar mistakes of the recruits and then providing behaviourist-based training programmes to rid the new hires of L2S interference errors.

Who is responsible for making these important training decisions and what is the basis for such decisions? As mentioned earlier in this chapter, this task appears to be left to the trainers and sometimes to senior management who insist on often quite unrealistic outcomes for the time and money invested.

This combination of high (and often unrealistic) expectations; little expertise in the training teams; the mimicking of bad 'best practice' from other call centres, and no time for preparation and upskilling, is resulting in poor curriculum and questionable training in the call centres (Lockwood 2008).

The typical call centre communications programme for pre-hires lasts for 2 weeks full-time. This amounts to approximately 80 hours of training. Each day the pre-hire trainee attends around 8 hours of training that is split into discrete and unconnected lessons on grammar, accent neutralization, soft skills, quizzes and intercultural training. The syllabus documents comprise little more than a collection of activities with most often no stated training aims and objectives. They generally do not provide any pedagogical frameworks nor guides for use to help other trainers. The example of a typical day's training as shown below reflects the good intentions of a training team trying to pack in activities to remediate problems that have been highlighted by quality assurance personnel and team leads on the floor. These programmes however, lack rigour and integration in educational planning and do not draw on applied linguistic theory and good practice in language teaching and learning. Just as seriously, there are no principled measures for success, so we have very little idea as to the impact of the significant investment that call centres are currently making into their training programmes. Interestingly, in the call centre programmes reviewed in this chapter, there was very little listening material and very few examples of real calls for the trainees to practice listening skills. Below is a typical day out of a 10-day training programme. Although the days vary, they are similarly organized.

Such a training programme would be targeted to a group of pre-hire trainees, perhaps 10-20 in a class and the sources of the materials are typically downloads from the internet and homegrown materials.

There are a number of issues that contribute to the poor quality of the communications syllabuses being developed in the call centres. First, there is very little understanding within call centre training departments in the Philippines about the **nature of language**. This is reflected negatively in the curriculum

<p>Monday</p> <p>9-10.30 Grammar lesson: e.g. prepositions; verb/Subject agreement/tenses</p> <p>10.30-12 Soft skills: Dealing with an irate customer</p> <p>12-1: Roleplay</p> <p>Lunch break</p> <p>2-3.30: Accent neutralization drills: tongue twisters</p> <p>3.30-5: Culture training: e.g. facts and figures about the state of Denver</p> <p>5-6: Quiz</p>

Adapted from 2-week call centre training programme in large Manila-based call centre

FIGURE 1 A typical call centre daily training plan

documents such as the one described above. Non-linguists often believe that good language skills relate directly to a good 'knowledge' of the grammar items. This means that the programmes are often packed with discrete grammatical item practice that bears very little relation to CSR functional communication needs. There are two main problems with this view. First, 'grammar knowledge' does not automatically mean an ability to use grammar in real situations. Applied linguists, and particularly sociolinguists, explain the difference between language and parole (de Saussure 1916) and use and usage (Widdowson 1978). 'Langue' and 'use' here being the terms to describe a 'knowledge' of grammar; while 'parole' and 'usage' describe the ability to communicate (i.e. actively produce the language). This distinction is a critical one for trainers to understand in real situations. This lack of understanding was painfully obvious when consulting in a large BPO back office in Manila where one managing director who had just had all his middle management staff complete a exhaustive discrete grammar test developed internally, was at a loss to understand why supervisory staff who had scored 100% on the grammar test could not write or speak good English in the workplace. Structural grammatical items taught in isolation do not result in a functional communication unless the contextual information of content, purpose and audience is provided and explained. An ability to understand and use discrete grammatical items does not magically result in textual competency – that is the ability to make extended communication on the phones with customers successful. Good language use requires the speaker to use language as a 'system of choices' that relies on an understanding of the context. Without this understanding, effective choices cannot be made (Halliday 1985). A sociolinguistic description of the language of call centre customer service interaction is encapsulated in the authentic text of the call itself. Describing and analysing this 'grammar in action' provides the starting point for uncovering what needs to be taught as part of the language curriculum. Generally speaking, in the call centre pre-hire communication programmes investigated, discrete and decontextualized grammatical items are taught with no reference to the authentic texts. Descriptions and analysis by applied linguists of authentic texts will be invaluable for call centre communication programme development. Such analyses will inform materials developers as to the key lexicogrammatical features that cause communication breakdown and contribute to success on the calls. Furthermore, through the collection of data and the expansion of a corpus of call centre interaction, one is able to reliably source high frequency idioms for training. Examples of early research of the textual and linguistic qualities of authentic call centre exchanges are outlined later on in this chapter.

The second problem evidenced in the content of the BPO communication training programmes relates to an unquestioned belief in the call centres that first language interference is the source of many of the communication problems. There is a misconception that if we can only get rid of these L1 features, native speaker proficiency of the CSRs will magically happen. There is emerging

research that challenges such assumptions. First, there is English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) research to show that many first language (L1) interference features do not cause communication breakdown. For example, the kinds of non-standard forms identified for Philippines English (Bautista 2004) are very often evident in call centre interactions. Some of the most prevalent of these include the lack of verb/subject agreement, pronoun switching, non-standard use of prepositions in phrasal verbs, altered use of tense and aspect (e.g. use of past perfect for recent rather than distant past, overuse of the future continuous *will+ing* form,) and most notably the restricted use of modality and overuse of 'would'. In the current research (Lockwood, Forey and Price 2008) there was however, scant evidence of these features causing communication breakdown on the phones in the call centres with the occasional exception of personal pronoun switch, overuse of the modal 'would' and the mixing up of simple present and past tense. There is a growing body of research showing that L2 speakers of English are adept at negotiating meaning around L1 features (Bolton 2005; Kirkpatrick 2007).

When interviewing the trainers who were also the writers of the call centre training programmes, the main rationale for the inclusion of the grammatical items related to the mere fact that they were simply L1 mistakes, rather than if they caused communication breakdown. Relentless drills of decontextualized and discrete grammar items such as verb-subject agreement, tenses and prepositions are common in call centre teaching programmes.

What the Literature and Current Research is Saying

There is an extensive literature that deals with workplace and academic discourses (Bhatha 1993; Candlin, Maleyand Sutch 1995; Idema 1995 and forthcoming; Roberts, Davies and Jupp 1992; Swales 1990; Swales and Bhatha 1983). Perhaps one of the most powerful and relevant studies to emerge out of the applied linguistic literature in the UK, for the BPO is the framework informing the Industrial Language Training (Roberts, Davies and Jupp 1992). The value in this framework is that it links directly to practice. They say that theories of interaction have three major functions for trainer as a curriculum developer:

1. to describe: they provide descriptive accounts of what is involved in interaction and thus they can also help us to develop a critical awareness and analysis of the interaction;
2. to interpret: they provide analytical tools for understanding how people make sense when they talk to each other;
3. to explain: allied to interpretation, they can help us to relate the specific and local in interaction to the social institutions through which things get done and which determine our social and economic well-being

(Roberts, Davies and Jupp 1992:30)

Many theoretical linguists have picked up on these components of this framework. Candlin, C. N and Candlin, S. (2003) and McNamara (1990) have looked also at the medical profession; Idema (1995, 2003) has looked at, and is looking at, the discourse of the public service and administration in Australia; several studies have been carried out on the discourse of teachers in classrooms (McDowell 1995; Elder 2001; Gibbons 2006) as well as other professions such as accountants (Nunan and Forey 1996; Forey and Nunan 2002), the metals and engineering industry (Mawer 1993, 1999), pilots and air traffic controllers (Alderson 2007) UN peacekeepers and business managers and leaders are also under investigation.

In recent years there have been a number of studies completed on the subject of English language communication breakdown in the Asian call centres (Clark, Roger and Murfett forthcoming; Cowie 2007; Forey and Lockwood 2007; Friginal 2007; Hood and Forey 2008; Lockwood 2008; Lockwood, Forey and Price 2008; Lockwood, Forey and Elias 2009). These studies have used a sociolinguistic framework to look at authentic call centres data, notably either conversational analysis (CA), corpus studies or systemic functional linguistics (SFL). Forey and Lockwood (2007) based their research into the textual flow of the call centre interaction and transaction based on listening to over 500 inbound call centres calls across a range of different industry types. After identifying what appeared to be the generic structure and identifying obligatory and optional stages, they focused on where, in the textual flow, the calls appeared to be breaking down. Specifically, it became evident that the major problems in communication lay in expressing and understanding the purpose of the call and in the servicing stages. Interestingly, the specific areas of breakdown appeared to have less to do with the phonological and lexico-grammatical choices made by the L2S CSR and more to do with the interpersonal, intercultural and discourse capabilities of the CSRs.

Lockwood, Forey and Price (2008) carried out a further study isolating the specific communication areas of breakdown in the calls and again this study was based on a range of calls collected in the Philippines. This study again used a communicative competency framework domains of phonology, lexico-grammar, discourse and interaction (Canale and Swain 1980, 1981) to investigate the nature of the communication breakdown. From an analysis of this data set it was found that there were examples of communication breakdown due to the Philippine English (PE) reduced consonant and vowel sounds, although these were extremely rare. Interestingly it was also found that customers complained about the CSR's accent being hard to understand when, in fact, the research showed it was other features (notably interactional and discoursal limitations) of the CSR's communication that was causing frustration as described below:

Example 1

CSR: I'm explaining it to you Ma'am, it's for privacy purposes, it doesn't show here in my system but you do have a beneficiary, it's just not showing

in my system , but I can request a letter indicating for you who your beneficiary is. . . .

Caller: Well, you know you're not very plain. You have an accent right? I'm having trouble understanding you. Are you saying it does not show a beneficiary? Are you saying that? Are you saying that? (Lockwood, Forey and Price 2008, p. 231)

In this study, it was also found that non-standard patterns of Philippine English (Bautista 2004) such as the lack of verb/subject agreement, pronoun switching, non-standard use of prepositions in phrasal verbs, and altered use of tense and aspect were prevalent, but rarely did they result in serious communication breakdown. Callers and CSRs appeared to be adept at negotiating meaning around these non-standard patterns if they threatened communication. More serious communication failure appeared to centre around the interactional and discoursal language choices and limitations displayed by the CSR in the calls. To a certain extent, caller frustration was more frequently found in the calls because the CSR appeared vague, robotic, rude, incompetent, confusing, long winded, etc.

This initial work has been further expanded by Forey and Hood (2008) who investigated the nature of the interpersonal interaction/transaction in the call centres and specifically the interactive rise and fall of emotion. The calls used for this research were based around problematic call in inbound telephone conversations collected from call centres in the Philippines. This study draws on Appraisal theory (Martin and White 2005) and shows that reliance on implicit (for example the use of phonological devices e.g. equal stress on words to carry the meaning of impatience), rather than explicit attitude (where the caller would say 'I am really fed up with you!') with both the caller and CSR is common, although this is manifested in different ways. While the caller frequently grades up FORCE in references to time taken, or number of contacts, the CSR employs such lexico-grammatical choices such as concessive connectors e.g. *just, already, once, yet and actually* to control the interpersonal aspect of problematic calls. Wan (forthcoming, and see current volume) and Cowie (2007, and current volume) have both researched the area of prosodic features in the call centre interaction. Wan (forthcoming and current volume) explores how voice quality creates meaning potential in conflict between the caller and the CSR. Cowie (2007) explores, through an ethnographic study, how 'accent training' in the Indian call centres impacts the employability of the CSR, particularly in American call centres. Friginal (2008) has researched call centre discourse in the Philippines involving US customers and local CSRs. His research design follows a quantitative multidimensional framework developed by Biber (1988) to extract and interpret linguistic co-occurrence in his corpus. The three linguistic dimensions analysed were first, 'addressee-focused, polite, and elaborated information vs. involved and simplified narrative; second, planned, procedural talk and third managed information flow' (Friginal 2008:715). Results showed variations in the linguistic composition of the discourse of agents and

callers across the three dimensions. He plans to build on this research by extending it to Indian call centres which he thinks may differ. He is also interested in how social categories e.g. speaker roles, gender, the nature of the accounts may determine and predict the use of features across the three dimensions.

Another study (Clark, Rogers, Murfet and Ang 2008) was carried out with call centre data collected from a large insurance company based in Singapore. Response data from around 500 problematic calls were collected from call centres in Singapore. A 'grounded theory' qualitative together with a quantitative (cluster and regression) approach were used to analyse and interpret the data. Four categories emerged that appeared to relate to the notion of courtesy; namely 'shows solidarity', 'anticipates needs', 'shows attentiveness' and 'asks for direction'. The authors make the argument that 'solidarity expression challenged traditional views of politeness and is less about the presentation of self and more about enabling collaboration with the other' (Clark, Rogers, Murfet and Ang 2008:2). This is a significant finding and contributes to the field with implications for call centre communications training which currently appears preoccupied with the traditional emphasis on politeness markers such as empathy and apology.

Very little of this research however, is understood and currently used in the design and delivery of call centre communication training in the call centre destinations.

Discussion

The discrepancies between what the research is now suggesting and what is taught in the communications training programmes in the call centre training departments under investigation are huge. Significant communication breakdown in the call centres appears to relate to the domains of communication performance such as an ability to interact with ease with the customer and an ability to explain products and services, rather than discrete L1 interference mistakes in the grammar and the pronunciation. In order to teach such communication performance, one first has to describe and analyse it from a sociolinguistic standpoint. This means collecting and selecting calls, transcribing and analysing them for their communicative strengths and weaknesses and writing training material that reflect these findings. Counting and describing the number of discrete grammatical and phonological errors in the discourse does not account for communication breakdown. Regrettably this is exactly the approach that is taken by non-linguists working in this field. One trainer recounted the common practice in their call centre in the recruitment and post-course assessment stages, of simply counting the number of grammatical and phonological mistakes to determine suitability for work as a call centre

agent. Another call centre recruiter explained that if a recruitee makes more than 3 phonological mistakes s/he is simply not hired (irrespective of whether the vowel sounds hindered communication). The unfortunate washback of such an approach means that recruitment officers and trainers simply concentrate on discrete grammatical and phonological items that research is showing are of minimal significance in communication success. Not only are potentially good CSRs not recruited for work as a result of such practice, but huge investments of time and money are wasted on such flawed assessment and training practices. More seriously, it would seem, good communicators are not getting access to jobs as CSRs.

Conclusions

Clearly on-going research will be invaluable to this important industry. Further research into the discourse and interpersonal functions of the calls will provide the potential for much better informed materials development and training and coaching within the workplaces in the future. Research into the precise curriculum planning, design and evaluation of call centre programmes may shed light on how best to train trainers in the call centres. It would also be of interest to research the impact of different kinds of communications training, not only in terms of content but also in terms of length, in the call centres; and to research the impact of the call centre communications training not only in terms of final assessment scores, but also in terms of performance on the floor. Much also needs to be done in the area of language assessment research in the call centres. There is a great deal of anecdotal evidence that communications assessment interviews are designed to keep recruits out of employment rather than bring them in. There is also some evidence that new recruits improve their communications skills at an exponential level once they start work on the floor. A research project exploring recruitment assessment practices would highlight practices that may be hindering business development. In addition, a longitudinal study of a sample of new recruits moving onto the phones over a 6–12-month period would be of value insofar that such a study would help predict how fast CSRs become really competent in their jobs.

However, hand in hand with such research, there is a need for professional development of call centre workplace trainers as a way of ensuring that the research outcomes find their way into improved pedagogical approaches in the communications training programmes particularly in the areas of educational planning for adult learning, intercultural training, sociolinguistic theory and practice and language assessment approaches. As has been suggested in this chapter, the applied linguistic skills and approaches that help trainers to analyse their own calls, to integrate the culture, language and soft skills components

more coherent programmes and to make accurate assessments for diagnostic and quality purposes is essential. Until then businesses may well question the wisdom of their investments in communications training and assessment.

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Part IV

Communication Skills: Assessment and its Uses