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WAYS NOT TO BE CONSIDERED IMPOLITE WHEN COMMUNICATING ACROSS CULTURES

Citizens of the West often consider people from the Eastern Europe impolite while speaking English. A study was conducted to find out the reasons. People from all over the world who work or used to work with Eastern Europeans were interviewed about the probable reasons of considering easterners impolite. After long and scrupulous discussions, the conclusion was made.

Using imperative is the first reason. In the western countries, such construction as “Give me please...” will provoke only negative impressions. It can be related to a community, where some features of our behavior were formed. The feeling of living in a huge family that our parents and grandparents used to have in the USSR was one the reasons. Being a generation of independent Ukraine young people grew up with reminiscences of that formation. However, such a way of communication is considered exceptionable in the West and it should be avoided. A comparison of the phrases “Give me please another sheet of paper” and “I would like to have another sheet of paper please?” or “Could I have another sheet of paper please?” proves the latter to sound more polite.

Second. Avoid being too resolute and direct. Even if you are certain about something, make sure to use “seems” or “it looks like” in your expression. According the observations, English native-speakers use “seems” to obvious facts. In an everyday office situation, “My computer is broken” sounds like a direct and a bit hush expression. Consider “My computer seems to be broken” or “It looks like my computer is broken” instead. Obviously, the second variant sounds better and not too direct. It is understood that a person is sure about it but he sounds more adequate and more polite.

The third point is about one phrase that should be used more often. It is “I was wondering if you might be able to...” The phrase is used in case of asking somebody about something. Of course, one can use the shorter variant “Can you...?” or “Could you...?” However, the first variant is worth the efforts. It sounds more open and still polite. By the way, it is also a nice way to start conversation with a stranger.

Now it comes to the last but not the least point. Honestly, it is one of the most important because it makes sense to talk about it even in Russian or Ukrainian. One-word answers are meant. Imagine, the interlocutor saying “Don’t worry about the broken computer. In a moment, we will send someone to have a look at it. You’ll be able to go on working in a few minutes.” Then such an answer follows “OK, thanks.” It is rather natural and routine but it does not sound like a person is

pleased to be taken care of. The better reaction would be to say something like “Sounds good” or “Sounds great”. This way one will sound much friendlier.

To sum it up: try to think west and avoid the native language clichés while communicating with western representatives in order to seem and to sound polite.

LITERATURE

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