Clarifying points in emails.

1) Choose words from list below to fit into each sentence. Only one solution makes proper sense.

matter / What / making / As / hesitate / clear / saying / words / understand / Please / mean / clearer

a) Do I make myself (1. )?
b) Am I (2. ) myself understood?
c) (3. ) I understand it,
d) So what you're (4. ) is,
e) In other (5. )
f) If I (6. ) you correctly,
g) I don't think I can make it any (7. )
h) Do you know what I (8. )?
i) (9. ) don't misunderstand me,
j) (10. ) I mean is,
k) I should like to clarify this (11. )
l) Please do not (12. ) to contact me if you have any questions.

2) Analysis. General questions for discussion.

a) Written language has the disadvantage of sometimes being misunderstood. There are two sentences here which could be misinterpreted and sound rude. Which are they and why are they ambiguous?

b) Which two sentences are the most formal? Why?

c) Ask your teacher about the communicative activity she/he has planned.
**Teacher’s notes.**
*(Time for activity: 30 mins approx. Level: intermediate.)*

**Clarifying points in emails.**

**Correct answers to question 1.**
1. clear
2. Making
3. As
4. Saying
5. Words
6. Understand
7. Clearer
8. Mean
9. Please
10. What
11. Matter
12. hesitate

**Answers to question 2.**

a) This may not be obvious to students. Sentences (a), (b). Firstly, due to the meaning. Secondly, the Anglo Saxon words suggest informality. Sentence (a) is also a phrase used to admonish somebody. (b) uses the very informal "ing" form with the verb "make"; it sounds too colloquial.

This question is just to help the student understand the importance of using the correct and established phrases in business emails which won't sound ambiguous. Note: the translation of these two sentences into the student's native tongue may sound harmless.

b) (k) and (l). They both contain Latin-based words: "clarify", "hesitate", "contact".

c) Ask students to each think of an aspect about their work or a hobby which is rather technical or difficult to understand for others. Get the students into pairs. Ask them to use the phrases to explain and ask questions about the topic they have thought of. [Note: these phrases are commonly used in spoken language too except for (k) and (l), which should be ignored for this activity.]