

# Understanding English however it is spoken

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# To cover...

Why do our learners need to understand English 'however it is spoken'?

Teaching with authentic listening materials

Features of authentic materials compared with scripted materials

Encouraging active listening and clear speaking

# Listening challenges

- We need to build a Russian ship
- It's all about the interpaces
- How ve dolop de project?
- Ver fezes of the project
  
- That's drack leads or SMEs
- So far nothing has gone awree
  
- (What about Texas?)



## What my students tell me

“In the new Supply Chain I am working as Order Fulfillment Specialist in the News Team. I am responsible for customers in Asisa Pacific like, India, Pakistan, Malaysia, Australia and for certain customers in Africa.”

“I’m working in the Supply Chain Center ..... and I’m an Order Fulfilment Specialist. I’m responsible for the countries: Poland, Switzerland, Austria and Slovakia”

“I need English in my daily work due to the communication with the not English speaking markets, because I have to send e-mails with Information to the customer services. Besides I have to clarify with the contact person delivery dates or the paper availability.

The customer service inquires us via chat / e-mail or telephone. They send orders or inquires.”

# Some questions

- Do you often use authentic listening materials in your teaching? If not, why not?
- Do you record your own materials – video, audio? If not, why not?
- Do you use published authentic and/or scripted listening materials in your teaching? If so, which? If not, why not?
- How do your learners respond to working with authentic listening materials?

## Use authentic listening materials

- help learners to communicate in English in real settings
- build sensitivity to a range of accents and improve awareness of pronunciation, stress and intonation differences
- develop everyday vocabulary
- build awareness of the language/grammar which speakers really use (Fragmented sentences, standard and non-standard forms, 'mistakes', false starts)
- widen cultural awareness

## Setting the scene for Seamus recording (from *Collins English for Business Listening*)

- Do you think that the responsibility for clear comprehension lies with the speaker or listener?
- Do other speakers have difficulty in understanding your accent? What efforts do you make to help them?
- Should native speakers modify their accents? Should they limit the complexity of the language which they use?
- Ask your learners to talk about any situations where they have found it very difficult to understand other speakers, or situations where other speakers have not been able to understand them

# Working with the Seamus recording

- Have your learners visited Ireland / Northern Ireland?
- What do they know about the history of Ireland?
- How do they (you??) feel about Seamus's views on 'anglicising' his accent?
- Do any of your learners believe that changing your accent is a betrayal of an individual's linguistic/cultural identity?



# Contracted and uncontracted forms

- Focus on the issue of contraction (*I've* rather than *I have*, *They're* rather than *They are* etc.) in terms of which is easier to understand.
- Note the importance of being able to understand contracted forms particularly when listening to native speakers, but note that using uncontracted forms often helps the listener to understand more clearly.
- Note: Seamus's statement that he avoids 'subjunctives and subordinate clauses' will not mean much to most native speakers, who will have little idea of what such grammatical structures are!

## Some uses of 'will'

Occasionally I will take a client out for lunch.

The rear garden is south-facing so you'll get the sun most of the day.

You have somebody to cook for you. A lady will come in the morning to wash your clothes.

I will recommend you the Peking duck.

# Idiomatic expressions

I put up with the hassle of the day-today commute

I'm sat on the M25 doing no miles an hour.

They look after the nitty-gritty

I may have been cc'd or forwarded

There's a whole mix of making sure you don't drop any balls in the process, 'cos you can't let anything slip.

# 'Mistakes'

Italian people is really people with a good fantasy – happy people

I explain structure of the building. Then I take them down to canteen.

I called a manager in German. Because his English is not very good because he's not English native speaker so his pronunciation is maybe hard for me to understand.

I would say if somebody care of what you are doing, he will probably challenge you and ask you a lot of question.

# 'Active' listening

Ask the speaker to clarify when you do not understand

Ask the speaker to slow down

Ask the speaker to speak up

Ask the speaker to be more specific

Be empathetic

Rephrase what the speaker says

# ..but the speaker needs to help the listener

Don't speak too fast

Give people time to think/respond

Be aware of who you are talking to

Avoid unnecessary idiom and complex grammatical structure

Explain acronyms and abbreviations when necessary

Check others have understood your points

Don't overwhelm the listener with information

# References and resources

- Badger, I English for Life 'Listening' B2+ Collins ELT 2014
- Badger, I English for Life 'Listening' B1 Collins ELT 2012
- Badger, I English for Business 'Listening' Collins ELT 2011 + [App for I Pad](#) 2012
- Walker, R. 'Teaching the pronunciation of English as a Lingua Franca', OUP 2010
- Wilson, JJ. How to teach listening, Pearson 2008
- <http://www.collins.co.uk/page/English+for+Life+Resources>
- - *Additional authentic recordings on the Collins site*
- <http://accent.gmu.edu>
- – *People from around the world recording the same paragraph in English*
- <http://sounds.bl.uk/Accents-and-dialects> – *Examples of regional UK accents and dialects*
- <http://www.languagebyvideo.com>
- - *Video examples of English accents around the world*