

Recording scripts

Unit 2

Starting off

Recording script CD1 Track 5

Woman 1: Where I live people tend to be bilingual – they speak the regional and the national language and they switch between languages with ease. As a result, they seem to find it easier to learn other languages as well. At least I know quite a lot of people who speak several foreign languages.

Man 1: People do worry a bit about how the language is changing. I think, due to globalisation I suppose, lots of fashionable loanwords are coming into the language, particularly from English, so my mother tongue is not at all the same as it was, say, fifty years ago. Personally, I don't know if that's a bad thing – I mean, if people find it easier to express themselves using loanwords, then perhaps they should.

Woman 2: I find it frustrating because I spent years trying to reach an advanced level but now my English has got a bit rusty because I don't use it very often and that's a pity.

Man 2: I spent years at school studying Spanish and never learnt to speak it well. I guess I should have been sent on an exchange to a Spanish or a Mexican school for six months or thereabouts 'cause everyone knows that living in the country, you just pick up the language naturally and that's just about the best way to learn it.

Woman 3: I'm really dedicated to studying languages. I aim to achieve an excellent command of English, which means becoming highly articulate and being able to use the language accurately and effortlessly.

Man 3: Language is a tool for achieving other things and, frankly, I wouldn't consider accuracy to be as important as fluency when learning a foreign language. I think the main thing is to make oneself understood.

Woman 4: We live in a highly competitive world. Countries compete with each other, employers compete with each other and people compete. Consequently, we should be teaching young people to use language for persuasion rather than self-expression. It's all very well being able to say what you think and feel, but you've got to be able to sell yourself, sell your product, achieve your aims.

Listening Part 1

Recording script CD1 Track 6

Extract One

Woman: It's actually a remarkable book, Colin, and particularly because, unlike other travel writers, you've managed to get behind the scenes, talk to ordinary Mongolians in their own language and on their own terms. How in fact did you go about learning Khalkha? Did you go to classes?

Colin: Not exactly. I'd done that for Russian and Chinese, both of which I now speak fluently, but for Khalkha, well, I thought I should pick it up while I was there, you know, learn it on my own and in my own way, so as soon as I arrived I settled into a flat and immersed myself in the neighbourhood and just started talking to people and getting to know them.

Woman: And now you speak it fluently?

Colin: Well, I reckon I can more or less hold my own in a conversation.

Woman: And what do you think is the key to good language learning? Do you have to be naturally gifted?

Colin: Well, obviously for an adult it helps to have some sort of gift, and that's not something we've all got. Being fairly outgoing and uninhibited helps too. I mean, you won't get very far if you're scared of making a fool of yourself, but basically it's application. It's really getting down to it, whatever the circumstances, and getting stuck into it because, you know, any language you learn is going to be more complicated than maths, and you don't learn maths just by being uninhibited!

Woman: Eventually, while you were there you had the amazing experience of being invited to live with a Mongolian family, didn't you? Tell us a little about that ...

Extract Two

Rajiv: I mean I remember the trauma as a small child of ...

Susan: Come off it, don't exaggerate! Trauma!

Rajiv: I'm not! Let me finish! The trauma of learning how to spell – you know, they used to give us dictations in class to make sure we knew things like putting a double 'p' in 'approve' and spelling 'right' with 'GHT'. It's frankly absurd.

Susan: But it's part of the character and beauty of the language – not everything has to be reduced to something functional.

Rajiv: Maybe not, but as a language teacher it would make my life a lot easier ...

Susan: I wonder if that's true – after all, it's not you but your students that get into trouble with bad spelling. Anyway, nowadays with spellcheckers that's hardly their biggest handicap.

Rajiv: But they just don't know how to say new words correctly!

Susan: Then perhaps it's your teaching methods that need reforming!

Rajiv: You've really got it in for me today, haven't you? Anyway, I got to thinking about all this some time ago when I came across something in a magazine quite by chance. One thing it mentioned was that spelling reform would cut the space it takes to write something by about fifteen percent. Imagine: newspapers, libraries and bookshops with fifteen percent more room!

Susan: And think about having to reprint every book and replace every road sign. I think you're being unrealistic, quite honestly. Mind you, I've read a lot about dyslexia amongst English kids and apparently our complicated spelling system is a major factor there ...

Rajiv: If you can call it a system.

Susan: So you might have something there.

Extract Three

Simon: Doing a job interview in English is becoming a common experience for many people from overseas, Peggy, but what can they do to avoid coming a cropper?

Peggy: Well, Simon, the problem is that the candidate often lacks the sort of cultural background that would stand them in good stead in these situations, with the result that while their English is up to scratch, their responses take the interviewer by surprise. You know, a question like 'What do you most enjoy about your present job?', where the interviewer is expecting something about the challenge or working with friendly colleagues or such like, and the interviewee is completely thrown because in some cultures people don't necessarily equate work with pleasure at all.

Simon: It's more for making ends meet.

Peggy: Exactly. And at the same time, because they're nervous, they may be less expressive than normal anyway and this may also show up in their gestures and so on as well. In fact, for many jobs, especially jobs where language skills are not absolutely essential, interviewing isn't necessarily the best way of selecting the right employee anyway. And this goes for native speakers just as much as for people from overseas. A better approach might be to set up a simulation of the job in question so as to see whether the candidate has the skills and attitude they're looking for. Anyway, interviewers need to realise that they can't always expect people who've recently arrived from abroad to deal with interviews in a way that they, the interviewers, would find natural.

Simon: So the fault is often more with the interviewer, not the interviewee?

Peggy: Yes.

Speaking Part 2

Recording script CD1 Track 7

Bethia: OK, there's one picture of a man, he's a chef and he's talking to a group of people, could be giving them a demonstration of how to cook a meal? And there's a video screen, erm, and a mirror above showing the meal being cooked so people can see everything clearly. Yeah, perhaps he's mixing the food and putting it into pans and describing how to prepare this dish. And another picture is of a coach talking to his team, perhaps telling them how to win the match, giving them some tactics and things like that. So both of them are probably quite tough explanations to give because obviously they're talking to large groups of people. Well, the coach is talking to a large group of people, not the cookery teacher, and he has to explain everything with words and the match might be a crucial one while the cookery teacher can actually show people in the mirror, so really I'd say the coach has got the hardest job, yeah.