

# Recording scripts

## Unit 3

### Listening Part 2\*

#### Recording script CD1 Track 9

**Presenter:** This week's All in the Mind examines an unusual condition you may never have heard of before: prosopagnosia. Here's Professor Alexander Scharma to explain.

**Professor Scharma:** Hello. Well, let's start with an image some of you may be familiar with: a painting called *The Son of Man*, by the surrealist artist René Magritte. In the picture, an apple floats in front of a man's face, covering the features that would normally allow him to be recognised. The painting perfectly illustrates the concept of prosopagnosia, or face-blindness. To people with this condition, as soon as someone leaves their sight the memory of that person's face is blank – or, at best, a set of jumbled features. Face-blindness is a little like tone-deafness: the tone can be heard, or the face seen, but distinguishing between different tones or faces is nearly impossible. The effects of prosopagnosia can be so bad that people severely affected cannot recognise their own parents or children. If we understood how the normal brain recalls faces, we would be well on the way to understanding this strange disorder. It might also help us to understand human evolution, since the ability to recognise faces is more or less equal to the ability to recognise individuals. This ability helps to hold societies together and has enabled humanity to develop a complex culture which is unique in the animal kingdom. The question scientists need to answer is whether this basic ability has its own private brain mechanism, or whether it is simply one aspect of a general ability to recognise individual members of a particular class of objects. Researchers have used face-blind volunteers to explore this question.

The subjects were shown images of cars, tools, guns, houses and landscapes, and also black-and-white pictures of faces with no hair on their heads. Ten of these images were repeated. The subjects were asked to indicate, as quickly as possible, whether each image they saw was new or repeated. The results were surprising. None of the face-blind subjects could recognise the faces in the series well, but they could distinguish between the other repeated pictures as easily as people without prosopagnosia could. That confirms the idea that faces are handled differently by the brain from other objects. It has been shown in experiments that people with face-blindness can be taught to improve their face recognition skills, but it is still not known what prosopagnosia sufferers are missing when they recall a blur instead of a face. This is not to say that prosopagnosia has no advantages. As one person with the condition writes on her website, 'You can wake up in the morning and pretend you don't know your own kids. Then you don't have to give them any pocket money.'

### Speaking Part 3

#### Recording script CD1 Track 10

**Woman 1:** Well, stress can affect people in many ways: insomnia ...

**Woman 2:** Sally would know about that one.

**Woman 1:** Not sleeping, losing your appetite or eating more than you want to, bad-temperedness, being snappy.

**Woman 2:** How about the pictures?

**Woman 1:** OK – the first one looks like an exam situation ...

**Woman 2:** Very, very stressful.

\* Recording script CD1 Track 9 adapted from *The Economist* 13 December 2004: 'About Face, Prosopagnosia'. Copyright © The Economist Newspaper Limited, London.

Woman 1: Yes.

Woman 2: Time pressure, trying to get everything down that you know, worrying about questions and that sort of thing.

Woman 1: And the second one, someone in hospital – could be a relative that's ill and you're particularly worried about them.

Woman 2: Or it's yourself and you're particularly worried about yourself with the doctor in there and you're waiting for the diagnosis, having to have blood tests – that would be horrible.

Woman 1: And the third one is an airport.

Woman 2: That is, like, super-stressful in my family – I'm not sure that would be quite so stressful for anyone else.

Woman 1: I've never found airports stressful.

Woman 2: I once spent, like, three days in an airport with my family.

Woman 1: Flights can get delayed a lot, can't they?

Woman 2: Yeah, if you're trying to get home for something important, it can be quite stressful as well and not speaking the language if you're somewhere abroad.

Woman 1: Mmm – the fourth picture: I'm really not entirely sure what's happening.

Woman 2: No, I'm not. It looks like they can't communicate very well with each other.

Woman 1: Yes, he's trying to think of what to say.

Woman 2: The fifth one looks like work stress.

Woman 1: It does – headaches, probably from looking at a computer screen or reading.

Woman 2: Headaches from having to listen to your boss talk too much.

Woman 1: Tiredness from having missed lunch because you're so dedicated to your work.

Woman 2: Long hours, too many deadlines ...

Woman 1: Incompetent staff around you ...

Woman 2: Hmm – relying on other people, not knowing what to do.

Woman 1: Not being told what to do properly ...

Woman 2: Yeah – being given the wrong information.

Woman 1: And the last one looks like a traffic jam ...

Woman 2: A major traffic jam.

Woman 1: Of stationary cars.

Woman 2: If it's hot, it's usually more stressful ...

Woman 1: Or if you're trying to get somewhere important.

Woman 2: Hmm.

Woman 1: To the airport perhaps – that's one stressful situation after another.

Woman 2: Anyway – which is the most stressful situation, do you reckon?

Woman 1: Erm, traffic jams because they're so commonplace, whereas perhaps personal illness or something doesn't happen so often.

Woman 2: Yes, I think I'd agree. They just seem to happen so often these days, and it's nearly always when you're in a hurry to get somewhere.