

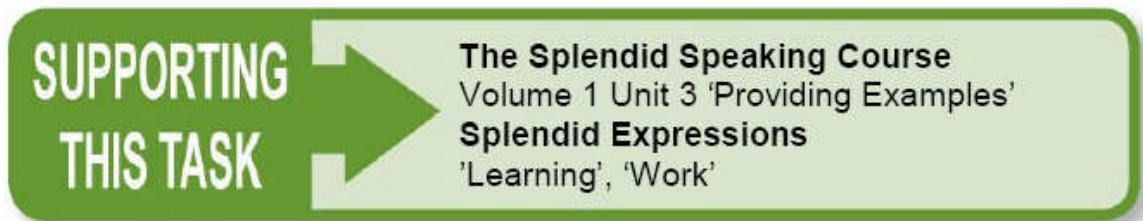
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# Splendid Speaking Podcasts

Topic: Asking/Responding to Questions  
(Interview 16: March Archives)

This show can be listened to at the following address:

<http://splendid-speaking.com/blog/?p=31>



## Comprehension Questions

As you listen, decide whether according to Anca and Laurent, the following questions are true or false.

- 1) Anca and Laurent both worked in the same area.
- 2) Laurent is currently working as an engineer.
- 3) Anca knows a lot about Laurent's field of work?
- 4) English is important for Anca as she wants to be a teacher.
- 5) Laurent believes people express their ideas differently in different languages.
- 6) Anca feels that speaking English is quite easy.

## Transcript

### Introduction

Welcome to the Splendid Speaking podcast. Transcripts for all podcasts including this one are now available to subscribers of our mailing list. You can sign up to the newsletter from [www.splendid-speaking.com](http://www.splendid-speaking.com).

How good are you at making conversation with a complete stranger? Do you find it easy thinking of things to say or questions to ask? This podcast features Anca from Romania and Laurent from France and this was the first time they'd spoken together through Skype. The focus was on asking questions. As you listen decide how well Anca and Laurent managed to hold a natural and interesting conversation. In particular, decide how

well they ask questions and also if they show interest in what the other has said. If you have access to the transcript, listen a second time and answer the comprehension questions. Finally, make a note of their use of English, which we'll look at in the feedback section.

Let's listen to Anca and Laurent.

Anca: Where do you live in ... France?

Laurent: I live in Lyon ... Lyon's ... the second biggest town in France.

Anca: What are you doing there if ... I am not too curious?

Laurent: No ... no ...OK. In fact In Lyon I'm teacher ... I am in ... I'm teacher in refrigeration and air conditioning. It's ... a technical field ... I don't know if you understand what it is exactly?

Anca: Yes I understood you very well ... Yes I understand you very well. It's a very interesting ... job you have there. Are you an engineer?

Laurent: Yes I am ... and I worked as an engineer for several years and now I'm a teacher in fact. I changed jobs a few years ago.

Anca: I think it's ... I think it's better as a teacher. I like teach too. But I am an engineer too.

Laurent: OK

Anca: Yes, I ... can tell you something about me some words about me. I live in Romania.

Laurent: OK ... nice country.

Anca: In Bucharest, the capital of the country.... And what else would you like to find out about me?

Laurent: I just would like to know ... in which field you work as an engineer.

Anca: Engineer ... energetic.

Laurent: OK ... like me yes ... so you know a lot of things about refrigeration and air conditioning as well?

Anca: Not so much because I gave it up ... some years ago I think ten or fifteen and ... now I don't work as an engineer.

Laurent: OK

Anca: I ... knew about nuclear ... energy that was my .... my ... school I finished ... I haven't ... I haven't found the word ... the right words.

Laurent: OK ... but I understood you. Nice ... it's nice. And if I understood you well ... you ... you are a teacher now or you are still an engineer?

Anca: No, I'm not a teacher I'm retired now. And ... I ... try ... as I told you ... it's a hobby for me to improve my English and sometimes ... I try to teach others English who knows less than me.

Laurent: OK

Anca: Did you understand?

Laurent: Very well ... very well ... no problem.

Anca: Very well I am glad ... I am glad.

Laurent: And do you think that speaking English it's very important for you?

Anca: It's very important as I like it and I want to speak as well as possible. I like to do things very well in general. And ... you decided ... to study English as amusement I think ... you said.

Laurent: Exactly

Anca: But ... weren't you curious to find out ... or to learn another language ... not only English?

Laurent: No it's true. I ... In fact I lived for two years in ... Turkey and ... at that time ... I was able to speak Turkish ... so it was quite interesting as well.

Anca: It's curious to find out how people can explain ... can express their ideas in different ... so different ways.

Laurent: Yeah, exactly it's ... it's very interesting ... yes because we ... we don't speak ... in the same way in fact and when I speak French ... I don't say exactly the same thing ... as when I speak another language ... in fact you're right ... it's a part of our culture as well. I don't know if you understand me.

Anca: Yes I understood ... I understand you very well. Yes, speaking English is ... for me is not so easily that I can speak in Romanian and I would like to speak in English as easy ... as I speak in Romanian ... to express my idea ... my ideas ... better than now and that's why I ... try to ... to learn more than ... than now.

Laurent: Yeah, nice. But I really think that you can express yourself quite well.

Anca: It's your opinion I'm not so sure. Let's see what Pete says.

## Feedback

First of all, thanks to Anca and Laurent for taking part in this Skype interview and for agreeing to be recorded. If you go to the Splendid Speaking website you can leave your own comments on their conversation. Now for some feedback. Both Anca and Laurent did extremely well considering this was the first time they'd spoken together and that they were both new to Skype. They managed to maintain a lively conversation, asked a variety of questions and showed interest and responded to what the other person had said with full, informative answers. Looking at the kinds of questions they asked, you no doubt noticed the various question types that were used: both open and closed questions as well as statements, which in context were clearly expressed as questions:

*“Where do you live in ... France?”*

*“...Are you an engineer?”*

*“...so you know a lot of things about refrigeration and air conditioning as well?”*

*“...you ... you are teacher now or you are still an engineer?”*

*“...And do you think that speaking English now it's very important for you?”*

One point worth mentioning is Anca's use of a negative form in the following question:

*...But ... weren't you curious to find out ... or to learn another language ... not only English?*

A positive form would be more appropriate here as the negative implies that Laurent has no interest in learning another language, which is not the case. The question could be expressed as:

‘Have you ever been interested in learning another language as well as English?’

Both speakers responded well to these questions, giving full answers, particularly to those closed questions which could have been answered with shorter responses. On one occasion Anca had trouble coming up with a word she needed to express herself:

*“...I ... knew about nuclear ... energy that was my .... my ... school I finished ... I haven't ... I haven't found the word ... the right words...”*

Some suggestions for Anca include: ‘my field’, ‘my specialist area’ or ‘my area of expertise’.

Finally, listen to the following extracts from the conversation. Can you spot the mistakes in each one?

*“ In Lyon I'm teacher...”*

*“...I think it's better as a teacher. I like teach too...”*

*“... I ... can tell you something about me some words about me...”*

*“... I just would like to know ... in which field you work as an engineer.*

*“...And if I understood you well ... “*

*“...and sometimes ... I try to teach others English who knows less than me...”*

*“...And do you think that speaking English it's very important for you?”*

*“...speaking English is ... for me is not so easily that I can speak in Romanian...”*

So, did you spot the mistakes?

*“In Lyon I'm teacher...”*

This should be 'a teacher'.

*“...I think it's better as a teacher. I like teach too...”*

This should be 'I like to teach'.

*“...I ... can tell you something about me some words about me...”*

Rather than 'some words about me' Anca could say 'a few words about me'.

*I just would like to know ... in which field you work as an engineer.*

The question should be: 'I would just like to know'.

*“...And if I understood you well ... “*

This should be: 'if I understood you correctly'.

*“...and sometimes ... I try to teach others English who knows less than me...”*

Not 'who knows less than me' but 'who know less than me'.

*“...And do you think that speaking English now it's very important for you?”*

This should be: 'speaking English is very important for you?'

And finally:

*“...speaking English is ... for me is not so easily that I can speak in Romanian...”*

This could be rephrased as 'it is not as easy for me to speak English as Romanian.'

OK. That's the end of this podcast. Once again, many thanks to Anca and Laurent. Until next week it's 'Bye' from me Pete Travis.

## **Answers to Comprehension Questions**

1) Anca and Laurent both worked in the same area.

Ans: True. They were both engineers.

2) Laurent is currently working as an engineer.

Ans: False. He is currently working as a teacher.

3) Anca knows a lot about Laurent's field of work?

Ans: False.

4) English is important for Anca as she wants to be a teacher.

Ans: False. She is learning English as a hobby.

5) Laurent believes people express their ideas differently in different languages.

Ans: True.

6) Anca feels that speaking English is quite easy.

Ans: False.

