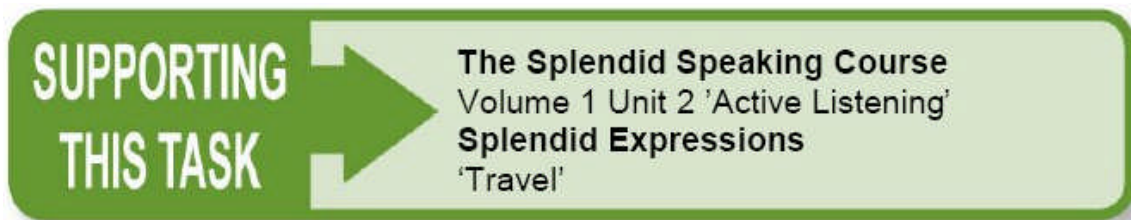

Splendid Speaking Podcasts



Topic: Active Listening
(Interview 19: March Archives)

This show can be listened to at the following address:

<http://splendid-speaking.com/blog/?p=36>



Comprehension Questions

As you listen, answer the following questions.

- 1) Where has Ana spent most of her life: Austria or Romania?
- 2) Which language does Ana regard as her first language?
- 3) Has Ana met anyone from Switzerland before?
- 4) What is Jonas planning on studying at university?
- 5) Why does Jonas know about Ethnology?
- 6) What does Jonas say is interesting about Pondicherry?

Transcript

Introduction

Welcome to the Splendid Speaking podcast. My name's Pete Travis and this week we're listening to Ana from Austria and Jonas from Switzerland, who is currently living in India. A reminder that transcripts for all podcasts including this one are available to subscribers of our mailing list. You can sign up to the newsletter from www.splendid-speaking.com.

Do you find it easy thinking of things to say or questions to ask when meeting someone for the first time? Well, this was a 'getting to know you' opportunity for Ana and Jonas and the focus of the task was on their ability to ask questions about each other's interests, studies, or careers, and to listen and respond naturally to what their partner had to say. As you listen decide how well Ana and Jonas manage to do this. 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 session.

Let's listen to Ana and Jonas.

Jonas: Well, Ana, all that I know about you is your name ... where do you come from?

Ana: Well, I come from a country that is very close to the country you come from. I mean I currently live in Austria and I also grew up in Austria however, I am originally Romanian so ... I was born in Romania and both my parents are Romanian but I moved to Austria with my mother when I was 5 years old so I've spent most of my life in Austria.

Jonas: So you speak German pretty well I guess?

Ana: Yes I speak German ... I mean German is my first language though it isn't really my first language but it's certainly the language that I speak best.

Jonas: Well then, we have something in common ... Well I speak Swiss German and that's pretty closely related to ... to the high German that the people in Germany and Austria speak.

Ana: At university we had some students from Switzerland and ... yeah they tried their best to speak German that was as close as possible to ours ... but anyway it was ... easy to understand and I like the accent ... I like Swiss accents.

Jonas: So ... why do ... why are you doing the CPE? I mean what are you expecting of this?

Ana: I don't really have a particular reason for doing this. I took CAE three years ago and ... quite happily passed with an 'A' ... and now I'm ... I'm trying to write a paper in English for university and therefore I somehow

have to get into English again and I thought that if I have to do this it would be a great opportunity to try to do the CPE ... who knows what it will be good for. I mean I really don't know what my future will look like and I think that it's certainly a good thing to have it.

Jonas: Yes, well I'm thinking ... similarly ... I think that having the CPE ... well if I pass ... that will offer me maybe a job abroad I don't know ... in England or in Asia that would be quite advantageous.

Ana: You mentioned ... a job. What are you doing at the moment? Are you a student or do you work?

Jonas: Well here in India I'm just doing ... language courses generally ... and I've taken a year off ... I've passed college and next year I'm going to university to ... to study something related to environmental studies.

Ana: Sounds interesting.

Jonas: What are you studying?

Ana: I study a very strange thing that is called European Ethnology. It is something ... between Sociology, Ethnology, Anthropology ... I mean I think it's more or less what is called in England 'Cultural Anthropology' so more or less 'Cultural Studies' this would be a more general term.

Jonas: Yes, well I know quite a lot about it ... although not about Ethnology in Europe but my ... my parents both studied it and that's how

Ana: Really? Wow! I rarely find people who know what this is. ... And how do you enjoy life in India? It must be very different, isn't it?

Jonas: Well yeah, we're pretty fortunate ... on this world to be westerners and to be relatively ... wealthy and prosperous compared to the majority

in India here ... that's what I've ... seen in these ... these past months and ... we live in Pondicherry ... that's a French colony ... well a former French colony ... and we're living in a French quarter with many other Europeans as well ... it's a very interesting cultural mix.

Feedback

First of all, thanks to Ana and Jonas for taking part in this Skype interview and for agreeing to be recorded. I should send particular thanks to Jonas, who stayed up till two o'clock in the morning in order to take part! If you go to the Splendid Speaking website you can leave your own comments on their conversation.

Now for some feedback. This was the first time Ana and Jonas had spoken together and I'm sure you'll agree they both showed excellent conversation skills and use of English. In artificial situations like this – and often in life generally - you have two people participating in a conversation like two trains on separate tracks, concentrating on talking about themselves or thinking about what they are going to say next and consequently never really connecting with their partner. However, in this interview both Jonas and Ana were very accommodating towards each other, listened carefully and showed genuine interest in each other. Both Jonas and Ana often responded to a comment with a statement or question which related directly to what their partner had just said. What's more, they did this in a very complimentary way which helped break the ice and build trust. For example, Jonas made the following comments when discovering Ana's background in Austria:

“So you speak German pretty well I guess?”

“Well then, we have something in common ...”

Ana was equally complimentary about her partner's German:

“... but anyway it was ... easy to understand and I like the accent ... I like Swiss accents...”

She showed interest in what Jonas was planning to study:

“... and next year I'm going to university to ... to study something related to environmental studies.”

“... Sounds interesting.”

And on hearing Jonas knew about Ethnology she responded with:

“... Really? Wow! I rarely find people who know what this is...”

So, excellent examples of how to break the ice and get to know someone. Both speakers had excellent use of English, were very fluent and used English naturally with vocabulary appropriate to the context. There were some nice expressions such as:

To be closely related
To get into English
To be relatively ... wealthy and prosperous
and an interesting cultural mix

Jonas modified statements very naturally with the use of words like ‘quite’ and ‘pretty’. Finally, for those of you who enjoy listening out for errors, I’m afraid this week we only have a couple! Can you spot the mistakes here:

“...I’ve passed college and next year I’m going to university to...”

“...we’re pretty fortunate ... on this world to be westerners and...”

So, did you spot the mistakes?

“... I’ve passed college and next year I’m going to university to...”

We would say ‘finished college’ or ‘passed college exams’.

“...we’re pretty fortunate ... on this world to be westerners and...”

We say ‘in this world’ or ‘on this planet’.

Some of you may have noticed Ana’s use of the following question tag and wondered whether it’s correct:

“...And how do you enjoy life in India? It must be very different, isn’t it?”

This is actually perfectly OK. Ana uses ‘must’ at the beginning of the sentence because she’s speculating about how different life in India must be. However, it would be wrong to repeat ‘mustn’t’ in the tag as Jonas doesn’t need to speculate.

OK. That’s the end of this podcast. Once again, many thanks to Ana and Jonas. Until next week it’s ‘Bye’ from me Pete Travis. And remember that you can download the transcript to this and all previous podcasts by signing up to the Splendid Speaking newsletter, a link to which you’ll find at www.splendid-speaking.com

Answers to Comprehension Questions

1) Where has Ana spent most of her life: Austria or Romania?

Ans: Austria.

2) Which language does Ana regard as her first language?

Ans: German.

3) Has Ana met anyone from Switzerland before?

Ans: Yes, at university.

4) What is Jonas planning on studying at university?

Ans: Environmental Studies.

5) Why does Jonas know about Ethnology?

Ans: Both his parents studied it.

6) What does Jonas say is interesting about Pondicherry?

Ans: There is an interesting cultural mix of people.

The Splendid Speaking Self Study Course

Strategies for making introductions and breaking the ice are practised in Volume 1 of the 'Splendid Speaking Self-Study Course'.

Volume 1: Introductions and Small Talk

In this volume you'll learn how to:

- Make an impact with a 15-second introduction (Unit 1) - a useful skill in a job interview or networking situations.
- Make small talk using the S.O.F.A. strategy (Unit 2)- a surefire way to make social situations much easier.
- Listen effectively and show interest in what others have to say (Unit 2), so you can build an immediate rapport with other people.
- Relate a S.T.A.R. story (Unit 3) that illustrates a personal achievement - ideal in an interview for a job or training course.

Plus 2 other key speaking strategies on body language and giving examples.

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- Introduce photographs and information graphics (graphs, charts, tables, etc) to illustrate your talk (Unit 5).
- Avoid worrying when you're asked to "say a few words". You'll soon be giving a T.O.P. spontaneous talk, and using pauses for effect (Unit 6).

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