

HOW TO HELP LEARNERS UNDERSTAND THE WORLD'S ACCENTS



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LONDON, GISIG-PRONSIG EVENT, 14 OCT 2017

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In this workshop...

1. Why bother?
2. 5-step lesson plan
3. Reflection & more resources



WHY BOTHER?

WHO NEEDS TO UNDERSTAND SO
MANY ACCENTS ANYWAY?

WHY BOTHER?

- Intelligibility is a two-way street (Derwing & Munro, 2009)
- Huge variation in English accents + NNS vastly outnumber NS (Crystal, 2008; Graddol, 2006)
- BELF, EMI... (Jenkins, 2014)
- Approx. 20% of spoken English interaction involves NS (Beneke, 1991, cited in Seidlhofer, 2001)

ISN'T THIS TOO HARD FOR LEARNERS?

- Systematic approach, repeated over time
- “We hear with our ears but we listen and understand with our brains.” (cognitive hearing science, Linköping University, 2017)
- Simple formula: exposure + attention



5 STEPS TO UNDERSTANDING

A SIMPLE LESSON PLAN

5-STEP LESSON PLAN

1. Listen
2. Notice
3. Analyse
4. Practise (predict)
5. Reflect



Laura

I. Listen

“What advice would you give someone who is learning English for their current or future job?”



2. Notice

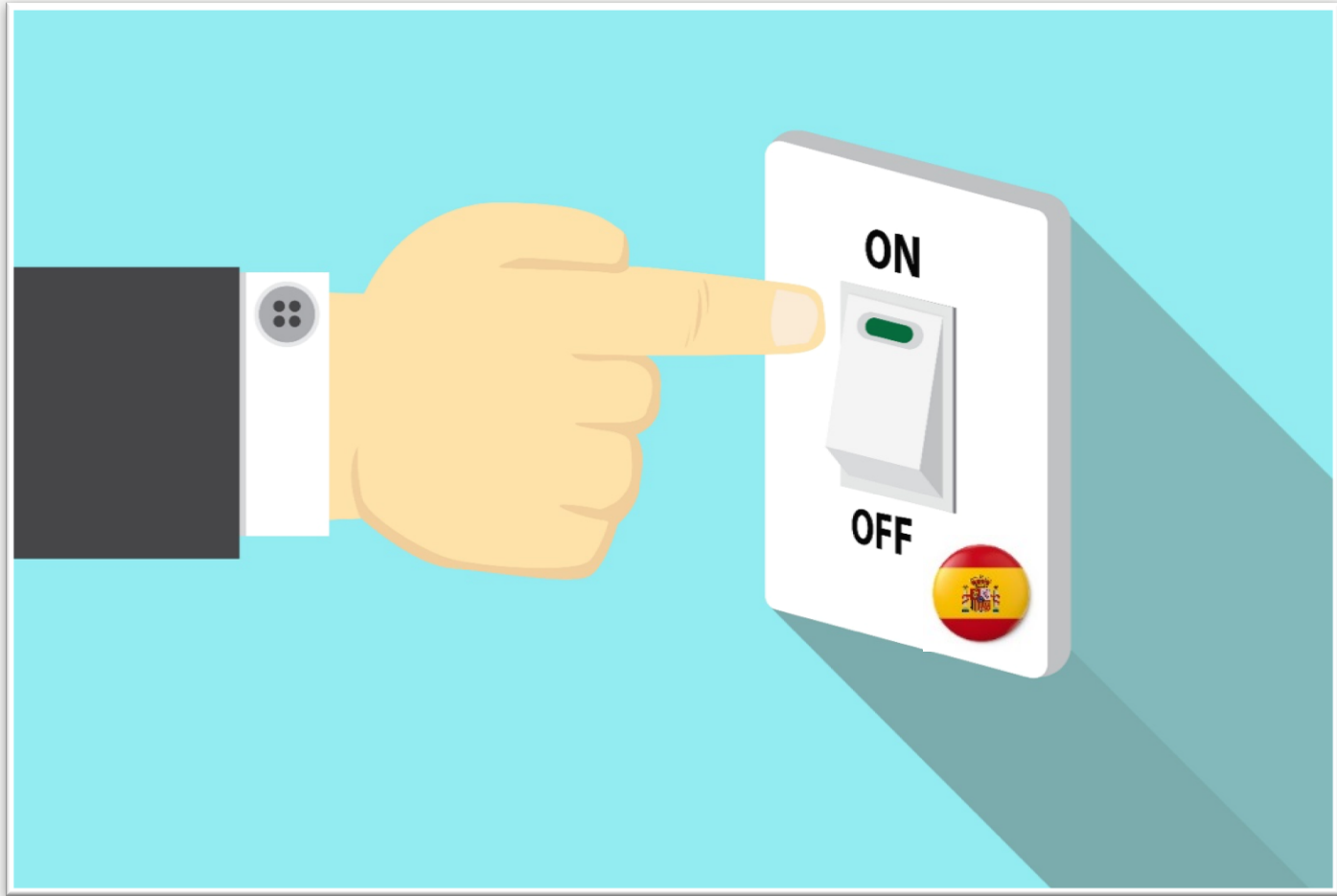
“British”

“conversation”

3. Analyse

/ʃ/

/s/





4. Predict

“Standard
English”

“sure”

Where might
you hear / ʃ / ?

/ ʃ /

sure

conversation

/ s /

British

Standard English



Teachers'
version

5. Reflect

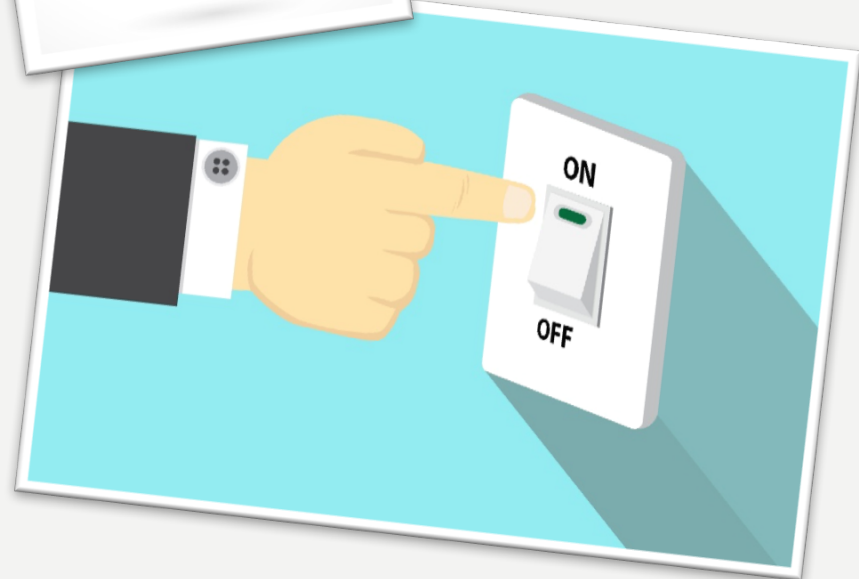
Can you think of any students in your current classes (or previous experience) who need to develop these skills? Who do they interact with? Are they studying or working in a mixed-LI environment?

Do you think your students would feel comfortable doing this kind of analysis?

Do you think you would?

5-STEP LESSON PLAN

1. Listen
2. Notice
3. Analyse
4. Practise (predict)
5. Reflect



THINGS TO REMEMBER

1. Analyse; don't patronise. Don't mock.
2. Learning takes time!
3. Make it a habit to bring a range of voices into class.
4. #1 Human. #2 Video. #3 Audio.
5. Beware poor quality videos.
6. L2 celebrities can also make good role models.
7. Share and share alike!

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THANK YOU!

ANY QUESTIONS?

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REFERENCES, FURTHER READING & RESOURCES

Beneke, J. (1991). Englisch als lingua franca oder als Medium interkultureller Kommunikation. In R. Grebing, *Grenzenloses Sprachenlernen*. Berlin: Cornelsen. 54-66.

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Seidlhofer, B. (2001). Closing a conceptual gap: the case for a description of English as a lingua franca. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 11(2), 133–58.

Speech Accent Archive. <http://accent.gmu.edu/> (one text, read by thousands of people)

TED Talks. <http://www.ted.com> (videos on every subject imaginable by speakers from around the world)