

Why don't they understand? Using listening difficulties productively. TESOL Italy – November 2018

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Task A: Robocup. Before showing the Robocup video to Giovanni, my B1 learner, I asked him a pre-listening question. Read the following exchange: what might be the advantages of such a pre-listening task?

Teacher: so based on the title and the picture, what do you think this video is going to be about?

Learner: erm... when I was in computer science engineering, we had, we had a robot, and some colleagues of my university worked about this robot, okay, because they... we are programming the robot to play in... football, and this was in 1998

T: that's pretty cool!

L: I don't remember where the competition.... the championship, soccer competition was in 1998, perhaps in France, on a football... field?

T: yes, a football field, a football pitch



Task B: Obama & Jimmy Kimmel. Watch the interview: what kind of difficulties might your learners have with this video? You can use the transcript below and make notes.

Jimmy Kimmel: [laughs]

Obama: so... I... and I... [laughs] so, so it it's it's useful that I don't have that choice to make

Jimmy: I know you have to leave, but can we keep her for another four years?

[audience claps and clamours]

O: she is... she is spectacular, but I was telling somebody backstage: Michelle was never wild about politics. Michelle... once explained to me, I try to organise my life not to have a lot of mess around and politics is just a big mess.

J: yeah

O: she said... but she... [laughs] I still remember when I was thinking about running for president, she said you know, I think you would make an outstanding president... and I would work so hard to, to make sure you were president, you're the kind of person we need, if I weren't married to you!

Songs & videos (in order of appearance)

Shawn Mendes, *Stitches* (2015). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VbfpW0pbvaU>

ODN News, *Robocup: The robot football world championship gets underway in the Netherlands* (2013). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nwefNs-PrDA&t=1s>

Jimmy Kimmel Live, *President Obama Says First Lady Would Divorce Him if He Ran Again* (2016). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rDujVSXYcrY&t=34s>

Software and websites for listening tasks

Audacity, free software for editing audio. Available at <https://www.audacityteam.org/>

PlayPhrase, online database of TV series and movies to search authentic pronunciation of phrases. Available at <https://www.playphrase.me>

Synth, online audio recorder, provides free transcription. Available at <https://gosynth.com/>

VLC Media Player, free cross-platform multimedia player. Available at <https://www.videolan.org/index.en-GB.html>

YouGlish, online database of authentic materials. Search US, UK, AUS English. Available at <https://youglish.com/>

Ytcropper, online Youtube video cutter. Available at <https://ytcropper.com/>

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