

BBC Learning English – Q & A of the Week

About this script

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关于台词的备注:

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Native English Speakers / 英语为母语的人

Finn: Hello and welcome to Question and Answer of the Week, presented by me Finn.

Feifei: And me, Feifei.

Finn: Now, before we find out this week's question, let's listen to two people talking about their favourite cities.

Feifei: 请大家在听的过程当中看能不能辨别出哪个人讲的英语是其母语。Which one is the native speaker?

Insert

My favourite city's definitely London. So much going on, it's an eclectic mix of people, lots to do and see all the time so it's a great place.

New York. It's different to another city. It's very, very different, the people the building.

Finn: So – any ideas? Feifei, tell us.

Feifei: The first one! The second person was from... Spain?

Finn: Spain, that's right. But who was easier to understand?

Feifei: 这个问题其实也就是今天节目中我们要来解答的。Wenwen 就问下面这个问题。

Insert

I have studied English for years and now I live in London. Why do I find that I could understand the non-native English speakers better than native English speakers? Could you help me to find out the reason? Thank you.

Feifei: Wenwen 说她不知为什么自己觉得听母语不是英语的人 non-native English speakers 说英语会比英语为母语的人 native English speakers 更容易。她虽已经学英语多年, 并且人现在就住在伦敦, 可是这个问题还是让她很困惑。

Finn: Feifei, do you find me difficult to understand?

Feifei: Ha ha, no I don't. But you do speak quite clearly.

Finn: Quite clearly? Well thank you very much, I'm happy to hear that. But I understand Wenwen's question. For example when I was learning Chinese I also used to find it easier to speak to non-native speakers when I was beginning. Possibly because the vocabulary that they knew was the same as the vocabulary I knew because we were all beginning and we used the same kind of textbooks. And we didn't know any slang. A lot of native speakers use a lot of slang, 很多俚语。

So today we're looking for other reasons why native speakers are sometimes more difficult to understand. Lets listen to those two people from the start of the programme again. This time try to notice as many differences in the way they speak as you can.

Insert

My favourite city's definitely London. So much going on, it's an eclectic mix of people, lots to do and see all the time so it's a great place.

New York. It's different to another city. It's very, very different, the people the building.

Feifei: 好了, 听完了吗? 有没有听出大的区别?

Finn: Perhaps we can look at three main areas. One, I think, which is very obvious, is the speed of speech. Feifei, would you agree?

Feifei: Yes, the English woman spoke much faster. 这一点我想大家都知道, 英语为母语的人通常说话的语速较快, 我们听起来会比较吃力。

Finn: But related to this point is another one which I think is useful for Chinese learners to think about. Native speakers tend to run words together.

Feifei: 她们说话有时候有很多连读 run words together。请听下面这句话。

Insert

So much going on, it's an eclectic mix of people, lots to do and see all the time.

Feifei: 请再听一遍 – 这句话中有很多连读, 最明显的地方就是 people 和 lots 之间。单词 people 和单词 lots 两个词之间么有空歇, 连得很紧。

Insert

People ... lots. People ... lots. People ... lots.

Finn: Now, let's compare this to the other speaker.

Insert

It's very, very different, the people, the building.



Finn: Now here, even though he has a strong Spanish accent we can hear each word individually.

So that's difference number one: speed. There are at least two other areas we can talk about: the words people use and the clarity of their speech; how clearly they speak.

Feifei: 选词和说话清晰度。很容易理解，大多数学习英语的朋友们的词汇量较英语为母语的人来说较小，熟知的成语也很有限。

Finn: For example, the woman we've been listening to uses quite a difficult word. Listen out for it:

Insert

So much going on, it's a eclectic mix of people, lots to do and see all the time.

Finn: Did you hear it? Feifei?

Feifei: Eclectic 兼收并蓄的。

Finn: Now, to make things more difficult, she doesn't pronounce the word very clearly:

Insert

it's an eclectic mix of people...

Finn: "it's a... cleti mix o people". She said "clectic" rather than "eclectic" didn't she?

Feifei: 上面这位女士说话不仅有很多连读，而且她的语音不很清楚，还犯了一个语法错误。

Finn: Yes, because it sounds like she says "a eclectic", which should of course be...

Feifei: An eclectic. 如果你以前没听过 eclectic 这个词，那么想在她说的这句话中正确的辨别出这个词是很困难的。大家应该都知道 mix 混合这个词的意思，我们虽然不知道 eclectic 的意思，但是根据 mix 我们能猜出这句话的意思。

Finn: Feifei, we've been talking about the clarity of speech. One other thing to talk about is the accent. If people speak in an accent we're not familiar with it can be hard to understand.

Feifei: Accent 口音。这可能是另一个英语为母语的人说话让我们难以理解的原因。

Insert

It's different to another city. It's very, very different, the people the building.



Finn: This man clearly has a Spanish accent, but does it really make him more difficult to understand?

Feifei: I actually think it's not too bad.

Finn: Yes, it's quite clear even though he has an accent. Which brings me to another point: as we often say in these programmes, if you want to improve your listening skills it's really a great idea to listen to as many accents as possible.

Feifei: 如果可能的话，尽量多听各种口音。在如今这样的全球化社会中，standard English 标准英语这个概念越来越模糊了。就像与德国人和印度人讲英语的机会向比与英国人和美国人说英语的机会已经差不多了。

Finn: Ok so we've talked about some of the main differences and how they can affect understanding: the speed, running words together, words used, the accent and clarity of speech. In a moment we're going to play you some more people talking about their favourite cities, native speakers and non-native speakers, and I want everyone to think about what we've discussed today while they listen.

Feifei: 是的，因为只有多练习才是最好的提高方式。记住，虽然很多学习英语的同学没有英语为母语的朋友，不过别忘了，和自己的同学或朋友也可以一起说英语，一起练习，共同提高。

Finn: So, until next time, goodbye everyone. Happy learning. And thank you to Wenwen for her question.

Feifei: 欢迎大家登陆我们的网站www.bbcukchina.com，在这里大家可以听到更多的英语口语。感谢收听，下次节目再会。

Insert

I actually really enjoyed Barcelona. We went there a few times and I really liked it because of the weather, I just liked it, I can't really say why. Because there's the beach and the city and that's it.

I'd like to live in New York, cos it's always busy it's like London it's busy and it's hot as well. So, yeah, that's the only reason.

Miami, that's a beautiful city. Because I love NBA games. My favourite player is in Miami so I love that city.

Rio de Janeiro, because if you can see the weather right now, the rain, the grey the wet it's a miserable day, all day it's awful. So Rio, the sun, the sea, the beautiful people, come on.

I'd love to live in London and I am going to live in London next year, because why would you want to live anywhere else?