

Phone Conversations Lesson Template

What Did He Say, Exactly?

(For use as a FLO Exercise)

Preparation

Transcribe a portion of conversation containing approx. 15 short clauses (i.e. not whole sentences) phonetically. This section should be approx. 5 minutes into the dialog. Download, print, and copy listening worksheet for students.

Objectives

1. Students will be reminded that dialect is primarily a spoken phenomenon.
2. Students will become more informed about the interplay between standard language and dialect.
3. Students will practice sound/symbol transcription as a skill exercise.
4. Students will be more aware of the existence of dialect sounds that they are not discriminating adequately enough from verbal input.

Warm Up (10 Minutes)

Instructor makes two columns on the SmartBoard labeled *Written MSA* and *Spoken Dialect* and asks students to brainstorm the kind of texts that they would most likely encounter in each when dealing with real world Arabic. ("Text" is used broadly to include any language input – from books to music videos.) After students brainstorm, instructor fills in knowledge gaps and clarifies any misconceptions that may exist. Discuss the phenomenon of "code switching", i.e. instances in which educated native speakers may switch between standard and dialect – both verbally and in writing. Open the floor for questions and discussion before proceeding to listening exercise.

Transition

Explain to students that even though dialects are primarily spoken phenomena, you will be working on an exercise to help sharpen their perception of dialect sounds. This is merely a game and is not likely to ever be requested of them in a real world setting. Tell students that they will listen to 5 minutes at first, just to get them used to hearing the dialect.

General Listening (5 Minutes)

Let students listen to the first five minutes of the conversation. Perform a brief comprehension check.

Specific Listening (20 Minutes)

Play fifteen short sentence clauses from the exchange. Stop for approx. one minute after each in order to let students write a phonetic transcription using the English sound system. Allow them to work in pairs if they prefer.

Wrap Up (10 Minutes)

Display teacher version of transcription and compare briefly. Discuss difficulties and praise successes. Note any patterns, especially in instances where students are not discriminating sounds that do not exist in English. Point these out and stress them. Stress importance of being able to visualize language – especially for visual learners. Encourage them to continue to use the LingNet website and resources to practice listening to Arabic dialects.