

Phone Conversations Lesson Template

Pardon Me for Interrupting

(To be used as a lesson in noticing and gaining *strategic competence* with reference to interruptions)

Preparation

Familiarize yourself with selected phone conversation and note three roughly equal listening portions for use during your class activities. Obtain red sheets of construction paper for students to use as “red flags”. Prepare a list of acceptable phrases that can be used to interrupt a speaker. Download, print, and copy lesson worksheet for students.

Objectives

1. Students quantify the number of interruptions found in a typical phone conversation.
2. Students explore appropriate ways to interrupt to ask for clarification or repetition.
3. Students examine acceptable strategies for holding the floor if somebody tries to interrupt

Warm Up (5 Minutes)

Students discuss the concept of interruptions in conversations. When is it appropriate? When is it not? How do you do it? Do they think speakers of Arabic interrupt more often, less often, or equally to speakers of English?

Listening Activity 1 (10 Minutes)

Instructor plays first conversation segment for class. Their task is to tally the number of times in the segment of phone conversation an interruption or attempted interruption occurs. After the segment is finished, students report back and discuss briefly. How does the information they gathered correspond to their ideas about the frequency of interruptions discussed earlier. Does it confirm or disconfirm it?

Listening Activity 2 (10 Minutes)

Instructor hands out red sheets and list of acceptable interruption phrases. Play the second listening segment and ask students to hold up a red flag if they would want to interrupt the speaker (for repetition, clarification, etc.) Stop the audio and have the student practice using one of the given phrases. Give brief feedback. Continue in this manner until end of segment two.

Listening Activity 3 (10 Minutes)

Instructor plays the third conversation segment. This time, students’ task is to examine how speakers hold the floor when another speaker tries to interrupt him/her. This may be by using specific phrases or by other verbal or non-verbal means. Allow students to discuss everything they noted and point out any additional strategies that they may have missed or misinterpreted.

Wrap Up (5 Minutes)

Summarize/discuss strategies. Point out the importance of being aware of the social norms for interruption as well as the necessary polite phrases. Point out how important it is for a non-native speaker to be able to hold the floor effectively – particularly when interacting with or explaining something to much faster native speakers. Encourage students to continue to use the LingNet website and resources to practice listening to Arabic dialects by noting how conversations change based on who is speaking.