

# Authentic-language tasks: The potential of Internet radio

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This paper outlines the value of Internet Radio in the language classroom and introduces several teaching activities using this media. It is suggested by that by providing learners with samples of authentic English, Internet Radio can increase awareness of natural discourse features, which are often absent from listening tasks in textbooks.

本稿は英語の授業においてインターネットラジオがもつ価値について検討し、このメディアを使いたいいくつかの教授活動を紹介するものである。学生に生きた英語のサンプルを提供することで、インターネットラジオは、教科書に載るリスニング練習からは省略されがちな「自然な談話の特徴」に対し、学生の意識を高めることができる、ということを示唆している。

**T**he primary aim of this paper is to demonstrate the potential of Internet Radio (IR) as a source of natural spoken English for the language classroom. The merits of this media and the ways in which it can be used as a teaching resource will be discussed before several activities incorporating IR are described. It is intended that introducing actual examples will exemplify the range of activities that may be created.

## Some merits of IR

### *Exposure to authentic English use*

The incorporation of authentic texts into the language teaching syllabus, in preference to those concocted for EFL or ESL learners, has been widely advocated. Willis (2003), for instance, urges teachers to include samples of genuine spoken interaction to illustrate the grammar of spoken English and warns that “there is a

serious danger that specifically designed texts will show the language not as it really is, but as the course writers imagine it to be or would like it to be” (p. 224).

As well as exposing learners to the kind of English they can expect to hear outside of the classroom, authentic listening can have an important affective role. Based on the author’s experience, learners often appear more motivated when they are told that what will listen to was actually “made for native English speakers.”

Rost (2002) suggests that while the issue of what is meant by “authentic language” is “one of the most controversial issues in the teaching of listening”, most teachers would regard “genuineness” as its distinguishing characteristic (p. 125). Genuineness, as Rost points out (p. 124), generally refers to those features such as natural speed, colloquialisms and hesitations that are common in everyday spoken discourse, and which will be described later in this paper.

This author’s personal definition of authentic, however, is more limited: he considers language that has been designed explicitly for an EFL or ESL audience, no matter how genuine it may sound, to be ersatz authentic. Therefore, a textbook such as *Top Notch* (Saslow & Ascher, 2006), which states in its introduction that all its “conversation models feature the language people really use; nowhere to be found is ‘textbook English’ written merely to exemplify grammar”, would fail, perhaps unjustifiably, his personal criteria.

### **Easy monitoring**

Happening on suitable authentic material often involves an element of serendipity, but generally the more time

that can be spent monitoring, the greater the chance of finding something appropriate. The mobility of a match-box sized MP3 player makes for efficient monitoring since downloaded IR can be listened to anywhere. Monitoring need not be a purposeful action; it can merely involve listening for enjoyment but with a teacher’s ear open for input with pedagogical potential.

### **Preventing language degradation**

In informal conversations with native English teachers in Japan, a number have commented that living in a non-English speaking country and teaching lower-level students can lead to a dumbing-down of the very language they are being paid to teach. Listening to quality speech-radio provides regular exposure to exemplars of the English language, which may help guard against such degradation of the teacher’s L1. Listening to IR also keeps teachers acquainted with a major force shaping the spoken language. As Humphrys (2004) asserts in reference to the BBC, radio “has a far greater influence over the way we [the British] use the English language than the *Académie [Française]* has over the way the French use theirs” (p. 222).

### **Using IR as a teaching resource**

The language teacher can find various uses for IR, including the ones describe below.

### **Searching for a specific topic**

Some IR sites, including the BBC’s, have a search facility to

find archived programmes matching a key(s) word. Audrey Hepburn, for instance, featured in a section entitled Style Icons in the textbook *Cutting Edge Advanced* (Cunningham, Moor, & Comyns Carr, 2003, p. 77). Typing the actress's name into the BBC Radio 4 search function retrieved a report that served to supplement the textbook (an extract of this report is shown in transcript 4).

### **Giving voice to a text**

It is often possible to combine a newspaper article, or some other written text, with IR that covers the same story. Multimodal presentation of content allows repeated exposure to the key vocabulary and is, as Rost (2002) points out, more likely to be ensure comprehension and retention than that presented through only one media (p. 104).

### **Obtaining an oral corpus**

The speech heard on IR can provide samples of words and phrases, often in memorable contexts. The following examples illustrate this function.

a) Listening to a medical phone-in programme called Check Up it was apparent to the author that the verb *wonder* was used frequently by callers asking the doctor for advice. Transcript 1 is such an example from a programme dealing with epilepsy.

#### **Transcript 1**

Female caller: Yes, yes well he was and then he suddenly had two seizures because the medication was changed because he was having side effects,

so he's having different medication now, so hopefully that'll fix it. I *wondered* what I should do actually.

*Check Up* (BBC Radio 4, 25 November, 2004)  
<[http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/science/checkup\\_20041125.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/science/checkup_20041125.shtml)>

Usage books describe *wonder* as a distancing verb that serves to soften requests, questions, suggestions and statements (Swan, 1995, p. 159). Listening to a number of *Check Up* programmes, it appeared that the verb is also particularly common when asking for advice following a relatively long explanation of a problem. Based on this observation, the phrase *I (just) wondered what I should do* was subsequently incorporated into a lesson on asking for and giving advice.

b) After completing a worksheet from the *Cutting Edge Advanced Resource Book* (Albery, Cheetham, & Comyns Carr, 2003) on foreign words and phrases used in English (p. 154), the author was asked about words of Japanese origin. He was able to bring in for the students extracts of IR programmes in which Japanese loanwords had been used. Two examples are shown in Transcript 2.

#### **Transcript 2**

1. So why should someone who committed such professional *hari-kari* return to the scene of the catastrophe? (*Woman's Hour*, BBC Radio4, November 11, 2004)

2. It wasn't the nicest texture, but I got the most humungous *umami* hit from this. (*The food programme*. BBC Radio4, June 12, 2005)

Extract 1 is from an interview with the founder of what was once the largest jewelry retailer in the world (the man is infamous for making a speech deprecating his company's products, which resulted in the collapse of his business empire). Japanese students were interested to learn that a word they rarely used themselves had become part of the English lexicon, albeit with radically changed pronunciation. The second extract is of a British chef recalling the taste sensation experienced when eating snails. Here a Japanese word, *umami* (the so-called fifth basic taste, discovered by a Japanese scientist and roughly translated as *savoury*) has been incorporated into colloquial speech.

c) Transcript 3 is a monologue heard on a programme about offal, a topic that may not be expected to provide rich pickings in terms of EFL teaching resources. Notwithstanding the difficulty of some of the vocabulary, this recording introduces *put* (+ personal pronoun) *off* in a highly memorable context and was incorporated into a lesson focusing on phrasal verbs.

A chef is talking about his feelings towards offal.

### Transcript 3

I think in common with a lot of other people, I haven't always disliked even the idea of offal, really. I remember when I was young, when I was at primary school, you know, I used to like things like liver and kidneys. I think there is just something about being told what these things actually did, that *put me off* them a bit. There's always that lingering notion at the back of your mind that when you're eating a kidney that the

main thing about a kidney – the main thing that it does – is it makes urine. That's going to *put you off*, isn't it? Certainly does me.

(*The Food Programme*. BBC Radio4, October 2, 2005)

The practice exercises below followed the listening:

1. Read the transcript (3) above and write down ten key words that will help you remember it. Then, using only these ten words, pretend that you are the chef and retell his experience to your partner.
2. Write your own sentences using the phrasal verbs *put off* (e.g. I saw a terrible accident. It really *put me off* driving).
3. Tell the class about an experience that put you off something you had previously liked.

Notice that Question 3 uses the audio as a springboard for a discussion about the student's own unpleasant experiences. Harmer (1998) stresses that an important principle of listening is "encouraging students to respond to the content of a listening, not just to the language" (p. 100).

### Some features of authentic spoken discourse

The transcript below is an extract from a feature on Audrey Hepburn and includes a vox pop on the streets of a British city. It contains a number of features that are frequently heard in spoken English, but rarely observed in the written language.

**Presenter:** Audrey Hepburn was as popular with women as she was with men. She was smart, gamine and funny, and she's been described in a new book, *Growing up with Audrey Hepburn*, as the quintessential "woman's woman". Well, Rebecca Sandal spoke to women on the streets of Manchester and to the author Rachel Moseley, and asked them what they think the term means.

**Woman 1:** Gosh! A woman's woman? Someone who is a really good friend, but very strong and... um, very determined, I think.

**Rachel Moseley (a):** For example, she was perceived to be beautiful and intelligent, innocent and sophisticated and, I think very importantly, both feminine and strong.

**Woman 2:** Some women would say a woman's woman is an independent, like, go-getter sort of thing. And then somebody else a woman's woman is sort of much softer, and so I don't think... I don't think you can define because everybody's just got such a wide range of opinions now.

**Rachel Moseley (b):** She was also perceived as not about sex, which stars who were perceived more as men's women, if you like, like Marilyn Monroe and Bridget Bardot were.

**Woman 3:** I think there are two extremes, aren't there? The woman's woman that you - you picture two I guess, don't you? One's quite fluffy

and, you know, has got the perfect hair style and the make up and the diamonds and whatever. And then there's the business woman, who has the reputation of being perhaps quite cut-throat and determined in a, eh, quite a selfish way.

**Rachel Moseley (c):** Marilyn Monroe would be seen as the classic man's woman, partly because she combined sexiness with a kind of childlike innocence, which makes her both appealing and available, but not threatening.

*Woman's Hour* (BBC Radio 4, January 16, 2003). You can listen again at: <[http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/womanshour/2003\\_02\\_thu\\_05.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/womanshour/2003_02_thu_05.shtml)>

Some features of authentic spoken discourse contained in transcript 4 include:

1. *Fillers.* Willis (2003) suggests the label *fillers* for sounds such as *er* and *erm* is a misnomer because it suggests they have no meaning or function, when in fact such words can often mean "...let me continue. I haven't finished what I want to say, and I'd like a little time to gather my thoughts" (p. 186).
2. *Vague language.* The use of *like* and *sort of thing* by woman 2 and *whatever* by woman 3 are examples of vague language, common in real time discourse when it is often difficult to find the exact word or phrase that is wanted.
3. *Repetition.* There is often a built in redundancy in spontaneous discourse. Woman 2, for example, repeats the phrase *I don't think*.

4. *Flexible word order.* Written down, the comment by Rachel Moseley (b) appears linguistically clumsy. Spontaneous discourse, however, is often unconventional or even ungrammatical. Gilmore (2004) asserts that tidying up this kind of language, as is done in many textbooks, may “slow down learners’ acquisition of efficient listening strategies such as focusing on content words” (p. 368).
5. *Ellipsis.* The omission of words or phrases from sentences because they have already been referred to or mentioned and are thus considered unnecessary is common in spoken language (we have already seen it in transcript 3 where the dummy subject *it* has been left out of the sentence *Certainly does me* on the last line). Here, woman 2 omits the pronoun in the utterance: *I don’t think you can define [one] because....*
  6. *Bailing out.* Abandoning or “bailing out” of an utterance and starting another is quite common in spontaneous speech and can be seen in the utterance by woman 2: *The woman’s woman that you– you picture two I guess, don’t you?*

As Willis (2003) points out, certain aspects of spoken language, particularly interactive markers such *uh-huh*, *mm-hmm*, *right*, *okay* and *fine*, are “very teachable” (p. 198). Such markers have an important affective role in communication by indicating, for example, that a listener is responsive and sympathetic. In the textbook, *Tell me more* (Reesor, 2004), a unit is devoted to some of these markers and other so called *verbal cues*, which are described as “messages that the listener sends the speaker during a

conversation...[and which] help a speaker decide what to say and do”(p. 14). The concocted tape accompanying *Tell me more* is certainly useful for introducing certain features of spoken language in a controlled way, but exposing learners to authentic audio enables these features to be heard, as it were, in their natural environment.

It should be said that due to their unpredictable nature, other features of spoken language observed in transcript 4, particularly repetition and bailing out, would probably not be as amenable to teaching as interactive markers. Furthermore, even if repetition and bailing out could be effectively taught in the classroom, they do not seem to the author to be the kind of native-speaker feature that most teachers would actively encourage their students to emulate as a general communication strategy. Yet, whether or not the students go on to produce such language is not necessarily the point. What may be most important about studying such features is that it encourages students to notice the language more and such noticing, stresses McCarthy (1998), “is a crucial step towards effective acquisition” (p. 68).

### Teaching activities

There follows a selection of listening activities that the author has used successfully in the classroom. All the audio is from the BBC Radio 4 site but readers should be able to find suitable material on any quality speech station. It should be noted that these activities were taught in classrooms without computers using only a CD player. Advice on recording audio from the Internet is given in the appendix.

The author is of the opinion that at some point in a listening task students should usually be given a transcript.

Although on some IR sites, including those of BBC Radio 4 and ABC (Australian Broadcasting Company), an accompanying transcript can be found for a number of programmes, transcription by the teacher will be necessary in most cases. Providing a transcript makes it easier for the teacher to indicate salient language points and also encourages students to listen to the piece online outside of class. (Regarding the availability period of audio material on the BBC's Internet site, it should be noted that while some programmes can be listened to for months or even a couple of years after the initial broadcast, the listen again function for many others is available for only seven days).

### Activity 1

An interview with Jack Higginson, a seven-year old football prodigy, illustrates the way smooth communication can be hindered when a speaker's contribution to a dialogue is insufficient. Before the listening students read a short newspaper article about Jack as a way to introduce some of the key vocabulary they will subsequently hear on the audio (this is an example of multimodal presentation of content mentioned in the section *Giving voice to a text*).

Below is a transcript of an interview with Jack Higginson. Jack's lines, however, have been left blank. Imagine you are Jack and write his responses.

Before you start writing you should assume that

1) Jack is a talkative child who would never just give one-word answers. You should, therefore, try

to answer all the interviewer's questions as fully as possible.

2) This is a telephone interview and the line is bad, so sometimes you will need to ask the interviewer to repeat a question. To do this use phrases such as "Sorry, I didn't catch what you said" and "Could you repeat the question please?"

Steve May is interviewing Jack Higginson on the *Today Programme* (BBC Radio 4, 23rd September 2004). You can listen to the interview again on: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/today/listenagain/>

### Transcript 5

**Steve:** Hello Jack.

**Jack:**

**Steve:** Hi Jack. How you doing?

**Jack:**

**Steve:** Excellent. Now, you want to sign for Manchester United, I know, don't you?

**Jack:**

**Steve:** But you can't until April 4 and that's when you're eight years of age because football regulations mean that you can't sign until eight. But that's really what you want to do, isn't it?

**Jack:**

**Steve:** Are you a big Man-U fan then, obviously?

**Jack:**

**Steve:** Right. And your specialty is scoring double hat tricks, isn't it?

**Jack:**

**Steve:** Tell us about that.

**Jack:**

**Steve:** How many goals have you scored? You scored 37 goals last season, didn't you?

**Jack:**

**Steve:** What your specialty is is scoring six goals at a time, isn't it?

**Jack:**

**Steve:** And what's your ambition in football? Why do you want to be a professional footballer?

**Jack:**

**Steve:** Absolutely. I suppose that's a good answer. Your favourite player?

**Jack:**

**Steve:** Who is your favourite player?

**Jack:**

**Steve:** Absolutely, for Man-U. And, I've got a note here to say that your ambition is to buy a fast car and a big house for your parents. I mean, is that your dad's ambition for you?

**Jack:**

**Steve:** OK, lovely. Jack, thank you very much indeed for joining us. Good luck with the career.

**Jack:**

**Steve:** OK. You take care

**Jack:**

a) When you have finished writing Jack's lines, practice your conversation in pairs.

b) Now listen to the actual interview and write down what Jack really said.

c) Was Jack being a good communicator during this interview? Why or why not?

*Language questions*

1) Why do you think the interviewer uses a lot of tag questions? (*It is possibly a strategy to maintain a one-sided conversation and provide the listener with information while still ostensibly preserving the interview format*).

2) Find an example of paraphrasing. Why does the interviewer use it? (*"And what's your ambition in football?" is paraphrased to "Why do you want to be a professional footballer?" The interviewer probably thought Jack probably did not understand the word "ambition"*).

3) Find an example of ellipsis. (*How [are] you doing? and ([Who's] your favourite player?)*)

4) In the question "Who is your favourite player?" why do you think the contraction *who's* is not used?



(The interviewer may be expressing annoyance by using the full form and placing more stress on the verb).

### Comments on activity 1

Jack's replies to the interviewer's questions in the order asked were: *Good; Yeah; Yeah; Yeah; Yeah; Yeah; What did you say?; Yeah; Yeah; Because I like football; What did you say?; Chistiano Ronaldo, Yeah; OK; Yeah.* The interview is under the light-hearted heading of *Blunder Clips* on the BBC Radio 4 site, but a string of such short responses would most likely not have been deemed amusing if they had come from an adult's mouth.

Communication, as this task illustrates, tends to proceed more smoothly when questions are answered with supplementary information. This is a valuable lesson for those Japanese students who habitually offer only minimal responses.

### Activity 2

If a listening exercise is embedded within a context that students are not familiar with, the load on them may be unnecessarily increased. An exercise in the textbook *Inside Out Advanced* (Jones, Bastow, & Hird, 2001), for example, involved listening to a woman recalling how her mobile phone had almost been stolen in a pub (p. 48). The unfamiliar Irish accent of the speaker, together with several items of low frequency lexis, made the exercise difficult enough; however, what completely confused some Japanese students was the central element of the story: Why someone would want to steal a mobile phone?

Notwithstanding the chance this exercise provided to discuss aspects of crime in the UK, it is often advantageous to base listening tasks on contextually accessible, or familiar, content. For Japanese learners, Japan-related material such as that in transcript 6 and transcript 7 are likely to be free from possibly distracting contexts.

Many Japanese seem to be worried about the declining birth rate. Which of the possible reason(s) below do you think is actually causing this decline? Mark your answers with a ○.

I think Japan's declining birth rate is because:

- a) Japanese women are getting married later.
- b) The sperm count of Japanese men has declined.
- c) The Japanese have gone off sex.
- d) Japanese women are still expected to quit their jobs when they have children.
- e) An increasing number of Japanese women are deciding not to get married at all.
- f) The number of people in homosexual relationships is rising.
- g) It's difficult for men to take paternity leave.
- h) People prefer pets such as dogs and cats to babies.
- i) There is a lack of child care facilities.
- j) It costs too much money to bring up a child.

Now listen to this radio report about Japan's decline birth rate. Which of a ~ j above are mentioned in the report.

### Transcript 6

So why are the Japanese not having children? The reasons given are multiple. Women are getting married later, and because Japanese women are still expected to quit their jobs when they have children, a record number are just not having any or, in fact, not getting married at all. One in four Japanese women in their early thirties is single; up from one in ten a decade ago. Less than one percent of men take any paternity leave whatsoever. But perhaps the real reason is the cost of having a baby; some estimate it costs ¥13,000,000 to raise a child in this country. That's around £ 65,000.

*Woman's Hour* (BBC Radio4, September 24, 2005). You can listen again at: <[http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/womanshour/2005\\_39\\_sat\\_01.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/womanshour/2005_39_sat_01.shtml)>

### Comments on activity 2

The pre-listening exercise serves to activate stored knowledge about a widely reported issue in Japan and teach key vocabulary that will be heard in the audio. Pre-listening helps prime the students to enable more effective listening (Rost, 2003, p. 142). It is important to note that because authentic texts themselves cannot be simplified (simplifying them would in effect render them concocted) other ways, such as presenting or eliciting key concepts and vocabulary, must be used when simplification is necessary.

This piece of audio constitutes authentic English because it was not concocted for the EFL or ESL learner. On the other hand, it could not be considered an example of spontaneous English since it has obviously been written in advance. On a cline of spontaneity, a report such as this by a BBC foreign correspondent probably lies somewhere between the news (read from a script and having many of the characteristics of written language) and a radio phone-in (spontaneous conversation produced in real time). Nevertheless even though their spoken language has often been well prepared beforehand, reporters, at least those on the BBC, are skilled at engaging the listener with speech that invariably sounds natural.

Moreover, since reporter's discourse often exhibits "textbook" intonation and other phonological patterns, the author has found that it is particularly suited to pronunciation practice activities. One such activity includes a stress recognition exercise suggested by Field (2003, p. 329) that involves playing recordings on low volume and instructing learners to transcribe the more prominent words.

### Activity 3

Harmer (1998) points out that even if students have only the occasional chance to hear varieties of English that are unlike their teacher's, it gives them a "better idea of the world language which English has become" (98). The activity below is based on an interview with a Japanese speaker of English, Naoko Takato, one of the three Japanese held hostage in Iraq in 2004. (Only a short extract of the ten-minute interview is reproduced here).

Listen to this interview with Naoko Takato from *Woman's Hour* (BBC Radio 4, September 27, 2004). You can listen again at: <[http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/womanshour/2004\\_39\\_mon\\_01.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/womanshour/2004_39_mon_01.shtml)>

### Transcript 7

**Interviewer:** How concerned were you for your own safety before you were taken hostage?

**Takato:** I was not afraid of Iraqi people, but sometimes US soldiers tried to stop me with guns. Not only one time, you know, maybe three times I got a problems with US soldiers. But everytime, everytime I just distributing medicine by car. Er, one time we were carrying the medicine from Amman to Baghdad, and, you know, we forced to lay down on the street. I was so afraid, it was scared.

### Comments on activity 3

Although Takato's English ability is impressive, errors typical of Japanese speakers are evident in the interview. A post-listening task involved students analyzing the transcript for those errors that could be considered to interfere with meaning (these have been underlined in the transcript extract). This task was not intended as a nit-picking exercise but to help raise student's awareness of their own errors. Listening to Takato's interview also provided the opportunity for students to apply the knowledge gained from their course book, *121 Common mistakes of Japanese students of English* (Webb, 1991), to analyzing a piece of actual discourse.

### Activity 4

The radio phone-in can provide teachers with recordings of opinions on various contentious issues. Compared with the content of textbooks, for example *Impact Issues* (Day & Yamanaka, 1998), that focus on controversial subjects, the opinions expressed by callers to radio stations are invariably more diverse and often more extreme. With advanced learners in particular, playing such calls can stimulate livelier discussion than the more measured presentation of issues in textbooks. Transcript 8 is of a caller giving his views on smoking in public in the week that the issue was debated in the British Parliament.

Listen to a caller on a phone-in programme giving his opinion on smoking.

Question 1: What is Dr Goodfellow's basic point?

### Transcript 8

**Presenter:** Dr Tom Goodfellow from Rugby.

**Dr Goodfellow:** I'm a doctor. I'm a radiologist and I actually diagnose the nasty work, the nasty cancers. My point is that I lived with my parents, god rest them, for over twenty years, and they were both heavy smokers, and as a result I've got a mild chronic bronchitis; not life-threatening, not serious, but, you know, unpleasant. Now, when everyone is discussing the effects of smoking in pubs and clubs and bars, no one is mentioning the effects of passive smoking on children by their parents. You can choose to go in a pub or club, but you can't choose who your parents are.

And actually the effect of passive of smoking on children is quite appalling. We forbid and ban all sorts of other abuse of children, but somehow this one is ignored.

**Presenter:** That's an extraordinarily interesting point. If you were to have such a ban, you would effectively be banning cigarettes altogether, wouldn't you? Would there be anywhere where you could smoke cigarettes?

**Dr Goodfellow:** I think that if people choose to smoke, they have to do it outside, completely separate. But certainly there must be a real rule that parents must not be allowed to subject their children to a smoky atmosphere with all the negative effects on it. Yes, I think we have to...as a society.

**Presenter:** Quite difficult to enforce, wouldn't it?

**Dr Goodfellow:** Very difficult to enforce and that's why I'm very disappointed the government have been so mealy-mouthed about this bill. Rather than taking a real clear stand, they've just watered it down unacceptably. And children can't choose. That's the tragedy; and it's another form of child abuse.

**Presenter:** Thank you.

*Any Answers* (BBC Radio4, October 29, 2005).

*Discussion* The British government is debating

whether to ban smoking in all public places. Do you think the Japanese government should be having the same debate?

### Comments on activity 4

Question 1 requires global listening skills and encourages students to process what they hear for meaning before it is analyzed for language. To ready students for the task, the author tells them to imagine they overhear this conversation while sitting on a London bus. They should aim only to get the gist of what the speaker is saying.

Regardless of the degree of understanding during the initial global listening, subsequent intensive analysis and discussion of the text ensures the task is not just a test of student's present level of listening comprehension, but a way for them to learn new language as it appears in the context of a point of view that students may not have hitherto considered.

### Conclusion

This paper examined the use of IR in the language classroom, particularly in relation to the role it can play in raising student's awareness of authentic English. Authenticity should not of course be seen as automatically conferring all natural conversation with some intrinsic value. Indeed, as Cook (1998) points out, a good deal of natural discourse is "impoverished, inarticulate or boring" (p. 59). However, as many listeners to the BBC and other stations will attest, there is much to be heard on radio that is linguistically rich, articulate and stimulating. It is hoped

that this paper will encourage language teachers to consider incorporating even a fraction of such content into their lessons.

**Mark Rebuck** has been in Japan on and off for ten years. He holds an MA in Japanese from Sheffield University and an MA in TEFL from Birmingham University. His research interests include the use of English loanwords in Japanese and the grammar of spoken English.

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### Appendix

- a) The BBC's terms of use (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/terms/>) state that audio from the Internet may be copied and used to create a “derivative work” only if it is for “... personal, non-commercial use”. The activities introduced in this paper were used by the author for purely educational purposes with no financial gain being made.
- b) Teachers who wish to use IR as a teaching resource in a non-commercial capacity will require software that is designed for recording IR. The author uses Replay Radio ([www.replay-radio.com](http://www.replay-radio.com)), but several other others are available on the Internet. Editing is also easy with these

systems. Audio files needed for the classroom use can be burnt onto a CD, which can then be played on a CD player.