Sociolinguistic Task

Designed by John Shaw (2024)

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1. Match the recording to the people:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Recording 1 |  |
| Recording 2 |  |
| Recording 3 |  |

2. Listen Again and write down the intensifying collocations you hear. Do you think they are informal, neutral or formal?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Informal | Neutral | Formal |
|  |  |  |

3. Why do these different social grouping use intensifiers in different ways? What do you think happens when people from these different groups talk together? How do they view each other?

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Answer Key

**Answers to Handout 3**

Recording 1 – British Teens

Recording 2- Two lawyers

Recording 3 – Valley Girls

Suggested Answers (From the full recordings)

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Informal** | **Neutral** | **Formal** |
| Well good  Proper brilliant  Well excited  Proper awesome  Well keen  Totally  Insanely good  Super impressive  So catchy  Beyond amazing  Permanently stuck | Exceptionally strong  Particularly persuasive  Remarkably consistent  Exceptionally favourable  Highly effective  Incredibly charming  Ridiculously unexpected | Exceptionally compelling  Exceptionally robust  Unquestionably advantageous  Exceptionally strong Strategically sound  Thoroughly meticulous |

* Groups use this language to show that they have the same kind of outlook and beliefs in life and belong to the same social group.
* When different groups talk together, they either have to code-shift, usually from an informal to a neutral or formal setting as power structures generally demand this; or the more informal speak can refuse to code-shift on principle to defend their sub-culture.
* Many people, but not all, who speak more formally look down on those using a lot of phatic emphasisers as less educated or immature. On the other hand, those who use intensifiers phatically often feel that those who don’t are part of the institutionalised world and cannot feel the same excitement that they can in their exclusive clubs with their secret language.