Listening at work – Expats’ experiences with understanding Danish

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The aim of my study is to discuss adult language learning in the age of globalization (Coupland 2010, Block 2010) when expats move from one country to another because of their job. I investigate expats’ investment (Norton 2000) in learning Danish as a second language by focusing on their listening comprehension while working in a Danish company. Even though most companies in Denmark have English as corporate language many expats still express the need to know more Danish (The Expat Study 2010). Meetings and official events might be in English but coffee and lunch breaks are often in Danish.

In this paper I use data from a case study to discuss how this expat handles listening problems in different situations at work. I use his own descriptions of himself and his experiences with learning Danish to analyze what strategies he uses for understanding Danish. In this way the autobiographical part of the data collection contributes to understanding the learner’s actions. Listening in real life situations at work seems to require various listening, learning and communication strategies (Vandergrift 2006, Færch og Kasper 1983) that expats would benefit from learning when working in Denmark.

References:


Vandergrift, L. (2006): Second language Listening Ability or language proficiency. Modern Language Journal, 90, i, s.6-18

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