

## EPISODE 6: CONFUSING WORDS

C: Commonly confused verbs. Are you ready?

A: Do verbs often get confused? I hadn't realized verbs had that capacity!

C: They certainly do

A: Should that actually be commonly confusing verbs? No. Verbs that people are commonly confused by or verbs that are commonly confusing people.

C: For example. Tell, say.

A: Isn't that the same thing?

C: Ah, common mistake that I hear here: 'say me! Say me!' why do people say 'say me'?

A: Because they're translating directly from 'dime'. Which would be translated as 'tell me!'

C: Ok, so what would the difference be, between tell and say?

A: Ok, so, the power dynamic between us outside of this podcast is not considered here, right? I can speak freely here, when I give an incorrect explanation? I won't be fired?

C: One hundred percent.

A: So, you tell a story, you tell information, but you cannot use the verb tell to express word for word what someone has told you. Right? So, 'he told me' you cannot follow that with a direct quotation. So, 'he said to me' and a million other reporting verbs that we can use, but that's the primary. 'Tell' is used to then explain the information that was transmitted. Whereas 'say' is almost always used to give a direct quotation of what was said. On the other hand, 'tell' can also be used to express influence over another person. In that 'he told me to go to the store'. 'he said to me to go to the store'...borderline. 'he said', comma, quotation: 'go to the store'. Sorry, I should say 'inverted commas'.

C: Inverted commas, yes. I've got a theory on this.

A: Please.



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C: because I, I don't read the grammar books to be honest. For me, 'say', you're declaring. And you're making a general public knowledge.

A: Declaring! It makes me think of, who's the Looney Tunes character...? **Sameny Sam**? He was 'I do declare! I do declare!'

C: I do say. And what do you say? That's it, it's out there. It's out there for everybody to know. But with tell, you can always give it a little more of an audience, it's like a secret. It's like 'I'm gonna tell you', and then the information. But you're emphasizing a little bit who you are going to tell, what are you going to say.

A: And how do your students respond to that explanation?

C: Oh, they nod.

A: Yeah?

C: Exactly.

A: Well, of course, but there's two types of nodding: the 'yes teacher leave me alone'...

C: That's the one

A: And 'I understand'

C: I figure that it is the former. 'Yes teacher, leave me alone'.

A: Oh, and that brings up a good one: former and latter.

C: Former and latter?

A: Those are kind of, you know, former being the first of two, and latter being the second.

C: And the last?

A: You cannot former, latter and last?

C: Last and latest.

A: Ah, that's true! Last and latest. I would say even in English there is confusion. When you talk about 'this artist's last album'...'David Bowie's last album is amazing! When is



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the next one coming out?' since he passed away that's...but that's not an incorrect use! Like I say 'our last album came out two years ago'.

C: But where's the line between your last album and your latest album?

A: Maybe latest is used to talk about your most recent thing, when it's closer in time.

C: Still relevant.

A: Yeah, cause now you wouldn't say 'the latest David Bowie album is amazing'. No, because it was two years ago, three years ago, whatever...

C: Six years ago.

A: Is it really? Is that how long it was? Jesus, it's been a long time.

C: It's been a long time.

A: Well, for those of you who like David Bowie, I have some insider information that I can't share but there will be an album with David Bowie lyrics coming out in the near future. Nothing to do with me, personally, but by a very very well-known singer, and it sounds really cool and really weird.

C: You heard it here first.

A: Yes, there you go. Ok, so that makes sense. Latest is used when it's still in a relevant time period and then it becomes last, meaning latest but not recently latest. And then there's last meaning 'el ultimo de la fila'.

C: Is this your last record?

A: Yeah, exactly!

C: Do you promise?

A: I'm personally offended by that!

C: How about rob and steal? These are commonly confused verbs. I think there's a difference.

A: Yeah, those are easy. Steal, the object, the grammatical object of steal is the thing that has been taken.



C: Right.

A: Right? So you steal the guitar, you steal the whole object. I love when people say 'I got stolen!'

C: Yeah, it's my favourite!

A: No, that's kidnapping!

C: Exactly.

A: And then, rob means to take the content of usually an institution or a building. Or it could be a person, 'I got robbed'. So, to steal the object of another person, thing, or building.

C: So, your car got stolen, or your car got robbed?

A: Both are possible.

A: A bunch of years ago, I was stupid and I left some guitar pedals, in the US, on the seat of my car and they got robbed, the car got robbed. The car was still there, but my pedals were stolen. Yeah, I love that green tube screamer.

C: 'I don't care', 'I don't mind'. Difference for you?

A: Ah, ok. Oh, ok, wow, now I feel and English student. Uh, I don't care...

C: Would you like tea or coffee?

A: I do.

C: Neither.

A: 'I don't care'...oh, no, you can't say 'I don't mind'. No, 'I don't care' is that one option is as valid as the other. 'I don't mind' you don't use in response to an option. To possibilities. You say 'is it ok if I sit here?'. 'I don't mind'. 'Is it ok if I sit here?'. 'I don't care'. Also acceptable. So, in that case both are acceptable but if you're given options, I can't use 'I don't mind', you have to use 'I don't care'. Can you improve upon my explanation, please?



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C: For me, the difference would be to stay in politeness. 'I don't mind' is, for me, very polite. It's to say: 'I don't mind. You decide and I will be happy with both options'. But if you say 'I don't care' you're really saying, quite rudely, that I don't care.

A: There we're getting into intonation which is a whole other whole can of worms. But hold on, let's go back to before we came in here, I offered you tea or coffee. It's what literally happened out there. Actually, well, water or coffee. Do you want water or coffee?

C: Coffee.

A: Right. Say 'I don't mind'. Do you want water or coffee?

C: I don't mind.

A: Acceptable for you?

C: Now that you say it...

A: Borderline.

C: Yeah, borderline.

A: Right? I think that it has to do with the kind of options. I see what you're saying, 'I don't care' easily can sound a little more snotty. Like 'do you mind if I 'bla bla bla?' 'I don't care!?' 'I don't mind!' You can't say 'I don't mind' with that kind of obnoxious attitude, I think.

C: Do you remember that song from a few years ago, 'I don't care! I love it!?' It was this Charlie XCX song.

A: Oh, Charlie .....?

C: Charlie XCX.

A: I didn't understand those numbers. Charlie the 19<sup>th</sup>? Is that his name? XEX or XIX?

C: XCX. Charlie XCX.

A: It wasn't written like XIX?



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C: No, X. C. X.

A: Oh, it's not 19, it's...I don't know what that is in roman numerals.

C: A modern day singer. Ok, few others. This is difficult. Avoid and prevent.

A: Oh, that's easy. Come on, you need to bring some harder questions next time. So, prevent is to keep something from happening. To ensure something does not happen, right? To avoid is something that exists, and you don't want to participate in it, or run into it, or have any contact with it, whether it's metaphorically or literally.

C: So, when you're driving you see like, possibly and accident, you avoid it.

A: Whereas the car in front of you stops, you slam on the breaks, then you prevent an accident.

C: Excellent. Ok, lose and miss. This is one of my favorites because: 'lose a train' or miss a train'?

A: Sure, sure. Lose means you can't find something.

C: So, do you lose a train?

A: I mean, if you're one of those people, who I never been but I really enjoy, with the model trains, you have your favourite train... 'oh my god, I can't find it, I lost my favourite train!'. 'Miss' is to not catch it in time. But then, of course, we get into the overlap with the emotional definition of 'miss someone'. Meaning, to emotionally feel their absence. 'Añorar', right? Echar de menos. Now, related to that, what's the lesson that I often give my kids? Ah! 'Wait for', 'hope for' and 'expect'. Those are my favourites, because it can...en castellano it can be 'esperar'. So you can wait for the bus you expected to come, you really hope it's gonna come but in the end it doesn't come.

C: Yeah, I tend to teach that one with money.

A: With money? Oh, you tell me, explain. See? 'Tell me'!

C: Exactly, 'tell me'! With the lottery. Do you expect to win the lottery? Do you know the statistics?

A: Hold on, hold on! Just 'cause someone expects to win the lottery does not mean they know the statistics.



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C: I think they do not know the statistics if they expect to win. Yeah, you can't expect to win the lottery, it's almost impossible, but you hope to win the lottery, that would be amazing.

A: True, but are you waiting to win the lottery?

C: I sure am! I wish it would happen!

A: True, true. Ok, makes sense.

C: 'Discuss' and 'argue'?

A: Ah, that's easy! 'Discuss', right? Is to have a normal conversation.

C: It's what we do, all the time.

A: It's what we do. We should argue! One of these days we should come in hot and just decide we're gonna argue. And 'argúe', which is my favourite pronunciation of that word, which is not correct. To argue, right, is to have an emotionally charged discussion.

C: And would you say 'row'?

A: Personally, I would not, but I'm aware of that word and I always use it as an example of one of those horrible words that could be 'row, row, row your boat' it's not 'row, row, row your bout'. To have a row, right? To have an argument.

C: To have an argument, yeah, but to me it's more...

A: Is it different? Bigger or less than an argument?

C: Yeah, it's...more intimate. It's your family, friends, partner, you row.

A: So, you would have a row with like, a random idiot who stopped at the top of the escalator to look at his cellphone as you're getting out of the metro?

C: No, you just shout, yell.

A: Oh, ok. Ah, but I know we're not talking about pronunciation, but shout and shoot is a fun one. Shout and shoot, yes, this happens often.

C: That's unfortunately...



## Vocabulary bank

You **tell someone something**, but you **say something (to someone)**.

To **nod (your head)** = to make an affirmative gesture moving your head forwards and backwards.

The **former** is *the first of two in a list*, and **latter** is *the second of two in a list*.

The **latest** is *the most recent* and the **last** is *the final one*.

You **steal something** (take all the object), but you **rob something from a person, place or thing**.

**I don't care** and **I don't mind** both mean **it doesn't matter**, but **I don't mind** is *more polite* and **I don't care** is *assertive and possibly rude!*

**To prevent** means to stop something from existing or happening, but **to avoid** means to not go near or participate in something that exists or is happening.

**Hope** is *a desire for something to happen* but **expect** is *something you are convinced will happen (whether you like it or not!)*

**A row** is *a noisy argument*



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