

PART②

One angry radio listener wrote:

There's nothing that irritates me more than having to listen to some empty-headed person being interviewed on radio and TV, when he's asked a perfectly straightforward question, and he expands his answer with a flood of you knows.

Nor is it just you know which is singled out for attack. There are several words and phrases which people insert into their speech, and which attract criticism when they are over-used. Some of them can be seen in the following conversation—which isn't entirely fictitious:

Interviewer:

So why has your policy changed?

Famous Person:

Well, you know, there hasn't been, you know, a change, as it were, in the usual sense of that word ... you see, I mean, there is in fact a difference between change and, you know, development, so to say ...

No one would be happy with this kind of reply—especially if it came from somebody whose standing might lead you to expect something rather more confident and coherent.

That's why many people object to you know, you see, mind you, I mean, and all the other phrases of this kind. They are held to be signs of unclear thinking, or lack of confidence, and anyone anxious to develop a controlled, precise speech style, or an authoritative public image, would do well to avoid them. Some people go further. In their view, phrases like you know should be eliminated from the language in the next major clean-up exercise. They are of no value. They communicate no meaning. So let's get rid of them. Enough said?

No. There's far more to be said about these little phrases. They do have a job to do in modern English. They do communicate meaning—though it's often a different kind of

meaning than many people expect. To get rid of them entirely would be a real loss, not a gain, for the language.

To see this, let's look again at the Famous Person interview, and ask what was wrong with it. Two things. There were too many you know-type phrases. And they were being used in a situation where clear and precise thinking was expected. The Famous Person might have got away with just one or two of these phrases—but to use ten of them in his opening couple of sentences was positively foolish.

But now reflect on a quite different situation, where clear and precise thinking is not expected, and where there is no public image to be concerned about. At home, out shopping, in the pub ... in innumerable everyday settings where there is no external pressure on us to speak according to a national standard, where no one is listening to us in order to judge us, or our fluency, and where people use language just as a form of social cement, to chat rather than to converse—in these domestic settings, conversation operates with a very different set of language standards from those we try to use in formal situations. And one of the most important differences is the use we make of such phrases as you know—introducing them into our speech in such a natural and unselfconscious way that neither speaker nor listener becomes aware of the fact that they have been used at all.

問1 文中の下線部(1)～(3)の意味にもっとも近い語を、それぞれ次の1～4から1つずつ選びなさい。

- (1) 1. funny 2. invented 3. true 4. wrong
(2) 1. clear 2. exciting 3. interesting 4. peculiar
(3) 1. afraid 2. conscious 3. eager 4. uneasy

問2 次の文1～7が本文の内容と一致するものを3つ選びなさい。

1. The angry radio listener attacked the use of you know because the phrase is perfectly straightforward.
2. The Famous Person used you know-type phrases just once or twice in the opening sentences of his interview.
3. The author disagrees with those who believe that phrases like you know communicate nothing.
4. We should not use phrases like you know too often when we are expected to be clear and precise or when we would like to look confident and authoritative.
5. We should avoid using you know even when we need not be concerned about clear and precise thinking or about our public image.
6. At home, out shopping, or in the pub, we do not feel external pressure to speak formally, but other people are listening to us to see whether we can speak fluently.
7. In some situations we must avoid overusing phrases like you know, but in others we do not have to be too sensitive to their use in our conversation.

問3 文中の破線部(4)を和訳しなさい。

問4 文中の破線部(7)の **they** は何を指すか、本文中の同じ段落から 5 語以内で抜き出して答えなさい。