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Hospital cleaner fired for speaking Polish

7th September, 2012

http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1209/120907-being_fired.html

Contents

The Article	2
Warm-ups	3
Before Reading / Listening	4
While Reading / Listening	5
Listening Gap Fill	6
After Reading / Listening	7
Student Survey	8
Discussion	9
Language Work	10
Writing	11
Homework	12
Answers	13

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THE ARTICLE

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1209/120907-being_fired.html

A Polish hospital cleaner in Norway has been fired for speaking Polish during her lunch break. Johanna Renclawowicz, 34, received her marching orders from the Sykehuset Telemark hospital. Her dismissal letter said: "You have been given information that only Norwegian shall be spoken during working time. Your colleagues and patients have repeatedly complained that Polish is spoken in the eating area, cleaning department and corridors, etc." The hospital claimed they continually warned Ms Renclawowicz against using Polish at work. In August, they sent her a letter that was titled, "The use of language in the workplace". In it, she was told that speaking Polish created a "bad working environment".

Ms Renclawowicz moved to Norway four years ago to find a better life. She now has a three-year-old daughter and a mortgage on her house. She started work at the hospital in August 2011 as a temporary worker. Four other Poles at the hospital warned her that the hospital had banned Polish. She said: "It was strange that we were expected to speak Norwegian to each other on our breaks, even when we're not that fluent....Every time the boss heard one of us speaking Polish, she said, 'Speak Norwegian'. She mainly complained if it happened during lunch breaks." There were even, "We speak Norwegian at work" posters put up in the hospital. She will now sue the hospital for discrimination and unfair dismissal.

WARM-UPS

1. BEING FIRED: Walk around the class and talk to other students about being fired. Change partners often. Share your findings with your first partner.

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

hospital cleaner / being fired / lunch break / marching orders / colleagues / workplace / a better life / mortgage / temporary worker / fluent / complained / unfair dismissal

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

3. UNFAIR DISMISSAL: Give a score (fair = 10 / not fair = 0) and complete this table with your partner(s). Change partners often and share what you wrote.

	Score	Why?
Speaking one's native language		
Making many small mistakes		
Making some personal photocopies		
Not waking up after a lunch break		
Arguing with the boss		
Not passing workplace tests		

4. FIRED: Students A **strongly** believe a company can sack anyone at any time; Students B **strongly** believe not. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

5. A BETTER LIFE: Where would you go? Rank these and share your rankings with your partner. Put the best at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- USA
- Brazil
- Barbados
- Australia
- UK
- Japan
- India
- Bhutan

6. LANGUAGE: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'language'. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1209/120907-being_fired.html

1. TRUE / FALSE: Read the headline. Guess if a-h below are true (T) or false (F).

- | | |
|--|-------|
| a. A hospital worker was fired for speaking Polish after work. | T / F |
| b. The worker was warned against speaking Polish during working hours. | T / F |
| c. The hospital never gave the worker a letter about her use of Polish. | T / F |
| d. The hospital said the use of Polish was not good for working relations. | T / F |
| e. The worker has lived in Norway all her life. | T / F |
| f. Other Poles at the hospital warned the worker about not using Polish. | T / F |
| g. The hospital expected the Poles to speak Norwegian to each other. | T / F |
| h. The cleaner has decided not to follow up her case in the courts. | T / F |

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article.

- | | |
|----------------|------------------|
| 1. fired | a. relocated |
| 2. dismissal | b. repeatedly |
| 3. colleagues | c. atmosphere |
| 4. continually | d. sacked |
| 5. environment | e. communicative |
| 6. moved | f. coworkers |
| 7. mortgage | g. prohibited |
| 8. banned | h. take to court |
| 9. fluent | i. termination |
| 10. sue | j. housing loan |

3. PHRASE MATCH: (Sometimes more than one choice is possible.)

- | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. received her marching | a. letter |
| 2. dismissal | b. in the workplace |
| 3. they continually | c. fluent |
| 4. The use of language | d. on her house |
| 5. created a bad | e. orders |
| 6. a mortgage | f. Norwegian to each other |
| 7. warned her that the hospital | g. working environment |
| 8. we were expected to speak | h. for discrimination |
| 9. we're not that | i. had banned Polish |
| 10. sue the hospital | j. warned Ms Renclawowicz |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1209/120907-being_fired.html

GAP FILL: Put the words into the gaps in the text.

A Polish hospital cleaner in Norway has been fired for speaking Polish (1) _____ her lunch break. Johanna Renclawowicz, 34, received her (2) _____ orders from the Sykehuset Telemark hospital. Her (3) _____ letter said: "You have been given information that only Norwegian shall be spoken during working time. Your (4) _____ and patients have repeatedly complained that Polish is spoken in the eating area, cleaning department and (5) _____, etc." The hospital claimed they continually warned Ms Renclawowicz (6) _____ using Polish at work. In August, they sent her a letter that was (7) _____, "The use of language in the workplace". In it, she was told that speaking Polish (8) _____ a "bad working environment".

dismissal
titled
created
marching
corridors
during
against
colleagues

Ms Renclawowicz (9) _____ to Norway four years ago to find a better life. She now has a three-year-old daughter and a (10) _____ on her house. She started work at the hospital in August 2011 as a (11) _____ worker. Four other Poles at the hospital warned her that the hospital had banned Polish. She said: "It was strange that we were (12) _____ to speak Norwegian to each other on our breaks, even when we're not that (13) _____Every time the boss heard one of us speaking Polish, she said, 'Speak Norwegian'. She (14) _____ complained if it happened during lunch breaks." There were even, "We speak Norwegian at work" posters put up in the hospital. She will now (15) _____ the hospital for discrimination and (16) _____ dismissal.

expected
sue
mortgage
fluent
moved
unfair
mainly
temporary

LISTENING – Listen and fill in the gaps

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1209/120907-being_fired.html

A Polish hospital cleaner in Norway (1) _____ speaking Polish during her lunch break. Johanna Renclawowicz, 34, received her (2) _____ the Sykehuset Telemark hospital. Her dismissal letter said: "You have been given information that only Norwegian shall (3) _____ working time. Your colleagues and patients have repeatedly complained that Polish is spoken in the eating area, cleaning (4) _____, etc." The hospital claimed they continually warned Ms Renclawowicz against using Polish at work. In August, they sent her a (5) _____, "The use of language in the workplace". In it, she was told that speaking Polish created a "(6) _____".

Ms Renclawowicz moved to Norway four years ago to find a better life. She now has a three-year-old daughter (7) _____ house. She started work at the hospital in August 2011 as a temporary worker. Four other Poles at the hospital warned her that (8) _____ Polish. She said: "It was strange that (9) _____ to speak Norwegian to each other on our breaks, (10) _____ that fluent....Every time the boss heard one of us speaking Polish, she said, 'Speak Norwegian'. She (11) _____ it happened during lunch breaks." There were even, "We speak Norwegian at work" posters put up in the hospital. She (12) _____ hospital for discrimination and unfair dismissal.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1209/120907-being_fired.html

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionary / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'lunch' and 'break'.

lunch	break

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• marching• letter• patients• continually• titled• bad	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• better• house• banned• expected• mainly• unfair
---	--

UNFAIR DISMISSAL SURVEY

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1209/120907-being_fired.html

Write five GOOD questions about unfair dismissal in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper.
When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

UNFAIR DISMISSAL DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What springs to mind when you hear the word 'fired'?
- c) What do you think about what you read?
- d) Who is wrong, the hospital or Ms Renclawowicz?
- e) Is speaking one's native language a sackable offence?
- f) Are you surprised this happened in Norway?
- g) How would you feel if you were given your marching orders?
- h) What do you think of the cleaner's colleagues for complaining about her use of Polish?
- i) What should be "The use of language in the workplace"?
- j) Should an employer be allowed to order employees not to speak a particular language during a lunch break?

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UNFAIR DISMISSAL DISCUSSION

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) What three adjectives would you use to describe this story?
- c) Do you think the cleaner regrets moving to Norway?
- d) Is banning a language in the workplace an act of racism?
- e) Does this story highlight potential problems with an ever-increasing multinational workforce?
- f) Should the hospital have helped the cleaner in any way with her Norwegian?
- g) What do you think of the "We speak Norwegian at work" posters?
- h) Do you think Ms Renclawowicz will win her case in court?
- i) If she wins, what should the judge award her?
- j) What questions would you like to ask Ms Renclawowicz?

LANGUAGE – MULTIPLE CHOICE

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1209/120907-being_fired.html

A Polish hospital cleaner in Norway has been fired for speaking Polish during her lunch break. Johanna Renclawowicz, 34, received her (1) _____ orders from the Sykehuset Telemark hospital. Her (2) _____ letter said: "You have been given information that only Norwegian shall be spoken during working time. Your colleagues and patients have (3) _____ complained that Polish is spoken in the eating area, cleaning department and corridors, etc." The hospital claimed they (4) _____ warned Ms Renclawowicz against using Polish at work. In August, they sent her a letter that was (5) _____, "The use of language in the workplace". In it, she was told that speaking Polish created a "bad working (6) _____".

Ms Renclawowicz moved to Norway four years ago to find a better life. She now has a three-year-old daughter and a (7) _____ on her house. She started work at the hospital in August 2011 as a temporary worker. Four other Poles at the hospital warned her that the hospital had (8) _____ Polish. She said: "It was strange that we were (9) _____ to speak Norwegian to each other on our breaks, even when we're not that (10) _____Every time the boss heard one of us speaking Polish, she said, 'Speak Norwegian'. She (11) _____ complained if it happened during lunch breaks." There were even, "We speak Norwegian at work" posters put up in the hospital. She will now (12) _____ the hospital for discrimination and unfair dismissal.

Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.

- | | | | | |
|-----|-----------------|------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| 1. | (a) walking | (b) running | (c) sprinting | (d) marching |
| 2. | (a) dismal | (b) dismissive | (c) dismissal | (d) dismay |
| 3. | (a) repeat | (b) repeatedly | (c) repetitive | (d) repetition |
| 4. | (a) continually | (b) continuation | (c) continuity | (d) continue |
| 5. | (a) written | (b) sketched | (c) titled | (d) doodled |
| 6. | (a) habitat | (b) ecosystem | (c) world | (d) environment |
| 7. | (a) payment | (b) mortgage | (c) agreement | (d) fine |
| 8. | (a) banned | (b) scanned | (c) fanned | (d) panned |
| 9. | (a) expat | (b) expected | (c) expedited | (d) expelled |
| 10. | (a) flippant | (b) fluid | (c) fluent | (d) flatulent |
| 11. | (a) mainly | (b) big time | (c) orderly | (d) whole |
| 12. | (a) sap | (b) sic | (c) sew | (d) sue |

WRITING

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1209/120907-being_fired.html

Write about **being fired** for 10 minutes. Correct your partner's paper.

[illegible]

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find out more about unfair dismissal. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. BEING FIRED: Make a poster about being fired. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

4. NEXT STAGE: Write a magazine article about the next stage in this story. Include imaginary interviews with the cleaner and her boss.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

5. LETTER: Write a letter to a labour lawyer. Ask him/her three questions about being fired. Give him/her three of your opinions on it. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

- a. F b. T c. F d. T e. F f. T g. T h. F

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|----------------|------------------|
| 1. fired | a. sacked |
| 2. dismissal | b. termination |
| 3. colleagues | c. coworkers |
| 4. continually | d. repeatedly |
| 5. environment | e. atmosphere |
| 6. moved | f. relocated |
| 7. mortgage | g. housing loan |
| 8. banned | h. prohibited |
| 9. fluent | i. communicative |
| 10. sue | j. take to court |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. received her marching | a. orders |
| 2. dismissal | b. letter |
| 3. they continually | c. warned Ms Renclawowicz |
| 4. The use of language | d. in the workplace |
| 5. created a bad | e. working environment |
| 6. a mortgage | f. on her house |
| 7. warned her that the hospital | g. had banned Polish |
| 8. we were expected to speak | h. Norwegian to each other |
| 9. we're not that | i. fluent |
| 10. sue the hospital | j. for discrimination |

GAP FILL:

Hospital cleaner fired for speaking Polish

A Polish hospital cleaner in Norway has been fired for speaking Polish (1) **during** her lunch break. Johanna Renclawowicz, 34, received her (2) **marching** orders from the Sykehuset Telemark hospital. Her (3) **dismissal** letter said: "You have been given information that only Norwegian shall be spoken during working time. Your (4) **colleagues** and patients have repeatedly complained that Polish is spoken in the eating area, cleaning department and (5) **corridors**, etc." The hospital claimed they continually warned Ms Renclawowicz (6) **against** using Polish at work. In August, they sent her a letter that was (7) **titled**, "The use of language in the workplace". In it, she was told that speaking Polish (8) **created** a "bad working environment".

Ms Renclawowicz (9) **moved** to Norway four years ago to find a better life. She now has a three-year-old daughter and a (10) **mortgage** on her house. She started work at the hospital in August 2011 as a (11) **temporary** worker. Four other Poles at the hospital warned her that the hospital had banned Polish. She said: "It was strange that we were (12) **expected** to speak Norwegian to each other on our breaks, even when we're not that (13) **fluent**....Every time the boss heard one of us speaking Polish, she said, 'Speak Norwegian'. She (14) **mainly** complained if it happened during lunch breaks." There were even, "We speak Norwegian at work" posters put up in the hospital. She will now (15) **sue** the hospital for discrimination and (16) **unfair** dismissal.

LANGUAGE WORK

- 1 - d 2 - c 3 - b 4 - a 5 - c 6 - d 7 - b 8 - a 9 - b 10 - c 11 - a 12 - d

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