

Clover English

PODCAST PDF GUIDE THE IRISH LANGUAGE PART 2

TRANSCRIPT

VOCAB EXPLANATION

EXTRA ARTICLE

GRAMMAR: WHO/WHAT/WHEN - EVER

TRANSCRIPT



Hi everyone and welcome to this week's episode of the Clover English podcast. I'm your host, Kerry and today I'll be continuing to speak about the Irish language. If you didn't catch the first episode I've linked it in the show notes so make sure to check that out first. As usual, make sure to download the PDF guide that comes with this episode with the transcript, vocabulary explanations, extra vocab AND a grammar explanation. So, check the show notes to get the link. These will not be free forever, I'm already setting up my store so take advantage now. I would love to do these for free forever but I need to do things like eat, pay my bills and raise a family and all those things, unfortunately require money, so unfortunately I can't do this for free forever...

So, in The Irish Language Part 1 I spoke a little about the features of the Irish language, the Ogham alphabet, and the development and decline of the Irish language. We finished up at the 19th century when English really began to overtake Irish as the dominant language in Ireland. This was because English became associated with opportunity, employment and prestige, while Irish increasingly became associated with poverty and illiteracy.

So, in today's episode I'd like to explore how, despite its decline, the Irish language was revived and preserved somewhat by the work of an organization known as The Gaelic League, then we'll see how the language's usage developed in both the Republic of Ireland and in Northern Ireland right up until the present day.

So, *without further ado let's get cracking.*

Notes:

Without further ado: without waiting anymore

Let's get cracking: let's start

We cannot begin to explore the Irish language in the 20th century without mentioning the Gaelic League. So, the Gaelic League was an organization founded in 1893 in Dublin. Their main goals were to promote the use of the Irish language, create new literature in Irish and to de-anglicize Ireland through a process of “cultural nationalism”. I’d like to pause over that last phrase there. Cultural nationalism in this case refers to the restoration of the Irish nation through a return to Irish culture in a non-political and non-sectarian manner.

So, originally the Gaelic League did not want to **chain** the Irish language to politics or religion, which were of course truly divisive issues in Ireland at the time, and founding members like Douglas Hyde emphasised the importance of bringing the Irish language to people **from all walks of life**. However, the league soon shifted from “cultural nationalism” to “political nationalism” and the Irish language quickly became a politicized tool to further the cause of Irish Republicanism. This helped **alienate** those unionists who preferred to maintain the union with Great Britain. The Gaelic League also became increasingly close to the Catholic church which further alienated protestants in the country who started to outwardly reject all things Irish in favour of a more British identity.

So, we see this political and religious divide **come into play** over the Irish language. It increasingly becomes associated with Irish independence and the catholic church, or at least the Gaelic League certainly did. They [the Gaelic League] held a lot of traditional Irish cultural events in local parishes (a parish is a local church by the way) and had a close relationship with catholic schools. The campaigning that the Gaelic League did was so significant that by 1921 “the British govt had given the language a more privileged position than other optional and extra subjects on the national curriculum. The government also supported the language by paying teacher training **grants** to independent Irish language colleges **run by** the Gaelic League¹.”

Notes:

Chain: a chain is a piece of metal used to attach things to something. For example a bike chain is used to secure a bike to something like a fence so it won't get stolen. It can also be used as a verb to mean “attach” like in the sentence above

From all Walks of Life: expression meaning diverse

Alienate: to make someone hostile/indifferent to something

Come into play: appear

Grants: money given to someone by an institution that they don't have to pay back

Run by: organized by

1 “Irish/ness is all around us: Language Revivalism and The Culture of Ethnic Identity in Northern Ireland” Olaf Zenker

TRANSCRIPT



So, what happened to the Irish language after independence then? Remember that when the Republic of Ireland got independence from Great Britain the country was partitioned into Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland (partitioned, by the way, means it was given a border that wasn't there before). So, we'll start by looking at the Republic of Ireland and then Northern Ireland's relationship to the Irish language because they did not develop in the same way, they developed in very different contexts and we have to recognize that.

So, when the Republic of Ireland gained independence in 1922 Irish was recognized as the country's first official language and was made a compulsory subject in all primary and secondary schools. **Alongside** this, all administration was handled bilingually in Irish and in English. So, Irish was also a compulsory requirement for employment in the public sector so if you wanted to be a civil servant, a civil servant is someone who works for the government, you had to prove that you could speak Irish. Some commentators say that the removal of this requirement in 1974 has contributed to the decline of the language.

So how many Irish speakers are there today in the Republic of Ireland? To obtain this information we're unfortunately limited to the national census which might not be super reliable. According to the 2011 census 41% of people over the age of three defined themselves as Irish speakers (which was actually an increase of 7% on the figure in 2006) but the amount of people who speak Irish as a first language is restricted to a very small minority, mainly along the West Coast. A word of caution is needed when interpreting these results because people were simply asked "Can you speak Irish?" which could mean very different things to different people. How does one define "speak Irish"? Does it mean to speak the language fluently? Does it mean being bilingual? Does it mean being able to have some conversations in Irish? Or simply having a basic awareness of the language? This difference in interpreting the question may have **skewed** the results.

Notes:

Alongside: in addition to

Skewed: in this context it means that the results may have been made unreliable

In the last episode I spoke about the Gaeltacht areas in Ireland which are small regions where Irish is more commonly spoken, well apparently the amount of Irish being spoken even in these areas is decreasing. For many young people in these areas English is now the dominant language. The Irish government has committed to **tackling** this problem with a 20 year plan for reviving and encouraging the use of Irish with an aim to increase the number of people using Irish on a daily basis. However, one of the main barriers to realizing this goal is that there are few opportunities for people to speak Irish outside of formal, classroom environments (or outside Gaeltacht areas).

I think many of you listening can agree that when your language learning is restricted to the classroom it never really **takes off**. Learning a language in a controlled environment with the safety net of a teacher is not the same thing as speaking it in authentic contexts and encountering the language in a more organic way. I'm not saying classrooms don't have their place, just that classroom learning needs to be supplemented with real, authentic conversations and interactions with others. And that's one of the problems in Ireland at the minute, is that a lot of the Irish language instruction, teaching and exposure is only happening in these classroom environments.

Okay, so we've seen the situation in the Republic of Ireland, let's **move on** to the Irish language and its journey in Northern Ireland which is quite a different story altogether.

There's no doubt that the Irish language has suffered more in the North than anywhere else on the island. The language suffered a lot due to the establishment of the Northern Irish state which was designed to be a pro-British and pro-Protestant state. Those in charge, and indeed many of the citizens, saw the Irish language as a foreign language that didn't have a place in their society. However, the politicians of the time were very pragmatic and clever: they didn't just ban the language from the education system, as was done with other minority languages in other countries.

Notes:

Tackle a problem: put measures in place to solve a problem

Take off: in this context it means become successful or popular

TRANSCRIPT



Lord Charlemont (who was the Minister of Education) said that “forbidding [Irish] ... will stimulate it to such an extent that the very dogs in Belfast - at any rate the Falls Road dogs - will bark in Irish”. Just a quick note; the Falls Road is a very Irish nationalist, Catholic neighbourhood in Belfast. So, we can see by this quote that the politicians in charge knew that if they banned the Irish language, it would only **cause a backlash** and stimulate it and that’s exactly what they wanted to avoid. So they didn’t actually **outright** ban it. But they certainly didn’t promote it either.

In Belfast today you can see that many street signs are bilingual in English and Irish, however this normally only happens in Irish nationalist areas and this practice was actually prohibited until 1995. So, before 1995 you couldn’t legally have any street signs that were in Irish.

I’m sure the majority of you are familiar with the BBC, well there are special BBC channels throughout the UK such as BBC Scotland, BBC Wales and BBC Northern Ireland. Well, Irish was rarely heard or seen on BBC Northern Ireland before 1981 despite BBC broadcast programmes in both Welsh and Scots Gaelic since the 1920s! So it’s clear that there was some type of bias against using the Irish language for broadcast programmes.

So what about today in Northern Ireland? In modern day Northern Ireland. Well, according to the results of the 2011 Census, 11 per cent (184,898) of the population in Northern Ireland have some knowledge of Irish. However, only six per cent reported being able to speak the language. So this is a very tiny percentage indeed and...which could in reality be lower. I think one of the main problems is the lack of Irish instruction at many state schools and before I mention why a little background information is needed.

Notes:

A backlash: intense criticism or rejection of something, normally towards a government policy. Example: “There was a backlash against the rising of fuel taxes. Many citizens protested in the capital against the policy”

Outright: completely or obviously

The Northern Irish education system is **notoriously** segregated between protestants and catholics, both normally attend their own separate schools. Integrated education has **come a long way** but there is still a clear segregation. Irish wasn't taught at my school for example, which was a majority Protestant school and that was really the case for everyone I knew who didn't attend a catholic school. On the other hand, those I know who did attend catholic schools did have at least some schooling in the Irish language. There are things like bilingual schools and even schools which use Irish as the main language of instruction, but these are **few and far between** in the north and normally restricted to Catholic areas.

However, personally I have hope. In my old neighbourhood there is now a centre which teaches Irish and in my mother's neighbourhood I saw an advertisement once for an Irish language nursery school for children. This was quite incredible, as the Irish language has, since the beginning of Northern Ireland, been viewed with suspicion and even contempt in these very Pro-British areas. So, I hope the **tide is turning in favour of** more people taking up the Irish language in the future.

Well, that's all for today folks! I hope you've enjoyed these last two episodes I've really enjoyed making them because this is a topic I'm quite passionate about really. I think we should all make an effort to respect and preserve endangered languages in anyway we can. And if this is a topic that you're also passionate about I'd like you to check out 7,000 languages. They are an NGO dedicated to preserving minority languages. I'm gonna link their website in the shownotes and I'd urge you all to consider making a donation so they can continue doing their work. They work with many communities who have traditionally been discriminated against because of the language they speak and they're helping others learn heritage languages and keep them alive. So, yes check them out! I'd also like you guys to tell me about any minority or endangered languages that either you speak or that people in your country speak. I'd be really interested in hearing about that. So get in touch with me via my social media channels (links are in the show notes).

Notes:

Notoriously: have a reputation for something. For example: "He is notoriously bad tempered"

Come a long way: advance

Few and far between: if something is "few and far between" it means there aren't many of them

Tide is turning: this expressions indicates that a change is coming. It's normally used with "against" or "in favour of". For example: "the tide is turning against the president, her policies aren't very popular and people are getting fed up"

TRANSCRIPT



And today's idiom is one that is very much associated with the Irish people and that is to have the **gift of the gab** which means that you have a propensity, a skill for talking. So, if you have the gift of the gab it means that you talk a lot, and you know.. You're probably quite an entertaining person and you're very sociable and yeah you have this good oral ability when it comes to talking. And that's something that a lot of people say about the Irish, so I thought since we're looking at the Irish language that would be our idiom of the week. So, one more time that idiom is; to have the gift of the gab. You'd say something like; "the Irish people really have the gift of the gab" okay, so that's the idiom for this week.

Last but not least, don't forget to download the PDF guide. This episode contained many expressions and phrasal verbs that you might have missed but which I assure you are very common and important in everyday speech. So I think this is going to be the last podcast before the arrival of my daughter, my due date is fast approaching and to be honest it's getting really difficult to **stay on top of** my work and things when I'm this pregnant. So this could be the last one before my daughter comes. So, I'll see you all when I've hopefully already given birth...very scary. Okay, have a good one.

Notes:

Stay on top of something: To remain completely in control of, aware about, or on schedule with something.

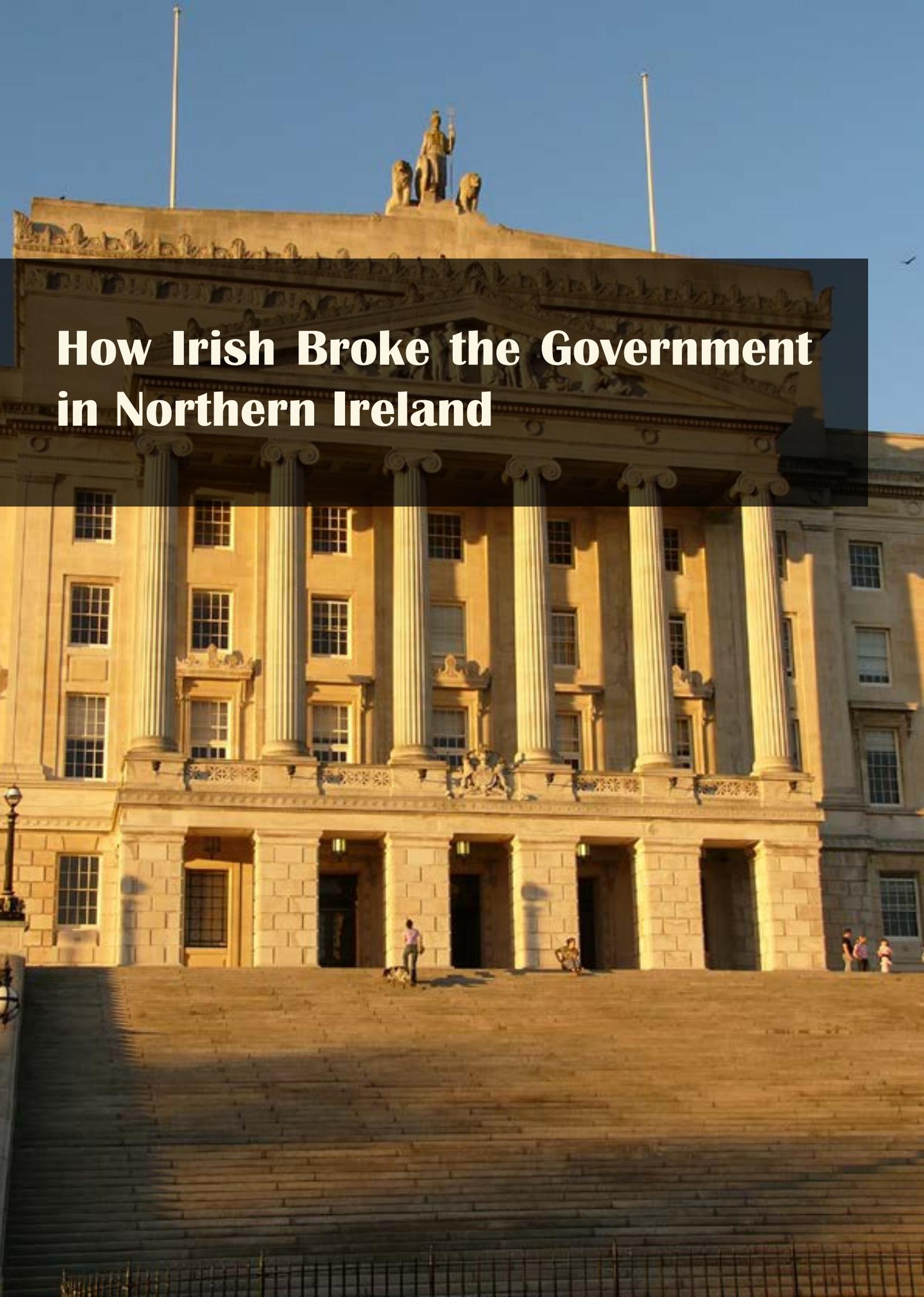
LET'S CONNECT



MAKE SURE TO FIND ME ON

INSTAGRAM & TWITTER.

YOU CAN ALSO SIGN UP TO MY
NEWSLETTER BY VISITING MY
WEBSITE



How Irish Broke the Government in Northern Ireland

THE IRISH LANGUAGE ACT

Northern Irish politics is experiencing a crisis. The country usually has its own devolved government, which means it has powers to govern itself in a number of areas such as education and healthcare, and this parliament is known as Stormont (pictured left). However, at the time of writing, the country has been without this government for 1025 days. There is even a website which counts the amount of days that the government has not been active (<https://howlonghas-northernirelandnothadagovernment.com/>). One of the main reasons for the collapse of the government is a dispute over the Irish language. Two of the main political parties have reached what's known as a deadlock, which means they cannot find a solution or agreement in their policies and so there is no progress within the government.

These two main parties are Sinn Fein (representing Irish nationalists who want to see a return to a united Ireland) and the DUP (representing British unionists who want to keep the union with the United Kingdom). Sinn Fein want to introduce an Irish Language Act in Northern Ireland which would see the language elevated to equal status with English. They tried to introduce the bill in 2015 but did not win the necessary support for it to pass.

Key Features

- The use of Irish in courts, in the parliament and for use by state bodies including the police
- The appointment of an Irish language commissioner
- The establishment of designated Gaelteacht areas in the North
- The right for education through Irish
- Bilingual signs on public buildings and road signs

“I respect the Irish language and those who speak it but in a shared society this cannot be a one-way street. Respect for the unionist and British identity has not been reciprocated.”

- Arlene Foster, DUP leader.

The DUP do not support the act as they see it as a way to bring of privileging Irish culture over British culture. They have suggested supporting a new “cultural deal” which would include the Irish language, but would contain provisions for other cultural expressions. However, this call was rejected by Sinn Fein and the government remains at an impasse.

Irish language activists and supporters have held a series of protests and many in the country are fed up with the lack of progress and are demanding that local politicians’ pays are cut until they are back working again in Stormont.

Equality is an integral part of a democratic society and this includes upholding the rights of Irish-language speakers.

- Sinn Fein

GRAMMAR:

WHO/WHEN/WHAT -EVER



This structure (question word + ever) is used to refer to something/someone in a non-concrete way. They can be subjects, adverbials and objects in a sentence. Let's take a look at some example sentences to see them in action.

Speaker Number 1: "Who's that man?"

Speaker Number 2: "I'm not sure, but whoever he is, he's been very rude!"

In this sentence speaker number 2 is using "whoever" because she doesn't know who the man is. Take this example sentence which further illustrates this point:

"Whoever told you that Karen was going to quit was lying."

Here, the speaker does not know who told the listener that Karen was quitting so she uses "whoever" instead of using a sentence with a relative clause like; "The person who told you that Karen was going to quit was lying." (This is quite a mouthful of a sentence, right?!)

It can also have the meaning of "it doesn't matter who" or "any person who". For example;

"Whoever wants to sign up for the class can do so at reception."

Here the sentence means "any person who wants to sign up for the class can do so at reception."

Here the sentence means "any person who wants to sign up for the class can do so at reception".

CLAUSES BEGINNING WITH THESE WORDS CAN ACT AS ADVERBIALS.



“Whatever happens, just keep calm” (this is the same as saying “It doesn’t matter what happens, just keep calm”)

“Whenever I go to London I’ll try and see a show at the West End.”

You might be wondering what the difference is between whenever and when. In this example sentence, you could just as easily say “When I go to London...” but “whenever” has a more open meaning. Perhaps the person who says “Whenever I go to London..” hasn’t actually got her plane tickets yet. Whereas the person who says “When I go to London...” has a trip already organized.

However, whenever can also suggest repetition;

“Whenever I have a meeting with my boss I get so nervous.” Here the speaker suggests that this is a regular thing, that every time she has a meeting with his boss he gets nervous. The speaker who says “Whenever I go to London I’ll try and see a show at the West End” could also be suggesting that everytime she goes to London she tries to see a show.

ANSWERING QUESTIONS



However, a big difference is that we can use this -ever structure to answer questions.

Speaker 1: “What time do you want to go home?”

Speaker 2: “I don’t mind, we can go whenever,” (suggesting that he doesn’t have a specific time in mind)

Speaker 1: “What do you fancy having for lunch?”

Speaker 2: “I’m not sure, I’ll be happy with whatever,” (the speaker doesn’t mind what type of food they have for lunch).

SUBJECTS AND OBJECTS



We can use these words as both subjects and objects.

“Whoever wins the race will win \$250” (whoever = subject of “win”)

“Whichever house you choose you’ll still be close to the centre.” (whichever = object of “choose”)

“Whatever you want is fine with me.” (whatever = subject of “is”)

WHATEVER: SPECIAL NOTE



Whatever can sometimes be used as a rude way to say “I don’t care”. It seems to be less popular these days but back in the 90s and early 2000s it was quite trendy to say it (but again it’s rude to use it like this!)

Here’s a classic example:

Parent: “I can’t believe you failed your maths test! Did you not even study for it?”

Teenager: “Whatever, it’s not even an important exam...”

HOWEVER



However can be used to introduce a contrast: “The President gave assurances to the public that he would create more jobs, however, the majority were not convinced.” However, (see what I did there?!) it can also mean “in any way”.

“You can’t act however you like at work, there are rules and protocols to follow.”