

TRANSCRIPT · EPISODE 01

Slow Listening - The Secret to Fast English Fluency

Full episode script · English

151 lines

Your English Toolbox

Hey, English Toolbox fam.

We are so excited to have you back today for an episode that's going to change the way you think about language learning.

Welcome back.

Today, we're going to dive into a topic that might sound like a paradox, but it's a powerful secret to fluency.

Exactly.

The title of today's episode is Slow Listening Makes Your English Stronger and Faster.

It sounds a bit strange, but we're going to explain why taking things slowly at first is the fastest way to get to your goals.

We're talking about building a solid foundation, trusting the process, and staying motivated by focusing on a pace that actually helps you learn.

Forget the feeling of getting lost in a fast conversation.

We're going to show you a better way.

This is going to be incredibly useful.

And to help us explore this idea, we have our fantastic guest back with us who has some brilliant personal experience with this.

Let's give a huge English Toolbox welcome back to Poppy.

Hi, everyone.

It's so great to be back.

I'm really excited to talk about this because it connects directly to something I've been doing in my own language learning journey with Spanish.

That's perfect.

Poppy, you're currently studying Spanish, right?

And you've been doing some language exchange activities?

[laughs].

That's right.

I'm taking part in a tandem language exchange program at my university.

Um, I help a Spanish student with their English, and they help me with my Spanish.

We meet up for coffee and just talk.

It's a great way to practice.

So, how does that connect to this idea of slow listening?

Well, when we do it, it feels so natural.

We both speak slowly.

I'm listening carefully to my partner, and they are listening carefully to me.

[laughs].

We take our time with each word.

I'm not worried about my accent or making a mistake because we are both focused on making sure we understand each other.

No one is trying to speak quickly, like, we're both learning, and we want the other person [laughs] to succeed.

It creates a space of trust and patience.

That's such a great point.

It's a natural human way of communicating when you're both learning.

You build a connection before you focus on speed.

And this is the real paradox we want to talk about.

A lot of language learning materials throw you straight into normal speed, fast conversations.

You listen to them, and you feel disappointed because you only catch a few words.

You start to think, "Maybe I'm not good at this," and then you risk giving up.

Exactly.

That was a big fear for me when I started.

I would listen to a Spanish podcast for native speakers, and I felt like I was drowning in a sea of words.

I would get maybe 20% of what they said.

It was really discouraging, but in the tandem exchange when we're going slowly and being patient, I feel motivated and happy.

It's rewarding for my brain because I am actually understanding and participating.

This is a perfect comparison.

It's like what a musician or a dancer does.

Julia, I'm sure you have some experience with this.

I do, actually.

When you learn to play the piano, you don't just start playing a complex piece at full speed.

That would be impossible.

You learn it slowly note by note in a very deliberate way.

You practice the difficult parts slowly over and over again until your fingers and your brain remember the movements.

Only then after you've mastered the piece slowly do you start to add speed.

And dancers do the same, right?

They don't just jump into a fast dance?

No way.

They break down the movements or the steps one by one.

They do them in slow motion to make sure their body knows exactly what to do.

The muscle memory is built slowly and carefully.

Once the slow movements are perfect, the speed comes naturally, and it looks beautiful and effortless.

They don't start with speed.

They finish with it.

This idea is everywhere.

Think about learning to drive a car.

Your first few lessons aren't on the motorway at 120 kilometers an hour.

You start slowly in an empty car park.

You learn how to use the pedals, how to turn the wheel, how to look in the mirrors.

You do everything slowly and carefully.

When you feel confident with the slow individual actions, you gradually add speed and complexity.

You build confidence and trust in your own skills.

And it's the same with language.

It's so true.

Like, you, like, I was just thinking about this.

Like, the, the biggest reward for me in my Spanish learning isn't a fast conversation.

Like, it's the moment when I understand a whole slow sentence.

My brain feels a little burst of happiness, [laughs], and I get excited to keep going.

And that's exactly how our brain learns.

Our brains are like a muscle. When you learn something slowly and deliberately, you're not just throwing information at it; you are giving your brain the time it needs to build strong connections.

We call these neural pathways.

When you listen to slow English, your brain has time to identify each word, understand its meaning, and connect it to the rest of the sentence.

It's an effective way to learn.

So if you're listening to a normal speed conversation and you feel overwhelmed, your brain just can't keep up.

It's like trying to build a house in a tornado.

It's difficult and frustrating.

But with a slower pace, you give your brain the time it needs to properly organize the information, and those connections become stronger and stronger.

The speed comes later once those strong connections are there.

It really is a powerful way to learn.

When I feel like I have understood a whole podcast, even if it's slow, I feel like I've won a small victory.

And all those small victories add up to big progress.

Exactly, and that's our main goal with this podcast.

We want you to feel those victories every single episode.

Now before we sign off, it's time for our language lab.

Julia, hit us with some of those great phrases we've used today that our listeners can add to their vocabulary.

Thanks, Martin.

We had some excellent phrases in this episode that are perfect for talking about learning and growth.

Let's break down three of them and then a grammar point.

Okay, first up, diving into a topic.

That sounds like a great way to say you're starting something new and going into it deeply.

Precisely.

It means to start a new subject or activity with a lot of detail and focus.

Martin used it at the beginning when he said, "We're going to dive into a topic that might sound like a paradox." It's a nice, active phrase to show you're taking something seriously.

So, you could say, "I'm going to dive into that new book about history this weekend," or, "Let's dive into the details of this project." It suggests a real commitment to the topic.

Exactly.

Next, a great phrase for how things feel, drowning in a sea of words.

That one is very visual.

It sounds like a lot of words all at once, so many that you can't keep up.

You've got it.

It's a very common phrase to describe feeling completely overwhelmed or lost in something, especially a large amount of information.

Poppy used it when she said, "I felt like I was drowning in a sea of words." It paints a very clear picture of that frustration.

I've felt that way many times.

So, you could also say, "During the lecture, I felt like I was drowning in a sea of numbers," if you were talking about a difficult math class.

It's a great way to express that overwhelmed feeling.

And for our third phrase, build a solid foundation.

That sounds like an important idea, something you start with before you build something bigger.

It is.

This phrase means to create a strong, stable base of knowledge, skills, or trust on which something more complex can be built.

We used it to talk about how slow listening helps you create a strong base before you add speed.

You could say, "You need to build a solid foundation of grammar before you can write a complex novel." It's a fundamental concept for learning anything new.

Perfect.

And for our quick grammar tip, let's talk about the phrase, "A sea of" that we just heard.

It's a great way to use [laughs] the word sea as a metaphor.

Exactly.

When we use the phrase, "A sea of," we are not talking about the actual ocean.

We are talking about a very large amount of something, so much that it feels like you are surrounded by it.

It can be a sea of words, a sea of people at a concert, or even a sea of papers on your desk.

It's a simple but effective way to talk about a huge number of things.

Super useful.

Thanks, Julia, for breaking those down so clearly.

My pleasure, Martin.

Well, that wraps up our deep dive into the paradox of slow listening.

We hope that Poppy's stories and our examples have shown you that taking a slower pace can lead to bigger, faster results in your language learning journey.

Absolutely.

And because we truly believe in this method, we have a very special announcement.

In our future episodes, we are going to start a new series where we will use a special slower pace in our conversations to help you learn even more effectively.

We're going to put our money where our mouth is and show you exactly what we're talking about.

That's right.

We're going to practice what we preach and make this a regular feature.

You'll be able to listen with confidence, catch all the new phrases, and build that solid foundation we talked about.

So, make sure you subscribe to Your English Toolbox so you don't miss any of our new slow-paced episodes.

And please share this episode with a friend who is also trying to learn a new language.

Let them know that slowing down can be the fastest way to get to fluency.

Thanks so much for having me back.

It was great to share my experience and talk about something I'm so passionate about.

Happy learning, everyone.

See you next time.

And remember, slow listening makes your English stronger and faster.

Take care, everyone.

Stay curious.