

TRANSCRIPT · EPISODE 48

English for Farsi Speaking People

Full episode script · English

481 lines

Your English Toolbox

Part one.

Welcome home, friends.

Welcome to your English toolbox, your slow English podcast where we train your ears step by step.

I am Martin.

And I am Julia.

And today, bringing the calm, I am Peter.

Today is a very important day for our community.

We are dedicating this entire episode to a specific group of our listeners.

We want to send a warm, loud embrace to our Farsi and Dari speaking friends.

We know you have been absent

for a while.

But we are seeing you return, and it fills us with joy.

We know that life has been incredibly heavy for many of you recently.

Sometimes, when the world around us becomes difficult, we feel like closing down.

But you are doing the opposite.

You are opening up.

Learning a language is an act of hope.

It is a declaration of freedom.

It means you refuse to be limited by your geography or your circumstances.

Language is

the key that keeps the world open, even when doors are closing.

Your resilience is powerful.

And we want to honor that resilience by giving you the best tools we have.

We have analyzed the specific architecture of your native language.

Farsi is a beautiful, poetic, and ancient language.

But English is a different beast.

It has a different logic, a different rhythm, and a different soul.

Today, we are going to build a bridge between these two worlds.

will break down the invisible barriers that stop you from feeling fluent.

And I will be here to help you practice the solutions, slowly and calmly.

Let's start with the biggest invisible wall.

It is the way you organize your thoughts.

Martin, I have noticed something interesting when I speak with my Iranian students.

They often pause in the middle of a sentence.

It feels like they are searching for the word.

But they aren't searching for the word.

They

are searching for the structure.

Exactly.

The problem is the architecture of the sentence.

In linguistics, we call this the difference between SOV and SVO.

Let's make it simple.

Imagine a train.

In English, the engine of the train is the verb.

The action.

And in English, the engine comes right at the front, immediately after the driver.

The driver is the subject.

So the order is driver, engine, cargo.

Subject, verb, object.

For example, the student eats an apple.

The student is the driver.

Eats is the engine.

An apple is the cargo.

This is strict.

English demands to know the action immediately.

But Farsi is different.

Farsi is like a mystery novel.

In Farsi, you keep the secret until the end.

You put the engine at the back of the train.

Your brain naturally wants to say the student an apple eats.

You hold the verb, hostage.

This is beautiful for poetry because it creates suspense.

But in

English conversation, it creates anxiety.

The listener is waiting for the verb.

And you are holding it in your short-term memory.

This creates a huge cognitive load.

Your brain is working double time to hold the verb while you translate the verb.

And you translate the objects.

This is why you feel tired after speaking English.

And it's not just the sentence order.

It is also the description order.

In English, if you want to describe a garden, you put

the adjective first.

We say, a beautiful garden.

But in Farsi, you use the ezafe construction.

You say, garden e beautiful.

You put the noun first, then the description.

So when you speak English fast, your brain follows the Farsi map.

You might say, I saw a car red instead of a red car.

These are not mistakes of intelligence.

They are mistakes of gravity.

Your native language has a strong gravity.

It pulls the words into the Persian order.

Part 3 The Strategy Fixing the Train Syntax Solution Hello again.

This is Peter.

I want you to take a deep breath.

The problem Martin described is very common.

But we can fix it with a simple visualization.

I want you to imagine you are holding a heavy ball.

This ball is the verb.

It is the action.

When you start a sentence in English, you must throw the ball immediately.

Do not hold it.

We are going to practice

a technique called subject action detail.

I will give you a scenario.

I want you to identify the action first.

Scenario.

You are hungry.

There is a sandwich.

In Farsi, you think, I, sandwich, eat.

In English, I want you to throw the verb.

I eat.

Then add the detail.

I eat a sandwich.

Let's try another one.

Scenario.

You see a friend.

You are happy.

Don't wait.

Who is the subject?

One.

What is the action?

See?

Throw the

verb.

I see.

Who?

My friend.

I see my friend.

This feels aggressive at first.

It feels like you are being too direct.

But in English, this directness is clarity.

Now, let's look at the beautiful garden problem.

The isaf habit.

In English, the adjective is the paint and the noun is the wall.

You must paint the brush before you touch the wall.

You cannot have wall blue.

You must have blue wall.

Repeat this mental image.

Paint first.

Object second.

Let's practice with a simple phrase.

Not book interesting.

Paint first.

Interesting book.

Not girl smart.

Paint first.

Smart girl.

When you speak, trust the front of the sentence.

Commit to the verb early, even if you haven't decided on the object yet.

You can say, I want, and then pause to think about what you want.

That is perfectly natural English.

I want to go to the cinema.

But if you say, I, to the cinema, and

then pause, the listener is lost.

Throw the verb.

Anchor the listener.

Part 4.

The V-shape mistake.

Phonetics problem.

Now we need to talk about the physical shape of your mouth.

This is where things get slippery.

There are some sounds in English that act like ghosts for Farsi speakers.

You don't see them, so you replace them with something familiar.

The biggest ghost is the letter W.

In Farsi, you have the V sound.

Like victory.

But you do

not really have the W sound.

Like window.

So your brain creates a shortcut.

It maps the English W onto the Farsi V.

This is dangerous.

Why is it dangerous?

Because it changes the meaning of words.

Imagine you are telling a story about a trip.

You want to say, we went to the West.

But if you use the Farsi map, you say, we went to the West.

A vest is an undershirt.

So you are saying you traveled

to an undershirt.

It sounds funny, but it confuses the listener.

The listener has to stop and decode your sentence.

Oh, he means West, not vest.

That microsecond of confusion breaks the connection.

Another common ghost is the TH sound.

The TH in think or this.

This sound does not exist in Farsi.

So most learners substitute it.

They usually use S or T.

So I think becomes I sink.

Like a sinking ship.

Or I tink.

Or thank you

becomes sank you.

Or tank you.

Again, context usually helps.

But it forces the listener to work hard.

And we want to make it easy for our friends.

We want your English to flow without friction.

It is not about having a perfect British or American accent.

It is about removing the friction that stops understanding.

Part five, the strategy.

Lips versus teeth.

Phonetic solution A.

This is Peter.

Let's go to the sound gym.

We are going to train

your muscles to make new shapes.

First, the W versus V battle.

This is entirely about your teeth.

I want you to say the word very.

Do it now.

Very.

Freeze.

Where are your top teeth?

Are they touching your bottom lip?

Yes.

Feel the vibration on your lip.

V-ery.

That is the V sound.

Teeth on lip.

Now, we need to break this habit for the W sound.

For W, your teeth are forbidden from touching your skin.

teeth allowed.

Your lips must form a small, tight circle.

Like you are going to kiss someone or blow out a candle.

Make the circle first.

Now make a sound from your throat.

Wah, wah, wah, wah.

Window.

Window.

Window.

West.

West.

West.

If your teeth touch your lip, stop.

Reset the circle.

Let's practice a drill.

I will say a pair of words.

Repeat after me.

First with teeth.

Then with the circle.

Vest.

West.

Vetterinarian.

Wet.

Vine.

Wine.

Feel the difference physically.

Now, let's look at the TH sound.

Think.

And this.

The Farsi mouth wants to keep the tongue behind the teeth.

To make the TH, you must be brave.

You must stick your tongue out just a little bit.

Put the tip of your tongue between your top and bottom teeth.

Bite it gently.

Now blow air through it's ears.

If you don't feel the air on your tongue, you are making a T

or an S.

Let's practice the thank you drill.

Stick the tongue out first.

Anc.

You.

Eater.

It feels strange at first.

It feels like a physical exercise.

Because it is.

You are building new muscle memory.

Part six.

The snake and the short vowel.

Phonetics problem B.

You are doing great.

We have fixed the train and we have fixed the lips.

Now, let's talk about the snake.

The snake?

Yes.

In Farsi, it is structurally impossible to start

a syllable with two consonants.

Your language does not allow it.

So when you see an English word like school, your brain panics.

It sees S and C together.

Your brain says illegal.

I need a vowel to help me.

So you instinctively add a little eh sound at the beginning.

You say eschool.

Or esstreet.

Or estart.

This is called a prosthetic vowel.

It's like a crutch your brain uses to walk through the word.

But in English,

this extra vowel adds a syllable.

School is one syllable.

Eschool is two syllables.

This changes the rhythm of your speech completely.

It makes the English sound choppy.

And then there is the vowel trap.

The difference between short I and long E.

Farsi speakers struggle to hear the difference between bit and beat.

Or sit and seat.

Your ear naturally gravitates towards the long E sound.

So you might say please take a seat when you mean take a

sit.

Actually, that example works both ways.

True.

But imagine this one.

I want to live here.

If you stretch the vowel, you say I want to leave here.

Leave means to go away.

Live means to stay.

Those are opposite meanings.

So if you tell your boss I want to leave when you mean live, you might lose your job.

This is why vowel length is critical.

It is not just an accent issue.

It is a meaning issue.

And finally, the stress.

Farsi has a very predictable stress pattern.

Usually, the stress is on the last syllable.

Dan esh gah, university.

But English stress is like a wild animal.

It moves around.

Photography.

Photograph.

Photographic.

If you apply the Farsi rule and put the stress at the end of every word, the English sounds robotic.

And native speakers struggle to understand where one word ends and the next begins.

Part 7.

The strategy, hissing and rubber bands.

Phonetic

solution B.

Hello again.

Peter here.

Let's calm the snake.

We need to fix the esh gul problem.

The trick is to start with air, not voice.

When you say esh gul, you are using your vocal chords for the ehh sound.

I want you to turn off your voice.

Just blow air like a snake.

Do not make a sound.

Just air.

Now, while the air is flowing, slide into the rest of the word.

Cool.

Treat.

Start.

Let's

practice.

I will say the word.

You start with the snake sound.

Smart.

Structure.

Specific.

If you hear your voice before the S, stop and try again.

Now for the vowels.

Live versus leave.

The short I, live, is a lazy sound.

Your mouth should be relaxed.

Your jaw drops a little.

Live.

The long E, leave, is a tense sound.

You have to smile.

Stretch your lips back.

E, leave.

Think of it this way.

Short I is a

grunt.

Long E is a smile.

Repeat after me.

First the grunt, then the smile.

Sit, grunt.

Seat, smile.

Bit, grunt.

Beat, smile.

Feel the tension in your cheeks for the second word.

That tension is the key.

Part 8.

The Culture of Requests Pragmatics Problem.

We are almost there.

But we cannot finish without talking about how you treat people.

Or rather, how English speakers think you treat them.

Farsi culture is deeply respectful.

You have taruf.

You have

elaborate rituals of politeness.

But when Farsi speakers translate their requests into English, something gets lost.

Often you become very direct.

You might say to a teacher, check my homework.

Or to a colleague, send me the file.

In your mind, your tone is soft.

But the words are commands.

In English, a command is aggressive.

It sounds like you are ordering a servant.

We call this a face-threatening act.

You are threatening the dignity of the other person.

English

politeness is not about tone.

It is about grammar.

It is about adding extra words to soften the blow.

Also, be careful with prepositions.

Farsi uses the word as for many things.

From and of.

So we often hear, I am tired from the traffic.

Instead of tired of.

Or I am afraid from the dog.

Instead of afraid of.

When you use the wrong preposition, it sounds slightly foreign.

But when you use a direct command, it sounds rude.

And we know you are not rude.

We know you are kind.

So let's make your English sound as kind as your heart.

Part 9 The Strategy, The Sandwich Method, Pragmatic Solution Peter, here for the final strategy.

Politeness in English is like making a sandwich.

The meat is what you want.

Send me the file.

But you never serve the meat alone.

You need a slice of bread on top.

The opener.

And a slice of bread.

On the

bottom.

The softener.

The opener prepares the person.

Excuse me.

I am sorry to bother you.

I was wondering.

The softener shows gratitude.

Please.

If you have time.

If it is possible.

Let's transform a command into a sandwich.

Command, give me the pen.

Now let's add the bread.

Opener.

Sorry, Martin.

Meat.

Could I borrow the pen?

Softener.

Please.

Sorry, Martin.

Could I borrow the pen?

Please.

This opens doors.

People want to help you when you use the
sandwich.

As for the prepositions.

Do not learn the word afraid alone.

Learn the chunk.

Afraid of.

Treat it as one long word.

Afraid of.

Tired of.

Interested in.

Good at.

If you learn them as couples, you will never separate them.

Part 10.

The U-shaped curve.

Thank you, Peter.

That sandwich metaphor is going to save a lot of relationships.

Friends, we have covered a lot today.

Syntax, phonetics, culture.

You might feel overwhelmed.

You might try to use

these tips and feel like your English is getting slower.

That is normal.

In fact, it is necessary.

It is called the U-shaped curve of learning.

At the beginning, you translate quickly from Farsi.

You are fast, but you are using the wrong map.

Now you are learning the new map.

So you will slow down.

You will make mistakes as you try to find the W sound or the subject verb order.

You go down to the bottom of

the U.

But this is where the magic happens.

You are rebuilding your foundation.

And soon, you will climb up the other side.

And on the other side, there is fluency.

There is clarity.

And there is connection.

Your Persian heritage is a gift.

It gives you a rich perspective on the world.

We do not want you to lose that.

We just want to give you a new lens to look through.

Thank you for coming back to us.

We are honored to be part of your journey.

Breathe, practice, and keep going.

See you in the next episode.

We are really happy to have you back.

Take care.
