

The ANXIETY related to languages that nobody names. Four ways to FIX IT.

English learning resource · EN

Full episode script · English

169 lines

Study task: Listen again and notice the expressions you studied.

Hello, everyone...

welcome back to Your English Toolbox.

I am Martin.

And I am Julia.

Last week, we made you a promise.

We said there was something we needed to talk about properly... something too important to rush.

We said: language anxiety deserves its own episode.

Well...

today is that episode.

So let's start somewhere unexpected.

Think about a smoke detector in a kitchen.

A good one... a sensitive one...

goes off when there is a fire.

But a slightly broken one...

goes off when you simply make toast.

No fire.

No danger.

Just bread, slightly too brown.

And yet... the alarm screams exactly the same.

That... is what anxiety does inside your body.

It cannot always tell the difference between real danger... and a difficult conversation in English.

So today, we are doing this in three parts.

First... we look honestly at what happens, specifically, when English makes you anxious.

Then... we zoom out.



Because this is bigger than language.

We will talk about anxiety in modern life itself... where it comes from, and why so many of us carry so much of it.

And finally... we give you real tools.

Small, practical things you can do... in the seconds right before you have to speak.

Let's start close to home.

You already know the feeling.

The heartbeat.

The dry mouth.

The blank where a sentence should be.

But here is the part most people never explain to you.

It is not really about grammar.

In your first language, you are quick.

You are funny.

You have opinions, timing, charm.

You built that version of yourself over a lifetime.

But in English... for now... you lose access to most of that.

You become slower.

Simpler.

More exposed.

And that is genuinely frightening... because it is not just your English being tested.

It feels like the whole person is being judged... on a smaller, clumsier version of themselves.

Psychologists have a name for part of this: evaluation apprehension.

The fear of being watched while you are still figuring something out.

And here is the strange part: you already survived this once.

As a child, you learned your first language the exact same clumsy way.

The difference is...

nobody was watching you then.

Now, somebody usually is.

A colleague.

A stranger.



A cashier with a queue behind you.

So that is the language side.

Now let's zoom out.

Because here is something worth saying clearly: anxiety, in general, has quietly become the background noise of modern life.

Look at how we live now.

Phones that never fully switch off.

Messages that expect a reply within minutes, not days.

News from six continents... landing in your pocket... all day, every day.

Your brain was never designed to process that volume of input.

And then there is comparison.

A hundred years ago, you compared your life to your neighbours.

A street.

A village.

Now you compare it to a curated, filtered highlight reel of millions of strangers.

And there is a third pressure, quieter than the other two.

Every single day, you now make hundreds of tiny decisions that simply did not exist a generation ago.

Which app to answer first. Which notification to silence.

Which version of yourself to be, on which platform, for which audience.

Decision fatigue, researchers call it.

And it quietly drains the exact same mental energy you will later need... to find your words in English.

No wonder so many of us feel like we are always slightly behind.

Always slightly not enough.

Our alarm system... the same one that once watched for wolves and storms... was simply never built for this much input.

It was built for one tiger a week.

Not a hundred small alarms a day.

And there is one more thing worth naming, because it rarely gets said out loud.

In the past, danger usually had a clear ending.

The storm passed.

The village came back outside.



Someone rang a bell, lit a fire, and life resumed.

Your body got a clear signal: it is over now.

You can rest.

Modern life almost never gives you that signal.

The inbox is never quite at zero for long.

The news cycle never declares the day finished.

So your body stays a little braced, almost permanently... waiting for an all-clear that never quite arrives.

That is not weakness.

That is biology, doing its job, in a world it was never designed for.

And this is exactly where the two ideas meet.

By the time you reach that English conversation... your alarm has often already been ringing all day, for completely different reasons.

The traffic.

The inbox.

The bills.

The news.

So it is not always English making you anxious.

Sometimes English just arrives... as the final straw on an already overloaded system.

Let us tell you about Amara.

Amara moved from Lagos to Manchester two years ago.

She understands English perfectly.

She reads contracts, watches the news, follows every joke at work.

But every Friday, she has a short call with her manager.

And every Friday... her hands go cold before it even starts.

One week, almost by accident, she tried something different.

Ninety seconds before the call, she took one long breath in through her nose.

Then a second small breath, right on top of it.

And she let it all out, slowly, through her mouth.

Just once.

And something shifted.

Not everything.



Just enough.

Her heart rate dropped.

Her shoulders came down from somewhere near her ears.

The call still happened.

The English was still imperfect in places.

But this time, she was in the room.

Not hiding from it.

So let's give you exactly what Amara stumbled onto... on purpose.

Four small tools.

None of them take more than a minute.

Tool one: the double breath.

Two breaths in through the nose, one right after the other... then one long, slow breath out through the mouth.

It genuinely tells your nervous system that the danger has passed.

Do it twice, before any English conversation that worries you.

Tool two: come back to your senses.

Literally.

Name five things you can see.

Four things you can hear.

Three things you can touch.

It sounds simple, almost silly.

But it pulls your mind out of the imagined conversation ahead... and back into the real, safe present.

Tool three: the one sentence you already own.

Remember the crutch we spoke about last week?

This is exactly where it lives.

Before you speak, choose one simple sentence you already know by heart, and let that be your way in.

And one more tool... maybe the most surprising of the four.

Researchers have found something almost strange: telling yourself you are calm rarely works in the heat of the moment.

Your body simply does not believe it.

But telling yourself you are excited often does.



Because nervousness and excitement feel almost identical in the body — the same fast heart, the same alert energy.

The only real difference... is the story your mind decides to tell about that feeling.

So right before you speak, try saying it, even quietly, in your own words: I am excited about this conversation, not afraid of it.

You are not lying to yourself.

You are simply choosing the true story that helps you, instead of the one that hurts you.

You are not breathing because you are weak.

You are breathing because your body deserves one honest signal: this is not a tiger.

This is just a conversation.

So let's bring it together.

Language anxiety is not really about grammar... it is about being watched while you are still learning.

And it rarely arrives alone.

It usually meets the anxiety already living in your modern, overloaded day.

But you now have four small doors out of it: the double breath, your five senses, the one sentence you already own, and the story you choose to tell about your own racing heart.

You are not too anxious to learn English.

You are simply a person whose alarm system has been working overtime... and is finally learning, slowly, that it can rest.

And one honest thing before we close.

If anxiety feels like it goes far beyond English... far beyond any single conversation... that is worth talking to someone about, too.

There is no shame in that.

Only wisdom.

If you made it this far, you are truly committed to your English.

Please head over to YouTube, search for "Your English Toolbox", and subscribe.

Your support there means the world to us... and it keeps this podcast growing.

Thank you for trusting us with this one.

It mattered to us... more than you know.

I am Martin.

And I am Julia.

And we will see you... in the next one.

