

Transcript - "Listening Time" Episode 100

Welcome to the Listening Time podcast. Hey everybody, this is Conner, and you're listening to Episode 100 of the Listening Time podcast. Thank you all for helping me reach Episode 100. I hope that all of these episodes have been helpful for you. I hope that you've improved your listening as you've listened to all of these episodes, and I hope that we can continue on with this podcast for a long time. So, thank you all for helping me reach this point.

And of course, since this is a special episode, I'm going to do a Q&A-type episode, a questions and answers episode. So, I took some of your questions that you asked me, and I'm going to try to answer them. I'll answer as many as I can. I think when I did the previous Q&A... I think that was Episode 50... I only answered a few questions.

So, I wanted to do something different this time, and I wanted to answer as many as I can. And so, I'll spend less time on each answer and just try to answer as many as possible. I'm sorry if I don't answer all of your questions, because of course, I don't have enough time in this podcast to do that. But I'm going to answer as many as I can.

And before we start, remember that if you want to support me, if you want to help me reach Episode 200 in the future, please consider becoming a Listening Time Member, and you'll receive my specialized training, my Listening Practice Seminars. And if you want my advanced podcast episodes, then become a Listening Time Family Member or VIP, and you'll receive two new advanced episodes every month.

So, if you want that extra content, or if you just want to help me out and support this podcast, then make sure to join my membership. The link is in the Episode Description below the episode. That's www.patreon.com/listeningtime Alright, let's get started.

Okay, I'm going to go as fast as I can through as many of these questions as I can. Alright, the first question is, Do I speak Spanish to my son? Yes, but that's not the main language that I use when I speak to him. I try to speak to him in English most of the time, and my wife speaks to him in Spanish.

So, we do one parent, one language. I speak to him in English. She speaks to him in Spanish. However, I have the habit of mixing a lot of Spanish into my speech. And so, I often speak to my wife and my son in Spanish, but I try not to do this too much because I want him to hear English throughout the day.

The next question is how to sound more British if someone wants to travel there. So, if you're traveling to the UK, and you want to sound more British, if you want to sound more like the locals, I would focus mostly on the vocabulary, not on the pronunciation. Okay?

So, you don't need to change your whole pronunciation just because you're going to travel to one country. You can try to do that a little bit, but the main thing is to use the vocabulary that they use. You don't want to have any miscommunications. And so, you'll have to use the internet, and find those lists of common words that are different in American and British English.

And I would focus on those words and focus on the most common phrases that might be different in the two languages. So, I would use those online lists just to

practice with that before going there. Because I, myself, as a Native American English speaker might have trouble if I go to the UK and I don't know these words. So, I would focus on the vocabulary not necessarily the other elements like the pronunciation. Okay?

The next question is, Do I have any books that I offer for English learners? Not yet, but very soon, actually. I'm actually working on a book right now which is a collection of three short stories that are translated into Spanish so that you can read it in English and in Spanish.

So, this will be for Spanish speakers of course. It won't be for people who speak other languages, but I'll at least have that available for my Spanish speaking audience. And if you don't speak Spanish, but you just want to read the English part of the book, that's okay too. But I'll announce that pretty soon because I'm getting pretty close to finishing with this book. So, I'm excited about that. So, stay tuned for that.

The next question is, How do you say things in the moment if you already understand a lot, but you just can't say things fast, or you have to think a lot or you don't know what to say? So, this is something that everyone feels, or almost everyone feels when they learn a language.

First of all, I need to say that you want to make sure that you actually understand a lot. When you say that you understand a lot, I don't know exactly what your level of listening is, but if you don't have a very high level of listening, that's where you want to focus on. You want to make sure that you can understand, like, almost everything that you hear.

If you're not at that point yet, then of course, you're not going to be able to speak as fast as native speakers because you won't have as much in your repertoire, as we say... this is like your collection of weapons or tools. You won't have as much in there to draw from, to actually say whole phrases and words fast in the moment, right?

We want to understand things very well and be able to identify those phrases when we hear them again and again, and be able to say them naturally not because we've memorized lists of phrases or words or things like that, but because you've heard them so many times. You understand them. They sound very normal for you. And you'll eventually start to say them just because they feel right.

I talk a lot about that. You say whole phrases. You say things correctly and naturally when you know that they're correct. So, the first step is to do tons and tons of listening and to make sure you're understanding things very well. Right? Not just understanding the main point of the sentence, but actually understanding every single word, every single sound in these sentences.

Make sure that that's your main focus. I'm not saying that that's the only thing you want to do, but that needs to be your main focus. And as you start to do your speaking practice, you'll be able to produce those phrases and those words that you have been listening to, that you've heard during your listening practice. So, that's the first thing I need to say, is make sure that you actually do understand a lot, like almost everything. So, focus on your listening practice.

And then, when you do your conversation, practice, don't stress about being correct 100% of the time. Just allow yourself to speak naturally, and notice the gaps. The word "gaps" just means holes. Notice the holes in what you're saying. If you're not able to say a certain thing, then make a note of that, and go find what you're missing.

Right? And you can start to fill in those gaps little by little, and you'll probably learn a phrase or a word afterwards that you didn't know, and then next time, you can try to use that when you're speaking.

But this is for when you've already reached a very high level of listening. So, you don't want to just try to fill in the gaps if 60% of what you want to say is missing. Right? That's not good. You want to make sure that you can already say most of what you want to say in normal conversations just from repeating things you've already heard many times, and then you fill in the gaps with what's left, the gaps that are left.

So, the first step is to focus more and more and more on listening. I know that that's what I always say, but that's what I believe. And then, you fill in the gaps afterwards when you do your conversation practice. Alright, I spent a lot of time on that question. I need to hurry.

The next question is how to speak faster using vocabulary that you already have. So, this is similar to the last question. So, speaking faster is not the same thing as speaking correctly. Okay? So I'm addressing fluency here, not accuracy. Fluency has to do with saying things at normal speed and not thinking about them beforehand. So, you're only able to do that if you already know what you want to say, and you know that it's correct, and you just produce that phrase, for example.

So, in order to do that, you have to actually know this vocabulary word very well. You're not just going to learn it one time from a list of words and then expect to use that in your speech. No. You'll probably have to hear that word in different contexts many different times before you can finally use it at normal speed without thinking. Alright?

Many people, they try to learn vocabulary actively, and then they try to incorporate all of those words into their speech, but I don't think that that's necessarily the best method. You want to learn vocabulary through input, through the things that you're listening to and reading, and you need to hear them in many different contexts. And then eventually they will become natural for you. You'll be able to say them fast.

If you're speaking, and you have trouble using a new vocabulary word that you learned, it's because you don't actually know that word well enough yet. You need to hear it in more contexts, in more situations, and get more familiar with it, and then you'll be able to use it naturally in your own speech. Okay?

The next question is, How do I feel as an independent creator, and was it hard to leave my last job as an employee? Well, I feel great. This is what I love doing in terms of work. I love working on my own. I don't like relying on other people. I don't like when I have to depend on others in order to accomplish my goals. I like to do it on my own. So, I really like that.

And I've been working independently for many years, for about six and a half years now. So, I haven't had a job as an employee in a long time. And the last time that I left a job... so, that was six and a half years ago... it was easy for me. I didn't feel like it was difficult at all. I was actually very excited to work independently.

And now, I'm doing something that has more meaning than what I was doing before. I'm able to help many more people now than I helped when I was just an employee before. So, that's great that I'm in this situation now, where I can grow in my career and I can grow in terms of how many people I can reach. So. I really like that.

The next question is, When is it hard for me, as a native speaker, to understand other native speakers, like in different forms of entertainment, like music, TV, etc. So, I would say that it's hard for me to understand certain dialects of English when I maybe consume content in those dialects. So, the hardest dialect for me to understand would be Scottish English. So, that's definitely the one that I have the most trouble understanding.

And I remember watching a documentary, or something like that, in the past that was made by Scottish people. And I remember that I needed the subtitles. I needed the captions at the bottom of the screen to understand a lot of what they were saying. Of course, I understood most of what they were saying, but there were big gaps. There were times when I just didn't know what they were saying. So, I needed to read the captions in order to understand.

So, that can happen if I watch movies or TV shows from really hard dialects like that. But that's very rare. I think besides Scottish English, I don't think that there are other types of dialects that are really hard for me. I don't think so. But yeah, that's the hardest one.

And in terms of music, it can be hard to understand the lyrics of what the person is singing, regardless of what their dialect is. So, there are many songs where I don't know what they're saying at different points in the song. So, as an English learner, it will be hard for you at times to understand different songs in English because it can be hard for us sometimes, depending on how they sing, right? A lot of singers sing very clearly, and I know exactly what they're saying. But sometimes they don't. And sometimes it's kind of hard to hear all the words that they're saying. So, I hope that answered your question.

The next one is why don't I teach much grammar? Well, I don't do this because I don't think that it's that important compared to listening practice. So, when you're a very, very beginner, when you're just starting from scratch with some language, yes, grammar is important because it helps you understand the foundation of the language that you're learning, and it helps you get a feel for that language.

But once you reach a little bit of a higher level, then grammar is no longer a very important thing compared to listening, let's say. So, I want to focus on what's important. And I'm actually focused on helping people out who already have some knowledge of English. So, I'm not focused on absolute beginners. I'm focused on people that already have some knowledge of English, but they can't understand native speakers.

So, that's my target audience. And so, for me, grammar is not that important. That's why I focus on listening practice, because this is what I do when I learned other languages. So, I'm just repeating that with English and helping you guys with that.

The next question is: which prepositions to study to understand, like, really fast and reduced speech. So, it's not necessarily about studying prepositions. What it is, is that you have to start to expect the right sounds. You have to identify what English really sounds like when native speakers speak fast, and to expect these sounds when you hear them say different words and say different phrases.

So, if you've never watched one of my Listening Practice Seminars before, I recommend that you do that. You can try them out. And this is exactly what I focus on. I help you understand these different sounds, the different ways that native speakers

shorten their speech, and I help you identify what all of these things sound like and help you, little by little, identify and expect the correct sounds.

So, it's not about studying certain prepositions. It's about focusing on what native speakers actually sound like when they speak. And once you start to expect the right sounds, things will get easier for you, okay? So, like I said, if you haven't checked out my Listening Practice Seminars, try them out. Maybe become a Listening Time Member just to try them out and see if you like them, okay?

The next question is about learning a third language, when it's good to start with that. What I would say about this is you should probably have reached a pretty good level in your second language before you start your third language. You don't have to do this. There are some people that learn two languages at the same time from scratch. So, it's possible.

However, if you want to make it easier for yourself, I would recommend that you reach at least an intermediate level in your second language, and then you start with a third language. You don't have to reach a very high level. You just want to reach a level where you feel a little more comfortable in that language. You're starting to feel a little more comfortable, a little more confident in that language, knowing that if you don't focus 100% of your effort on it, you're not going to lose everything, right?

However, if you are still a beginner in your second language, and then you start your third language, and then you focus more on the third one, this might be trouble for your second language. You might forget a lot and you might feel like you have to start from a very low level when you return to it.

So, that's just my opinion about this. But like I said, if you want to start two, three languages at the same time, for example, from scratch, you can do that as long as you have enough time and dedication for each language. However, most people don't have this. They have to focus most of their time just on one language. So, that's why I'm saying that it's probably better to reach an intermediate level in your second language and then start with the third one after that. But you don't have to take that advice. That's okay.

The next question is about my hope for the future of education. So, I'll address English education here, not education in general. I hope that in the future, in English classes around the world, the focus will be on input, not output. I hope that students won't be forced to just learn grammar, and then produce sentences using that grammar that they learned, and I hope that they aren't forced to talk when they're not ready to talk.

I hope that the focus is on actually just listening and reading interesting content in English and allowing students to actually have fun while learning and not forcing them to produce speech at an early stage. They should be focusing on listening and reading as long as possible, and then eventually, they'll feel more confident to actually start talking. So, I hope that that's how things are in the future for English classes.

The next question is do I speak French? I do, but I have a pretty low level now because I haven't studied French in many months. And I haven't focused on it. And I haven't done a lot of speaking, actually. I've actually focused almost all of my effort on listening, and I still want to reach a higher level of listening before I start speaking a lot. So, I'm going to go back to French in about a month, and I'll do a lot of listening, and then eventually, I'll start to have more conversations. But as you probably know by

now, I focus almost 100% on listening for a long time when I learn languages, and then I start speaking after that.

And I think I have time for one more question. How do I learn a language from scratch? Well, I've kind of answered that. You can probably get that by now. I first just get a feel for the language just by looking through a grammar book, maybe focusing a little bit on grammar, the different structures... of course, the alphabet if it's a different alphabet.

And I get that very basic understanding of the language, and then I start listening and reading content that's understandable for me. So, it has to be slow and understandable. And then, eventually, I start to move to harder content until I can understand content made for native speakers, and then I just focus on that for a long time, and I just listen, listen, listen, listen and maybe read a little bit.

And then eventually, when I feel like I can actually produce speech naturally, then I'll focus on conversation as well, while still doing tons of listening. So, in a nutshell, or in summary, what I do is I focus a ton of my time on listening, much more than 90% even, like 98, 99% on listening. And then eventually, I start speaking.

Alright, I think that's all the time I have for today. I'm going to stop there. Thank you all for your questions, and thank you for helping me reach Episode 100. If you want my specialized training or if you want my advanced podcast episodes, make sure to join my membership. Join the right tier depending on what benefits you want. And so, the link is in the Episode Description. That's www.patreon.com/listeningtime

And I hope that you'll stick with this podcast and keep listening for the next 100 episodes. And I want to thank you all for your support. Alright, well thank you for listening to this episode, and I'll talk to you on the next episode of Listening Time.

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