

LEANLAB EDUCATION



FROM CONFIDENCE TO CAREER GROWTH

**The Impact of Preply's One-on-One Tutoring
Program on English Learners' Journeys**

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OVERVIEW



OVERVIEW

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Preply helps people on their language learning journeys by connecting them with real online tutors who provide personalized one-on-one learning experiences. In the spring of 2025, Preply partnered with Leanlab Education, an independent nonprofit research organization, to gain insights into the impact of the Preply program on English language learners' skills and confidence, and the value of the program. Specifically, the Preply team wanted to understand how effective the Preply one-on-one tutoring model is at helping native Spanish speakers learn English to achieve their professional goals and aspirations.

Between January and May 2025, 144 diverse native Spanish speakers living in Spain worked with a Preply tutor to learn English for 12 weeks. Sixty-seven (47%) of the participants engaged in 24 or more lessons over 12 weeks (an average of two or more Preply lessons per week, the minimum recommended by Preply to maximize learning). At the end of the 12 weeks:

- On average, participants **improved their CEFR-aligned English language level test scores across all skill areas**, and one-third of participants who took 24 or more lessons improved their total scores by a full level (for example, A2 to B1).
- 93% of all participants and 97% of participants who took at least 24 lessons **reported feeling confident speaking English**.
- 92% of all participants and 94% of participants who took at least 24 lessons **reported feeling confident writing in English**.
- 99% of all participants and 100% of participants who took at least 24 lessons **reported making progress towards their goals**.
- 97% of all participants said that **learning with a real person was very important to their progress**.
- 99% of participants **reported having a personalized learning experience with Preply**.

The results of this study suggest that with Preply's one-on-one tutoring model, learners can have a positive and productive experience learning English, and even potentially expedite their learning journey. Additionally, these results underscore the value of consistent practice when learning a new language.

**OVERVIEW****STUDY OVERVIEW**

Study Overview

The Preply language learning program works by matching learners with on-line tutors who fit their budget and schedule. The learner and tutor work together to codesign a personalized learning plan, and after an initial trial lesson, the learner subscribes to a weekly or monthly lesson schedule with their tutor. Learners are able to change tutors at any time.

For this research study, Spanish-speaking participants (**Table 1**) in Spain recruited directly through the Preply platform were given free Preply lesson credits to use over the course of 12 weeks to learn English with an online tutor in exchange for sharing qualitative and quantitative survey and English level test data with Leanlab. Participants were encouraged to engage in a minimum of two Preply lesson hours per week as recommended by Preply for maximizing skill improvement. Participants completed a pre- and post-CEFR¹-aligned English language level test (Pipplet), a pre- and post-survey assessing their confidence in their English language skills and their experience with Preply, and a short midpoint survey. The Pipplet level test provides both total English language level scores as well as scores for eight individual skills: speaking and listening, writing and reading, language fundamentals, phonological control, grammar, vocabulary, spoken fluency, and coherence and cohesion. Twelve participants (**Table 2**) provided additional qualitative feedback about their Preply experience via a 1-hour focus group and were compensated with a gift card.

Note: Participant quotes included in this report have been translated from Spanish into English.

¹ Common European Framework of Reference for Languages



OVERVIEW SAMPLE

TABLE 1: Participant demographic information

	All participants (n=144)	Participants who took at least 24 lessons (n=67)
Gender identity	54% Women 45% Men 1% Non-binary	52% Women 48% Men
Age	28% Age 25-30 31% Age 31-35 17% Age 36-40 15% Age 41-45 8% > Age 45	30% Age 25-30 30% Age 31-35 17% Age 36-40 16% Age 41-45 8% > Age 45
Top industries represented	29% IT and Software 13% Marketing, Advertising, and PR 10% Health and Pharmaceuticals	27% IT and Software 18% Marketing, Advertising, and PR 9% Health and Pharmaceuticals
English language CEFR starting levels	13% Elementary (A2) 76% Intermediate (B1) 12% Upper intermediate (B2)	14% Elementary (A2) 73% Intermediate (B1) 13% Upper intermediate (B2)
Mean lesson hours taken	23.5	32
Range of lesson hours taken	4-48	24-48



OVERVIEW SAMPLE

TABLE 2: Focus group participant characteristics

Participant	Age	Gender identity	Profession	Total lesson hours taken
1	41-45	M	Systems administrator	40.5
2	41-45	M	Software developer	45.5
3	25-30	M	Business development manager	33
4	31-35	W	Accountant	32.5
5	31-35	W	Marketing analyst	42
6	31-35	W	International mobility specialist	49
7	31-35	M	Advertising creative	39
8	31-35	W	Lawyer	24
9	25-30	W	Receptionist	19
10	25-30	M	Software programmer	19
11	25-30	W	Human resources	19
12	31-35	W	Product designer	15.5

**OVERVIEW****RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. How confident and comfortable do participants feel using English in everyday life after learning with a Preply tutor?
2. How confident and comfortable do participants feel using English in a variety of professional situations after learning with a Preply tutor?
3. How do participants perform on their English level tests after learning with a Preply tutor?
4. How well does the Preply program help participants achieve their language learning goals?
5. What aspects of the Preply program did participants find most useful and valuable, and how satisfied are they with their experience?



FINDINGS



FINDINGS

ENGLISH USAGE CONFIDENCE

How confident and comfortable do participants feel using English in everyday life after learning with a Preply tutor?

Most participants reported improved confidence and comfort in speaking, reading, writing, and understanding English after learning with a Preply tutor. Confidence has been shown to be a key factor in English language competence and proficiency for English language learners.

- 93% of all participants and 97% of participants who took at least 24 lessons reported **feeling confident speaking English** after learning with a Preply tutor.
- 92% of all participants and 94% of participants who took at least 24 lessons reported **feeling confident writing in English** after learning with a Preply tutor.
- 91% of all participants and 94% of participants who took at least 24 lessons felt **more fluent** in English after learning with a Preply tutor.
- Up to 81% of participants who took at least 24 lessons reported **improvements in their comfort and confidence** using English in a variety of everyday situations (**Table 3**) after learning with a Preply tutor.

Several participants shared feedback that one of the biggest barriers to speaking a new language is the embarrassment, anxiety, and fear of saying something incorrectly that one often feels when learning the language. Many felt that being able to talk directly with a real person (their Preply tutor) was key in helping them overcome these negative feelings and be a more confident English speaker.

These findings suggest that Preply's one-on-one tutor learning model may be a highly effective way to help learners break through mental barriers and develop more confidence when learning a new language, especially if they are working frequently and consistently with a tutor. Several research studies have shown that self-confidence is directly related to English speaking competence



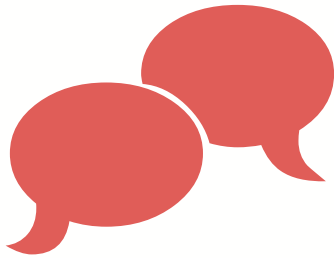
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ENGLISH USAGE CONFIDENCE

and proficiency for those learning English as a second language¹.

TABLE 3: Self-reported improvements in participants’ English comfort and confidence after taking at least 24 lessons with a Preply tutor over 12 weeks

Percentage of participants who felt more confident using English in everyday life after learning with a Preply tutor	80%
Percentage of participants who felt more comfortable communicating with native English speakers after learning with a Preply tutor	81%
Percentage of participants who felt more comfortable starting casual conversations and making small talk in English after learning with a Preply tutor	69%

¹ Ghafar, Z.N. (2023). The Influence of Self-Confidence on English Language Learning: A Systematic Review. International Journal of Applied Educational Research 1(1):55-68.



“Having lessons frequently gave me a confidence [speaking English] that I didn’t have before. It allowed me to develop my English without feeling too much pressure.”

– Self-employed account manager, age 25–30; Initial English speaking confidence rating: 6/10; Final English speaking confidence rating: 9/10

“This program has helped me learn almost daily, [and helped] me gain confidence in my English, which was my weak point and why I decided to go with Preply. I’m really happy with how it’s helped me and how I’ve made progress in that area.”

– Engineer, age 31–35; Initial English speaking confidence rating: 3/10; Final English speaking confidence rating: 9/10

“There came a time when I managed to have enough words in my mind to be able to speak [English] with a certain fluency, something I had never achieved before.”

– Mechanical engineer, age 31–35; Initial self-reported English fluency rating: 3/10; Final self-reported English fluency rating: 7/10



FINDINGS

ENGLISH IN A PROFESSIONAL SETTING

How confident and comfortable do participants feel using English in a variety of professional situations after learning with a Preply tutor?

English is an important global language, especially in business, and research shows that higher English language proficiency can lead to better job satisfaction and opportunities¹. In this study, most participants reported improvements in their abilities to function and grow at work after learning English with a Preply tutor.

- 100% of all participants reported feeling that learning English will help them progress in their professional career.
- 62% of participants **felt more qualified for a variety of work roles** after learning with a Preply tutor.
- Up to 72% of all participants and 80% of participants who took at least 24 lessons reported **improvements in their ability to use English effectively in the workplace** across various situations after learning with a Preply tutor (**Table 4**).

These findings suggest that learning English with a Preply tutor may unlock career opportunities for professionals that are less accessible if they do not speak English.

¹ [English skills have life-changing impact, are seen as the key to unlocking higher pay, wider job opportunities, and better friendships \(Pearson.com\)](#)



FINDINGS

ENGLISH IN A PROFESSIONAL SETTING

TABLE 4: Self-reported improvements in participants' English usage in the workplace after learning with a Preply tutor over 12 weeks

	All participants	Participants who took at least 24 lessons
Percentage of participants who felt more comfortable giving presentations in English at work after learning with a Preply tutor	71% (n=140)	80% (n=65)
Percentage of participants who felt they were better able to share their opinions in English in work meetings at the appropriate time after learning with a Preply tutor	72% (n=141)	76% (n=66)
Percentage of participants who felt they were better able to communicate across cultures and collaborate effectively in diverse teams after learning English with a Preply tutor	66% (n=142)	73% (n=67)
Percentage of participants who felt they were better able to participate in negotiations in English that benefited them at work after learning with a Preply tutor	66% (n=139)	70% (n=66)
Percentage of participants who felt better able to build positive relationships with international colleagues after learning English with a Preply tutor	69% (n=140)	69% (n=67)



“About a month ago, I had a job interview in English. At first, the interviewer asked in Spanish how my English was, and I told her I was practicing. Then we spoke in English for about 10 minutes, and she said, ‘I have to congratulate you—you’re better than you said.’ I was honestly really happy.”

– *Business development manager, age 25–30*

“I was preparing for technical interviews. When I had an interview, all the questions were very similar to what I had already practiced.”

– *Machine learning engineer, age 25–30*



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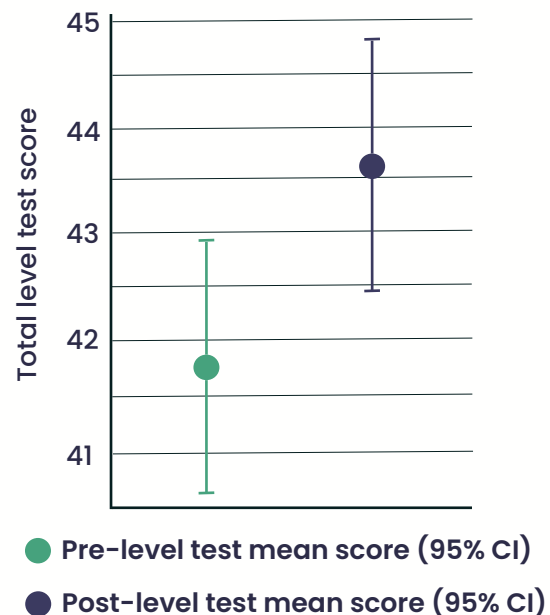
ENGLISH SKILL IMPROVEMENT

How do participants perform on their English level tests after learning with a Preply tutor?

On average, learners improved their level test scores across all skill areas after learning with a Preply tutor¹, including speaking, listening, grammar, and fluency.

- Participants demonstrated **statistically significant improvements on post-level test scores** compared to their pre-test scores overall (**Figure 1**) and for each of the individual skills.
- One out of three learners who took at least 24 lessons **improved their CEFR-aligned language test scores by a full level** (for example: A2 to B1).
- These learners progressed **up to 3x faster** than typical learning timelines (**Table 5**).
- 78% (7/9) of learners who started at the A2 level and took at least 24 lessons improved their test scores by a full level.
- 91% of all participants and 94% of participants who took at least 24 lessons **felt more fluent** in English after learning with a Preply tutor.

FIGURE 1: Mean and 95% confidence interval (CI) for participants' pre-level test total scores vs. post-level test total scores. Participants demonstrated significant improvements in their post-test scores compared to their pre-test scores ($p < 0.05$).



¹ Note that the relationship between level test scores and participation in the Preply program is correlative.



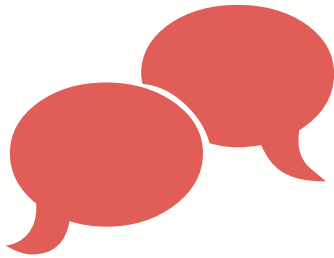
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ENGLISH SKILL IMPROVEMENT

TABLE 5: Typical timelines for progressing a full CEFR level vs. Preply participant timelines

Typical learning hours to progress a full CEFR level (e.g., A2 to B1) ¹	Learning hours to progress a full CEFR level by nearly 1/3 of Preply participants who took at least 24 lessons (in this study)
~160-240	~24-48

These findings suggest that learning with a Preply tutor may help English language learners become more fluent and proficient, and could expedite learners’ progress, especially if they work regularly with a tutor.

¹ Learning hours needed to progress a full CEFR level are dependent on a variety of factors, and the “typical” learning hours estimate here is based on [what has been reported from organizations such as EF](#).



“After the [Preply lessons], I've acquired a larger vocabulary and am expressing myself better in English than before I started.”

- IT project manager, age 41-45; Pre-test CEFR level: A2; Post-test CEFR level: B1

“After a few classes, I started thinking in English. Even after the class was over, I continued speaking to myself in English.”

- Psychologist, age 36-40; Fluency rating before learning with a Preply tutor: 4/10; Fluency rating after learning with a Preply tutor: 8/10

“When watching [TV] and listening to music...I began to understand the vast majority [of English words] without having to try too hard.”

- Health care specialist, age 25-30; Comprehension of spoken English before learning with a Preply tutor: 4/10; Comprehension of spoken English after learning with a Preply tutor: 6/10



FINDINGS

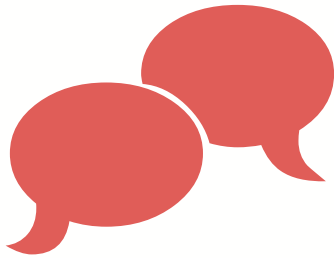
ENGLISH LEARNING GOALS

How well does the Preply program help participants achieve their language learning goals?

Participants were able to make progress towards their language learning goals with Preply, and attribute much of that progress to learning with a real person.

- All of the participants in this study were learning English to help them with professional goals, such as career advancement or feeling more confident at work.
- 99% of all participants and 100% of those who took at least 24 lessons reported **making progress toward their goals** after learning English with a Preply tutor for 12 weeks.
- 97% of participants felt that **learning with a real person was very important** to their progress.
- While many participants recognized the importance of practicing with a real person before beginning their Preply program, many expressed that it was even more important than they originally thought after learning with a Preply tutor.

The Preply learning model of engaging learners one-on-one with real human tutors creates a safe space for learners to practice English without fear or embarrassment, and holds learners accountable in a way that other language learning program models may not.



“My original goal was to break the ice and get over my fear of speaking—and I think I’ve done that. So my goal has evolved a bit. Now I want to really speak English well—not just get over my fear.”

– Business development manager, age 25–30

“Last week I had to face a work meeting in English, and at that moment I realized that I felt much more confident speaking English, and therefore, taking advantage of everything that Preply had helped me learn and progress.”

– Lawyer, age 25–30

“I wanted to make a career change, switch departments. Not only [did] I need to dust [my English] off a bit, I needed to improve it. Just a week ago I changed jobs, and English is the working language. So honestly, I’d say [Preply] really helped me get that job.”

– Marketing analyst, age 31–35



FINDINGS

PREPLY EXPERIENCE AND VALUE**What aspects of the Preply program did participants find most useful and valuable, and how satisfied are they with their experience?**

Participants were highly satisfied with their Preply language learning experience. They appreciated how personalized their experience was and being able to practice English with a real person, and would recommend Preply to others.

- 99% of participants reported having a **personalized learning experience** with Preply¹.
- Many participants appreciated the quality of their tutors, highlighting important characteristics such as empathy, humor, and professionalism.
- Participants felt that the top five most valuable aspects of Preply are:
 - Direct human interaction and support (61%)
 - Program flexibility (61%)
 - Real-time feedback (43%)
 - A personalized learning experience (40%)
 - Connection to people and places related to the language they are learning (20%)

Preply study participants were highly likely to recommend Preply to their friends and family. After learning with a Preply tutor, the Net Promoter Score (NPS) for all participants was **65**. This is widely considered to be a “great” NPS, indicating a strong level of customer satisfaction, and is well above the average NPS for the Education industry (**Table 6**).

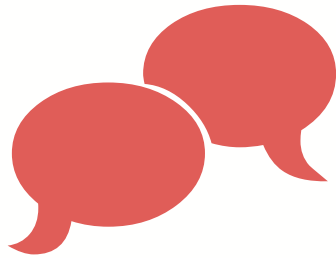
¹ Participants rated the personalization of their Preply experience 6 or higher on a scale of 1–10.

**FINDINGS****PREPLY EXPERIENCE AND VALUE**

TABLE 6: Average Net Promoter Score in the Education industry¹ vs. the NPS for Preply study participants

Average NPS for the Education industry	NPS for Preply study participants
Average: 42 Low (25th percentile): 32 High: (75th percentile): 66	65

¹ Source: [CustomerGauge/Survicate 2022 data](#)



“Preply is an easy-to-use platform with many available teachers. In just a few clicks, you can find a teacher profile that matches what you want to learn (general conversation, more technical conversation, exam, interview, etc.) and the schedule that suits you. Plus, it's very flexible in terms of scheduling, so you can reschedule or cancel classes if you run into any issues.”

– Software salesperson, age 46–50

“I realized that a large part of my limitation in learning English was the lack of practice with a native speaker to overcome my shyness when speaking. The [Preply tutors] were extremely professional, giving me tips at the right time and inspiring me to trust.”

– Project manager, age 41–45

“Sure, there are AI tools where you can practice conversation. But having that personal connection, knowing someone is waiting for you, really helps keep your motivation. It's like having a personal trainer for English class—you wouldn't skip it, like you might if you had to work out on your own.”

– Business development manager, age 25–30

About Leanlab Education

Leanlab Education is a nonprofit organization specializing in codesign research to evaluate learning tools. Our research team represents leading thinking on implementation science and learning engineering. Dr. Bror Saxberg (Kaplan, Chan Zuckerberg Initiative) and Dr. Edith Gummer (National Science Foundation, Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, Arizona State University) and Dr. Sean Talamas (Character Lab) guide research strategy from our board of directors, while Dr. Lynne Harden (former EdPuzzle), Dr. Akila Raoul (Loyola University Chicago), and Dr. Rebecca McGill-Wilkinson (Temple University, former Institute of Education Sciences) lead our research practice. Leanlab clients have included venture backed startups and federal grantees like Subject, Sown To Grow, and Boddle, and range to established companies and leaders in innovation, like Logitech, Gates Foundation, and Chan Zuckerberg Initiative.

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