



All Ears English Episode 145:

A Big Yes/No Mistake You're Making in English and How to Fix It

Gabby: This is an All Ears English Podcast, Episode 145: "A Big Yes/No Mistake You're Making in English and How to Fix It."

[Instrumental]

Gabby: Welcome to the All Ears English Podcast, where you'll finally get real, native English conversation with your hosts, Lindsay McMahon, the 'English Adventurer' and Gabby Wallace, the 'Language Angel,' from Boston, USA.

[Instrumental]

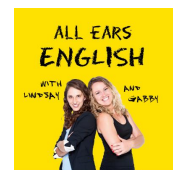
Gabby: So you guys listen to our podcast four times a week, but how can you actually learn how to learn with our podcast. (Um), Lindsay and I have made this e-book that is "Ten Ways to Learn English with a Podcast." And where can they get this e-book?

Lindsay: So you can get this e-book if you go to AllEarsEnglish.com/Free.

[Instrumental]

Gabby: You are making a big mistake. You need to STOP right now and fix this common error with yes/no questions. In today's episode, you'll learn how with lots of examples.

[Instrumental]



[Instrumental]

Gabby: Hey, Lindsay.

Lindsay: Hey, Gabby. How's it going?

Gabby: Great. And hello to our beautiful and brilliant listeners.

Lindsay: Hey, guys. Thanks for listening today. Today, we have a very cool situation to listen to and so with the situation today is we're at a party and Gabby and I are meeting each other for the first time.

Gabby: Yep.

Lindsay: But we have a mutual friend. What does mutual mean?

Gabby: Well, we have a friend in common. So our, our mutual friend has told each of us bits and pieces about each other. So I've heard of Lindsay. She's heard of me...

Lindsay: Right.

Gabby: ...through our mutual friend, but now we're finally meeting for the...

Lindsay: Right.

Gabby: ...first time.

Lindsay: So we want to clarify and confirm what we think we know about each other, but we're not sure.

Gabby: Yeah.

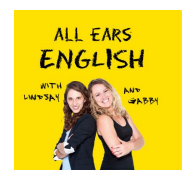
Lindsay: So let's get started.

Gabby: All right. "Hey, you're name is Lindsay, isn't it?"

Lindsay: "Yeah, it is."

Gabby: "Oh, great. I've heard so much about you."

Lindsay: "Really?"



Gabby: "Yeah."

Lindsay: "Oh, I hope all good things."

Gabby: "Oh, of course, of course. So, didn't you work in Brazil?"

Lindsay: "No, actually I worked in Argentina."

Gabby: "Oh, I'm so confused. I thought that you worked in Brazil 'cause (because) – well, don't you speak Portuguese?"

Lindsay: "No, I actually speak Spanish."

Gabby: "Oh, got it."

Lindsay: "Yeah."

Gabby: "Got it. Okay."

Lindsay: "Your friend – our, our friend didn't really describe me very well."

Gabby: "(You know), I could've gotten confused..."

Lindsay: "Yeah."

Gabby: "...too. (I mean), Argentina, Brazil, they're all..."

Lindsay: "Geographically close, right. Totally different countries. Totally different languages."

Gabby: "Woops!"

Lindsay: "Woops! Okay. Yeah, and so – but isn't your name Gabby?"

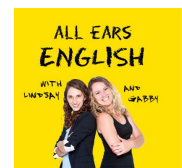
Gabby: "Yeah, it is."

Lindsay: "Excellent. And didn't you run the Iron Man last month?"

Gabby: "I did."

Lindsay: "Oh."

Gabby: "It was amazing."



Lindsay: "That..."

Gabby: "Yeah."

Lindsay: "...sounds so cool."

Gabby: "Yeah."

Lindsay: "Don't you also speak Chinese? I thought I heard you spoke Chinese."

Gabby: "Oh, no. I don't. Actually, I speak some Japanese..."

Lindsay: "Oh."

Gabby: "...just a little bit."

Lindsay: "Japanese, that's..."

Gabby: "Yeah."

Lindsay: "...what it was. Okay."

Gabby: "Yeah."

Lindsay: "And (um) -- but haven't you actually lived in Boston for about ten years now?"

Gabby: "Yeah, well that's true. Absolutely."

Lindsay: "That's true."

Gabby: "Yeah, I, I have lived in Boston for about ten years. (Um), so do you have any other questions?"

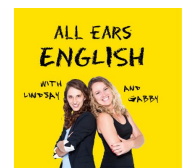
Lindsay: "(Um), nope. That's all..."

Gabby: "Are you...?"

Lindsay: "...I really want to know about you."

Gabby: "Are you, are you sure you don't have any other questions?"

Lindsay: "Nope."



Gabby: “You don’t have any other questions do you?”

Lindsay: “(Ar-), actually, I don’t have any other questions and I’m gonna (going to) go over there and talk to someone else because I feel I’m being harassed right now.”

Gabby: Okay. Well, that was a little awkward asking you so many times if you have questions. I just wanted to really hammer home a point about how to answer questions in different styles. They might be – I call them positive questions, (uh), or negative questions that involve the word “not”...

Lindsay: (Uh-huh).

Gabby: ...or “don’t”, or, (you know), some contraction of the word, (um), “not.” So, so there were a lot of examples and I meant to ask Lindsay a question, (like), “Hey, your name is Cheryl, isn’t it?”

Lindsay: “No, it’s not.”

Gabby: Right, right. (Um), or, (you know), different, different versions of this question where, where you might have to say...

Lindsay: “No.”

Gabby: ...(right).

Lindsay: Right.

Gabby: “No, my name is not...”

Lindsay: Right.

Gabby: “...Cheryl.”

Lindsay: And the last question that you asked, you asked me, “Do you have any other questions?”

Gabby: Right.

Lindsay: Right.



Gabby: "Do you have any other questions?" So...

Both: Yeah.

Lindsay: So what we've noticed...

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: ...from a lot of students, a lot of students -- in your native language guys, you might actually say, "Yes, I don't have any more questions."

Gabby: Right.

Lindsay: But...

Gabby: Or, "Don't you have any more questions?" Sounds like maybe you wanna (want to) say, "Yes, I don't."

Lindsay: Right, but we don't say that in English.

Gabby: Right.

Lindsay: We stick with the answer, as you said, Gabby, (right). Your rule of thumb is...?

Gabby: Well, always say "Yes" or "No" to match your answer.

Lindsay: Not to match the question.

Gabby: Exactly. (Um), "Do you have any questions?"

Lindsay: "No, I don't."

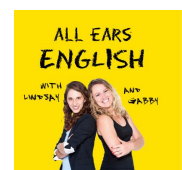
Gabby: Exactly. So, so you guys, don't ever – do not ever put "Yes" and "I don't" ...

Lindsay: Yeah.

Gabby: ...together.

Lindsay: Yeah.

Gabby: It's like, it's like wearing, (you know), a red shirt and yellow pants.



Lindsay: Very confusing.

Gabby: Just don't it.

Lindsay: If you say that to a native speaker, who's maybe not a teacher, they're not used to this, they'd be so confused, (like), "He said, 'Yes,' he said, 'No.' I don't know, I don't... Oh my gosh."

Gabby: Right. Well, and this can lead to a lot of confusion in the classroom and in even more, I would say, (um), critical situations, like if you're negotiating a business deal or if you're in an interview, right?

Lindsay: Ooh!

Gabby: (Like), "Hey Lindsay, you can type, (uh), 100 word per minutes, right?"

Lindsay: (Uh), "Yes, I can" or "No, I can't."

Gabby: Right. But never "Yes, I can't."

Lindsay: Right.

Gabby: (Like), (like) never...

Lindsay: What?

Gabby: Right.

Lindsay: Don't contradict yourself...

Gabby: Yeah.

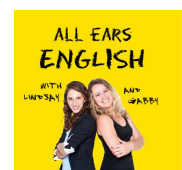
Lindsay: ...within the same phrase.

Gabby: And, and it can be really, really tricky when we're using "can" or "can't" because those sound very similar right? "Can" – positive, "Can't" ...

Lindsay: Oh, and...

Gabby: ...negative.

Lindsay: ...that's another episode...



Gabby: Oh, yeah.

Lindsay: ...for pronunciation.

Gabby: Oh, yeah.

Lindsay: We'll take care of that on another day, but for today, we just want to remind you guys, don't – I think this comes down to translating from your native language, right?

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: That's where you guys are making this mistake, we think.

Gabby: Right, right.

Lindsay: (Um), so don't translate.

Gabby: Yeah. So, maybe just to give you a, a couple more examples, (um), just using our podcast like, "Hey, you listen to the All Ears English Podcast?" "Yeah, I do!"

Lindsay: (Duh)!

Gabby: "(Uh), don't you love it?"

Both: "Yes..."

Lindsay: "I love it."

Gabby: "And, and, you, you, you don't want to listen every single day?"

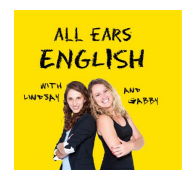
Lindsay: "Actually, I do. Yes."

Gabby: "Yes."

Lindsay: "I do."

Gabby: "Lindsay, you're so good."

Lindsay: Yeah, I know. I'm a native speaker so. So here's a good trick guys. The word "actually" is a great...



Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: ...way to redirect the conversation...

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: ...so you're not stuck in having to mirror the question.

Gabby: (Um)...

Lindsay: "Actually, I do," or "Actually, yes, I do."

Gabby: Yeah, it's a great word to, (you know), break things up, put a little more emphasis on your answer, (um), "Actually..."

Lindsay: (Uh-hm), or "in fact."

Gabby: In fact.

Lindsay: Although, "in fact" is a little bit more formal, right?

Gabby: Little more formal. It's okay to use in formal situations.

Lindsay: (Uh-hm).

Gabby: Or like, "Really I do."

Lindsay: Or "in reality," I suppose you could say that.

Gabby: "In reality," yeah. "In reality, my name is..."

Lindsay: Right.

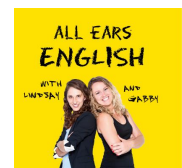
Gabby: "...Rebecca."

Lindsay: Right. But, "actually" by far...

Gabby: Not really.

Lindsay: Yeah. But, by far "actually" is the most common, I think.

Gabby: Yeah.



Lindsay: Right.

Gabby: Yeah, “actually”.

Lindsay: Yeah.

Gabby: Awesome. So, I hope that this is useful. I know that -- like Lindsay said we’ve, we’ve heard people mixing up the “yes” and the negative or the “no” and the positive. Just remember, as I said, the, the rule to live by is make sure the “yes” or “no” matches your answer, not the question.

Lindsay: Absolutely.

Gabby: Yeah. Cool.

Lindsay: That’s it. Thanks guys.

[Instrumental]

Lindsay: If you wanna (want to) put your ears into English more often, be sure to subscribe to our podcast in iTunes on your computer or on your smartphone. Thanks so much for listening and see you next time.

