



All Ears English Episode 153:

3 False Friends Gone Bad in the Business World

Gabby: This is an All Ears English Podcast, Episode 153: “3 False Friends Gone Bad in the Business World.”

[Instrumental]

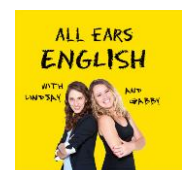
Gabby: Welcome to the All Ears English Podcast, where you’ll finally get real, native English conversation with your hosts, Lindsay McMahon, the ‘English Adventurer’ and Gabby Wallace, the ‘Language Angel’, from Boston, USA.

[Instrumental]

Gabby: All right, guys. The World Cup finished up, but now it’s time for the World Cup of leaving reviews for All Ears English on iTunes. We noticed that in June we had a lot of new reviews with Spain in the lead as the winner with eight reviews and Japan with seven, US- seven, China- six, and then some other countries left several reviews. But you guys, we wanna (want to) have a competition in August to see which country can leave the most reviews.

Lindsay: This is gonna (going to) be so cool. So we’re gonna (going to) be looking for Germany, Thailand, Brazil, Turkey, Russia, Italy, France, Mexico, Argentina, and Korea. Let us see your reviews guys.

Gabby: Step it up and let’s see which country can really win for...



Lindsay: Come on!

Gabby: ...reviews in August. We'll let you know the results at the end of August.

Lindsay: Excellent.

[Instrumental]

Gabby: In today's episode, you'll laugh, you'll cry and you'll find out why you must stop translating immediately.

[Instrumental]

Lindsay: Hello, Gabby.

Gabby: Hey, Lindsay. How are you?

Lindsay: I have a question for you?

Gabby: Okay.

Lindsay: Have you ever made a mistake in translating a word directly into another language...

Gabby: (Mm), yeah.

Lindsay: ...like maybe when you were learning Japanese, Portuguese, Spanish.

Gabby: Yeah, well I remember when I was first learning Spanish, I remember, (uh), (uh), an awkward mistake where I, I, wanted to say that I, I, felt, (um), shame, let's say, and I said in Spanish, "Estoy embarazada" ("I'm pregnant") because embarrassed, right, is in English very different from embarazada in Spanish. If our Spanish listeners you'll know what I'm talking about, "embarazada" means "pregnant"! So instead of telling my partner that I was feeling shame or feeling embarrassed about a mistake I made I actually said, "I'm pregnant."

Lindsay: Oh, that's – and that's a weird time to say that you're pregnant, to – (I mean), in a little language activity.

Gabby: Like, "Oh, I'm so sorry I made a mistake, I'm so pregnant."



Lindsay: Okay, I'm sorry that happened to you Gabby. And...

Gabby: Oh, it's a common mistake.

Lindsay: ...you're not the only one...

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: ...that that happens to.

Gabby: That's right.

Lindsay: That also happens to big companies.

Gabby: That's right, that's right, there's – well there's a lot of issues that happen when you try to translate directly, right...

Lindsay: Yeah.

Gabby: ...especially, (you know), we have a couple examples here from, from, Spanish there are a lot of 'false friends' or words that seem like they would be the same but they're not.

Lindsay: Exactly.

Gabby: Right, English has a lot of roots from Latin just like Spanish and French and Portuguese do, so if you speak those languages, be careful. So yeah, you were saying some companies have messed up, (um), they made some mistakes with translations.

Lindsay: Yeah, this is really funny. There's one company, (um), I guess they manufacture ball point pens.

Gabby: Okay.

Lindsay: (Um), and their message in English which is the, (you know), the, the, this is the way they meant to say it is, "It won't leak in your pocket and embarrass you," right. So it's embarrassing when your pen leaks in your pocket, you have this big, (you know), black, (uh), dot all...

Gabby: Yeah.



Lindsay: ...over your clothes. So then they tried to actually translate it into Spanish and instead they ended up saying, "It won't leak in your pocket and make you pregnant."

Gabby: Oh no!

Lindsay: Terrible.

Gabby: So I guess they used the same, (um), verb...

Lindsay: Right.

Gabby: ...(uh), from – well, thinking that embarrass is the same in Spanish, which it's totally not.

Lindsay: Right.

Gabby: It's totally different in English.

Lindsay: Yeah.

Gabby: That's a good one.

Lindsay: That's a good one. Do we have any other examples?

Gabby: Yeah, actually we have two more examples. (Um), let's see. Another one we wanna (want to) share is, (um), well, there's, there's, the phrase, the slogan, from a beverage company, "Turn it Loose". So...

Lindsay: "Turn it Loose".

Gabby: "Turn it Loose". In English we use the, the, idiom 'let loose'.

Lindsay: Yeah.

Gabby: Which means...

Lindsay: What does it mean?

Gabby: ...(um), it means just to relax.

Lindsay: Relax.



Gabby: Have fun.

Lindsay: Have fun.

Gabby: Right? And then in Spanish it was, it was, translated it and read as, "Suffer from diarrhea."

Lindsay: Oh no, that's really – that doesn't...

Gabby: I can't even say it.

Lindsay: ... make me want to buy this particular drink. I don't know about you. (I mean), I could think of better options.

Gabby: I would not want to drink something that's advertising with a phrase like that.

Lindsay: No way!

Gabby: All right, we have one last example of a translation gone bad.

Lindsay: Yeah...

Gabby: Lindsay.

Lindsay: ...we have one more example. So, a fast food company – their slogan is in English, "Finger Licking Good". What does that mean? "Finger Licking Good".

Gabby: "Finger Licking Good" is actually a pretty common way to describe food that is delicious.

Lindsay: (Mm), it makes you wanna (want to) lick your fingers. Right...

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: ...lick your fingers exactly. So when that was translated into Chinese, what happened, Gabby?

Gabby: It came out as, "Eat Your Fingers Off".



Lindsay: Oh my – I don't wanna (want to) eat my fingers off. I don't wanna (want to) actually...

Gabby: That was horrible.

Lindsay: Right.

Gabby: That's disgusting.

Lindsay: That's terrible.

Gabby: (Ugh).

Lindsay: Oh, gosh.

Gabby: So these are examples of translations gone bad and, (you know), I hope that your takeaways from this episode are, one, to laugh because these are pretty funny but, two, realize that it's impossible to translate directly from your native language. (I mean), sure, basic words can be translated, but when you get into more complex ideas and idioms, really guys, it's impossible and you have to just learn the English idioms for their own meaning, like, "Finger Licking Good" which means delicious. Like, (um), to be embarrassed...

Lindsay: (Uh-hm).

Gabby: ...which means to, (uh), feel shame about a mistake you made or, (uh), what was the other one, to...?

Both: Oh, "Turn it Loose".

Gabby: Or "Let Loose".

Lindsay: Right. And how can our listeners avoid translating directly? (I mean) what do we actually need to do to make sure we're more on the level of speaking rather than translating?

Gabby: Right. Well, when you listen to English, (like) when you listen to this podcast try to associate meaning directly with what we say instead of using your brain power and your focus to take our words in English,



translate them to your native language and then try to find meaning from that.

Lindsay: That's too much energy.

Gabby: And it's going to slow you down. So just try to associate meaning with what you hear, the sounds of English.

Lindsay: Exactly and by doing that you want to immerse yourself, as we've been talking about, right...

Gabby: (Uh-hm).

Lindsay: ...since we started this podcast, immerse yourself in the local culture, make native speaking friends and do...

Gabby: That's right.

Lindsay: ...all of that good stuff that we, we, help you guys with all the time.

Gabby: That's right, just hearing more of the language will help you associate meaning with it in different contexts.

Lindsay: Excellent, very funny.

Gabby: All right.

Lindsay: Thank you.

Gabby: Thanks.

[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.

