



All Ears English Episode 187: Why We Won't Make Your Bad English Good

Gabby: This is an All Ears English Podcast, Episode 187: “Why We Won’t Make Your Bad English Good.”

[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]

Lindsay: Are you waiting for us to give you better English skills, or good English skills? Well, at the end of the day, you’re gonna (going to) find out why it’s about what *you* do, not what we do for English success.

[Instrumental]

Lindsay: Guys, raise your hand if you are listening to this on a mobile device.

Gabby: Ooh, me.

Lindsay: Oh, you are too? Me too.



Gabby: I, I always listen to podcasts on my smartphone.

Lindsay: Absolutely. That's why we want to build a smartphone app.

Gabby: Ooh, that would be so cool. We could offer even more than the audio episode. We could offer transcripts, we could offer other learning materials, and fun, supplementary materials...

Lindsay: What a good idea.

Gabby: ...with the app.

Lindsay: But it's not free to make an app.

Gabby: It's not?

Lindsay: And it's not cheap, either.

Gabby: Oh, man. How are we gonna (going to) do that?

Lindsay: I don't know.

Gabby: Oh, my gosh! I know. We can, we can make this part of our Kickstarter campaign.

Lindsay: Awesome idea.

Gabby: So when you guys donate to our Kickstarter campaign at AllEarsEnglish.com/Kickstarter, you'll not only get a prize according to the level of your funding, but you'll also be helping us to create an app that will make your All Ears English experience even more awesome.

Lindsay: Yeah, we wanna (want to) see you guys over there at AllEarsEnglish.com/Kickstarter.

Gabby: Get over there before October 1, 2014. That's the deadline.

[Instrumental]

Gabby: Are you ready?

Lindsay: I am. Gabby, how are you today?



Gabby: How you doing? I'm doing great and I'm so excited to be here with our awesome listeners. How 'bout (about) you Lindsay?

Lindsay: Me too, of course.

Gabby: Whoo-hoo! So, we wanna (want to) talk to you guys because – (you know), we don't wanna (want to) pick on anybody, but we, we often get messages – it's not only been once – but we often get messages that go something like this: "My English is really bad."

Lindsay: Or something like – let's directly quote the message.

Gabby: Okay, sure. Okay.

Lindsay: Yeah. Let's just go out there.

Gabby: I'm scared. Okay.

Lindsay: "I hope you can improve my bad English."

Gabby: Yes.

Lindsay: What's the problem? Well there are two problems...

Gabby: Two problems.

Lindsay: ...in this quote. So we're not tryna' (trying to), (you know), pick on anyone specifically, but we wanna (want to) talk about this...

Gabby: We actually appreciate...

Lindsay: ...to help you guys.

Gabby: ...your message. We appreciate that you left us the message. We love reading your comments, your posts, your messages, your questions. Please keep them coming.

Lindsay: Yes.

Gabby: And, and we admire your, (uh), boldness to post and, and connect with us. We really...



Lindsay: Absolutely.

Gabby: ...appreciate that. So it's all love. We just want to talk about the mentality behind learning and how we might shift to a more positive and proactive mindset. Yeah.

Lindsay: Yeah, because we know that English is not just about learning verbs...

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: ...and vocabulary. It's about strategy.

Gabby: Yeah, and we're scared that, (you know), your past teachers and your past experiences may have given you some negative thoughts about your English.

Lindsay: Probably. Some...

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: ...deeply ingrained negative thoughts.

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: So the first part of this message, "I hope *you* can improve my bad English."

Gabby: Who's 'you'? Is that you Lindsay?

Lindsay: I guess...

Gabby: 'We'?

Lindsay: I guess he or she means us.

Gabby: Us.

Lindsay: Okay.

Gabby: (Uh).

Lindsay: So, I – one attitude that I really love is the proactive, independent attitude that it's *your* responsibility...



Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: ...to improve your English.

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: We're here to cheer you on, to motivate you, to give you some tools...

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: ...and to inspire you...

Gabby: Right.

Lindsay: ...but at the end of the day, it's *your* responsibility to improve your English.

Gabby: That's right. And I think we talked before about how consuming English and actually, (um), learning English are very different and I think when you're asking someone else, whether it's your teacher or, (you know), us here to give you English, (you know), "How can you improve my English?" It's (kind of) asking, (like), "Can you give me something that will, will change my English?" (I mean), I think we understand what you're saying, (right).

Lindsay: Yeah.

Gabby: You wanna (want to) listen to our episodes, you want to get good advice for English and we can totally do that for you, but we want you to be active...

Lindsay: Yeah.

Gabby: ...in your English.

Lindsay: And it's disempowering...

Gabby: (Um).

Lindsay: ...right? You're disempowering yourself...

Gabby: Don't wait for us.



Lindsay: ...when you say, “I hope *you* can improve my bad...”

Gabby: We want to empower you.

Lindsay: Yeah.

Gabby: I think, (you know), a better way to phrase this if, if we were gonna (going to) rewrite this comment...

Lindsay: (Uh-huh).

Gabby: ...is “What can I do,” or, or “How can I Use all Ears English to improve my...”

Lindsay: Yeah.

Gabby: “...my English?”

Lindsay: As a tool.

Gabby: Right.

Lindsay: Right.

Gabby: Exactly. (You know), “What are some strategies, or how, how could I learn English through your podcast?” (You know), putting the responsibility back on yourself.

Lindsay: Yeah, and I think a lot of this mentality also comes from when we were growing up, we were sitting in a classroom and the teacher was at the front of the room...

Gabby: Lecturing.

Lindsay: ...giving you the language.

Gabby: Yes.

Lindsay: It – The language only came from the teacher.

Gabby: The knowledge only came from...



Lindsay: Knowledge...

Gabby: ...the teacher.

Lindsay: But everything is flipped now guys.

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: Because you're consuming this podcast in mobile fashion while you're on your way to work and you're going out and seeking out native-speaking partners.

Gabby: Right.

Lindsay: English is everywhere.

Gabby: This is what I tell my, my students, my friends, everybody, I say, "Learning is no longer passive."

Lindsay: That's right.

Gabby: "You can't wait for your teacher to give you a lesson, or give you an assignment, or give you knowledge. You have to be proactive, you have to go after the knowledge you want, and the skills you want."

Lindsay: There's no time to be passive anymore.

Gabby: So, (I mean), don't ask us what we can give you, ask what you can do with the information or the tools that we make available.

Lindsay: Right.

Gabby: Right.

Lindsay: And a few episodes back, we had Kristy Oshita on the show...

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: ...and she talked about how an entrepreneur succeeds.

Gabby: Ooh.



Lindsay: And we talked about how to be an entrepreneurial English learner.

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: And that would be a great way. An entrepreneur goes out and seeks out ways to use these tools.

Gabby: Absolutely. Another thing I just thought of is, (you know), we really – one, one of our values is to help and support each other. And, so one way that you can learn English and practice English is to think about how you can actually help others...

Lindsay: (Uh-huh).

Gabby: ...in the All Ears English community to learn English. So another question you might ask, instead of, (you know), what can you, (uh) – what was it again?

Lindsay: “I hope you can improve...”

Gabby: “Hope you can improve my...”

Lindsay: “...my bad English.”

Gabby: “...bad English.” (Uh), “What can I do to help others learn English?”

Lindsay: Yeah.

Gabby: Look, you might think that your English is not good enough. That’s not true. There’s always someone who needs your help. Okay.

Lindsay: Right.

Gabby: And there’s, there’s a lot of ways you can help. (Uh), you can share the All Ears English podcast with your other friends who are learning English, you can make people aware of it. (Um), you can just start conversation on a page or in the All Ears English group and in that way you’re going to help others and yourself...

Lindsay: Yeah.



Gabby: ...at the same time.

Lindsay: That's right.

Gabby: Right.

Lindsay: That's right.

Gabby: So I wanted to talk about one other aspect of this quote. (Um), "...my *bad* English." I really understand that you're being modest and trying to, (um), be humble...

Lindsay: (Uh-hm).

Gabby: ...and I really appreciate those qualities, I really do, but I want to make sure that we're avoiding a negative mindset.

Lindsay: (Uh-hm).

Gabby: Your English is your English. It's not bad. It's not, (you know) – Well, I don't know if it's good. Maybe it's good, but...

Lindsay: What are we measuring it against?

Gabby: Exactly.

Lindsay: Right. Yeah.

Gabby: Exactly. And so saying that your English is bad, I feel it's setting yourself up for failure because you see your English as something that's bad and I think that's limiting your growth ...

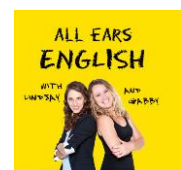
Lindsay: Yeah.

Gabby: ...potential.

Lindsay: Definitely a limiting belief.

Gabby: Right.

Lindsay: (Uh-hm).



Gabby: I remember I got some advice, I don't know where, but, (um), I was learning Spanish, and the advice was to tell myself – even if it's not true – tell myself 'I am the best Spanish speaker in the world.' Why? That's a total lie, but why would I say that? Because of confidence.

Lindsay: (Uh-hm). Yeah. Sometimes you have to say it before you believe it.

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: And then you can – you'll actually start to believe it and you'll start to hear it in your mind, right.

Gabby: Yeah, and I should say I tend to be a shy person who is not that confident, (right). So saying something like, 'My Spanish is the best Spanish in the world,' 'I'm the best Spanish speaker in the world,' that's gonna (going to) be helpful for me. Okay. Maybe it's not what everyone should say, but for me, (you know), if you are...

Lindsay: And you're just saying it to yourself, right.

Gabby: Oh, yeah.

Lindsay: It's not (crosstalk)...

Gabby: In my head.

Lindsay: ...going out (crosstalk)...

Gabby: In my head.

Lindsay: "My Spanish is the best..."

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: "...in the world."

Gabby: No, no, no. Just in my head.

Lindsay: Yeah.



Gabby: Just when I'm feeling like, 'Oh, my Spanish isn't good.' No, stop that negative thought and say "I can do it." there is, there is something, there's always a, (you know), a basic phrase or there's some way of communicating in English. (Um), you have to concentrate on what you can do, concentrate on what is good about your skills and then we'll help you close the gap.

Lindsay: Great. I like that. And then just to sum up this point, we have a great quote...

Gabby: Yes.

Lindsay: ...from Henry Ford.

Gabby: Yes. One of my favorite quotes goes like this: "Whether you think you can, or you think you can't, you are right."

Lindsay: Right. So today is a 'Deep Thoughts Thursday'.

Gabby: Yes.

Lindsay: That's a very deep thought and just to talk about – I think that this is what Henry Ford means: Our thoughts create our reality.

Gabby: Absolutely.

Lindsay: And...

Gabby: So, yeah, if you're thinking 'I can't speak English,' you're right.

Lindsay: That's (crosstalk). But that's dangerous.

Gabby: But if you think, 'I *can* speak English, I can do it,' you're right.

Lindsay: Right. And there's also a confirmation bias, right.

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: 'Cause (because) when we say we can speak, we're gonna (going to) find evidence that states we can speak...



Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: We're gonna (going to) find evidence of that. And then...

Gabby: Yes.

Lindsay: ...that's gonna (going to) be a positive feedback...

Gabby: You're gonna focus on that...

Lindsay: ...loop.

Gabby: Exactly.

Lindsay: (Uh-hm).

Gabby: So don't wait for permission to be a good English speaker. Don't wait for someone to tell you that you're good at English. You are good at English because you care enough to listen to this podcast.

Lindsay: Right. 'Cause (because) if you didn't care about your English skills, you wouldn't have found this podcast.

Gabby: That's right. And remember it's about, it's about your personality. It's about communicating with people. It's not about perfection, it's about...

Both: ...connection.

Gabby: Right. Exactly.

Lindsay: Yeah.

Gabby: All right, so we believe that you have good English, and (um), what we'd like to ask you to do, if you believe your English is good, take your smartphone out right now.

Lindsay: Right now. Right now.

Gabby: Take it out. I'll wait. Okay. Thank you. Take it out. Put it on camera and I want you to take a selfie wherever you're listening to this episode right now.



Lindsay: Yeah, we wanna (want to) see your faces.

Gabby: Wanna (want to) see your face and we wanna (want to) see where you are. (I mean), I'm always curious to know where you guys are. You know we're in Boston.

Lindsay: (Uh-hm).

Gabby: But where are you? Take a selfie and post it...

Lindsay: (Uh-huh).

Gabby: ...at Facebook.com/AllEarsEnglish.

Lindsay: Right.

Gabby: Post it to our page.

Lindsay: Show us where you're listening. Are you listening to us on the train? Are you listening at the beach? Are you listening in the car? Let us see your life. We want to...

Gabby: In the bathroom.

Lindsay: Yeah, we can – well, maybe not that one. We want a glimpse into your life.

Gabby: Yes.

Lindsay: We wanna (want to) know how you're interacting...

Gabby: Are you outside?

Lindsay: ...with us.

Gabby: Are you with your friends? What are you doing?

Lindsay: Yeah, we wanna (want to) know. Yeah. So go ahead and do that guys. We'll wait.

Gabby: And we'll post our selfies too if you do.

Lindsay: Yeah.



Gabby: Cool.

[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.

