



All Ears English Episode 204:

Three Tips for Learning English with an Expert on Italki

Lindsay: This is an All Ears English Podcast, Episode 204: “Three Tips for Learning English with an Expert on Italki.”

[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: In today’s episode with special guest, Tony Marsh, you’re going to learn three outside-the-box ways to improve your English.

[Instrumental]

Gabby: Hey, Lindsay, can you give me an update on that conversation service?

Lindsay: Sure, Gabby. So we actually have decided not to create the conversation service here at All Ears English. But you guys have continued to ask us where you can practice your conversation and we have some awesome ideas for you over on our resources page. Also, you guys have asked us



where you can practice your vocabulary, get TOEFL help, IELTS help. Go over to AllEarsEnglish.com/resources and find all your answers there.

[Instrumental]

Lindsay: Would you like to find a Native English speaker to practice English with online when you finish listening to today's podcast? With Italki, you can quickly get your own professional Native English teacher with the click of a button. Working with Italki teachers is 30% more cost-effective than finding your own English teacher in your hometown and it's so much easier. We've worked out a special deal for you. If you go to Italki before this offer runs out, you'll get ten US dollars in credits to work with the teacher of your choice for free. This offer runs out soon, so schedule your first lesson for this week. Go to AllEarsEnglish.com/Italki. That's www.AllEarsEnglish.com/I-t-a-l-k-i.

[Instrumental]

Lindsay: So today, let's talk about today's Super Fan. All Ears English Super Fan is Burn.

Gabby: Burn! That's awesome. Burn has been...

Lindsay: Burn.

Gabby: ...listening to All Ears English since the beginning and he's been a big fan. He's been very into All Ears English. He's been supportive, he's been commenting, leaving reviews. Awesome.

Lindsay: Oh my god. Burn is awesome. And what does Burn do? We asked him what he does with the podcasts to learn and to move to the next level. He says that he puts energy and power into his learning by imitating native speakers that he hears on our podcast and in other places, (uh), and just – he puts that power into it, to listen to it and to mirror what he hears. And he also does this using the transcript so that is an awesome strategy.

Gabby: Yeah, I love it. He's using the power of emotions to use and remember how to speak like a native, like an American English speaker.



Lindsay: And this is a jam of wisdom from Burn. We asked Burn what the key is to success in English and life and I love his answer. Do you wanna (want to) know his answer guys.

Gabby: Oh, yeah.

Lindsay: Oh, this is so cool. He says, “The key to success in English in life is consistency. So...”

Gabby: Ooh.

Lindsay: ...practice, practice, practice.” I love it. Consistency is so underrated, but it’s so important.

Gabby: Yeah. That’s great. Thanks for sharing that.

Lindsay: Yeah, we wanna (want to) say “Thank you so much” to Burn for being an amazing Super Fan and keep listening.

[Instrumental]

Gabby: Hey, Lindsay. How you doing?

Lindsay: Hey, Gabby. I’m great and you?

Gabby: Ah, doing great. Thank you. I’m really...

Lindsay: Good.

Gabby: ...excited because (uh), I have a great guest with us today, Tony Marsh. He is a language teacher online and in Chicago in the US and he actually teaches English, Spanish, Portuguese, Arabic, and a little Chinese to...

Lindsay: (Wha-)...

Gabby: ...adults. Yeah, I know – adult preparations and the government. (I mean), Tony you’re awesome. You do it all. How are you doing?

Tony: Thank you. Thank you. Hello, I’m good how are you?

Lindsay: Hey Tony.



Gabby: Very good. Very good.

Lindsay: Thanks for coming today.

Gabby: Yeah.

Tony: Thanks for having me.

Gabby: Yeah. I'm really excited because you have so much experience learning and teaching, (um), more than one language. And so I wanted to pick your brain a little bit about how our listeners can make the most of their learning. (Like) what are some tips you have for learning English online or, (you know), if, if your tips transfer over to, (uh), face-to-face that's great too. But just tell us if, if you would, a few of your tips for learning, especially for learning English, but maybe if they apply to other languages too, but (um), but yeah, just share with us – what, what could you tell (er-), our audience about learning English online?

Tony: Right. Well, I think (uh), I think the, the things you have to do to learn a language are gonna (going to) be the same whether you're learning online or learning face-to-face. The first, (uh), the first thing that I ask students to do when, (uh), when they begin to study with me is, is I say, "Ask yourself, 'What do I want to say and to whom?'" And this, (uh), is true at the beginning and this is true when you're intermediate and when you're advanced. Always keep in mind what do you want to say and to whom.

Gabby: (Um).

Tony: And this is helpful because it's, it's easy to become overwhelmed looking at, at a book or something in front of you that has (a-), has all these exercises and all this vocabulary. And the illusion is that in order to learn this language, you have to learn all of these words and that's kinda (kind of) the high school Spanish way, is learn this vocab list, learn that vocab list.

Gabby: Yeah.



Tony: (Uh), but it's, it's really not helping you in your conversation, which is (uh), a very important thing. It's-it's-it's to remember wha-what do I wanna (want to) say and to whom. And so i-if all you have to say, for example, is (um) – and in an extreme example, "Ticket, please. Thank you. Ticket, please. Thank you." If you can say that, then you, I would consider you fluent in that language because you can accomplish all of the linguistic tasks that you need. Now, of course...

Gabby: Yeah.

Tony: ...most of us wanna (want to) say more than just, (you know), a few words, but there's still a very (sort of), (um), (uh), defined set of, (uh), types of tasks, like introducing yourself, asking questions, describing places, talking about past, present, future, and, if you can, likes and dislikes.

Gabby: Yeah.

Tony: If you could do those things and plan to actually take the language you're, you're learning and go out and find someone to speak with or maybe you, you already have someone to speak with, (um), then you're gonna (going to) be way ahead of the game as opposed to just sitting there and, and trying to memorize something without really, (um), ever having the intention to go and use it.

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: (Um).

Gabby: I think a lot of our listeners might be familiar with the, the traditional classroom. Like you said...

Tony: Right.

Gabby: ...in high school where you learn to say, "The pen is on the table."

Tony: Exactly. Exactly.

Gabby: And...



Lindsay: Oh, no.

Gabby: ...how does that help you? (Like), who are you gonna (going to)...

Tony: Exactly.

Gabby: ...say that to?

Tony: Exactly. Yep.

Lindsay: I like this method 'cause (because) it's very practical, and I think our listeners are really looking for practical solutions right now. So...

Tony: Yes.

Lindsay: ...this is right on.

Tony: Yep.

Gabby: Yeah, that's great.

Tony: Th-the second point then that grows from that is (uh) is, is I have a catch phrase. I say "Earn a little, use a lot." So the opposite of that then is learning all of these words right and not planning to use it, but (uh) if you just learn a little like how to introduce, or how to do these, these few things and go out and use it with 20 different people, your language is gonna (going to) grow like a snowball.

Gabby: Ooh, I like that.

Lindsay: (Um).

Gabby: So you could use the same phrase, but with many people in many different situations?

Tony: That's exactly what I do. Th-th-th-the way I got my start in Mandarin was in New York City. I decided to learn how to say 'hello' and I ran around going Nín hǎo, Nín hǎo (hello), (like) to everyone, and I maybe got two people to not look at me weird or even look at me at all. (Um), and, and I've, and, and I, and, and then I got one who, who would, (you know),



humor me in a conversation and I picked up a few more words, which I then carried on, running around using those new words. So I did – it grows like a snowball. If you'll, if, if you'll use a little bit with a lot of people.

Lindsay: Yeah.

Gabby: That's great and it probably makes it easier to remember too, 'cause (because) I know repetition is really important.

Tony: Yes.

Lindsay: (Uh-huh).

Tony: And so I call it 'preparing your routine'.

Lindsay: Yeah.

Gabby: Very cool.

Lindsay: I like this. There's a real sense of experimentation in this too, which I think is so key with learning.

Tony: Definitely.

Gabby: Yeah. So you have to [crosstalk]...

Tony: I think children are like that. They, they learn a lot ...

Lindsay: Yeah.

Gabby: Yeah.

Tony: ...[crosstalk], they just run around trying to use it.

Gabby: Oh, that's the thing.

Lindsay: Yeah, I'm picturing a little kid running around. Exactly. I love it.

Tony: That's me.

Gabby: And you, yeah, even as an adult you have to (kind of) push yourself and just talk to lots of different people.



Tony: Definitely.

Lindsay: (Uh-hm), (uh-hm).

Gabby: Very cool. Yeah, I love it. So learn a little, but then get out there and use it.

Tony: Exactly.

Gabby: Awesome.

Tony: And if I could, if I could then just give my third point...

Gabby: Yeah.

Tony: ...which just (sort of) ties that all together is, (uh), it's to understand – this is another catch phrase 'language teaches itself' and what I mean by that, (um), I wanna (want to) quote a, (uh), a Hungarian colleague [inaudible]. (Uh), she says, "You learn grammar from language, not language from grammar." In other words...

Lindsay: (Uhn).

Tony: ...there's no amount of grammatical rules or explicit, (you know), 'noun follows adjective' or that's gonna (going to), that's gonna (going to), (you know), equate to fluency in a language. But rather by using the language, those grammatical patterns will (uh) become apparent to you even unconsciously. So...

Gabby: Definitely.

Tony: ...an example I like to use is (l-), say in Spanish, i-i-instead of saying green tea, the word order, the correct word order is tea green.

Gabby: Right.

Tony: Now, once you've learned that. I'm not necessarily interested in, in sitting back and saying "Oh, well the noun comes before the adjective." I'm not worried about grammatical jargon but rather...

Both: Yeah.



Tony: ...as soon as I learn the word for blue and then maybe the word for sky, I'm gonna (going to) know that it's not blue sky like it is in English, but rather sky blue.

Gabby: Yeah.

Tony: And the reason that it's sky blue is because it's tea green, not because of the rule, but because of a previous example which taught me the pattern implicitly.

Gabby: Yeah.

Tony: That's why language teaches itself. I don't teach you the language. (Um), a grammatical book doesn't teach you the language. We learn the language through the language.

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: (Uh-huh). I like that.

Gabby: That's how kids learn, (right). (I mean)...

Lindsay: Oh, yeah.

Tony: Absolutely. Absolutely.

Gabby: Yeah.

Tony: I-I hear kids say, "I jumped," "I danced."

Gabby: Yeah.

Tony: "I played," and therefore, they'll even say, "I go-ed," "I [crosstalk]"...

Gabby: Yep.

Tony: ...which isn't correct, of course, but it's okay. They got their point across.

Gabby: Right.

Tony: (Uh), and it gives an adult, (uh), the opportunity to correct a child in that moment. So by, by making those mistakes, they're improving. The adult



has, o-often has that trepidation about making mistakes or sounding, (you know), sillier like a child.

Gabby: Yeah.

Tony: But that's a problem. You need to make as many mistakes – I always say if you have a thousand mistakes to make, try to make them as quick as possible.

Gabby: Oh, I love it.

Lindsay: Absolutely. I like that.

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: Experimentation and just implementing things quickly.

Tony: Right.

Gabby: Yeah. And the more you try things out, I think, (you know), your, your brain is always looking for patterns and it's always looking for th-the fastest, easiest way to do things. So it's, like you said, it's going to notice the grammar from the language. So you need a lot of language though in order to-to realize those rules. So you have to listen a lot, you have to speak a lot. And I, I think that makes a lot of sense.

Tony: Exactly. You ask yourself what you wanna (want to) say and to whom you go out and do it, you learn a little, (uh), use it a lot.

Gabby: Yeah.

Tony: And then allow that language, allow that bank of information to begin to organize itself in your mind which it will do.

Gabby: Very cool.

Lindsay: (Uhn). And Tony if-if we're still stuck in the old way of thinking in terms of subject-object-verb, how do we get out of that?



Tony: Well, I don't think there's anything wrong, with, (um), with analyzing (uh) language for it's parts of speech. And I have many students who like that an-and I can cater to those students as well. They'll say...

Gabby: Yeah.

Tony: ...“Well, what's, is that a direct or indirect object and why?” And, and I love that. Personally, I am like that. I-I-I kinda (kind of) do it (a-), I'm the (ch-), I'm childlike, but I'm also, (um), I'm also in-interested in-in-in-in being able to explain everything. (Um), so I don't think it's necessarily, necessarily a problem. It only becomes a problem when adults substitute that kind of learning, (uh)...

Lindsay: (Uh-huh)

Tony: ...for actual using.

Gabby: (Uhn).

Tony: And-and what I find is that there is that (um) that, (uh), trepidation about speaking in a new language and so adults justify not (uh) putting themselves out there or taking risks in the language by saying, “I don't the language enough yet,” (right).

Both: (Uhn).

Tony: “It wouldn't be, it wouldn't be smart of me to, to fly a plane if I haven't [crosstalk] had enough lessons. (You know).

Lindsay: Yeah.

Gabby: (Uhn).

Tony: (Uh), so they do the same in language. They'll say, they-they'll say, (uh), (you know), “I'll-I'll speak, I'll begin using the language once I'm fluent,” but the problem is you never become fluent.

Lindsay: Yeah.

Gabby: Right.



Lindsay: Exactly.

Gabby: And what is fluency, (right). Like you said, if you can say, “Ticket, please,” (I mean) that’s...

Tony: [crosstalk]. Fluency is being able to say what you wanna (want to) say an-an-and maybe not even perfectly or maybe not even the exact way that you would say it in your first language, but rather finding a way to say it, [inaudible] locating which is huge for me. It’s one of the main things that I teach is how to, is how to think in the target language. And I mean from day one, if all you know how to say is “Hello”, like I did in Chinatown...

Gabby: Yeah.

Tony: All I’m thinking about is saying “Hello.” I’m not trying – so as I add to my routine, I keep track, keep – take inventory of what’s in my routine...

Gabby: Yeah.

Tony: ...and I only choose items, possibilities, patterns, vocab from my routine and that’s my thought process.

Gabby: (Uhn).

Tony: I’m not thinking in English and trying to translate. That can never happen. It must never happen. I’m teaching it’s a mental discipline from day one to rely solely on your routine and not try to translate or think in the other language.

Lindsay: (Um).

Gabby: I love that. ‘Cause (because) we know...

Lindsay: Nice.

Gabby: ...how many problems can come from translation, direct translation. It’s just...

Tony: It doesn’t work.



Gabby: ...a mess.

Lindsay: Exactly.

Gabby: So...

Lindsay: Exactly.

Gabby: Lemme (let me) (sort of) recap (um) what you said 'cause (because) I really love the points that you brought up. I think they're really helpful. I wanna (want to) make sure that I got them right. So your first point was ask yourself, 'What do I want to say and to whom?'

Tony: Correct.

Gabby: Okay. And then the second one was 'learn a little', like learn a few words, a few phrases, but then use them a lot with a lot of...

Tony: Exactly.

Gabby: ...different people. Okay. And then language teaches itself. So...

Tony: Right.

Gabby: Yeah. So just, (um), pay attention to the patterns that you see or you hear and try to (sort of) deduct the grammar from that...

Tony: That's right.

Gabby: Not necessarily learning the grammar first and (like) analyzing the language and (um) talking about the language.

Tony: Exactly.

Gabby: (Uh), yeah. Very cool. Very cool. So, yeah, so (um), I know that you've been, you've been starting to teach online. (Uh), can you tell us a little bit about that? Your-you're teaching on, on Italki?

Tony: Yes, I've begun, (uh), teaching on Italki and I absolutely love it.

Gabby: Awesome.



Tony: (Um), it allows me (uh), to meet with people from – I've, I've been to Alaska, I've been to the Ukraine, I've been...

Gabby: Whoa.

Tony: ...to Santa Fe recently. (Um), and (uh), i-it's absolutely awesome. (Uh), the students are great, everyone's there because they really wanna (want to) learn. They wanna (want to) learn conveniently. They wanna (want to) learn, (um), (uh), i-in a fun way and it's really nice to be able to, to work with people (um) from home on Italki.

Gabby: Very cool. Very cool. So, yeah if people wanna (want to) find out more about your teaching and what you do, (um), where can they find out about you.

Tony: Well, I have a website that's, (uh), www.TonyMarshMethod.com. (Uh), and that has a-a bit of my history. It's got (um), a-a-a blog on there which I, which I post to. (Um), (uh), so people can see me there. (Uh) on Italki my username is all one word, TonyMarshMethod and I would love to meet with absolutely everyone.

Gabby: Cool.

Tony: (Um), and (uh) yeah between those two places that's pretty much where I, where I am right now online.

Gabby: Great.

Lindsay: (Uh-hm). And, and for people to get over to Italki, the (bl-) best place to go, (right), is AllEarsEnglish.com/Italki.

Gabby: Yeah. Yeah, that's right. Yeah, we have, (um), a special, (uh), a special arrangement where people can get, (uh), what is it, what is it Lindsay. It's...

Lindsay: So they can get ten US dollars...

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: ...to go towards an English lesson. So essentially ten free dollars...



Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: ...(um), to put that towards a lesson with Tony or someone else.

Gabby: Yeah. Yeah. So I, I hope that (um), that, (you know), for all of our, what, 25,000 listeners, I hope you get 25,000 new lessons Tony.

Tony: Thank you very much. I hope so.

Lindsay: Can you handle that?

Tony: I, I'll see what I can do.

Gabby: Awesome. Very cool. Well, it's been great hearing your tips for language learning and I think they're applicable, (um), for online or in person or anywhere just as you said. So I really appreciate that you shared those with us.

Tony: My pleasure.

Lindsay: Yeah. Thank you.

Tony: Thank you.

Gabby: Great.

Lindsay: Thank you Tony. Thanks for coming. This has been great.

Gabby: Yeah.

Tony: My pleasure. Thank you.

Gabby: Great. We'll talk to you soon Tony. Bye for now.

Tony: Okay. All right. Bye-bye.

Lindsay: Take care.

Tony: See you on Italki.

Gabby: See you there.



[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.

