



#029: UNDERSTAND PEOPLE WHO SPEAK ENGLISH WITH A STRONG ACCENT

"Excuse me; I don't quite understand." "Could you please say that again?"

Hi, everyone!

I'm Georgiana, founder of SpeakEnglishPodcast.com.
My mission is to help YOU to speak English fluently and confidently.

In today's episode:

- I'm gonna talk about how to understand people who speak English with a strong accent.
- Next, through a point of view lesson, you'll practice vocabulary, and above all, you'll improve your grammar without memorizing boring rules.

Awesome! Let's get started!

I listen to people who speak English with a strong accent every day.

Their mother tongue sometimes has a strong influence on the way they speak English.

Have you ever traveled to another country and tried to speak their mother tongue?

Then you're probably aware that some locals experienced some difficulties understanding you and that not everybody was patient. Some people got very impatient and sometimes even rude.

That's why, whenever you talk to people with a strong accent you should try to be as **patient** and **encouraging** as possible.

Usually, people with a strong accent already know that you may have some difficulties understanding them.

So, just be **honest** with the person you're talking to. Don't pretend to understand if you can't comprehend what the other person is saying.

And don't be afraid to hurt the other person's feelings. Being honest doesn't necessarily make you rude.

Instead, use a polite phrase to say that you're having some difficulties understanding. Ask the other person to **speak more slowly**. Just say something like this:

"I'm sorry, but I'm having some difficulties understanding you." or "Can you please speak a bit more slowly?"

Don't try to **understand every single word**. Instead, make an effort to get the overall meaning. Like this, you'll be able to participate in the conversation.

As a **listener**, you'll need to **relax** and listen to meaningful words and then **observe**. Use as many contextual clues as possible.

Listen very carefully and **give** all the **feedback** possible to the speaker.

Use your facial expressions to give feedback.

- **Nod** when you get the meaning.
- **Smile** when the topic is interesting.
- **Frown** when the content is about some problem.

Put in all the effort and patience as possible:

In many cases the reason you don't understand people is not due to their accent but because you don't listen carefully enough.

Learn how to listen without interrupting:

If you can understand the main point, but you're not sure about some words which **don't seem relevant**, just **ignore** them and **don't interrupt**.

However, when you don't seem to understand **keywords, relevant ideas** and you **can't catch up** with what that person is saying you'll need to **interrupt by using a phrase like this one politely**:

"Excuse me, I don't quite understand." "Could you please say that again?"

Ask questions:

Help the speaker by **asking questions** like: *"Do you mean that...?"* or *"Are you trying to say that..."*

Like this, the speaker will get the impression that you're genuinely interested in the conversation.

Write Things Down

If you still can't get the meaning no matter how he or she explains, then try to **write things down**. Show them what you understood and leave in black the rest.

And, keep smiling, show respect, and have fun communicating with people from all around the world.

Point of View STORY

(Learn grammar without memorizing)

Ok, let's move on to the next section.

Let's practice some grammar with the **Point of View Technique**. The main benefit of this technique is that it'll help you to learn **grammar** intuitively, without boring exercises or memorizing rules.

How does it work?

I'll tell you a short story more than one time. Every time, I'll change a grammar point. For example, I can change the tense or the person. This way, you'll intuitively recognize the changes.

Let's get started!

First, I'll tell the story from Kate's point of view and then from Tony's point of view.

Hi everyone! I'm Kate and today I'll talk about my friend Tony.

Some years ago, my friend Tony had a "hopeless" accent or at least that's what I thought.

His accent was so strong that everyone thought he was speaking a variant of English or something like that.

It took me too much mental effort to guess whatever he was trying to say.

He was very nice and friendly, and we hang out from time to time. Often, we'd communicate with the help of facial expressions, hand gestures or even writing on a piece of paper.

The funny thing is that he could perfectly understand me.

We didn't usually run into each other unless we made an effort to do so. Eventually, we both got busy and didn't see each other for years.

Last week, we finally ran into each other. I was shocked at how much his pronunciation had improved. I was able to understand him perfectly, and although he still had an accent, it wasn't a distraction anymore.

I asked him how he improved his spoken English and how he got rid of the strong accent.

He told me that his first step was to identify his problem areas, so he hired a tutor.

Once he knew his weak points, he started listening to lots of English podcasts, and audiobooks.

He would normally listen to the same chapter several times and then he tried to copy the speaker's pronunciation and intonation.

After a while, his friends started to notice a great improvement. Eventually, it took him about one year to get rid of the strong accent.

He worked really hard to improve his pronunciation but, it's been totally worth it. Tony's life has changed completely.

Now he's helping others who are dealing with the same difficulties that he faced when he moved to the US.

Now, I'll tell the story from Tony's point of view.

Hi! I'm Tony. I'd like to tell you how I managed to get rid of my strong accent.

Some years ago, I had a "hopeless" accent or at least that's what everybody thought.

My accent was so strong that everyone thought I was speaking a variant of English or something like that.

It took people too much mental effort to guess whatever I was trying to say.

I liked hanging out with my friend Kate from time to time. Often, we'd communicate with the help of facial expressions, hand gestures or even writing on a piece of paper.

The funny thing is that I could perfectly understand her, but she wouldn't get me.

We didn't usually run into each other unless we made an effort to do so. Eventually, we both got busy and didn't see each other for years.

Last week, we finally ran into each other. She was shocked at how much my pronunciation had improved. Kate was able to understand me perfectly, and although I still have an accent, it wasn't a distraction anymore.

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After a while, my friends started to notice a great improvement. Eventually, it took me about one year to get rid of the strong accent.

I worked really hard to improve my pronunciation but, it's been totally worth it. My life has changed completely.

Now I'm helping others who are dealing with the same difficulties I faced when I moved to US.

Ok! Awesome! It's the end of this short story.

I hope you've enjoyed the story. It's incredible how much you can learn using this method. You can forget about memorizing grammar rules. English can also be fun. I'm sure you can agree on that. 😊

Go to Courses.SpeakEnglishPodcast.com and continue practicing your spoken English with stories.

See you soon and have a wonderful week! Bye! Bye!



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