

Transcript for **How I became fluent in English: Jose's story**

- Molly:** Hello and welcome to another video for the British Council's LearnEnglish Teens website and their YouTube channel. My name is Molly and today I'm here with my friend Jose.
- Jose:** Hello.
- Molly:** Today we're going to make a video about learning English. And I wanted to make this video with Jose because she's from Argentina and I thought it would be really interesting and useful for you guys to hear her perspective, and what her experience has been learning English, instead of me just talking, as a native speaker.
- First off, I wanted to ask you a bit about your background. So, what is your background studying English, like, when did you start and why did you start learning English?
- Jose:** OK, so I started when I was eight. And I started, like, for sheer coincidence because a friend of mine from school was going to take English classes and she didn't want to go alone, so her mum was like, 'Oh, could Jose come with her?' and I was like, 'Sure.' And once I started, like, I never looked back. I really liked it. It's really normal here in Argentina to start learning English at a very early age and I haven't stopped ever since. Now I'm studying English at university.
- Molly:** Yeah, and going to be an English teacher.
- Jose:** Yeah.
- Molly:** I wanted to ask, what has been the hardest thing about learning English?
- Jose:** Well, I think the big, difficult thing most of the times is grammar for a lot of students and knowing when to apply certain grammar functions, I guess, especially when they don't translate into your own language.
- Molly:** Yeah.
- Jose:** So, I'm a native Spanish speaker and, for example, for us it was very difficult to learn passive voice.
- Molly:** Yeah.
- Jose:** That was like the one that everyone hated.
- Molly:** Yeah. Because you don't really use it. And we use it a lot.
- Jose:** Yeah, exactly. I think those kind of equivalences that language 'miss' with the others, is kind of the tricky part because you cannot picture it in your own ... language, as, like, with vocabulary, for example. You have an equivalent word for, well, almost everything.
- Molly:** Have you had anything – any technique or any, I don't know, activity or stimulus – that you've used that's really helped you improve your English?
- Jose:** Um, I think exposing yourself to real language is very important. Er, I mean with English, the advantage of English is that it's so spread throughout the world that you don't have an excuse not to do it.
- Molly:** Yeah, haha.
- Jose:** Even if you turn on the TV, you'll find movies in English and I think that's very good. That, like, trains your brain to listen to real English and try to understand real English, er, incorporate words that you wouldn't find in a textbook. When I was learning French, that was something that really struck me, like, here, maybe in Argentina you're not exposed to French content, or

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French-speaking people so it's very difficult to do that, but with English that's very accessible, like, just with an internet connection, you ...

Molly: Yeah. And you watch a lot of YouTube.

Jose: Yeah.

Molly: So that can be a useful thing.

Jose: Yeah. YouTube is a very good tool when you use it correctly. And since there's so much different content on YouTube you can find whatever it is you like. If you like video games, if you like books, if you like just watching people live! You can find anything that interests you. And just listening to it, like, stimulates you in a way that maybe a normal class of English wouldn't.

Molly: Yeah. You've talked a bit already, but do you have any other tips or anything for people that are learning English?

Jose: I think one thing about learning languages and English is that you can do it at any stage of your life. A lot of people think that you have to start learning when you're young.

Molly: Yeah. And if you don't, then you're never going to reach ...

Jose: Yeah – you're never going to speak as well as you wish. I don't think that's true. I think learning a language is practice, like, you have to commit to it. You can't just go to class, listen to the teacher, do the stuff that they ask you and that's it. Like, maybe you'll do it, but it will take much longer. Like, practising a lot, trying to place things into context, like, 'Oh, this thing that I learned, I could apply it here, in real life.'

Molly: Yeah, totally.

Jose: Yes. And again, exposing yourself to music, movies, series, books, I think, makes a big change, it makes a very big difference. And it helps us to sound more ... erm ... genuine, which maybe when you're in class, you're thinking about all these, like, grammar rules and this specific vocabulary and you're, like, twisting yourself in all of this and you forget, like, the real reason is to communicate.

Molly: Yeah, totally.

Jose: Yeah. You can use and shape the language in whatever way you want. Practice and exposure are two good ways of learning a language.

Molly: Yeah, I agree. Like, from my experience the other way round, learning Spanish, that's totally what's helped me the most. You've got to commit, as well, like you said. 'Cause learning a language is a long process but it's definitely worth it, from my experience, from your experience, I think we would both say that, like, it's a hundred per cent worth it to learn a language.

Jose: It helps you be more open-minded, be more mindful of the people around you, it helps you explore the world in a different way ...

Molly: Yeah. Cool. Well, that was all the questions that I had, so thank you for being in this video.

Jose: Thank you for having me.

Molly: Hopefully the discussion of Jose's perspective has been helpful to some of you guys that are also learning English. I hope you enjoyed the video and I will see you in the next one.

Molly and Jose: Bye!