

FFCC Podcast Transcript: Special Q&A Episode

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6. Write down any questions you have about the new words or expressions so that you can ask about them during FFCC.
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Faster Fluency Conversation Club Podcast: Special Q&A Episode

Welcome to the Faster Fluency Conversation Club podcast by Business English with Christina. Joining the club is a great way for you to improve your fluency and confidence in English, meet people from all over the world and have fun while talking about real-world topics. We hold one-hour conversations on Zoom six times a week, Monday to Friday, and our podcast listeners receive a 50% discount on the first month of membership with the discount code FFCC50. Are you looking to improve your English speaking ability? Come and join us today.

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Christina:

Faster Fluency Conversation Club: Special question and answer episode.

Hey everyone. A quick special announcement before we get into today's topic. If you wanna send us an email with any English-related questions, ideas for topics, or any feedback, we now have a dedicated email address for podcast listeners. Send us an email at podcast@christinarebuffet.com with your questions, comments, and suggestions. We'd love to hear from you. And we might even read and answer your question on a future podcast. Now on with the show.

Christina:

Hey, everybody, Christina here with the faster fluency conversation club podcast. I hope that you are having a fantastic week today. I'm here with Matthew and Matthew. How are you doing today?

Matthew:

Uh, doing great. Doing great. Thank you. How about yourself?

Christina:

Yeah, doing well. Um, I just got in from my, um, workout just before we started recording this. So, um, I was making, making a joke with Matthew for, because we were talking about this earlier. Um, good thing this is only audio because I am hot and sweaty and look like I have just spent an hour, you know, doing exercise. So, um, but feeling good, feeling good. Uh, right. So today we have a special Q&A. That's question and answer. Um, and Matthew, I believe this was your idea actually. So do you wanna tell us a little bit about today's episode?

Matthew:

Well, sure. So, um, of course we, as, uh, English coaches or English teachers, we get a lot of questions, uh, from, uh, people who are learning English with us, naturally. And, um, you know, also with the podcast, we know there are a lot of listeners out there that I'm sure have a lot of questions. And so we wanted to also **tie in** the listeners to the podcast and we thought, um, a great way to do that would be to set up a dedicated

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email address. Mm-hmm <affirmative> um, for the listeners you out there, if you have any questions to, uh, submit them. So, um, Christina, what is the email address that they can reach us at?

Christina:

So our email address is podcast@christinarebuffet.com. That's podcast, um, singular no 's'. podcast@christinarebuffet.com. Um, but we'll also put it in the notes of course, so that you guys can literally just maybe like copy and paste or click it and send us an email with your questions. Uh, so that, you know, we make this it's our podcast, but it's your podcast also. And yeah, and we always enjoy answering your questions cuz we're like, wow, somebody really wants to know this thing. Uh, and generally if you have that question, there are other people who have that question.

Matthew:

That's right, exactly. So, um, I always tell people, you know, one of the best ways to learn something new is to ask questions.

Christina:

Exactly. A lot of questions and there are no stupid questions.

Matthew:

That's right. That's right. I love when people ask questions and actually a lot of times students will tell me, well, this is just a small question. And there's like, you know, one minute left in the lesson I'm like, no, no, no, no, this is not a small question.

Christina:

This is not. Yeah. Right. Exactly. Like, no, let's, let's talk about this next lesson because it's uh, yeah, exactly. And it's, I mean, you can really go, um, sometimes it does, they might think it's a small question, but actually it can be a very, um, broad question or a very complex question. Um, and yeah. And it's always fun to explore those. Um, so yeah, so we thought that in today's episode, um, we, of course, since this is the first Q and A session, we, we haven't received any questions from, from you guys. So send them over, send them over. But, uh, we, we sat down and we thought about what are some questions that we often hear, um, from students just over and over. And, uh, we

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put the first question, just what's the best way to learn English. Uh, Matthew, what's your take on this question?

Matthew:

Well, I would say that there's no best way to learn English.

Christina:

Yea, exactly.

Matthew:

Uh, everybody's different. Um, we're all at different stages of, you know, our English learning, uh, path, I would say. Yeah. Um, and, and really, it, it, it really does depend on what do you need your English for. Um, what do you know? Like what's your baseline level. Yeah. Um, and so, you know, it's really, um, a great idea, like, you know, obviously we're both English coaches, so maybe we're a little bit biased, but you know, I think both of us also, um, have coaches for other aspects of our life. Yeah. And you know, if you don't know, I, I think it's a good idea to sit down with a, a coach and, and really help you because it's really a personal journey. Um, and, um, yeah, I mean, I think, I think that's really important. Um, you know, otherwise, you know, one thing I would say is really kind of prioritize like your English learning and that's something that's hard, if it's your second language, you're like, well, what is important to learn?

Christina:

Right. It's, it's, I, I need to learn everything, you know, I need more vocabulary and, uh, but it's like, okay, let's, you have to break that down so that it becomes manageable and that you can actually work on specific things so that you can make progress and feel that you're making progress. And then that helps to, um, keep you going.

Matthew:

That's right. And yeah, the making progress and feeling, like you're making progress because I, I work with a lot of people and they're like, oh, I don't know if I'm really improving. And you know, that's really sad for me to be here because well, one, I, I can see their improvement, so they are, but they don't know that they're improving a lot of times. And so one way to do that is really keep track of your progress. So, you know,

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keep track of, you know, any new words or expressions you learn, you know, people in FFCC, we have the pizza tracker, it's a good way to keep track of your progress.

Christina:

A good way. Yeah.

Matthew:

But, you know, even just like, okay, I studied 30 minutes on Monday, one hour on Tuesday. 15 minutes on Wednesday...

Christina:

Maybe note it down somewhere so that at the end of the week, you can actually like, look at it and see, uh, and be like, wow. Okay. I I'm surprised that I did so much. Uh, I think it can really help. Yeah.

Matthew:

Right. And even if it's just writing down, you know, a few words or a few sentences or a few grammar points, and then spending the time to review like a lot of adult learners, especially. Right. Well, just keep trying to accumulate more and more and more what happens is you're kind of like a hamster in the wheel going around in circles, learning new, forgetting them, learning, forgetting, learning, forgetting instead of really like reinforcing things.

Christina:

Exactly Yeah. That's yeah. It's like, you know, I think, yeah. I think even though it was, you know, there's no best way, but maybe some key guidelines, you know, no matter whether you're doing like individual lessons, conversation sessions, self-study whatever, like whatever your method is, let's say, or your approach, um, you know, yeah. Make a note, like keep, maybe keep like a journal of what you're doing. And like you said, it just maybe write down Monday 30 minutes, Tuesday, 30 minutes, Wednesday, 20 minutes, et cetera. Um, and then also, yeah. Be sure to go back and review from time to time, because, you know, when you're learning new language, it takes repetition to remember things. Um, and if you're always trying to just push forward and learn new things, like you're just never gonna learn them. And then you're gonna feel like you're not making

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progress. And then that's going to just, you know, really decrease your, your motivation and your discipline to keep going. So, yeah.

Matthew:

Right. Yeah, exactly. And what you just said before earlier was depending on your method, um, you should have a plan. Right. So it's really step one is make a plan. Right? What do you wanna improve? What do you wanna get better at? And then work backwards from that. Okay. Maybe it's like, oh, I wanna, you know, uh, increase my vocabulary. Okay. Well, what kind of vocabulary? What, what situations?

Christina:

Exactly.

Matthew:

Right. And, and **work backwards** and, and create a plan. Yeah. And schedule, um, for you and test it and see if it's working, you know, you can reevaluate later if it's not working well, maybe you need to readjust your plan.

Christina:

Exactly. And I, I would say, yeah, don't, don't hesitate. Like, I don't know. I feel like with me, for, um, another topic completely, but like time management and managing my schedule, like, I feel I've readjusted my plan probably like a billion times. <laugh> um, but it's always like this process of, okay, this works, this didn't work. Let me try this, let me **tweak** that. Um, so it's a process as well. It's not like I do it once and then I'm set for life. Um, and it's the same with learning. It's always this process of trying it, tweaking it, you know, finding what works, finding what doesn't work. Um, and that's part of the process as well.

Matthew:

That's right. Yeah. So if you find yourself, like, I don't feel like I've improved, well, maybe change something in your process.

Christina:

Your process. Exactly. And that's where I think what, like you said, um, calling in a coach can help you really to identify that. And even if you're not doing like, you know,

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one lesson every week, but just having someone you, maybe you can meet with once every two weeks or once every four weeks. Um, but to help you stay on track and identify the goals and what you need to work on, and then you just have to go and do it.

Matthew:

Well, that's right. A lot of it is motivation and that's yeah another part where a coach can come in and help you. Yeah.

Christina:

Yeah. All right. Let's see. Our next question that we often hear, um, is again like a very general one, but it's what we hear almost all the time. How do I become more fluent and more confident in English? Um, I think every, almost every time when we ask someone, what is your objective in English? They say, I wanna be more fluent and I wanna be more confident, um, and have more vocabulary. So if that is a general goal, um, Matthew, what advice could you share for reaching those goals?

Matthew:

Yeah, this is always a good question. Um, because I always use like, um, like sports **analogies** or like if you're learning a musical instrument, um, you need those repetitions for your body, your brain, your mouth to have like a **muscle memory**. Yeah. You know, I can read about playing basketball all I want. Right. Right. And so a lot of students are, are quite good at reading right.

Christina:

Uh,

Matthew:

English, but it's far different than moving your mouth and making a sound. If you're just reading books about how about English and reading, grammar rules and reading vocabulary, that's one thing. But you know, getting out on the basketball court and shooting the ball, passing the ball. Dribbling the ball, you know, that's like speaking English, you need to move your mouth. Right. Um, and, and speak more.

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Christina:

Yeah. Exactly. And it's, it's, it's interesting. Um, because a lot of times when I talk to people, uh, they'll say like, oh, I'm, I'm pretty good at understanding. Um, but my difficulty is speaking. Uh, and I'll ask them, and you know, first of all, that's, that's quite normal in a language. Um, but then I also ask them, I'm like, oh, what do you, you know, do you watch like a lot of movies or, or Netflix or TV series, or maybe listen to podcasts in English. And very often they do. Um, and they're like, yeah, like I watch, I watch Netflix and English all the time, but I can't, I can't speak as well. And I'm like, because it's, that's totally different things. Um, and like you said, it'd be like, if I came to you and I said, Matthew, like, I've been reading all these books about basketball, but I don't know. I can't make that shot.

And you're like, well, yeah, cuz you have to practice making that shot. Um, and, and it's, it's exactly the same in English. It's to become more fluent and more confident you have to do it like speak regularly, uh, as much as possible. And really, um, you know, one of the things that we really advocate is like living in the language every day. So it, and it's a mix of speaking practice, lessons, uh, watching Netflix, uh, you know, if you're working in English, uh, you're using that's English practice as well. Um, you know, FFCC the, the Faster Fluency Conversation Club is a great place to get a lot of that speaking practice. Um, and living the language, cuz they can stay in contact in between the sessions, um, with our new app. Um, but yeah, it's like if you wanna become fluent and confident, you just have to like get out there and do it. And that's not, I mean, it's, it's simple to say. Um, but it's not always easy to actually do. And you know, in FFCC we try to make it easier. Um, because it is simple, but it's putting it in place and doing it that's often, I think the, the blocking point for a lot of people.

Matthew:

Yeah. And just to kind of **plug** FFCC. So if you're on the border out there and this sounds like you, you know, the, the FFCC it's it's people, one of the things people say to me a lot is there, like over here, it's like a, it's like a safe zone. People.. everybody's learning English and they don't feel afraid to make mistakes. Right. Because they're, everybody's **in the same boat**, everybody's in the same situation. So it's really a safe place to practice and practice speaking more. Yeah. And not worrying about making that mistake in an important meeting or something like that.

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Christina:

Right. Yeah. Build up the confidence before, um, the, the event or the day where, you know, you want to minimize your mistakes that you're making.

Matthew:

Right. And one other thing I'll add to that is like speaking is free, if you've got, you know, lips, a tongue and you can breathe, um, you can talk to your plant, your dog, your phone, the wall <laugh>, you know,

You can, you can, you can speak for free. Um, so, you know, use your voice more.

Christina:

Exactly. Just like talk as much as you can with real people is always better, but to your cat or your plants is better than nothing. Um, alright. And let's see our third question, third and final question for today's special Q and A episode. Um, another very popular one, How do I stop translating in my head? Um, very often people say, you know, oh, I think in, in my native language and then I try to put it in English and it's very slow. And then I hear myself speaking and I'm like, this is not right. And yeah. What advice could we give to people to help them translate less in their head or stop translating in their head?

Matthew:

Yeah. I mean, I think that's the goal is to stop translating in your head because, you know, English is one language and, uh, your native language is a completely different language. Things don't always translate. So, you know, something I like to do is, you know, instead of, um, teaching students, like one word at a time is to teach them, you know, chunks or set phrases or set expressions. What verb goes with this noun usually. Yeah.

Uh, and it's like, you know, again, use an analogy of like, let's say you're doing a puzzle and it's a thousand pieces. Well, what's easier one piece at a time. Or what if somebody gave you like five pieces of the puzzle at a time you're gonna have a much easier time completing that puzzle.

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Christina:

Exactly. And it's, it's also like, you know, because there's a lot of things in English, like prepositions, um, that often people are hesitant or like with phrasal verbs. Uh, and if you're trying to learn those as individual words, like, I'm just like, why would you do that? Like just like stop torturing yourself. Um, but just, yeah. Learn the expression and learn, you know, often we have, um, there are like fixed expressions, like, I don't know, raining cats and dogs, which actually nobody ever says <laugh>, but it's raining today. So that's the one that came into my head, um, fixed expressions. But then there are also just words that we very often use together that are not necessarily fixed expressions, but you might say like grab a coffee, um, instead of trying to think in your language, like, so should I say, like get a coffee or take a coffee or have a coffee, or just learn those expressions and that's gonna help you to have to think less about what you want to say.

And like now I like how you said that, um, you know, your language is one language and English is another language. Um, you know, maybe not always look for the perfect equivalent, um, to, you know, what, how you would express it in your native language.

Maybe it's not that perfect equivalent in English, um, or the, the grammar structure is a little different or maybe we would use different words, et cetera. Um, but just try, maybe, you know, of course, if you've got the right words, that's best, but if you don't just use the thing that comes into your head first, um, and it's, it's again, it's this process of doing what you can with what you have, uh, and then improving it little by little. And there there's an example of a, an expression little by little, um, as you practice more and more in fact.

Matthew:

Yeah, that's right. Exactly. And, you know, I would say that, um, a good skill to use is describing things. You know, we can, we can describe things without saying the actual word. So like, you know, maybe you're forgetting a word, you can't think of it off the top of your head. Um, but try describing it. It's like, oh, oh my God, it's raining out today. Where's my, um, where's that thing that keeps me dry, you know, it's got the, the hook on the end of it. Yeah. You know, where's that thing. Yeah. You might say, oh, do you mean your umbrella? It's the corner. Yeah. Oh, okay.

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Christina:

Exactly. And then the, like the other person, like, you know, conversations, um, like it's a two-way street. It's not a monologue. Like the other person is sitting there and waiting for you to find the perfect word if you're struggling. Um, they'll most likely, I, like, I would say any kind of person who has any kind of decent social skills at least, um, is gonna help you. They're gonna be like, uh, do you mean your raincoat? No, no, no. The thing that you hold in your hand, oh, your umbrella. Um, and it's like in a conversation, it's, it's a partnership and it's about finding meaning and communicating together, not waiting for the other person to do all the work so that then you can take your turn and do the work. Um, so I would say, yeah, don't, if you're struggling, describe it. And most likely the other person is gonna help you to find the right word. And then you'll say, oh yeah, I know that word. I just forgot it.

Matthew:

Right. Exactly. And people, we, we do this in our native language and I think that's something that when you're learning a foreign language is to keep in mind, is that we don't always understand each other when we're speaking our native language. Exactly. We forget words, you know, I, I think I saw one of your videos. It's like, oh yeah, where's that whatchamacallit? What's that thing. Yeah, exactly. Like, you know, this happens in our native language. I think a lot of people put so much pressure on themselves to be perfect when speaking second language or foreign language that they don't put on themselves in their native language.

Christina:

Exactly.

Matthew:

They don't realize it. Right. So it's just like, you know, understanding that, uh, you know, we don't always have the perfect word and sometimes there's not a perfect word. Yeah. And English in particular, there's no like perfect way of saying things. I think English is a language that has a lot of freedom.

Christina:

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Yeah. Um, and, and people are very, um, I would say like, if you, in almost, if you invent words, um, people might be like, what do you mean by that? And they, and you explain, they're like, oh, okay. That's a cool word. Um, like I just remember, totally know. Yeah. Uhhuh

Matthew:

Or they totally know what you mean. It's like, oh yeah. Oh, that's such a zoomy thing to do exactly. Right. Like, they're like a, zoomy like Zoom.

Christina:

Yeah, exactly. It's like, it's very, um, creative, I think. And it's, you know, I think some language it's, it's some languages, there are more rigid rules like that doesn't exist and you can't invent it. Um, but I feel like because English has so many influences from so many foreign languages, we're just like, Hey, whatever, if that gets your point across, let's use it. You know? Um, yeah. And then one, one final point maybe about translating, um, that I think a lot of students have, um, difficulties with, or, or, or hesitations, or they just, um, maybe not to put the fault on the students, but may or maybe making it more complicated than it needs to be. Um, it's the verb tenses, um, you know, English has, I think it's 12 verb tenses, but, uh, you, you were saying something before we started recording about the simple tenses, um, being used like most of the time.

Matthew:

Yeah. Especially in conversation. So the simple tenses, so simple past, present, future present continuous, um, these are used like 86% of the time in conversation. And then the next two, like, uh, present perfect and present perfect continuous. Now you're up to 95 or 96%. Right. And those six verb tenses. Yeah. And so it's really like the 80/20 rule, like put your focus on those because those are the ones that people use. Um, and then also just as a default, if you don't know, just go simple because it's, people are probably going to understand you. Maybe it's not the correct verb tense, but

Christina:

Right.

Matthew:

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You know, the thing is for a lot of purposes, it's just like, do you understand me, right. Yeah. Versus if we sit here in silence for the next five seconds while I think of the correct version, right.

Christina:

Well, if you're like, I will have been doing it and you're, I'm just like, what? No. Yeah.

Matthew:

Or just that awkward silence it's like makes the conversation very awkward. Whereas if you just say, I study English five years, how about you? Well, yeah. You probably understand me and you can respond to me. Right. Exactly. Even if that's not the correct verb tense.

Christina:

First. Right. And it's like, even if I, like, if I don't, I'll let, like, I'll ask a question, I'll be like, um, like you studied English for five years in the past, or you, you have been studying English for five years. Like you started five years ago. And again, it goes back to, um, conversation is about finding meaning and communication together. Not about getting it right all the time.

Matthew:

Right, right. Right. Another person, if they don't understand you, they will say, I'm sorry, what do you mean? Right. Yeah. Or could you say that again? Or do you mean you've been studying for five years? Yeah. And again, that's something we do in our native language is if we don't understand somebody we're like, oh, do you mean this? Yeah. Oh yeah, yeah. Yeah. That's what I meant. Sorry. That was just a mistake.

Christina:

Exactly. Right. Okay. No, very good. So, um, okay. So we, yeah, we had only prepared three questions, but I think three questions gave us quite a nice, um, podcast actually, uh, because we could get into it. Um, so yeah, I think it's a, a good time to wrap this one up. Um, so like we said, uh, at the beginning, if you have a question about English that you would like us to answer, send it to us by email at podcast@christinarebuffet.com. Um, we'll put the email address down in the notes so that, uh, we can answer your questions on a future, um, podcast episode. Alright. Thank you, Matthew.

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Matthew:

Yeah. Thank you. Have a good day.

Christina:

Yeah, you too.

Thank you for listening this week. We are always trying new ways to improve our podcast. And we have just set up an email for our listeners to interact with us more. If you have any English-related questions, topic ideas, or any feedback we'd love to hear from you, please send your emails to podcast@christinarebuffet.com. And you can find the email address in the show notes.

We also offer the transcript of this episode for free, so you can read after or while listening. And when you become a member of the Faster Fluency Conversation Club, you also get exercises on grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation each week. So you'll be more directly connected to the topic of conversation each week. And you'll be able to practice confidently if you'd like to join the club. The link for more details is in the show notes for this podcast. And we hope to see you in the Faster Fluency Conversation Club.

Click [here](#) and join the club! We're looking forward to speaking with you soon!

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