

# Speak English Now Podcast

## Episode #374

### Understand 90%. Speak More.

Hi! I'm Georgiana, and I'm back with a new episode of the Speak English Now podcast—the podcast that helps you speak English fluently, with no grammar and no textbooks.

### **Listening is powerful... but it must be comprehensible**

You already know that I insist on one thing again and again: **you need to listen a lot.**

You need to listen every day, and you need to repeat the same lessons many times, because repetition helps you consolidate:

- vocabulary
- grammar patterns
- pronunciation

...in a natural way.

#### [Day-3 — SpeakEnglishPodcast.com](http://SpeakEnglishPodcast.com)

But today I want to make something very clear, because some students misunderstand this idea:

 **Listening is powerful only when the content is comprehensible.**

In other words, you should understand most of what you're listening to.

If you don't, you're not really training your brain. You're mostly training your frustration.

☆ **Rule for today**

**You should understand at least 90% of what you listen to.**

If you understand about 90%, your brain can relax and follow the message, and you can notice new words and expressions naturally.

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If you understand much less than that, you will feel lost, and your progress will slow down a lot.

### **Why 90% is the “magic zone”**

Let me explain it with a simple example.

#### **Good input (the ideal level)**

Imagine you listen to a podcast episode and you understand almost everything.

You might miss a few words here and there, but you still understand:

- the story
- the main idea
- the intention of the speaker

That’s the perfect level, because your brain is getting clear input and learning something new at the same time.

#### **Bad input (too difficult)**

Now imagine something different.

You listen to a podcast and you only understand a few words.

You don’t understand the sentences, you can’t follow the story, and you start guessing all the time.

This is not good practice, because your brain doesn’t learn well from confusion.

 Your brain loves clarity and context, and it learns much faster when the message is understandable.

### **The big mistake many students make**

Many students think this:

“If I listen to fast native podcasts, songs, or TV shows, I will improve faster.”

That sounds logical, but it usually doesn’t work.

If you don’t understand what you hear, you don’t get stronger.

You simply get tired.

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It's like going to the gym for the first time and trying to lift **400 pounds**.

What happens?

- You don't get stronger.
- You get injured, or you quit.

Learning English is the same.

If you choose material that is too difficult, you'll feel stressed and discouraged, and sooner or later you will stop.

That's why having realistic expectations and choosing the right level is so important.

So if you can't understand content like songs, TV shows, or fast YouTube videos, that does **not** mean you are "bad at English."

It simply means you need more time with easier content — and more repetitions.

## **What you should do instead (the correct strategy)**

Here is the best approach:

- ✓ **Choose easy content that you can understand.**
- ✓ **Listen again and again, because repetition creates deep learning.**
- ✓ **Repeat out loud when you can, even if it feels simple.**
- ✓ **Stay with the same lesson for several days, so your brain can really absorb it.**

In fact, listening to the same lesson many times over one week is one of the most powerful habits you can build, because it helps you:

- consolidate what you already learned
- activate it when you speak

## **A simple test to choose the right level**

After listening to a lesson, ask yourself:

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- Can I explain the main idea in simple words?
- Can I retell part of the story, even if it's short?
- Can I answer easy questions about what happened?

✓ If the answer is **yes**, the level is perfect.

✗ If the answer is **no**, the material is too difficult right now, and you should choose something easier.

✂ **Final reminder**

There is no shame in easy content.

Easy content is how you build fluency step by step.

Let's practice speaking with a mini-story:



## Mini-Story

(Improve your Speaking)

I'll tell you a short story, then I'll ask you questions. After each question, you'll answer out loud. Then I'll confirm the correct answer. This helps you think in English and improve your speaking.

If you want to practice more, get my Premium Courses:

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Let's start!

*Danny wanted to improve his English fast, so he chose a super advanced podcast about quantum physics*

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*hosted by a very serious professor... and a parrot wearing tiny headphones.*

**Did Danny choose an easy podcast about coffee and daily life?**

No, Danny didn't choose an easy podcast about coffee and daily life. He chose a super advanced podcast about quantum physics.

**Who hosted the podcast?**

A professor and a parrot hosted the podcast. It wasn't only a professor; it was a professor and a parrot.

**Why did Danny choose something so difficult?**

Because he wanted fast progress. Danny chose difficult content because he believed difficult content would help him improve quickly.

*The professor spoke very fast, and the parrot interrupted every ten seconds like a dramatic co-host.*

**Did the professor speak slowly and clearly?**

No, the professor didn't speak slowly and clearly. He spoke very fast.

**Who interrupted the professor again and again?**

The parrot interrupted the professor. The parrot didn't stay quiet; it interrupted again and again.

**How often did the parrot interrupt—every ten minutes or every ten seconds?**

Every ten seconds. The parrot interrupted every ten seconds like it was allergic to silence.

*After two minutes, Danny understood only a few words: "quantum," "energy," and "banana." The parrot screamed "BANANA!" like it was the most important word in the universe.*

**Did Danny understand about ninety percent of the episode?**

No, Danny didn't understand about ninety percent of the episode. He understood only a few words, so the episode was too difficult.

**What words did Danny understand?**

He understood "quantum," "energy," and "banana." He didn't understand full sentences; he only understood a few words.

**How did Danny feel—calm or confused?**

Confused. Danny didn't feel calm; he felt confused and tired because he couldn't follow the meaning.

*But Danny continued listening because he thought, "If I don't understand, my brain is learning secretly... like a ninja." He even sat very still and didn't blink.*

**Did Danny stop listening immediately?**

No, Danny didn't stop listening immediately. He continued listening even though the podcast was too hard.

**Why did Danny continue listening?**

Because he hoped it would work. Danny continued because he believed his brain was learning secretly.

**Was that idea realistic?**

No, it wasn't realistic. It was more like magic, because understanding is necessary.

*After one week, Danny could repeat one sentence perfectly: "Quantum banana energy is complicated." He said it to his cat, and the cat walked away like, "This is not my problem."*

**Could Danny explain the whole podcast after one week?**

No, Danny couldn't explain the whole podcast after one week. He could only repeat one strange sentence.

**What sentence could Danny repeat perfectly?**

"Quantum banana energy is complicated." That was the only sentence he could repeat.

**Was the cat impressed?**

No, the cat wasn't impressed. The cat wasn't interested, so it walked away.

*Then Danny met his friend Leo, and Leo said, "Danny, your English isn't the problem. Your podcast is the problem."*

**Did Leo say Danny was bad at English?**

No, Leo didn't say Danny was bad at English. Leo said the content was too hard.

**What was the real problem—Danny's brain or the material?**

The material. The problem wasn't Danny's brain; the problem was the level of the material.

**How did Danny feel—relieved or offended?**

Relieved. Danny felt relieved because there was a simple solution.

*Leo gave Danny a simple rule: “If you don’t understand about ninety percent, you are not training English. You are training confusion.”*

**What rule did Leo give Danny?**

The ninety percent rule. Leo told Danny to understand about ninety percent.

**Is confusion a good daily strategy?**

No, confusion is not a good daily strategy. Confusion makes you tired and slows progress.

**Should Danny aim for about ninety percent understanding?**

Yes, Danny should aim for about ninety percent understanding because that level is comfortable and effective.

*So Danny chose a simpler episode about daily routines, and suddenly he understood almost everything.*

**Did Danny choose another quantum physics podcast?**

No, Danny didn’t choose another quantum physics podcast. He chose a simpler episode about daily routines.

**Did Danny understand almost everything this time?**

Yes, Danny understood almost everything this time. The meaning was clear, so he could follow the story.

**How did Danny feel now—stressed or calm?**

Calm. Danny felt calm because he could follow the story.

*Danny listened to the same easy episode again and again. He answered questions out loud. Even his cat listened... but only because the cat heard the word “snacks.”*

**Did Danny listen only one time?**

No, Danny didn’t listen only one time. He listened many times because repetition helps.

**What did Danny do out loud?**

He answered questions out loud. Danny didn't stay silent; he practiced speaking.

**Why did the cat listen?**

Because it wanted snacks. The cat listened only because it wanted snacks, not because it loved English.

*One month later, Danny tried a harder podcast again, and this time he understood much more, because he had built a strong base. And the best part? No parrots. No bananas. Just English.*

**When did Danny try a harder podcast again?**

One month later. Danny tried a harder podcast again after one month.

**Did Danny understand more than before?**

Yes, Danny understood much more than before. Before he understood only a few words, but now he understood much more.

**Why did Danny understand more this time?**

Because he built a strong base first. Danny didn't improve by suffering; he improved step by step.

**What is the lesson?**

Choose content you understand about ninety percent, and repeat it many times. That's how you make real progress.

*All right. That's the end of the story. Listen to this mini-story many times to improve your speaking! See you in the next lesson!*

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**Premium Courses:**

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