

Feel Good English

An Interview with Lindsay Dow - Living through Languages



For Lindsay Does Languages

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Hello there! Kevin here, with another episode of the Feel Good English podcast. The podcast that is helping you become more fluent in English, in life, in business, and in just about anything you want to become better at.

Today I have an interview with Lindsay from www.lindsaydoeslanguages.com, and you could consider Lindsay a very skilled language learner. She's going to share some tips with you on what she thinks is very important if you want to become a fluent speaker in a foreign language. And she's also going to talk about a book she found in a local library. A very strange book, on a very strange language. She'll share more about that in today's episode.

If you want transcripts to this episode, you can get them at www.feelgoodenglish.com/member become a member and get transcripts to all transcripts from the past and the future. Go to feelgoodenglish.com/member after the episode and also keep listening to the very end of the episode where I will talk about the vocabulary Lindsay and I used during this episode

that you might not know. Some phrasal verbs, some expressions, some British idioms that I don't use, but Lindsay does. So, listen till the very end and I will have a quick vocabulary lesson for you and now let's get into the episode with Lindsay from www.lindsaydoeslanguages.com.

Kevin: Hey Lindsay, how are you doing?

Lindsay: Hello! I'm very well thank you!

Kevin: So first off, where are you?

Lindsay: I'm in Milton Keynes, in little old England; it's interesting to talk to Americans about this place. Because it's actually I think one of the most American places in the UK.

Kevin: Ha!

Lindsay: It's quite strange; it was that built in the 1970s as a commuter town for London. So, whereas most places in England are just full of old 12th century church in history there is not much of that here. But the center of the town is built on a grid system, because in the 70s when they decided, hmm! What makes an efficient town? They looked to America, and there you go.

Kevin: Interesting! A grid system, can you explain that a little bit to our audience? What a grid system is?

Lindsay: So, a grid system is when you have lots of roads running parallel to each other in two directions, kind of vertical and horizontal. In fact, the streets are named like V-8 or H-4 for vertical eight or horizontal four. And then, when the roads

cross, you know traffic lights at a traffic lights cross roads; whereas most of the time in the UK, we tend to have roundabouts instead of cross roads with traffic lights generally. So, it's quite a unique place here for that reason.

Kevin: Can you give a little bit of your history on languages? You learn a lot of languages; you're definitely somebody spends a lot of time with languages. So, tell us a little bit about that.

Lindsay: Yeah absolutely! So, the first language that I ever learnt was French, and this was in primary school. Not quite kindergarden, junior school.

Kevin: Sure!

Lindsay: And it was basically an extra extracurricular club; I went there because they'll give you croissants at the end of term.

Kevin: Ha... ha...

Lindsay: And we had a little orange juice French breakfast party. And so, I kept going every term just for that reason and then it wasn't until I was 13 I wanted to do Spanish, because we'd had to do French all the way up through school. There were no other languages on offer then all of the sudden, this Spanish teacher came to the school, it was like, ah Spanish! Wow this is so new and exciting! And also because of Shakira, who had just released her Laundry Service; I was like, wow this is cool! And the Spanish songs I want to translate. So, I wanted to do Spanish, but to do Spanish, it was almost like a "right of passage" to prove that you could do languages, but you had to also do French.

So, I was like okay, why not, let's do both. And everything that's done is just kind of growing and spiral and I finished my degree in languages last year. That was kind of six-years part-time distance learning, so just a huge long, big part of my life; then suddenly disappeared 'poof'... into thin air! But, I was determined to keep learning languages since then. So, yes, it's been a lot of fun, and currently, I'm working on a little bit of Indonesian.

Kevin: Wow! And so, how do you choose the languages you're going to focus on?

Lindsay: Well, good question. Am, it varies; I mean, when I started my degree, it was, they had French and Spanish and I thought well, I've already done French and Spanish at this first level. I was like, let's mix things a bit; I'm just going to do some more. They had Italian, German, and Mandarin Chinese, but just come on offer. So I was like, ooh, okay; German is never really taken my fancy. Italian, that's going to be really easy! I speak French and Spanish no problem. I can do Italian, and Chinese yes of course by now, so I started with those two as the first kind of non-school languages. You know, this was like universities, it was like next level stuff, and then, they also had a German course. So, after I did the two Italian courses; I was like you know what? I should do the German because it's there. So it was basically just what was in front of me for quite a while with the languages that I chose. And then, it wasn't until maybe 2 – 3 years ago, that I was able to become a bit more open and flexible with my choices and pick things that actually I was drawn to rather than that were just there for me.

Kevin: Sure!

Lindsay: So, yeah! The first language that I chose genuinely out of my own chose was probably Dutch. And I studied that for a few months in 2014, I think. And then from there, it has just been ooh, this is exciting! And this is exciting! Just really enjoying and playing with language now that is not as formal.

Kevin: What would be your advice to people that have to learn English? Would be your advice to them to make the process more enjoyable and less stressful?

Lindsay: Yeah, I think that's really key is to make it enjoyable, because when you have to learn a language, like for a while this was French for me, this language that I had to do in school and even to the point at university, where I'd chosen to do it, you know there were times and it was like ahh... this is still *such a drag* because it's only here because I wanted to do Spanish even now it was you know; it was never... I never had quite the same connection, but so yeah, you do have to find something, anything that you love in that language. So, it could be that you love for example with French for me, Stromaya was a huge thing. Where I just love Stromaya and his music, and I went to see him live and you know, that was a real draw for like well, if I do this, then I can understand what's Stromaya saying in his songs.

So, whether it's a musician, whether it's a film you love, a place that you can go really easily and that you really love to go to, it could be a book of certain author, anything really. Just something that is like your little thing that you can just embrace. And once you found that, then it becomes a lot easier, because you have a connection.

Kevin: Yeah, that's awesome and you know and I think a lot of

times, yeah; and this is how we're raised and how our schooling happens as we're taught a language like myself, it was Spanish, a lot of people; it's English. And it's just thought as a school subject and a lot of school subjects are boring to us. It could be mathematics, science, whatever that may be. However, English is something you're going to have to carry with you forever. So, it's absolutely vital to connect it with something that's interesting to you and to connect with that hobby or interest through English. I think that's great advice; if you're listening out there, what does *spark your interest*? What makes you passionate? What are you passionate about? And just connect with that through English, and keep working on it. Any other tips some more, I would say the more technical aspects of learning a language? Do you have any advice for the listeners out there?

Lindsay: Oh good question. One thing I love is, using the things that you have in everyday life. So, a big thing right now would be social media. So you know, rather than sitting on Facebook for 5 and then 15, and then 50 minutes, just scrolling through cat videos you know, make that time useful. If we always say oh... we always spend so much time on Facebook, oh... it sucks out so much time from my day, rather than having it do that you know; and not being able to avoid it, actually, make useful, you know; find pages that you can follow, find groups you can join on Facebook, that you can then engage with in English. So that you are still spending time on Facebook, but you're making it useful for your language learning. So, really kind of adapting these things that are already part of our life and using it for language learning. I think social media is a huge one right now. There are so many ways you can use it for languages.

Kevin: Right! In English is, I've read something like 80% of the internet. So, it's definitely not hard to immerse yourself.

Lindsay: Yeah, especially with English yeah!

Kevin: Yeah, very cool! Your daily activities and what you do day today; anyway especially on social, media finding articles and videos, and what not just make sure that you're doing that in English correct?

Lindsay: Absolutely!

Kevin: What we do here on the feel good English podcast is, we teach lessons based on books that inspire and motivate, they also can teach you business skills that are inspired and motivate they also can teach you business skills and how to deal with relationships, and the reason behind that is, because we do need to connect with English. So, we might as well connect with English that helps you become more fluent not just English but in life as well. Lindsay, you have a very interesting book you're going to talk about; and it is connected with languages in itself. So, let's get into that. Lindsay talk about a book that has *sparked your interest* recently.

Lindsay: Okay, so this is a very unusual one and, the book is called "Dobuan Grammar" which may mean not very much right now. So, let me just explain. So, before I lived here, in Grid town, in Milton Keynes; I lived in a much smaller town about an hour North of here called Daventry. And this small town had a tiny library you know, with a very small language section. And I would always go into this library and I'd always go in and I'd look at the travel books, nothing would change. And I'd look at the language books and nothing would change,

but it was like a bit of a ritual. Oh yeah, this stuff is here, this is exciting. And then one day; about maybe two years ago now, I was in there as usual looking at the language books and I stumbled upon this *very strange, pink, faded, exercise book style book* and, but it's printed and it's printed like a typewriter; the font is very typewriter style. And it describes the grammar of a language spoken in Papua New Guinea. Of all places, this was in my tiny town library in the middle of England. So it's like, what is this book? Why is this here? So, I decided to rent this book out, and we have these, I don't know if you have these; we have these machines now where you put the book on the... there is kind of slab and the machine magically goes, [ding] this is the book. Somehow, even if you put more than one book on it detects it, this this is crazy, crazy technology!

Kevin: Right! hmm...

Lindsay: And it said, "uh, no! can't find this book," okay; so I went to the human, I went old style. I went to the human and I said, excuse me, I'd like to get this book out but you know, the machine isn't detecting the book. Oh, okay. "I'll just write it in," so, she's written in the date when I got the book out; then when it came to time to take it back, I went online to renew the book. To have it for three more weeks. No! the book wasn't on the system.

Kevin: Oh, wow!

Lindsay: Hmm, strange! So I rang up, "oh, that's fine! If it's not there, just finish when you're ready and bring it back when you're ready," and I still have it – two-years later.

Because I'm not finished yet. I'm going to go find these people, and you know, find the people that speak this

language and do my best to learn a little bit from this random book that I discovered in my small town library.

Kevin: So, is this the official language of Papua New Guinea and the grammar-based language, or is this a certain dialect? Do you know anything about that?

Lindsay: Yeah, so the interesting thing about Papua New Guinea is; okay, how many languages are spoken in Papua New Guinea? What do you think? Take a wild guess.

Kevin: Well, because it's a huge country, I would say one? Ha... ha...

Lindsay: Oh, over 800!

Kevin: Wow!

Lindsay: Yeah, maybe even over 850. It's the country with the most languages in the world.

Kevin: That's amazing, because I was joking, but Papua New Guinea is extremely small.

Lindsay: Yeah!

Kevin: I would actually...; what's the population of that island? Do you have any idea?

Lindsay: Oh, the population, I'm not sure. But the reason for so many languages is because it's not very well-connected or at least you know, hasn't been for a lot of it's past; so, you've got tribal languages that are spoken by potentially very small groups of people. You could go a little bit down the road; well, not the road, but you know what I mean? A little bit further away, and you've got a completely different language – you

know. And so on, and so on, but there is a language called 'Tok Pisin'; which was originally a 'Kreo', became a 'Pidgin', and now is one of the primary languages used in Papua New Guinea and also, I think it's called, 'Harimoto', which is another commonly spoken language there and English is quite widely spoken too.

Kevin: Oh, really?

Lindsay: Yeah! But, so Dobuan in terms of being a language of Papua New Guinea is kind of one of the smaller ones standing by; oh, in fact it says here at the front of the book, 7000 speakers, but the lingua franca for a hundred thousand people.

Kevin: Oh, well, very interesting. Yeah, that is very interesting; yeah that is very, very surprising to me. What an interesting place! Have you ever been to Papua New Guinea?

Lindsay: Not yet, but we're going; next year we're setting off on an overland trip across Europe, across Asia to like yeah, to find this language.

Kevin: Hmm, that will be extremely interesting! So, Lindsay, what fascinates you about languages?

Lindsay: I think *in a nutshell*, I could talk for a very long time about this, but in a nutshell, I think it's the connection. And whether that's the connection you feel when you go to a new country and you can understand what your bus ticket says or whether that's the connection between you and the bus driver when you get on the bus, because you can say thank you in their language – you know. It could be something really small, it could be something really big, but it's the connection with people. And the thing is, with languages, you're never done. You never finish learning a language.

Kevin: Very true!

Lindsay: And so, you can always have those moments of “ooh! ooh! I know what that means” Those little moments where you understand something that you didn’t think you would understand and that’s pretty special and they’re never going to end.

Kevin: Yeah, I totally agree and once people realize, especially with English, because the world connects in English these days and your world can be opened up so much if you do learn English, in what you can read and learn and who you could connect with and just opening your world up to a whole another level is kind of necessary these days for English speakers. It’s not just for getting a better job or passing a test, but yeah very, very fascinating. I know for me, studying languages in the formal context in school growing up, was never...; it never worked for me and didn’t inspire me, and then because I wasn’t excited about it, it didn’t work. Once I got out and started travelling and realized that I really wanted to connect with people around the world, and the way to do this was, to learn even just a few phrases from their language, the whole learning process really changed for me. So, very, very cool Lindsay; before I leave you today, you have an awesome website, a lot of good resources that help language learners, help English learners. Can you talk a little bit about what our listeners can find at your website: Lindsay does languages (www.lindsaydoeslanguages.com)?

Yeah, absolutely! So, there is plenty of blog posts, there’s videos over on YouTube, and there is some English specific stuff, from every now and then. And there are also some general language learning tips. So you know if you feel like

well, I know the grammar and I know the stuff, but I just don't know how, then there's plenty on Lindsay does languages to help you out with that.

Lindsay: Very Cool!

Kevin: So, www.lindsaydoeslanguages.com, correct?

Yeah, that's the one. And I also have; for English learners, a free phrasal verb e-mail course. So, if that is something that you are struggling with, and no doubt I've said, a fair few phrasal verbs I'm sure in this podcast today.

Kevin: Oh yeah, awesome.

Then yeah, you're more than welcome to sign up for that. It's absolutely free, just visit

www.lindsaydoeslanguages.com/phrasalverbs.

Awesome, so reach that next level of English, you guys out there with phrasal verbs. That is one of the hardest things to tackle in English, I would say. So, great Lindsay, thanks a lot for being here, thanks for sharing with us about your life and what you do, and about languages and any, any final words of wisdom for the Feel Good Listeners?

Keep going, keep going! Don't give up, even if it's a little bit each day, a little bit is better than nothing. Awesome, wonderful Lindsay, thanks a lot and we'll talk to you again.

Really, thank you! bye!

Thanks again Lindsay for joining us here at the Feel Good English podcast, I appreciate you giving us your time and your deep knowledge about language learning. Again, if you guys

want to learn more about her, go to:

www.lindsaydoeslanguages.com and also, find her phrasal verb course at www.lindsaydoeslanguages.com/phrasalverbs and attack those darn phrasal verbs. Until next time, as Lindsay says, "keep going, don't give up," keep pushing forward little by little; that's the key to success.

Perseverance!!

Going over some of the vocabulary from today's lesson, the first thing that I'm going to talk about: *Roundabouts*. Lindsay talks about in her hometown *roundabouts*; and here we're talking about roads, is when you have cars trying to get to different roads and they use a circle to do that. So you pull up to an intersection and you have a circle where you can enter into the circle and you can turn off onto a different road, this is called a *roundabout*. Find them in Europe and many countries in the US not so much, here we have very grid-based intersections.

She uses the expression it has *spiraled*; talking about starting slowly with languages and then how she started learning more through university, and then after just in the after just choosing different languages and it *spiraled* into different things. So, a '*Spiral*' is a continuous circle. So, if you can think of something going in a circle, over and over and over, continuing and moving and progressing, that's *spiraled*.

To *be drawn to something*, like you draw on a piece of paper with a pen like an art you draw, but '*to be drawn to something*', means you are attracted to that. Lindsay *is very drawn* to learning languages! I'm *very drawn* to reading books and sharing the lessons with you guys. So, *to be drawn to*

something, is to be attracted and to find interest in something.

Lindsay uses a great expression, *'to be a drag'*. *It's such a drag; drag, d-r-a-g*. If something is a drag, it means it's boring, it's not fun, it's uninteresting. Wow! This class is such a *drag*, I'm leaving.

'To spark your interest'; spark is a little flame, if you light a match or if you light a fire, you have *sparks* that come off of that or when metal is really hot and touches each other, those are *sparks*. But in this case, *to spark your interest*, means – to gain your interest. Something that lightens you up, and you say, "ha! I'm interested in that, that sparked my interest," that started my interest in something.

Another phrasal verb; *'to stumble upon'*, Lindsay uses *stumble upon*. "I *stumbled upon* this book," she *stumbled upon* this book means, she was not looking for it, but she found it anyway and it just happened to come into her life. So you can use this, if you're not looking for something and then you find something that's interesting, or maybe you're even wanting to find it, you didn't know where it was, you'd say, oh well, I *stumbled upon* this very, very interesting movie last night on TV, and I wasn't looking for it. I just *stumbled upon it*.

She talks about pink *faded* book; faded, f-a-d-e-d. when something is *faded*, it means it's losing its color. Because, it's old or it was in the sun, it's faded. It's not bright, it's not a solid color it's a *faded* color. So it's getting *faded*. It's losing its newness, its vibrance.

Lastly, great expression here, *'in a nutshell'*; so, we're talking about nuts, like a peanut, or a walnut/almond. In a *'nutshell'* you're trying to say something with the fewest possible words.

So, this person who gives very long stories, they always talking, talking, talking; the story takes 10-minutes, 15- minutes; you'd say, hey, dude! Could you just give me the story in a nutshell?

End.

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