

## Stop comparing your English to others

*What to track instead — and why it changes everything*

### THE CORE IDEA

Comparison measures distance from someone else.

Progress measures distance from your past self.

Track what you can say now that you could not six weeks ago. Track moments you stayed in English. Track one new phrase per week.

## 20 COMPARISON-TO-PROGRESS REFRAMES

Column A: the comparison thought. Column B: the progress question to ask instead.

#	Passive habit	Active version
1	'They speak so much better than me.'	<i>'What can I say now that I could not six weeks ago?'</i>
2	'I have been learning for years and I am still not fluent.'	<i>'Am I using English in more situations than I was a year ago?'</i>
3	'Native speakers make it look so easy.'	<i>'Is speaking getting less exhausting than it was before?'</i>
4	'That person learned faster than me.'	<i>'What is my actual practice time per week — and is it consistent?'</i>
5	'I still make so many mistakes.'	<i>'Are the mistakes I make now different from the ones I made before?'</i>
6	'Everyone in my class is better.'	<i>'Did I speak more English this week than last week?'</i>
7	'I sound so unnatural.'	<i>'Did I find a word in English instead of switching to my own language today?'</i>
8	'They learned in six months.'	<i>'What were they doing every day — and how does that compare to my habits?'</i>
9	'I freeze every time I speak.'	<i>'Do I freeze for shorter periods than I did before?'</i>
10	'My accent is so strong.'	<i>'Did I get my message across today — regardless of accent?'</i>
11	'I cannot have a real conversation yet.'	<i>'What topics can I talk about now that I could not before?'</i>
12	'They understand everything and I miss things.'	<i>'Do I understand more in a conversation than I did three months ago?'</i>
13	'My grammar is so bad compared to theirs.'	<i>'Did I use one structure correctly today that I struggled with before?'</i>

14	'I will never reach their level.'	<i>'What would reaching the next small level look like for me specifically?'</i>
15	'I am too old to learn this well.'	<i>'What progress have I actually made in the last six months?'</i>
16	'I was embarrassed by how I spoke.'	<i>'Did I speak at all — and is that more than I would have done before?'</i>
17	'I still cannot say what I mean.'	<i>'Am I getting closer to saying what I mean than I was before?'</i>
18	'My vocabulary is so limited.'	<i>'How many words did I use correctly in context this week?'</i>
19	'I should be better by now.'	<i>'Based on my actual practice time, what level of progress is realistic?'</i>
20	'I give up.'	<i>'What is one specific thing I can do differently this week?'</i>

## SELF-CHECK QUESTIONS

1. Why is comparing yourself to other learners useless as a feedback tool?
2. What is the difference between comparison and progress tracking?
3. Name three specific things you can track instead of comparing.
4. What does a 60-second recording tell you that a comparison cannot?
5. What is one progress question you will ask yourself today?

### TODAY'S SMALL ACTION

Record yourself for 60 seconds today. Save it. In six weeks, record the same topic. That recording is your real progress tracker.