

How to stop translating in your head before you speak

The habit that slows you down, and how to break it

WHAT THIS LESSON IS ABOUT

Not a grammar lesson. About the mental habit that creates a delay between thinking and speaking.

THE REAL PROBLEM

You think in your own language first. Then you translate. Then you speak. By the time you have finished translating, the conversation has moved on.

This is not a vocabulary problem. You probably know the words. The problem is the order you process them in.

You will not stop this by trying harder. You stop it by training a different reflex.

KEY IDEA

Fluent speakers do not translate. They retrieve. The goal is to build a direct link between thought and English, without the middle step.

THREE MOVES

1. Name things directly in English

When you look at an object, say its name in English immediately. Not in your language first. Direct. Every day.

Table. Window. Cup. This builds the reflex of going straight to English without a detour through your native language.

2. Think the first word, not the full sentence

When you want to speak, do not prepare the full sentence in your head first. Say the first word. The rest will follow.

'I think...' 'The problem is...' 'What I want to say is...' Starting is the hardest part. After the first word, it gets easier.

3. Accept the incomplete sentence

A sentence that starts and drifts is still practice. You do not have to finish perfectly. Say what you can. Stop when it feels wrong. Start again.

Native speakers do this all the time. The goal is output, not perfection.

PRACTICE

Read the situation. What would you say out loud right now, in English?

1. You look at something in the room.
Say its name in English immediately. No detour.
2. You want to say something but you are translating.
Say the first word of your sentence. Right now.
3. You start a sentence and lose the ending.
Keep going with different words. Do not stop.
4. You see a situation and want to describe it.
Say two words first. Then build the sentence around them.
5. You notice you translated before speaking.
Do it again. This time start with the English word first.

TODAY'S SMALL ACTION

Look at five objects near you right now. Say each one in English without thinking of your language first. That is the habit.

Want to go deeper? The members edition has 20 practice prompts per level (A2, B1, B2) and self-check questions.