



WE 001: Storytelling

Hi, my name is Sylvia, I'm passionate about languages, English in particular. Welcome to my world, world of English.

The language I love most of all is English, and this is what I do professionally. I'm an English teacher, I've been teaching for the last ten years more or less. It gives me a lot of satisfaction, a lot of pride. I love observing my students, I love looking at them and I love observing how they are developing and learning new structures, words and expressions.

Emm, I decided to record podcasts and share my knowledge with my students in this way because I love teaching, as I said at the very beginning, but I also love radio. And podcasting resembles radio a lot. It is a fantastic opportunity that we can record different sessions actually staying at home, not leaving anywhere.

Emm, of course, I'd like to tell you what my podcasts are going to be about because it is the first one. So the podcasts will be in English, and this is the decision I have made, to talk to you in English because I think it is a very natural environment for myself and also it will help you train your ear a little bit, and help you develop linguistically, help you learn new vocabulary and structures. Each podcast is going to be about a different thing, they are going to have different topics, different stories.

Underneath, I mean under the podcast that you are listening to you'll get a transcript, transcript of the whole text, and in this very text you've got all the interesting, new perhaps words in bold so that you can learn them because you will also get translation of them.

And today, the topic of my podcast is storytelling. I would like to explain why I chose this title. And this is because I would like to present to you a different method of teaching, or a different approach to teaching, different than the regular one or different than the standard one. It is actually called storytelling.



As I said, it is not very popular but it was put forward many years ago. And the idea is very simple. Some teachers, some linguists put forward an idea that actually when you start learning a language you should start with telling stories. It is a completely different approach because the approach that we know or the approach that most students are familiar with it is starting with introducing yourself, talking about your family and friends and presenting your daily routine.

I would like to tell you why this approach may actually help you, and there are a few reasons why telling stories is a good way to start learning a language with. First of all, it resembles this very natural way children learn their mother tongues. Of course when they start learning their language, they don't go to school, they don't learn grammar, but they just listen to stories, to different stories that their parents tell them, to different stories that they hear from their family members, brothers, sisters, from the radio, from TV. So storytelling is a very natural way, not so much actually to learn the language, but to acquire it. And here comes the difference between learning and acquiring a language. Learning means that you do it in a more artificial way, right. So you go to school, you take your books, you take notes, you take tests, so you learn something, and this is the method that most of us use, most of us apply so we learn a language. And an acquisition is something that happens more naturally, so you learn through natural contact, you just play with the sounds that you receive, and in this way you try to process them and acquire the new structures and vocabulary.

How does it actually help, right? How does this approach of learning a language through telling stories help? The first one would be that it teaches you or helps you to build the whole sequences of thoughts and ideas. You learn new vocabulary in context and this is super important. I am smiling here, I guess you can hear it, because this is one of the most difficult things that we as teachers encounter so how to teach proper expressions, how to teach proper phrases in context, right. Most students complain that the language that they get or the vocabulary that they learn, it is passive, right. So they know a lot of words, they remember them, they associate different expressions with different ideas but



actually when it comes to real speaking, when it comes to real communication, they cannot produce them because simply these structures are passive ones.

The expressions that you acquire through telling stories are simply easier to remember because you associate them with the story that you listen to, with the events that you listen about. As I mentioned before, there is, as a result of it all, there is less passive vocabulary, so the learner does not learn this vocabulary only for the test, but they can actually produce it later on.

The last thing I would like to mention here, of course it is last but not least it's the immersion. I know that most of you, I guess, know this expression, it has become very popular, and this is the approach of learning a language through diving into it, so to say, because this is what it means, to immerse, you immerse into the language, into the expressions, and you do not translate back and forth. You do not translate from one language into another, which is a key thing because this is what my experience tells me and this is what I observe very often that most learners keep on translating, even when they are advanced, right, even when they produce very nice structures, very nice expressions but they still cannot escape from their own mother tongues, from their native languages and they just keep on going right, translating from one language into another. And of course it is very tiring, and it will never, or it will make it very hard to produce this natural, standard of a foreign language and this is what all would like to get, simply.

I mentioned this before that approach is not very popular in schools, I mean traditional schools and of course I would not say that this is bad because the tradition is something that works well, right. People keep on learning the languages and they are pretty successful but this telling stories approach I guess it might help. I guess it's something worth thinking about; and in regular schools what we usually do is we start with the basic vocabulary, we start with talking about family and friends and with start with Present Simple. And we start with Present Simple to teach our students how to talk about their daily routines, right. So this is quite opposite, so we start with daily routines, not the stories, so not the past. As I said it is not bad, I mean the traditional approach is not bad, but let's just think about



it - how many options we've got there? How many options of a daily routine is there? Right, we all have this set of actions that we do every day or every morning and we cannot produce more than this standard **variety**. They are simply a sequence of the same actions that get repeated and at this level you cannot develop much, right, you cannot go any further because you just keep repeating the same expressions.

And with telling stories you can produce an **infinite** number of sentences, of sequences, of events, of experiences and that is why this starting point with a story might be very helpful because it helps to develop very much at the very beginning.

Of course, it is just a suggestion on my part, I would not like to revolutionise the education and the teaching system but I just would like to suggest or **draw your attention** perhaps to this other way and I guess it is **advisable** to try and see how it works in practice.

This is all, and I hope you enjoyed your time, please don't forget that you've got this transcript under my podcast so you'll get all the expressions written down with the most interesting vocabulary in bold that could help you learn it a bit. Thank you.



GLOSSARY

in particular - w szczególności, szczególnie

underneath - pod/ pod spodem (bez użycia dopełnienia)

in bold - pogrubionym/ tłustym drukiem

approach to - podejście/ stosunek do

(to) put forward an idea - przedstawić pomysł/ zaproponować

(be) familiar with - zaznajomiony/ zapoznany z

(to) acquire - pozyskiwać/ zdobywać/ uczyć się

(to) apply - aplikować/ stosować

acquisition - nabycie/ zakup/ nauka

(to) encounter - spotkać się z/ napotkać

(to) complain about - narzekać na

(to) associate with - utożsamiać/ kojarzyć z

immersion - zanurzenie/ zatopienie/ imersja

(to) immerse into - zatapiać/ zanurzać się w

back and forth - tam i z powrotem

(be) worth (doing sth) - warto/ wart robienia

variety - różnorodność

infinite - nieskończony

(to) draw sb's attention - przyciągać/ zwracać uwagę

advisable - pożyteczny/ pożądany/ wskazany