

How “Speaking to Yourself” is Useful for Learning English

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Imagine this: you're walking down a hallway, when you notice a strange man. He is talking in English, but there is no one else around him. What is he doing? In fact, that man... is me! But, don't worry; I am not crazy! I am just practicing English. And, to be honest, I usually practice at home.

I think most people may have a negative impression of people who talk to themselves. However, speaking to yourself is not simply a strange behavior, but rather a "breakthrough method" of learning English, among the other things. Let me explain:

My first example is "output speed". Maybe you've had the experience of writing English words over and over again in your notebooks. Did you have trouble with it, like he is having now? This way of learning English is actually very inefficient. It takes up a lot of time just writing the same words again and again with poor results. On the other hand, speaking to yourself can save you time memorizing those words. This is because output speed in speaking overwhelmingly surpasses that of writing.

In my case, I like to create a few sentences using my target words, and I say them to myself over and over, until I can say them fluently. Also, I sometimes talk to myself about what I'm doing... at home... or whatever catches my eye in my daily life (of course, when no one is around)! And, according to the research by the University of Arizona, by "associating what you want to memorize with yourself," you can learn more efficiently and retain the information in your memory for the long-term, instead of just short-term. This is called the Self-Relevance Effect.

My second example is the "acquisition of speaking opportunities". According to the research by the Foreign Service Institute, it takes more than 3,000 hours for non-native speakers to develop a high proficiency level in English. Therefore, even if you take a 30-minute English conversation lesson every day, it would take approximately "4 years" to acquire sufficient speaking skills.

Of course, there is also the option of study abroad, but there are still some issues for many learners, such as financial difficulties, or cultural differences. For these exact reasons, I have chosen to take online English conversation lessons after I enrolled at Nara KOSEN. However, as I just said, it would take years with those lessons alone. That's why, every time I finish a lesson, I speak to myself using the particular words that I couldn't think of during the lesson. Also, I utilize the voice recognition system of my

phone to confirm whether I am pronouncing the words correctly or not. And, as a result of these various "speaking" habits of mine, I have effectively improved my accent, my pronunciation, and my ability to construct English sentences quickly.

As a supplementary explanation, "speaking to yourself" can also help you in concentrating on targets in front of you. Have you ever seen tennis players saying something like, "Come on!" during games? In fact, many sports professionals often speak to themselves to keep control of their minds during crucial competitions. Incidentally, it is said that Albert Einstein would also often speak to himself while researching!

In conclusion, "speaking to yourself" is a really useful learning habit. You can efficiently and easily keep learning English without studying abroad. Actually, even if you are not interested in studying English, by speaking to yourself, you can push yourself toward positive directions. So, maybe, the next strange person in the hallway... can be YOU!

Thank you for listening to my presentation.