

We are all a mixture of the two mindsets

Thinking that you can divide the world population into growth mindset people and fixed mindset people is in itself a demonstration of a fixed mindset. We are all a mixture of both and it is not uncommon to have a growth mindset in one area and a fixed mindset in another. Mindsets are not a permanent part of you. You can change them and the first step to doing so is being aware of them both and recognizing which mindset you are leaning towards in various situations. Once you develop that awareness and if you want to change which mindset you display, you can decide to do so.

Tip #2 - Try to speak the target language from day one.

Reasons why speaking from day one is challenging.

1. **Education system set up.** Historically the emphasis in language learning was always on grammar and translation which put reading and writing as most important. It was only about 40 years ago that speaking and listening even became a branch of language teaching.
2. **The silent period.** According to Stephen Krashen, one of the gurus of 2nd language acquisition, every language learner goes through the initial silent period which ranges between 2 to 6 months. During that period the learner understands what is being said, is actively processing it but they are not able to repeat it accurately. In other words, the learner during this period is able to understand much more than they can produce.

Typical behaviors during the silent period.

Growth mindset people	Fixed mindset people
Put a lot of effort into their learning. They would want to test what their skills to see if their effort paid off. It's the effort not the ability that counts.	Value ability above effort. Effort is for those who don't have natural talent. They would not express their thoughts before they knew they could do so perfectly.
Treat mistakes as learning opportunities. Making mistakes is how we learn.	Do not make mistakes, so speaking before you can say it perfectly is not an option. You always want to sound intelligent.
Are not hesitant to face challenges. They know that if you consistently choose tasks that are too easy for you, you are neither learning nor progressing.	Prefer tasks that are easy for them. Challenges are scary as they invite a possibility of failure. Smart, talented people do not make mistakes. Effortless success is better, so at this point it is much better to acknowledge you understood all that was being said but you do not speak yourself.
Are interested in all feedback about their progress. They do not mind being corrected or even laughed at as long as they have learned something.	Are interested only in feedback that gives them praise. Negative feedback for a fixed mindset person means that they are not smart and talented.

Recognizing which mindset you display in a given situation, and working on developing the growth mindset is crucial if you want to start speaking from day one.

1. **Start BEFORE you think you are ready.** If you think you are not yet ready, you may never be. It is never too early to start. People who speak more than 3 languages did not learn them all by attending language courses – they learned in context, by listening and repeating what they heard and interacting with native speakers in social situations.
2. **Pre-teach yourself vocabulary.** Many language learners study a new language for work. Do not wait until you think you are a proficient communicator to use the target language. If you are heading to a meeting, work with a native speaker/ teacher before. Practice speaking on topics that may come up, studying specific vocabulary, prepare yourself as much as you can.
3. **Ask for help only if needed.** There is a good chance that while you are having your target language interaction, there will be people around you who speak English. That is not a threat – it is your scaffolding. If you get stuck or can't get your point across, ask for help.
4. **Record yourself periodically.** Comparing your skills is a powerful confidence building tool. Record yourself periodically while speaking on a topic, or reading a text. Comparing recordings will allow you to see the progress you are inevitably making.
5. **Remember that your success is not based on one event.** Whether it is a test, a social interaction or a vocabulary quiz, that one snapshot of your language ability is not a measurement of your ability or of how successful you are. Learning is a process. You need to see and monitor the trends, improvements, the effort and ability over a much longer period of time in order to measure your success.
6. **Focus on what you learned.** People might not understand you; they may correct you, they may even laugh, but do not let it bother you, and do not give up. If they do not understand – try to explain again using gestures and different words. If they correct you, thank them and repeat the sentence with the corrections at least twice. As an additional bonus, it will teach them a bit about growth mindset! Instead of focusing on what others may think about your language skills, ask yourself – have I learned something? If you did, you win!
7. **Don't be embarrassed when people see you learning.** This is at the core of what I am trying to convey in my podcast. As children, we learn so many skills within such a short period of time – walking, talking, manipulating objects, reading, climbing stairs, riding a bike, etc. etc. The list is long and most of this learning is done in public. Later in life, having people witness your learning is somehow an embarrassment. There is nothing wrong with acknowledging in public that you are learning. Stop comparing yourself to other people who may speak better than you. Rather than doing that, ask those people for advice. If others have a problem seeing you learn in front of them and if they judge you for it, frankly the joke is on them!

Don't let yourself be brought down by fixed mindset people around you, keep up your growth mindset and try to speak the target language from day one!