

To speak good English, surround yourself by people who speak English fluently

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Let us say that your current English speaking skills aren't great. You aren't very confident of being able to communicate confidently and effectively in English with anyone, be it a small group or a large one. However, you are very determined to improve your spoken English skills rapidly and prove to yourself that you can do it, while making a good impression on those around you. Taking up an [English speaking course](#) is obviously one way to speed up the process of learning, and an important one at that. Yet, there is another critical element that can determine the rate and extent of success in your endeavour.



Just as the old English adage goes, “a man is known by the company he keeps”, your success in [improving your English skills](#) will depend largely on the “company” you keep. If you are around people who speak in English regularly, you have a much greater chance of improving your own speaking abilities. On the other hand, if you spend most of your time around people who speak in another language, say Hindi or your local language such as Marathi or Bengali, the improvement in your own English speaking skills will be stunted even if you have signed up for an English speaking course.



There are two main reasons for this. Our ability to speak fluently in a particular language is dictated by what we hear most often. This explains why children who grow up hearing their parents speak in their mother tongue tend to speak that language fluently, while migrants to another city who end up speaking in a different language, struggle to teach their children to speak in their mother tongue. So, even if you read lots of English books and improve your vocabulary, your spoken English is likely to still be not as good. So, when you are working around people who communicate amongst themselves in English, there is a constant reinforcement of the language in your brain (both the conscious and subconscious brain).

The second reason why being in the company of English speaking people will help you is that you will be forced to practice speaking the language. When you notice that others around you prefer to communicate in English, it would be awkward for you to speak in any other language. This automatically leads you to make an attempt to speak in English. Practice, as you know, makes you perfect!

We have seen the benefits of being surrounded by fluent English speakers time and time again. For example, we know of many people who studied in vernacular medium until their University level and really struggled with proper English communication, both written and verbal. Despite their really weak fundamentals with the language, when these same people went overseas to an English-speaking country, their fluency in the language improved drastically in a matter of months. This clearly highlighted the impact of the environment around you.



So, if you are serious about being a fluent English speaker, take a close look at who you are spending the most time with. Do they speak in English with you often? If not, it is time to make some changes and be around people to do so.

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-By Chander Madan

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