



# Learning English

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# Needfinding Methodology



# Interviews

8 people

01

## Average User

Native Language: Non-English  
Primary Language: English  
Learning English

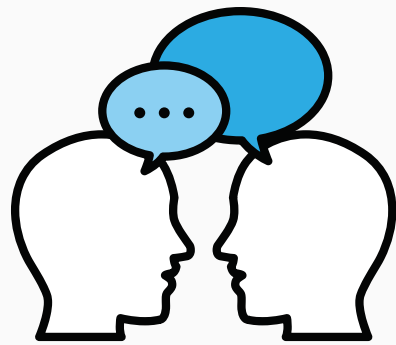
02

## Extreme User

Native Language: Non-English  
Primary Language: Non-English  
Learning English

03

# Diverse Participants



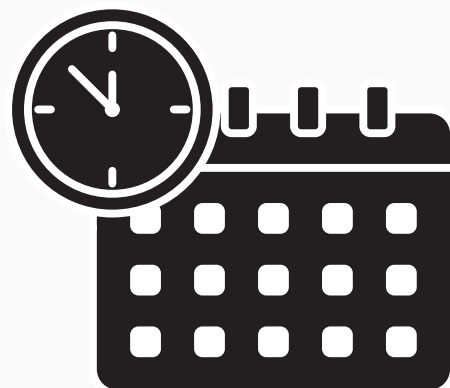
## Native Language

7+ LANGUAGES



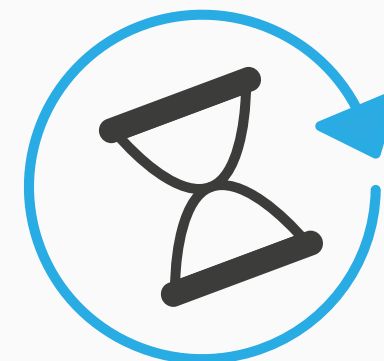
## Motivations

SURVIVAL, AMBITION, & MORE



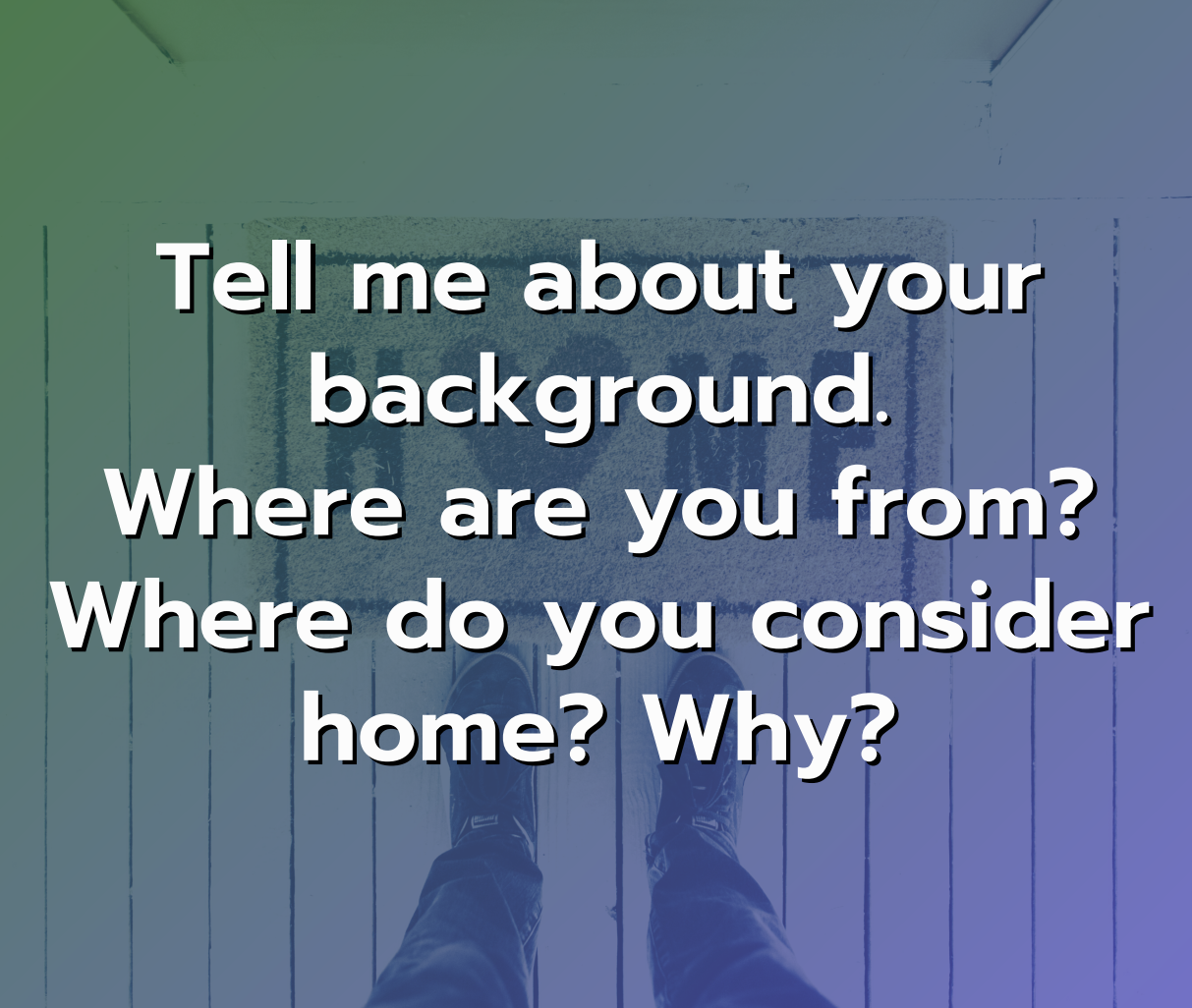
## Age

20 - 50 YRS OLD

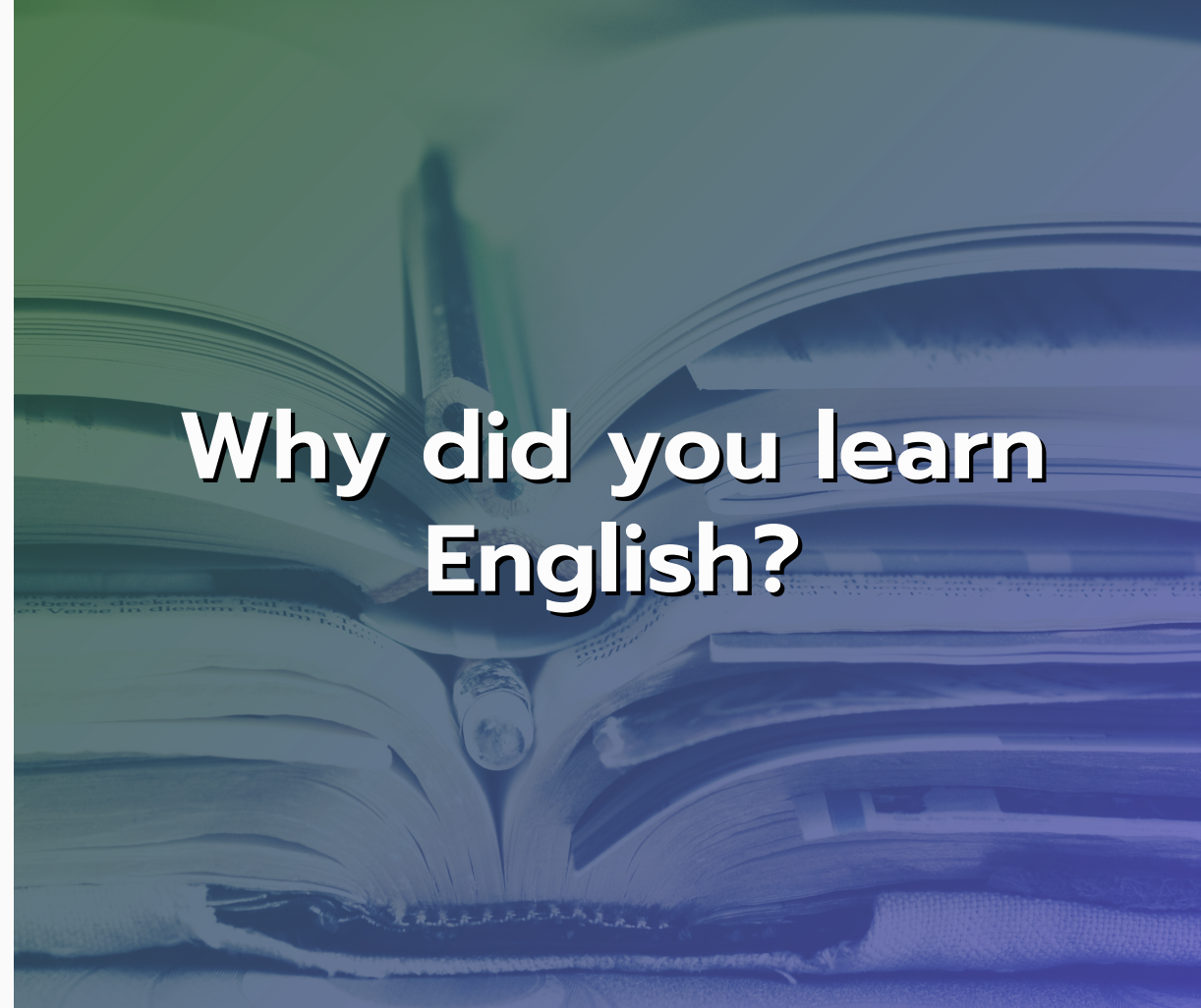


## Experiences

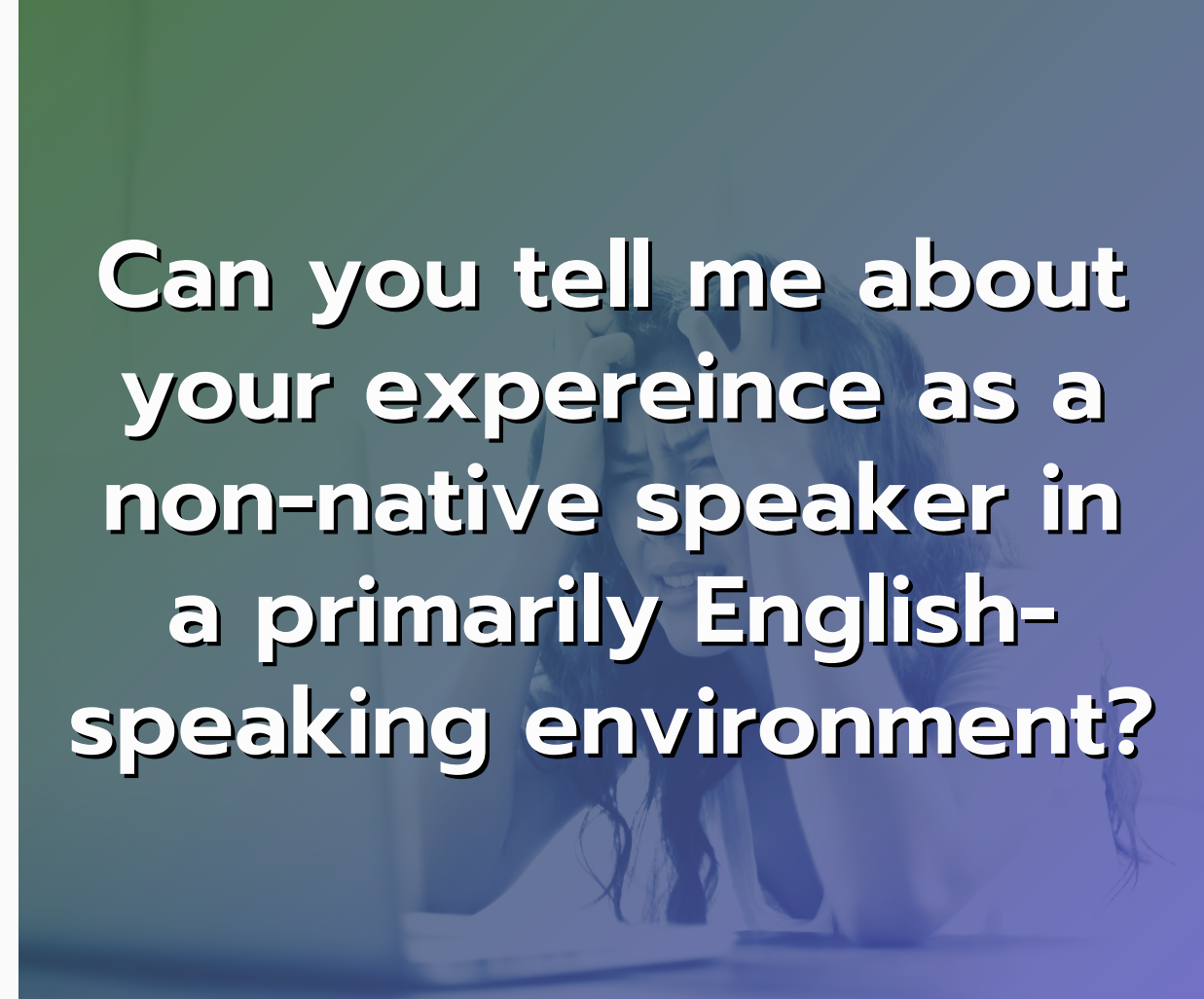
LEARNING AS A CHILD VS ADULT



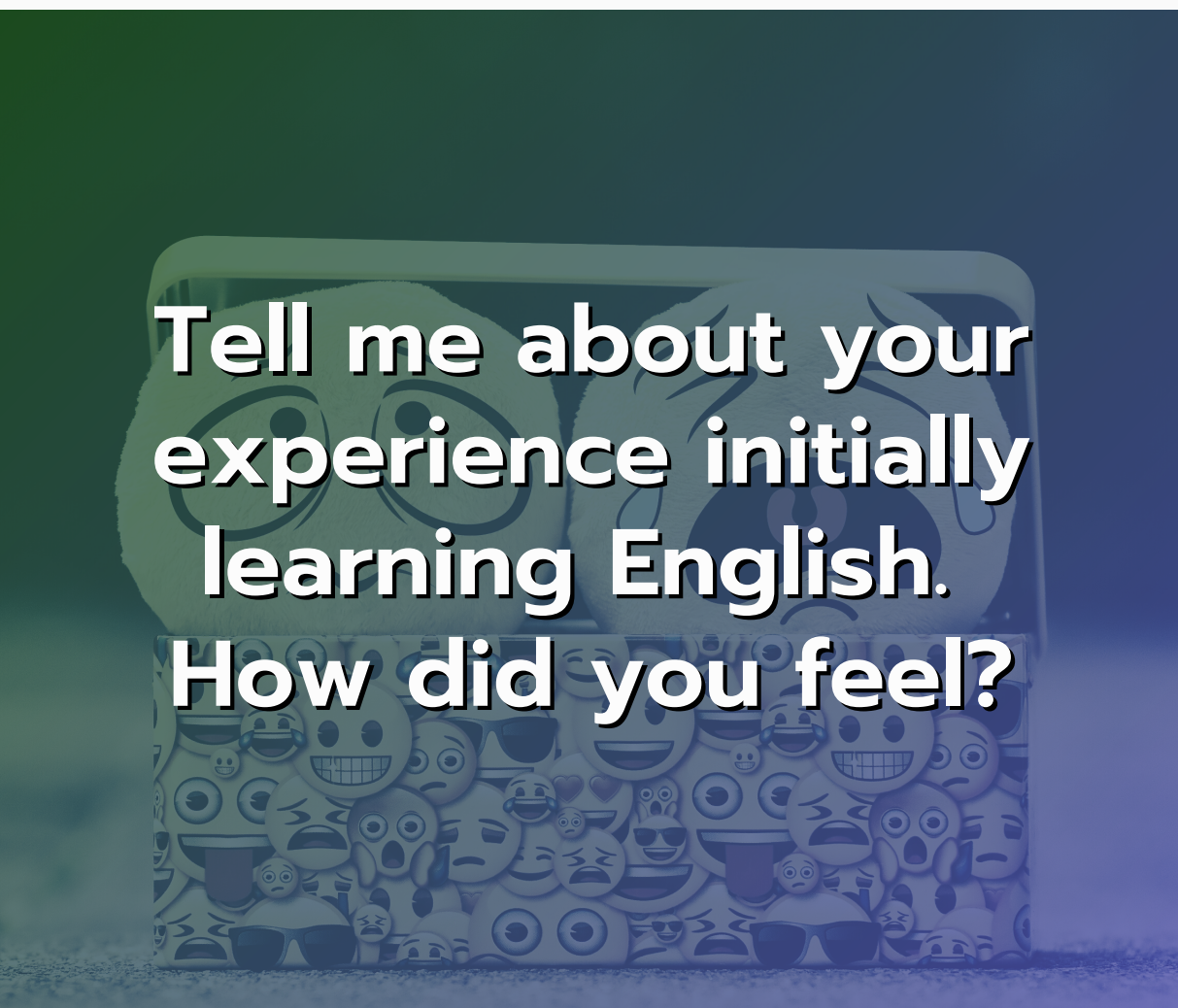
**Tell me about your background.  
Where are you from?  
Where do you consider home? Why?**



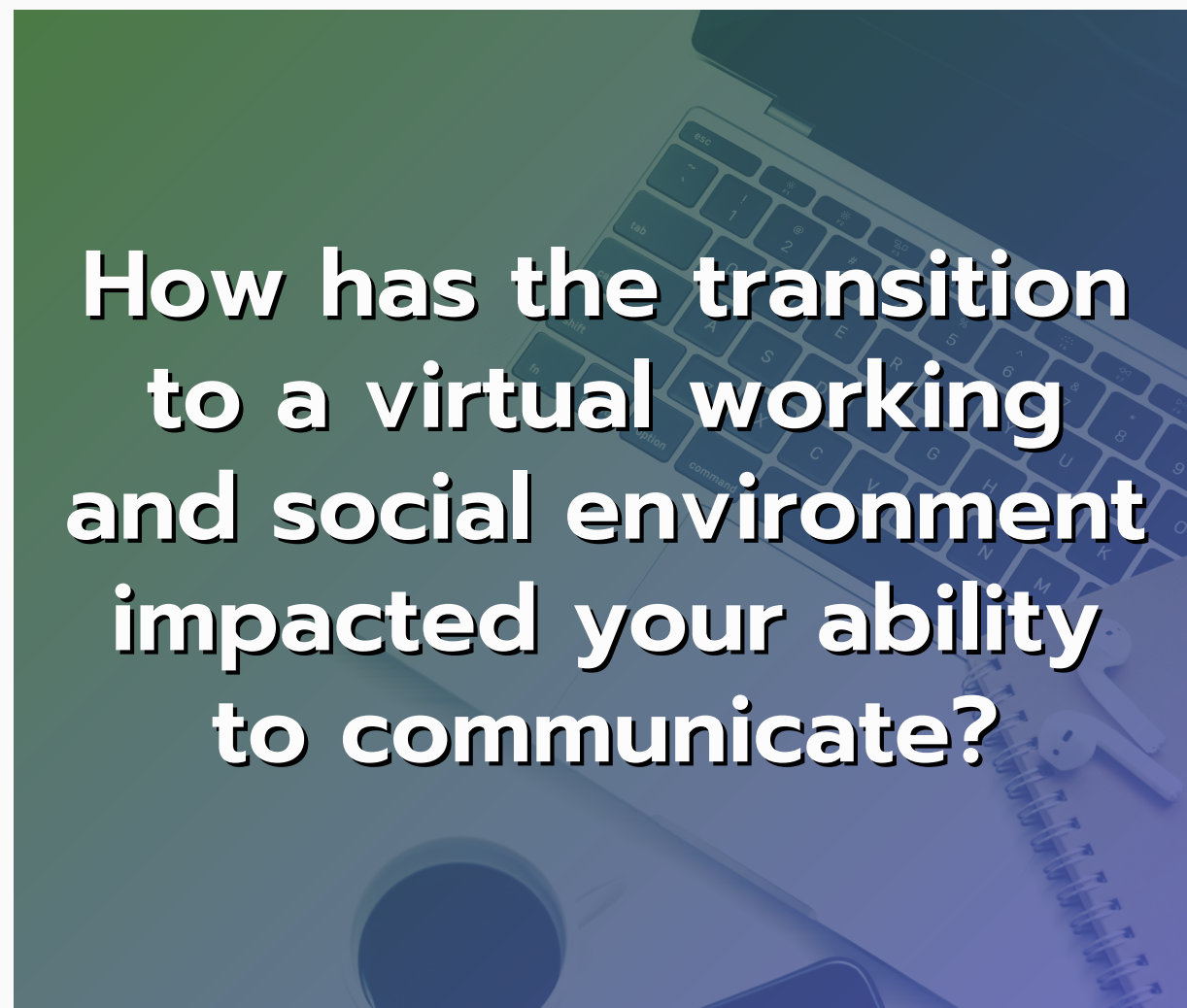
**Why did you learn English?**



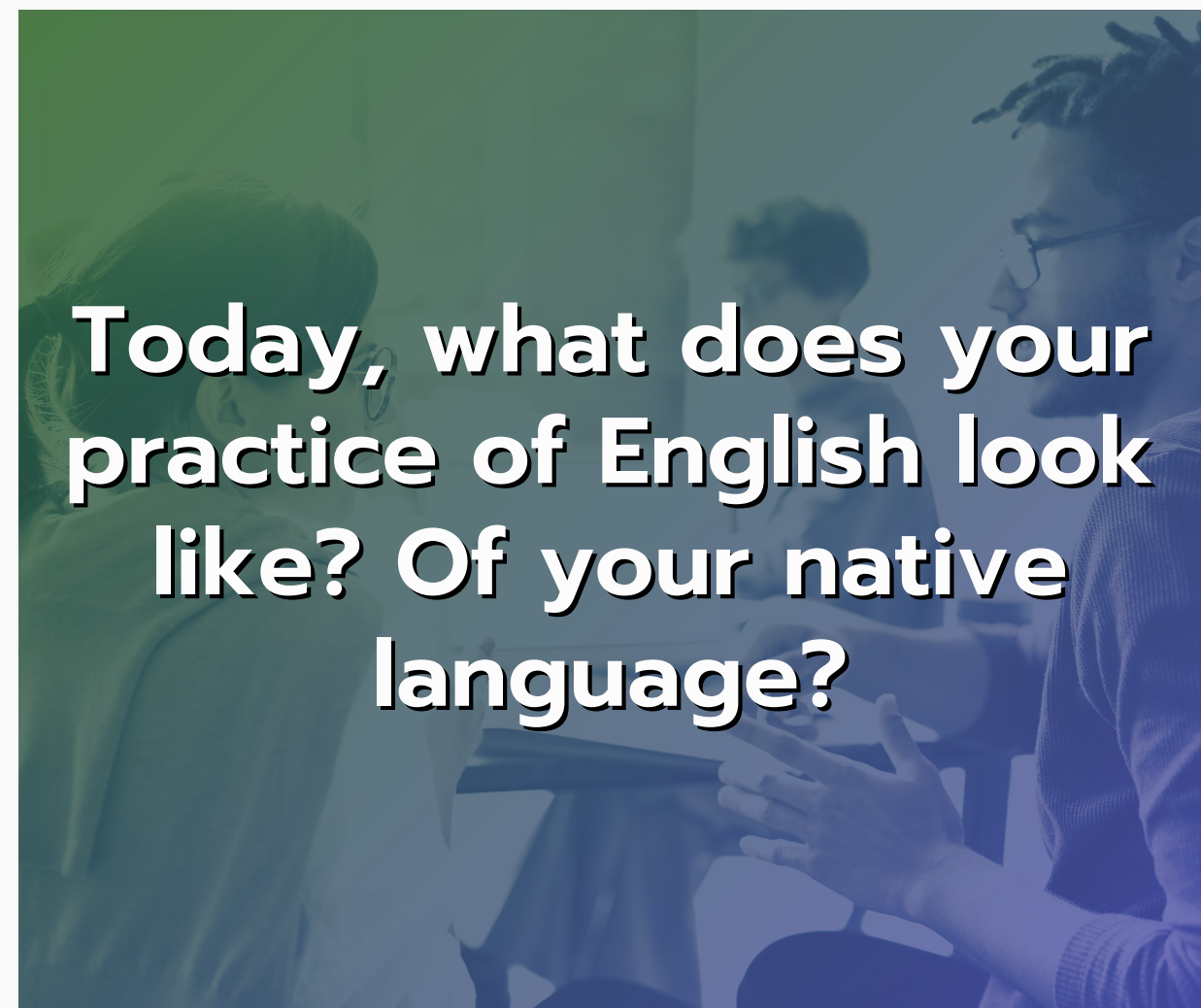
**Can you tell me about your experience as a non-native speaker in a primarily English-speaking environment?**



**Tell me about your experience initially learning English.  
How did you feel?**



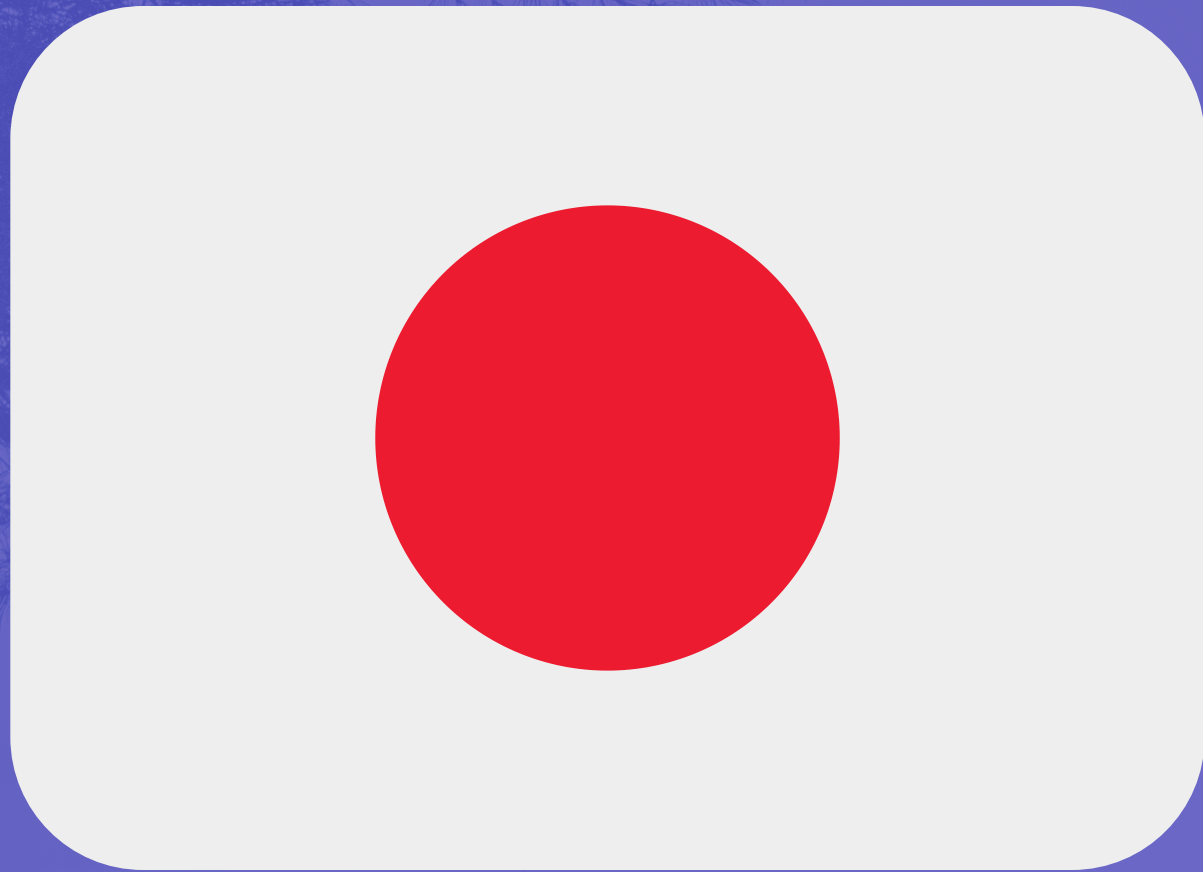
**How has the transition to a virtual working and social environment impacted your ability to communicate?**



**Today, what does your practice of English look like? Of your native language?**

# Interview Results





**Y**uri

International College Student  
From Japan  
Moved to US for School

“I'm uncomfortable going to grocery stores or ordering fast food. People talk fast; masks are hard to hear though; and, I'm afraid to ask people to repeat themselves.”



# Thuy

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Mother

From Vietnam

Immigrated 10 Years Ago

“With small talk,  
dialogue, and meet  
and greets,  
sometimes I’m just  
quiet because I don’t  
know how to  
respond.”

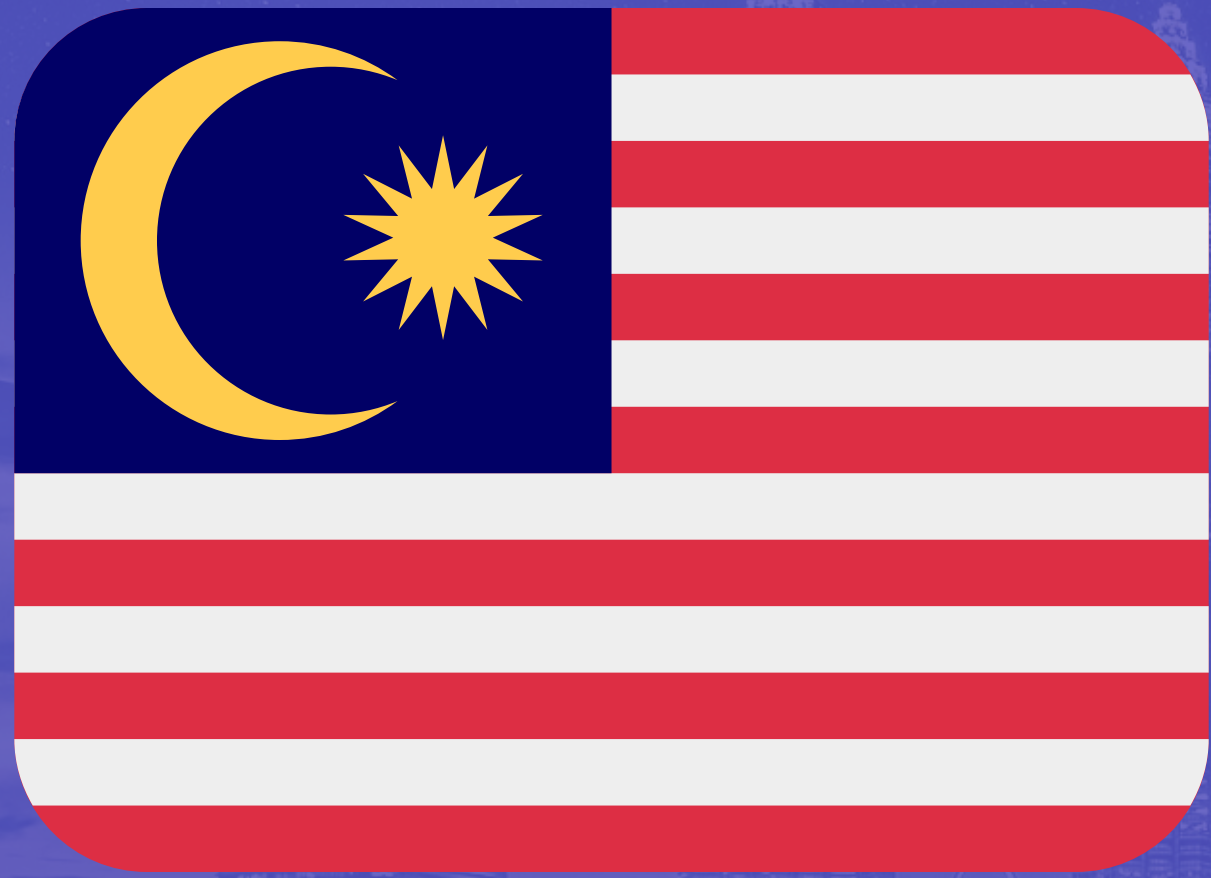


# Alejandro

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College Student  
From Ecuador  
Immigrated As A Child

"I'm thankful to the Boston Latino community who supported my family. Because of my mom's friends, I was able to meet other kids my age whom I would interact with to practice english."



# Hanson

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Malaysian Citizen

From & Resides in Malaysia

Learned English for Work

“I use different types of English depending on whom I'm talking to. If you try to speak proper English to a non-native speaker in Malaysia, they won't understand.”



# Mevini

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International Grad School Student  
From Sri Lanka  
Moved to the US for School

“Even today, I don't understand many phrases. The difference now is that I'm less afraid to ask. Before, I would just pretend to understand and google it later.”



**"Sometimes I don't have the formula for what to say in a situation"**

**"She was ashamed because as an adult she could not understand a simple request from a child"**

**"I found comfort in communicating with those who directly understood my frustration learning a new language"**

**"Our livelihood depended on my parents getting jobs, which was dependent on the language"**

**"I make typos all the time even when I know the word"**

**"Virtually, it's harder to catch up in a meeting if I miss a little bit, so I'm less likely to talk in meetings"**

**"I wasn't embarrassed as a kid but I was worried that I would be misunderstood"**

**"There are times I say something and people take it negatively, but I don't mean it that way"**

**Say**

**"Talk to family in Spanish because I don't want to lose ability to speak in my native tongue"**

**"Learn to be tolerant and adapt because I can't always get what I want due to my inability to communicate"**

**"Carry around a dictionary in case I need to look up words"**

**"My lack of vocabulary dissuades me from having deep and long conversations"**

**"Joined the student government association to practice my English"**

**"Ask the family for help to review emails and written documents for work"**

**"Watch American TV to learn new vocabulary and US culture"**

**"Integrate parts of our native languages into the ways we speak English"**

**Do**

**They  
don't care**

**I'm a burden  
if I ask for  
help too  
much**

**I want to do  
more, but  
don't know  
how**

**What did I  
do wrong?**

**People look  
down on me  
for having an  
accent**

**I don't  
belong  
here**

**People  
don't  
understand  
me**

**I can't give up. It's  
not just about me.  
I've got to think  
about my family  
and the sacrifices  
we've made.**

**Think**

**Embarrassed  
that I can't  
communicate  
properly**

**Scared that  
someone will  
take advantage  
of my lack of  
understanding**

**Worried that I  
won't be able  
to support my  
family**

**Proud  
reflecting on  
the progress  
I've made over  
the years**

**Doubt that in my  
ability to  
accomplish my  
goals despite all  
the work I've put  
in already**

**Helpless in  
everyday  
tasks**

**Thankful to  
those who have  
supported me  
throughout the  
process**

**Tired of the  
repetition: on  
my end and  
their end**

**Feel**

# Analysis

## Needs & Insights



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# Insight

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*Community plays a major role in helping people learn English.*

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# Need

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*Develop support systems and communities in which people feel comfortable asking for and receiving help.*

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# Insight

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*The context in which people learn English impacts their area of fluency.*

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# Need

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*Be understood and comfortable in any situation where English is required.*

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# Insight

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*People rely on physical cues and facial expressions to follow and understand conversations.*

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# Need

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*Track conversation flow and cues now that masks and virtual environments limit visual scope during interactions.*

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# Insight

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*Adults tend to experience more frustration than children when learning English as a second language.*

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# Need

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*Adult-tailored educational resources to learn and apply English while juggling the responsibilities of adulthood.*

# Summary



01

Our problem space is learning and practicing English as a second language.

02

Our interview participants represented a diverse array of native languages, age groups, motivations, and experiences.

03

Core insights included the role of community in learning English, limited fluency based on the context in which English is learned, new struggles due to COVID, and how age impacts fluency.