

POCO A POCO PODCAST

EPISODIO 03 • TRADUCCIÓN

Mi primer año en Inglaterra

TRADUCCIÓN COMPLETA

Complete English translation

A2

B1

Palabras en TERRACOTA → ver Vocabulario

Frases subrayadas en azul → ver Gramática

INTRODUCTION

Hello, and welcome back to Poco a Poco Podcast.

Español fácil... with English explanations.

I'm Juan.

Today's episode is a little more personal than the ones before.

I want to take you back to a specific moment in my life.

The moment I left Spain for the first time.

I was twenty years old.

I had a suitcase, a student visa, and almost no English.

Well... I thought I had English.

I had studied it for years at school.

But school English and real English... are two very different things.

As you'll hear today, the first year was hard.

Confusing. Sometimes a little embarrassing.

But it taught me something important about language learning — something I want to share with you.

So let's go. In Spanish, from here.

Stay with me. That's exactly the point.

MAIN STORY

Okay... today I'm going to tell you something personal.

Something that happened to me years ago... when I was twenty years old.

I left Spain for the first time.

I took a flight to England.

And I started university there.

I had a big suitcase... and a lot of fear.

The first day was... strange.

Everything was different.

The campus was enormous.

People spoke very fast.

And I... didn't understand almost anything.

I thought I knew English.

I had studied English for years at school.

But that English... was different.

It was textbook English.

Not real English.

The first week I wanted to go to the bank.

I needed to open a bank account.

I went to the bank in the city centre.

I spoke to the employee.

I told him what I needed.

And the employee said something to me.

Something long... something complicated.

And I... didn't understand anything.

Nothing at all.

I stood there staring at him.

He stared back at me.

Silence.

In the end... I left the bank without the account.

Without anything.

It was a little... **EMBARRASSING**.

But I didn't give up.

A few days later... I found a solution.

On campus there was a bank stand.

A bank for students.

The employees spoke slowly.

They spoke clearly.

And there was also one employee who spoke a little Spanish.

Just a little... but it was enough.

I was able to open my account.

I **MANAGED**.

Little by little.

That first year... I also discovered something.

Something that helped me a lot with English.

The television.

In my room... I had a small television.

Old... but it worked.
And I turned it on every night.
Not to watch specific programmes.
Just to listen to English.
Real English... in context.
At first... I understood almost nothing.
It was like background noise.
But with time... I started to understand words.
Then sentences.
Then entire conversations.
The television was my best teacher that year.
But... there's something I have to admit.
Something I did wrong that first year.
Something very common among language students.
I got inside a Spanish **BUBBLE**.
What does that mean?
It means that... almost all my friends that year were Spanish.
Or Latin American.
People who spoke my language.
It was easier... more comfortable.
When you're tired... when you don't understand anything...
It's much easier to speak to someone in your own language.
And I did it.
Too much.
So at the end of the first year...
I **REALISED** something.
I *had been living in England for almost a year...*
And my English hadn't improved as much as I'd hoped.
It had improved... yes.
But not enough.
The Spanish bubble had protected me...
But it had also held me back.
And that was an important lesson.

A lesson that completely changed my second year.
But that... is another story.
I'll tell it in the next episode.

VOCABULARY & GRAMMAR

Okay — let's talk about what you just heard.
Six words and expressions from today's episode.

First: **ECHAR DE MENOS**.

This means to miss something or someone.
There's no literal translation — 'echar' here doesn't mean 'throw'.
It means to feel the absence of something.
Juan echaba de menos el sol de Valencia.

Juan missed the sun of Valencia.

Second: **APAÑARSELAS**.

This means to manage, to get by, to figure it out.
It's a very colloquial reflexive verb.
It implies improvising and making do with what you have.
Juan se las apañó para abrir la cuenta.
Juan managed to open the account.

Third: **BURBUJA**.

Literally, a bubble.
Figuratively, a closed environment that isolates you.
Juan vivía en una burbuja española.
Juan was living in a Spanish bubble.

Fourth: **DARSE CUENTA**.

This means to realize — in the sense of coming to understand something.
A note of caution: the false friend here is 'realizar'.
'Realizar' does NOT mean 'to realize' — it means to carry out or accomplish.
Al final del año, Juan se dio cuenta de algo importante.
At the end of the year, Juan realized something important.

Fifth: **ATREVERSE A**.

To dare to do something. To have the courage to.
El segundo año, Juan se atrevió a hablar con gente nueva.

The second year, Juan dared to talk to new people.

And sixth — a grammar structure: *llevar plus gerund*.

This is one of the most natural ways to express duration in Spanish.

'Llevaba un año estudiando' means 'I had been studying for a year'.

Llevaba meses viviendo en Inglaterra... y todavía no entendía nada.

I had been living in England for months... and I still didn't understand anything.

That's it for today.

Thank you for listening to Poco a Poco.

Until then — poco a poco.