

LESSON TRANSCRIPT

Inner Circle S1 #08

August 2014: You're never fully prepared until you immerse yourself in Cantonese

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INTRO

Becky: Welcome to a special Inner Circle Audio Lesson! I'm Becky and I'll be your host. My co-host today is the founder of Innovative Language... Peter Galante!

Peter: Hi everyone! Peter here.

Becky: Today, we're covering one undeniable fact about language learning.

Peter: Which is... "You're never fully prepared until you get in the game and immerse yourself."

Becky: Most learners fail at languages because of this. Others use it to their advantage and succeed. How? What is the difference?

Peter: You'll find out how to use this fact to your advantage with the Custom Lists App.

BODY

Becky: So, Peter, our listeners may not know this, but you just came back from Italy.

Peter: You could say I was on a bit of a summer vacation.

Becky: But not from language learning, right?

Peter: Oh no Becky, my Italian... was getting put to the test every... minute... of... the... day... for the past 2 weeks.

Becky: Oh wow! So any progress updates from this month? How's the monthly goal?

Peter: Well let's just say the monthly goal was also vacation until next month.

Becky: I see.

Peter: But...there was still progress and I even picked up on a very important fact about language learning this

month.

Becky: Really? Let's hear it.

Peter: The fact is.... "No matter how much you study...You'll never be fully prepared until you get into the game."

Becky: ...You'll never be fully prepared until you get into the game?

Peter: Exactly. What you see in the textbook and what you practice with your tutor is very different than being in the trenches - speaking with people on a daily basis because everyone speaks in a different style.

Becky: So, it would be almost impossible to fully prepare, right?

Peter: Super, super hard. But, before we get into that, in the past Inner Circle lessons, we spoke about preparation...

Becky: ...which is pretty important.

Peter: That's right, Becky. But, today, we're going to talk about the flip side of that coin.

Becky: You'll never be fully prepared until you get into the game. It sounds a bit harsh at first...

Peter: Right. But its not a good or bad thing. It's just how language works.

Becky: So, in this Inner Circle Lesson, we are going to cover these three main points:

Peter: 1) Why you're never fully prepared until you get into the game when it comes to language

Becky: 2) How you can take advantage of this fact and succeed

Peter: and 3) How you can do so with your Premium Custom Lists

App

Becky: And, we'll cover your Italian vacation, right?

Peter: Well, you should know that before the vacation, I prepared with my Skype tutor, with my in-person tutor, I reviewed Custom Lists...

Becky: ...And it still wasn't enough?

Peter: It helped. It helped tremendously. But let's get into what happened in Italy. It's a perfect example of the first point...

Becky: ...Why you'll never be fully prepared until you get into the game?

Peter: That's right, and what we mean by get into the game is immerse yourself, going outside of that 1-on-1 tutor thing, where there are lots of people with lots of opinions, and lots of people with lots of ways of speaking that can confuse you very rapidly

Becky: Yeah, it's all in real time.

Peter: Coming at you rapid fire. So, during the first half of the vacation, my family and I stayed in Sardinia.

Becky: Huh really. When I hear of trips to Italy, they usually involve seeing the Colosseum in Rome, or riding the gondola in Venice. I haven't heard much about Sardinia.

Peter: Well it's kind of off the beaten path. Sardinia's an island off the West Coast of Italy.

Becky: Oh.

Peter: And actually that's what makes it so difficult to prepare for. But I'll explain why in a bit.

Becky: Okay, I assume you stayed in a hotel

then?

Peter: Actually. My family and I stayed in hotels for the second half of the trip. But, in Sardinia we lived like locals.

Becky: Like locals?

Peter: What happened was... I did a house swap at Homeexchange.com, and we traded homes with an Italian family. So, we actually lived in their home for a week.

Becky: You're very brave Peter. But what do you mean by living like a local?

Peter: As in, living in their town, and living life their way.

Becky: Like eating, shopping, and going to the same restaurants?

Peter: Exactly, for example, food shopping in these little Italian mom and pop shops.

Becky: Not big supermarkets?

Peter: Nope. And we had to get the bread at a local bakery. We got the meat from a butcher. Bought the fruit and vegetables at little shops.

Becky: And you did all this in Italian?

Peter: Well, some of them, I could do right from the start based on my studies. But, some of them, I could not do because each place had completely different way of ordering and buying food.

Becky: Really? I'd think you'd learn how to buy things with Italian Survival Phrases ...like "I'd like that please" or "How much is this?"

Peter: Ah, that worked in some places and it was an amazing phrase to have, but, at some places, it was a little more complex. In fact I did not come across a textbook that could fully prepare me for all the conversations that I encountered. Taking it one step further many of our Skype sessions were based on topics that I wanted to talk

about, so, it didn't occur to me to ask or my teacher to teach me about ordering bread at a bakery. Something that comes so natural to her.

Becky: How did buying bread at a bakery work in Sardinia?

Peter: Apparently you have to order bread by grams. It's similar with meat at the butcher shop. At the bakery they would cut the bread, weigh it and bag it for you.

Becky: Whereas, usually, you pick up what you want, pay and get out.

Peter: Exactly. So, I totally did not anticipate that. I didn't know I needed to say "500 grams of bread please."

Becky: And you can't just walk in and say "that bread please."

Peter: Exactly. I know the typical phrases that would help me at a modern supermarket or convenience store.

Becky: Right, but when you're away from the touristy places...

Peter: It's a lot different when you meet an elder gentleman or woman who has a very different way of speaking. It's very very different. And culture plays a big role in the language. Sometimes it's not easily translatable.

Becky: It's like ordering sushi in Japanese in a traditional shop. There's a menu with Japanese characters...

Peter: ...But no pictures. And you can't really point and be vague. So you'd NEED to know the proper words.

Becky: So typical phrasebooks don't usually cover these things.

Peter: Right. That's one example of why its hard, if not impossible, to be fully prepared until you get into the game. Meaning there and in these situations, immersion, again, we're talking about immersion

situations.

Becky: There'll always be something that you encounter in real life that a book won't cover. I mean you can only experience it to learn about it.

Peter: Very, very well put, Becky. And the second reason why "you're never prepared until you immerse yourself" is because language is constantly evolving.

Becky: Has Italian evolved? You and your skype tutor seemed pretty up to date with your conversations about that Frozen movie.

Peter: Well, I think the skeleton of the language stays the same. The grammar. You know, Becky, think about a 1950's English movie "Hey Doll." How would that fly if I saw you in the office today and said "Hey Doll!"

Becky: Well, it's all context, I guess, I mean in the office that wouldn't be appropriate. It would be more of a, yeah, it's inappropriate. It's out of date and it's out of context.

Peter: Yeah, so that's what we mean by the language is evolving. So a phrase that was common many years ago suddenly becomes obsolete and text messages weren't around 20 years ago but if you have an Italian friend, you're suddenly texting. So after our week in Sardinia, we moved on to Rome, Venice and Florence.

Becky: Ah, the hot spots. So it sounds like your Italian worked a lot better there but I'm sure from restaurant to restaurant, things would still change.

Peter: Oh yeah. Booking hotel rooms and ordering at restaurants were no problem whatsoever. Getting around the big cities was pretty straight forward. Again, a couple of tricks of the trade you had to learn, but very straight forward.

Becky: So you were pretty prepared with Italian for those places then?

Peter: Almost Becky, almost. One thing that I remember distinctly tripping me up...

Becky: ...it has to do with the evolution of language,

right?

Peter: That's right. It's that the big cities in Italy were very eco-friendly.

Becky: Ah, and with that, there are new words that aren't yet in phrasebooks.

Peter: You got it. The perfect example of this was : we went to a supermarket, and we were at the register and we had just rang up all the groceries and the cashier asked me if I wanted to buy something and I had no idea what they were talking about. And Becky you know how you freeze up when you hear a word that you haven't learned.

Becky: Yeah, I know that feeling. What were they asking to you buy?

Peter: It turns out in Italy, you have to pay for plastic grocery bags. So they actually asked me a word that I never encountered that was actually specific to Rome because I asked my tutor about it later. But, it was a word for the "plastic bag you buy to put your groceries in."

Becky: Only in that specific situation.

Peter: Only in that situation and apparently, only in Rome.

Becky: Wow. That's so specific. And that's because of the eco-friendly movement. It is pretty recent in Italy, right.

Peter: Exactly. I knew the word for "bag." I knew the word for "grocery bag." But, I didn't know the word for the bag you have to pay for when checking out because many years ago, that bag was given to you for free.

Becky: That wouldn't be taught in books or you probably wouldn't learn it in a class, from a teacher who's not living there. So, you can't really be prepared for that either unless you're there.

Peter: Exactly, so listeners, the reality is, you're never fully prepared until you get fully immersed. And, there'll always be a new word or unusual grammar

structure...

Becky: ...that weren't covered in your traditional learning material.

Peter: Shopping for food for example, may be a lot more different than just saying "this please"...

Becky: ...especially if you're away from the tourist spots. And as you said, even if you're in the tourist spots.

Peter: And we also have that language is always evolving.

Becky: And there's just the simple fact that you shouldn't wait until you're perfect, you can't wait if you're in that situation. You just have to start using the language. You'll learn more by using it.

Peter: That's a great point Becky. It actually took me a little while to warm up and start speaking the language. So, Listeners, you'll never be fully prepared, is just a fact of language and you shouldn't wait for that perfection to start speaking.

Becky: Alright. Let's get into the second point.

Peter: How you can take advantage of this fact and succeed.

Becky: The first thing you need to do, is accept this fact that you're never going to be fully prepared.

Peter: Most language learners don't .

Becky: They're afraid of making mistakes. Either they'll keep studying until they're perfect...

Peter: ...which will never happen.

Becky: Or after they make one mistake, they'll clam up, they'll stop talking and avoid speaking

again.

Peter: Huh. I made a very big mistake in Italy. Uh, instead of asking for a piece of pizza, I asked for sex. Yeah, it took me a little while to get my confidence back up to start speaking again but you gotta work your way through these mistakes because the fact is, mistakes are unavoidable. And you should've seen the look on the guy's face... at the pizza place.

Peter: If I can make that kind of mistake, you should not worry about making any kind of mistakes.

Becky: Right. And you kept going. I'm proud of you Peter. You can't escape these kind of mistakes if you want to improve your language.

Peter: So, here's the way you can succeed. Listeners. As soon as you make your mistakes...

Becky: ...You instantly know what part of your language is lacking. And you can correct it.

Peter: With the pizza place, the guy kind of guessed that I wanted a piece of pizza and not sex and smiled and he gave me the pizza. I managed to check out and actually order more bread. So, if I can make it through those mistakes, you can too. The point is that they happen and you gotta keep pushing forward.

Becky: And you should, if this happens to you, it would be good to note this down. Note the mistake in your Custom List's App.

Peter: Oh yes. I had a lot of those in my Custom Lists App. My Custom Lists App was actually full of many mistakes and even more than that, many of the corrections that the nice shop owners would give me.

Becky: Yeah, Peter that makes a lot of sense. But Peter, I have to ask, did you go back to that pizza shop again?

Peter: Okay. A few things helped, okay? My family was in the background so I think

he understood that it was an honest mistake. So, we actually did go back, he kind of laughed it off so we became very good customers.

Becky: Oh, really?

Peter: So the next time you make a mistake or you lose confidence, just think about how I felt about propositioning an honest pizza worker.

Becky: And it could be worse listeners. You could've done what Peter did.

Peter: Exactly. So, that should boost your confidence.

Becky: I'm feeling more confident already!

Peter: If I can make it through that order, you can make it through any situation you make a mistake in.

Becky: Yeah, we can listeners. Okay, so being open to mistakes and learning from them sounds really good...

Peter: So, listeners, you're probably wondering - how do you follow this advice in real life? Is there step-by-step process?

Becky: And this is where the third point comes in. Use your Premium Custom Lists App

Peter: So Becky, we just spoke about how language evolves and how it's impossible to be prepared until you're immersed, right?

Becky: Right.

Peter: Then we spoke about my big mistake and how you have to work through these mistakes. The commonality here is that you're constantly coming into contact with new words, phrases, or correct way to say things. What do you think is the perfect tool to note all of this new information down.

Becky: Oh, perhaps it's our new premium Custom Lists

App?

Peter: This was my go-to app on the trip. Ever mistake that I made. Every new word went right into the Custom Lists App and I would create my own lists, add my own words..

Becky: ...And you can base the word lists on different themes. right?

Peter: Exactly. Having lexical chunks, such as phrases and sample sentences, for themes...

Becky: ...can be a lot more useful.

Peter: For example, while in Sardinia, I created a shopping phrase list for all the phrases I used in Italian.

Becky: And you got to use them, right?

Peter: That's right. Kind of, here's was how things went. I would go to the shop. I would say a phrase. I would mess up. The people would correct it. And I would quickly add them to my Custom Lists App under a list... such as "shopping for fruit."

Becky: Listeners, imagine having lists of useful and essential phrases, organized by theme.

Peter: Word lists are so useful...

Becky: ...But phrase lists get you speaking and responding properly.

Peter: By theme. So Becky, what would happen was the first time I went to the shop, it didn't go smoothly. But I'd make my list. And then, before I went back to the shop, what do you think I did?

Becky: Quickly review it?

Peter: Quickly reviewed it, I would go in and the conversation went ten times

better.

Becky: And you could have it open, ready to look at it if you needed to respond to something. Or he said something, “what does that mean?”

Peter: Exactly. Also, after going to the shop, a few times, they would allow me to take pictures. And I would take picture of something I didn't know, asked them how to say it, they'd tell me how to say it and I'd add it to my list.

Becky: That's great. So useful.

Peter: Useful, practical, and it helped me improve my Italian so fast while I was in that immersion situation.

Becky: I'm sure you make such a better connection with these people so if they hear you using these really local words or specific to the context.

Peter: It's funny that you mention that. If you pick up a local expression in one place and use it at a different place, they warm up to you so much. And we learned a phrase at one shop that we used at a restaurant that got us free dessert.

Becky: Really? Free dessert? That's great. The Custom Lists App can get you free dessert, that's what I'm hearing.

Peter: Guaranteed, No, no, that's what language is about. It's a tool to make connections. And this tool really helps you put down the words that can help you make these connections faster.

Becky: That's great. So listeners, here's what you can do.

Peter: One: Open up Custom Lists App at customlists.innovativelanguage.com on your computer or smartphone...

Becky: Or, look for the link on this month's Inner Circle blog entry.

Peter: Two: Create a list based on a theme or topic you're interested

in...

Becky: ...or that you need for real life.

Peter: Like shopping or ordering at restaurants. Things that you do on a regular basis, like I did in Italy.

Becky: Three: Keep updating it with every new phrase and word you come across.

Peter: And here's the most important thing. Share these lists. Now, if someone is going to Sardinia, or they're going to Rome, they look at my lists and find useful expressions and phrases that they can use. This is the power of Custom Lists. You can share your lists with other users.

Becky: I'm sure those friends are so grateful as well, and they'll share with you later, from one of their trips.

Peter: Gives you a big headstart. What it actually does is, it allows you to immerse yourself without being there yet.

Becky: That is so handy.

Peter: Put it this way Becky, if you were going to Italy, the lists that I made would prove invaluable.

Becky: I'm sure they would have.

Peter: So, remember listeners, you'll never be prepared until you fully immerse yourselves...

Becky: ...But you can learn and progress faster from making mistakes and correcting yourself...

Peter: ...and most importantly, adapting and noting down what you learn in your Custom Lists App and sharing it with

others.

Becky: So, Peter, what can we expect for the September Inner Circle?

Peter: Well, since I'm back, I'm starting my lessons again and will aim for the 30 minute conversation goal.

Becky: Yeah, it seems like you took a nice break from learning Italian.

Peter: I wouldn't call it a break so much as military language training inside of Italy itself.

Becky: The real deal.

Peter: And thanks to this trip, I'll definitely have some new talking points for my tutors.

Becky: Listeners, let us know your goal too...

Peter: ...and start making your own Custom Word Lists. You can find the App on our site, under the Resources drop-down menu...

Becky: ... or visit customlists.innovativelanguage.com and log in with your site user name and password.

Peter: You can do this on your smartphone, web browser or from your computer.

Becky: Remember, it's free for you to access as Premium members!

OUTRO

Becky: Okay, well that's going to do it for this special Inner Circle lesson!

Peter: Bye everyone!

Becky: Thanks for listening, and we'll see you next time.