

Manners and Culture

Finally! We have some questions for this semester!

Q: Why do so many students here at the ELI speak their own languages all the time?

A: Oh, my. A difficult question. My answer is likely to be controversial. Over the years, I've asked this question of a lot of students. The main reason that students give is that it's easier. Others have indicated that they're afraid of what their friends will think, they have "important" things to say, or they just really don't care.

It's a huge problem here. The main reason that it's a problem is that it slows down your language learning (by a good 50%!) and that of the people you're talking to, as well as speakers of your language who can't help but overhear you. We have a large population of students who don't advance at the pace they think they should, and this is the number one reason. If you don't force yourself to use English, you won't get better. Simple, isn't it?

It's also a social issue on a number of levels. Number one, it's **rude**. Excluding the people around you from conversation is a social no-no. Number two, it's **dishonorable**. When you applied to the ELI, you signed an oath to speak only English at the ELI and at ELI functions. Number three, it's a **terrible waste of resources**. If you are too prone to give into the easy or if you are not even really here to learn English, you are arrogantly wasting the time of your teachers, your LAs, the staff and administrators, and your fellow classmates. You are also taking your money (or much worse, the money of whomever is paying for your study here) and symbolically setting fire to 50% of it. If you saw someone you knew actually sitting down and setting fire to \$2,000 in cash or so, you'd call them kind of stupid, wouldn't you?

Q: What is the difference between junk food and fast food?

A: Junk food is food that has a lot of calories and very little or no nutritional value. Not all fast food is junk food. For example, at McDonald's, you can get a fruit and walnut salad fast, at Subway you can get a sub sandwich with fresh vegetables and lean meats fast, and at

Burger King you can even get a veggie burger fast. However, if you add fries or chips and a sugar-filled soft drink to any of the above foods you have just added a lot of junk food.

Q: Why do people in Florida wear flip-flops and shorts in the winter time?

A: Well, for a lot of people, those are the main staples of their wardrobe; the weather here is rarely cold enough for a long enough period for us to own a huge amount of winter clothing. Then, too, as you've probably noticed, it can be 80 degrees F one day and 50 the next. . . .sometimes, people dress before they go out!

Quote of the Week

Before you do anything, think. If you do something to try and impress someone, to be loved, accepted or even to get someone's attention, stop and think. So many people are so busy trying to create an image, they die in the process.

--Salma Hayek



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