



## Coffee, Cats & Conversation 🇹🇼 900 Days in Taiwan with Kate Billington [991] Transcript

Hello listeners, welcome back to Luke's English Podcast. How are you doing today? I hope you're doing fine. Joining me on the podcast in this episode in order to record some English conversation for your listening pleasure is returning guest, Kate Billington.

Hello, why are you making a noise? What noise are you making Luke?

Come on, you've got to know what that noise is. What could that be? That's the sound of a huge audience of people all applauding, clapping and cheering.

I can just see you moving towards your microphone and back again.

I couldn't hear anything. You couldn't hear anything. Okay.

Sometimes, um, this recording platform that we're using cuts out. There's got filters, which cut out background noise, things like that. So you couldn't hear my amazing impression of a huge crowd of people all applauding all at the same time.

I thought you were, I thought you were going to do a voice and say my name. That's why I didn't say anything. No, no, no.

I was doing an incredible sound effects, which when this is finally put together, you'll, you'll be able to enjoy it. And you, you should in fact say something like, oh my God, that was amazing. Um, oh my God, that was amazing.

How did you make that noise? I've got a particular set of skills. I have all sorts of noises, lots of podcasting. Um, Kate, hello.

Uh, how are you doing? I'm very well. How are you? I'm very well too. Thanks.

It's nice to have you back on the podcast. Can you believe it, Kate? It's almost exactly two years since your last appearance on this podcast. How did that happen? How did it happen that two years past? Yeah.

Yeah. It's just, it's just life in it. It fills up your time.

I think, well, you would know you've got your busy, you know, family and podcasting and working and all that. It's the sort of question my son would ask. My son is two years old at the moment and he's in that phase of asking why about absolutely everything.

So we end up in some pretty deep conversations. So it's like, why is it dark? He'll say, and I say, cause the sun's gone down. Why? Why has the sun gone down? And then, you know, and I have to say, well, cause we're actually on a huge planet that's spinning and orbiting the sun.

And as the planet spins, the sun disappears over the horizon. Why is the sun disappearing? No, it hasn't gone down. We've just spun past it.

We've just spun away from it. Yeah. Yeah.

So anyway, that, that question of how did two years pass is kind of like that. Isn't it really? Um, now, um, okay. Anyone who's, who has started listening to this podcast in the last two years and hasn't heard episodes from before that period might not know you, Kate.

So I've got some Kate facts. Kate facts, which you can confirm or deny. Okay.

Okay. Don't worry. I haven't dug very deep for this.

So no, I don't think so. But again, you can confirm or deny whether these are true. So first thing is you are a fully qualified teacher of English as a second slash foreign slash other language.

And you've got a CELTA and a DELTA. Do you have a master's? Yes, I do. But my master's in is in intercultural communication.

Ooh. Okay. Did you, did you write a thesis or a dissertation at the end of that? I did.

My thesis was in, um, multilingual theatre subtitling. Specific multilingual theatre subtitling. Yes.

Which isn't normally actually subtitling. Normally it's sir, titling or super titling. Um, as it's sometimes called, which means that just the writing goes above the action on stage normally.

Um, whereas subtitling the word sub comes from the fact that the writing is normally below the action on the screen. Okay. So what do we need to know about multilingual theatre sir, titling? That it's really difficult to do it well.

So I did my master's in China. I was at Shanghai theatre Academy and they had some international theatre festivals and visiting performances and things like that. And a lot of them were sir, titled.

Um, and also opera has been sir, titled for a long time. Um, but often the sir, titles were just like really badly done. Um, like the screens were put in the wrong place or sometimes they'd just put two screens either side of the stage.

And then one time I saw an actor knock one of the screens over. That was a bad time. Um, or they'd be like really out of sync or, you know, it's just really hard to do well.

Um, so then I decided to research it. I mentioned it to my thesis professor or the head of the programme actually. And he was like, Oh, that's amazing.

You should research that. So then I started researching it and then I moved to Paris and I found a company that was called theatre in Paris that did, um, English sir,

titled plays, French plays for like English speaking tourists. Um, so I worked with them for a little bit, um, which was cool.

And they developed these like, um, they weren't, um, they were like augmented reality. It wasn't virtual reality, augmented reality glasses that you could wear and the subtitles, which were back in subtitles would appear on your glasses, which is really cool. Yeah.

Yes. That sounds amazing. Yeah.

Okay. Wow. Really interesting.

Um, we used to work together at the, uh, we used to work together teaching English at the British council in Paris, uh, where we met each other. Um, how long have you been an English teacher now? Uh, I think I've been an English teacher for as well over 10 years now. Um, yeah.

Yeah. So, uh, 10, 12, 12, 11, 12 years maybe. So the point, the point there listeners is that don't worry, you're in safe hands.

Okay. Yes. What's your favourite thing? We as good at us, uh, at, uh, what, what's, uh, what's your favourite thing about the job? What's your favourite thing about the job? Kate? Um, do you mean the job at the British council? Just teaching English in general English, because I asked, because as I mentioned before we started recording, I no longer work at the British council actually.

Um, I changed. Oh, you haven't mentioned yet that I live in Taiwan, but I guess now we'll, we'll mention that bit. You live in Taiwan.

Yes. So I moved to Taiwan two and a half years ago to work at the British council here. Um, and I was adult coordinator, which is kind of assistant head of the adults department, um, for a couple of years.

And then I moved to a new job at the beginning of this school year. So that was like August, late August, early September. Um, and I now teach English in a French school in Taiwan.

Um, so I'm teaching English as a foreign language to students who speak it as a foreign language and also teaching English the way it will be taught in the UK, like as a first language, so literature and language, um, to students who already have a

fluent level of English. Um, so I've got two kind of different streams of students in my classes. And my favourite thing about teaching, I think is seeing students progress.

Um, and also sometimes you get like really encouraging stories from students. Like they, I don't know, maybe they do really well in a, in a university entrance exam or interview or something. And it's because of what you've been doing during class.

So it's kind of, there's a really kind of tangible result there, um, where maybe actually all they needed was a bit more confidence. Um, but they've, they've got there through the practise. Um, and I think that applies even more when I'm teaching teenagers.

I love teaching teenagers and I mean, primary school kids, but not like tiny ones, um, like older primary and teenagers. Um, I really like teaching them cause you kind of, you see that progress every day. Um, and yeah, that's the best thing about the job, I think.

Great. Um, you've also taught adults a lot, right? Um, yes. What's your, um, favourite bit of advice that you give to adult learners beyond just saying you should listen to Luke's English podcast? Obviously that's the number one piece of advice.

Um, if you, I think you should listen to it on multiple different platforms so that he really gets lots of views. I mean, so that you get lots of exposure. Right.

So switch on the YouTube version, the Apple podcast version, the Spotify version, have them all going all at the same time. Like subscribe, comment. Yeah.

Have the YouTube one on the right, the Spotify on the left, Apple podcasts anywhere else, just completely surrounded. Yeah. Yeah.

Other than that, that's all you need. Other than that. Um, I think you should do something you enjoy in your target language.

So if it's English, then you should be using English for something that is not, is not, maybe it can still be difficult. I was going to say something that's not difficult for you, but something that you already enjoy doing. So if you're into music, you can make sure you're listening to English artists and learn the lyrics and sing along.

Um, if you're interested in, I don't know, history, try and listen to a history podcast or read some articles on a history website or in a history magazine, um, and so on. Try and find something that you really like. Gaming is a big one now as well.

Um, the only one, the only thing with that one is you've got to remember there's like a lot of quite specific vocabulary for gaming. It doesn't always transfer to other parts of life, but it can be really good. Um, and social media as well.

If you have English speaking celebrities who you really like and you can even interact with them online. So all of that is really good because you're already motivated to use English in those contexts because you want to, you want to get to the end goal, right? Which is either like understanding the person you're following on social media or taking part in the game or, um, learning more about this aspect of history or whatever it is that you care about. So that's one piece of advice.

And then I think my other piece of advice is, um, don't do the thing that people sometimes do where they think they have to learn really difficult words and use them all the time to show that they're really good at English because, um, it doesn't, it doesn't work. Um, and it actually kind of makes you look silly because you're trying to use words that probably don't fit the conversation that you're in anyway. And also you need to, you need to focus on being able to use language in the right places at the right time.

And if you overuse really kind of high level and quite unusual words, that's not what a native speaker would do. So it's not making you sound more fluent. It's actually making you sound like you've just learned a bunch of words and now you're trying to put them into conversation.

Yeah. You don't score points just for using big words. You score points for using the right words in the right context.

Yeah. Yeah. And I do also have, I noticed some students who do that almost at the expense of, of getting the grammar right.

So they'll use a fancy word in the sentence, but the sentence is wrongly constructed. So it doesn't make sense. Of course you can make small grammatical mistakes and I could still understand you.

That happens a lot, but it's a real contrast between, oh, I can see that you've learned this word, but you're not using the present tense correctly. So, you know, it

makes it look even more like you're not really kind of going about it the right way. So we've, we've talked before about, we've talked before about, um, things that you see on social media where some random person is teaching English and they say, don't say this, say this.

Don't say I'm tired. Say I am. I don't know.

Yeah. Or something. Yeah.

Something that obviously is really fancy and a rare word, but it's just going to seem really strange if you use it. So yes, we've, we've kind of talked about that before and that does lead people. It's just such an odd way to, uh, uh, describe levelling up your English, just, uh, converting normal everyday common phrases to much more literary, uh, phrases that, uh, people don't really use very much.

And just like the fact that it's rare and it's long, it doesn't mean that it's necessarily more advanced that often advanced communication is about effective communication. You know, that's what's driving your English is your ability to communicate complicated ideas, not just use complicated words to communicate simple ideas. Yes, exactly.

So I guess that's my advice. That's your advice. Okay, good.

Um, Kate, uh, you also, I've rephrased your advice, but yeah, I'll let you claim original copyright over the, over the idea. Um, Kate, you also do standup comedy in your free time. Um, uh, can you tell us what your latest gig was? What was your latest gig? And can you give us a quick gig report? Yes.

So my latest gig was on Friday. Um, we had a comedian visiting a guy called Mo Magdy or Mohammed Magdy, who is from Egypt, but lives in Hong Kong. And he was doing, he had done a little Asia tour.

So he went to Tokyo and Manila and I think Jakarta. I can't remember everywhere he went to, but he finished in Taipei and he performed here at a comedy club where I perform a lot. So I was one of the opening comedians for him.

Um, and it was great. It was, um, we had a reasonable sized audience, I think maybe about 50 people. Um, and yeah, Mo was great.

He was really funny. Um, I just did eight minutes as an opener and two other comedians also did eight minutes and I'm not going to lie, I felt a little bit underprepared, um, on the day because I'd had a busy day at work and I just hadn't really been in that mindset, you know? Um, so I kind of, yeah. Um, I put together some material that sort of fit together reasonably well.

Um, and then it worked really well. Yeah. People liked it.

Excellent. Good. Great.

Um, so I'm going to go into some other things later on. I'm still in the kind of Kate facts, uh, facts checking section of this. Uh, Kate, you also speak various languages.

Can you just give us a reminder? What languages do you speak and at what level? Okay. Um, so I speak really good English, top level English. I would say that's my level.

Yeah. Um, I speak good French. Uh, my French is fluent C2 level.

Um, I speak reasonable Chinese. Um, it's not as good as I would like it to be, uh, after two and a half years in Taiwan. And I, I studied Chinese at university as well.

So, um, I used to speak pretty good Chinese and then I didn't use it for like eight years when I was living in Paris and then I moved to Taiwan. It's definitely a lot better now than it was when I first got to Taiwan and it has improved since I got here. Um, but it's not great.

I'd like it to be better. I think it's maybe B1, B2. Yeah.

Really? Okay. I felt like it was a bit better than that. Like when I heard you speaking Chinese before, um, do you, do you speak Chinese a lot in your life? Well, I don't know.

It just sounded like it, you know, you know, when you hear someone speaking a foreign language, even if you don't speak that foreign language, you can detect a certain level of fluency and control in the way someone uses it, you know? And I heard you, you translated a joke, you translated that library joke. Um, and it sounded pretty good to me. All right.

I've done a whole standup set in Chinese. Yeah. So that was, that went well.

Um, but I still not practise. Really? Yeah. Cause you can't, yeah.

Cause you could just go up in English and kind of improvise your way through it. But in Chinese, yes, it's, it's tricky, right? Um, yeah. It was a very structured anecdote.

Yeah. That was how I did it. Um, yeah, maybe it's B2 level.

I don't know. Um, I don't speak as much Chinese as I would like to. Um, I obviously speak quite a lot of French at school because I'm at a French school now.

Um, and English for work. Um, sometimes I speak Chinese with my colleagues and I have some Taiwanese friends as well. Um, who I speak Chinese with sometimes.

Um, but I would say I've probably got more English speaking friends than Taiwanese friends. Um, and yeah, I just end up not speaking as much Chinese as I would like to. I did take classes for a while though.

Um, that was really good. Um, but I took them when I was still at the British council. So I was, I was working afternoons and evenings.

So I took some morning classes. Um, and then I started my new job. So I stopped taking them because now I work mornings and afternoons.

Right. I see. Um, but, uh, very good French and decent Chinese.

Um, what do you think? Are you a Mandarin Chinese? Are you a special case at learning languages or couldn't anyone do what you've done? I think anyone can do it. Um, but I think, uh, I think you have to have a different approach depending on the language. Um, I mean, I speak some other languages as well, but just to a much more basic level.

So I speak, um, very basic. I used to speak quite good Spanish when I was at school, but I've lost a lot of it. Um, and then very basic German and Italian as well.

Um, Italian, honestly, it's just like if Spanish and French had a baby, it would be Italian. So for Italian, I kind of just make it up if I'm not sure. And I normally get somewhere, um, maybe not where I meant to get to, but something happens.

You end up with a pizza in front of you. Yeah. I thought I'd ordered a pasta, but it's, you know, it's work.

I've got food. It's all right. It's all good.

Isn't it really? It'll do. Um, but yes, I think, I think anybody can do it, but I think, I mean, I don't know. I'm not like a neuroscientist or anything, obviously.

Um, I imagine some people, I think you probably have natural skills in certain directions, right? And that's probably true for all people. And I think, yes, for some people, it's probably true that languages are easier than they are for other people. And that's probably something about how your brain works.

Um, but also people are thrown into situations where they have to learn a language and they didn't expect to have to learn that language. You know, sometimes people have to, for example, leave their home country and go and make a home somewhere new. And they never expected to learn the language of the country they ended up in because, you know, they weren't, they didn't make a long-term plan.

They just had to go. Um, and you know, those people can, can absolutely master the language of the new country. And there's lots, hundreds, thousands of examples of people who have done just that, even if they wouldn't consider themselves linguists to begin with.

Um, so I think sometimes, sometimes people sort of get pushed into doing it and then they, then they learn how to master a language and then other people maybe would do it by choice and would master a language as well. Yeah. Motivation might be part of it.

You know, like the people who do it by choice just have something that's pushing them towards it. Whereas the people who were forced to, wouldn't normally have pushed themselves into it to the extent as someone like you who's just really interested in doing it. And as a result, they don't end up with the same level, but if they've been pushed into it by their circumstances, then they find they get a similar result as someone who just did it themselves.

Yeah. We could well do. Yeah.

Yeah. Especially if you're living in a country where you need to master a new language, you know, that's a big motivation itself. It's more of an external extrinsic motivation, as we say, rather than intrinsic.

Right. I imagine it would be more of a struggle as well. If you're sort of being forced to learn it, that would probably be learning.

Yeah. If you sort of resent it. Yeah.

Yeah. What about you though? You always say your French isn't very good. Is it still not very good? Still not very good, but yeah, I think it's partially to do with the fact that I just always use English all the time, you know, like at home, we speak English.

I speak English with my kids. I speak English at work. I speak English on the podcast.

If I'm doing stand up, I do it in English. And then all the bits in between are in French, you know? So as a result, my French is just constantly in, it's just in between, it's just in a constant in between state. Yeah.

Yeah. So yeah, that's not, it's not great. It's not my favourite topic of conversation, my French.

Yeah. But still, uh, other things, Kate, you like baking and you have a proper professional French, uh, baking qualification. So your professional level baking skills.

Yes. What's the, what's the last, are you still baking? What's the last thing you baked? I still bake, but not anywhere near as much as I used to because in Taiwan, I don't have a proper kitchen, um, because most apartments don't come with a proper kitchen. Um, you know, with like a, with a built-in oven and sort of space to prepare things and that sort of thing.

Um, there's a lot of studio apartments or, um, yeah, just sort of apartments where you would just have sort of a fridge and maybe a hot plate or one ring that you can use for boiling water or whatever. Um, but eating out is a lot cheaper here than it is in, in Paris or in the UK. Um, so people will eat out a lot more.

Um, but I do, I have a very good friend here who has a real kitchen because she's got a family apartment that she lives in, her and her daughter live there. Um, and I

actually stayed with them for a while when I first moved here. Um, and then I stayed with them again recently because my lease on my last apartment ended.

And then in between when I was looking for a new one, which is the one I'm in now, I was staying with them again. So I did bake a little bit then. I think the last thing I baked was, um, Taiwanese mince pies, which I invented.

I think they're the only ones in the world. Wait a minute. You need to explain mince pies and Taiwanese mince pies.

So mince pies are a traditional British Christmas sweet treat, even though they've got the name mince. So it's, it's M I N C E, which sounds a bit like the word mince, like M I N T S, but it's not, it's with C E at the end. Um, which normally refers to meat.

So minced meat is meat that's been cut into very small pieces. Um, and they're called mince pies because originally they had meat in them, minced meat, and also, um, dried fruit and spices and sugar and sometimes alcohol as well. Um, and they were invented a really, really long time ago, but I think the recipe that we kind of look at now that we call the original mince pies is maybe from the Victorian era.

So that's 250 years ago or so. Um, and at that point they did put meat in them, um, because the Victorians made some really crazy food. Um, and then after a while, people realised that they would be much nicer without the meat, just as like a sweet treat.

That's just got dried fruit. So it's got like raisins and chopped apple and orange peel, all kind of mixed together with spices and sugar. And then you let it soak for, we can let it soak for a long time.

Um, over a year actually it can keep because there's nothing in it that's going to go off. Yeah. Um, and then you make a nice sweet pastry and you make little pies and you put the filling, the mince meat, so-called mince meat, even though there's no meat inside it.

Um, you put that inside the pies and you put a nice little sweet pastry on top and then you put them in the oven to bake. So that's mince pies. And then, um, yes, I didn't say that.

You did, but I just wanted to remind everyone. Um, uh, yeah, traditional Christmas thing. Okay.

So Taiwanese mince pies then, what's the difference? So, um, British mince pies, as I've said, contain things like raisins, um, apple, orange peel, things like that. Um, which are the kind of dried fruits and sometimes fresh fruit, like apple that you could find in the UK at Christmas time. Um, so then I decided to make a Taiwanese version using Taiwanese dried fruits.

So, which are really big here. There's fruit, drying fruit is a good way to preserve it, I guess. So that's one of the reasons why it's popular here in Taiwan where it's very humid.

So food goes off quite quickly. Um, so I went and found lots of Taiwanese dried fruit and I chopped it all up and mixed it all together still with spices, um, and some sugar and some alcohol and that's Taiwanese mince meat. So instead of the British ingredients, it's got, um, mango and pineapple and, uh, red guava and pomelo, which is a type of citrus and what else? Star fruit.

Um, I can't remember what else now, but yes, sort of, I guess we call them tropical fruits. So Taiwanese fruits, um, goji berries, also roselle. Um, yeah, all mixed together and I let it marinate and I make the mince pies.

And the results, the results, I make the best mince pies in the world. Yeah. Um, not to brag, but I do.

Um, and now I make the only Taiwanese mince pies in the world. So I agree. Excellent.

If only someone would invent some sort of, uh, internet-based, um, web, web-based cake transferring technology, you could actually 3d print. I could 3d print them or something like that. Alas, not this time.

Oh yeah. You're drinking a cup of hot beverage. Uh, last time you had a, if you remember last time you had a round mug and that sent us off on a, on a tangent about the science physics of why a round mug retains the heat.

Uh, this time, because we're not physicists. No, but you know, we had a stab at it. Certainly.

But this time, yeah, we tried this time. You've got a different mug in it. I'm curious because there's something written on it.

I've got a different mug. It's a political joke. How political is your podcast? Oh, it's not that political, but you know, it's okay.

Is it? Guardian reading, tofu eating, Woker Artie. No, I don't know the quote. I think what's the quote.

The quote is from a very horrible British politician. Um, can I name her? Yeah. Okay.

Um, her name's Suella Braverman. Um, so, I mean, you know who she is, but I guess a previous government, which was a conservative government. Um, and they caused lots of problems by, um, giving money to their friends and not spending it on things like schools and hospitals, basically, um, sum it up.

And then she decided, um, to blame all of the country's problems. She made a speech in parliament where she said all of the country's problems were because of the Guardian reading, tofu eating, Woker Artie. Um, which basically means people who are on the other side of the political spectrum from her party.

So more left-wing people and the Woker Artie refers to people who are woke because woke is now like a negative word, but originally woke just means kind of aware of the different types of injustice that exist in the world. Um, which I think is a good thing. I think you should be aware when somebody is being discriminated against.

Generally injustice is generally a bad thing. Yeah. So you should probably notice it when it happens.

So anyway, so she got mocked a lot, um, for this quote, where she blamed all of the country's problems while her own party was in power. She blamed all of the country's problems on the Guardian reading, tofu eating, Woker Artie. And then I found this mug that said, member of the Guardian reading, tofu eating, Woker Artie.

And I thought that's the mug for me. Guardian reading. So reading the Guardian newspaper, which is a left-leaning newspaper, tofu eating, um, apparently, apparently people who eat tofu, uh, are a terrible thing.

Um, in, in the UK, like maybe in Taiwan, maybe in Japan, eating tofu is just totally normal. Uh, whereas in the UK, if you eat tofu, you might be seen as being a sort of, I don't know what really. Um, I think it's associated with like vegans and vegetarians who, for some people have a bad reputation because they have a reputation for being quite like, like preachy.

Like they're trying to make everyone into a vegetarian or a vegan, uh, which I think is a very old fashioned view of vegans and vegetarians. I don't think that's true anymore. Um, but yes, they have this kind of negative view that if you're, if you're a real person, you should be eating meat all the time or something.

I don't know. Yeah. Yeah.

Uh, right. Well, okay. Always an interesting mug involved.

Um, can I show you my favourite spoon? Yeah, of course you can show me your favourite spoon. This is my favourite spoon. It's a little cat.

See audio listeners. Kate is showing me a spoon, which is, which is in the, so the bottom half of the spoon is like a normal spoon. Uh, and the top half of the spoon is shaped in the form of a cat with its paws hanging forwards.

And it is formed. It's like a little kind of clip. So you can actually hang the spoon on the edge of your mug.

And it looks like there's a little cat sitting on the edge, peeking over the top. Very nice. Yes.

And I got it from a, um, a town in Taiwan, which is a village, which is known as the cat village. Um, it's been taken over by cats. Although some people do still live there.

Um, but it's mostly inhabited by cats now. Well, and they're, they're like running the town. They've got post offices, representatives in parliament, all of it.

They're running the schools, the hospitals. Yeah. I mean, genuinely taken over by cats.

I think what happened was, so it used to be a mining village. Um, and they, I don't think they mine there anymore. Um, so when they stopped mining, then a lot of people left the village.

So there were lots of empty houses and, um, lots of cats maybe got left behind, or there were just lots of cats there anyway. Um, and then it kind of became known as a place that was full of cats and, you know, people love cats. So it became like a tourist attraction, um, to go to this village, which I think is called Hutong, if I remember rightly, or maybe Hutong.

I can't remember. I'll one of my best friends came to visit Taiwan and she loves cats. Um, so she was like, the only thing I want to do is go to this cat village.

Um, so we went there on the train from Taipei. It's really close to Taipei and I got the spoon, um, and it was raining. So actually the cats were not sort of out and about.

Most of them were just like chilling under shelter, but there's cats in all the cafes, you know, um, everything's cats. So there are humans, there are humans there too, running the cafes and stuff, but there are also loads of cats. Okay.

So that was me thinking it was just cats. No, sorry. Sorry.

I, I oversold that for you. Unfortunately. Yeah.

But it's, that's still cool. Great. Cat lovers.

This is the place for you. Go there. So Taiwan, there you are, you're living in Taiwan.

You've been there for two years now. Um, yeah. Two and a half.

Yeah. Two and a half years. Yeah.

So how, how is it? How's life in Taiwan? Is it different to life in Paris? Yes. Yeah. It's very different.

Um, yes, it is very different in many ways. Um, trying to think what the main differences are. It's, it's incredibly safe.

That's one of the best things about Taiwan. Um, and Paris is not always safe. There's quite a lot of pickpockets.

Um, as a woman walking alone in Paris, there are places where you don't feel safe. I think also as a man walking alone, there are places where you don't feel safe as well. Um, and that, you know, there are some problems around crime and in some parts of Paris more than others, but you know, I would say it's sort of a typical European city in that respect.

You know, a lot of cities have those kinds of problems. Um, Taiwan is incredibly safe. Um, there's very, very little crime.

Um, I think from what I've heard from Taiwanese friends, there's little crime, tiny crime. It's just done by borrowers, you know, borrowers. Yeah.

They're like smaller than hobbits. They're tiny little guys that steal your cat spoon or something. Yeah.

That would really upset me. I think a cat spoon would be, would be quite big for them to carry. Actually.

Yeah. People who don't know the borrowers was a book. I can't remember the name of the author.

I think it's Mary something. You're looking it up properly. It sounds like it was like a Mary, it was, it was a children's book that was written quite a long time ago.

I read it as a kid, but when I read it, I think it was already quite old. And, um, it's about like tiny little people who live in, in your house and they sort of hide away, um, like behind the walls and the little gaps between the walls. They're like tiny people.

They're friendly people. Um, and the idea is every time you lose something in your house, you know, like you do your washing and then one of your socks has gone. You can't figure out why, uh, things like that.

The idea is it's the borrowers that have taken it to use it for their own life. So they're good people. They're not doing anything wrong.

They're just borrowing the borrowers. Mary Norton. Wow.

That's it. Okay. I half remembered you were right about the Mary thing and yeah.

Okay. So yeah, it's just a thing that we all know. I read the borrowers when I was a kid as well.

So does it say when it was published? No, I don't have that information. I could probably find out. Hold on.

Um, 1952. Oh, it's quite old. Okay.

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Um, yes. A family of tiny people who live secretly in the walls and floors of an English house and borrow from the big people in order to survive. Yeah.

All right. Cool. How do we end up talking about the borrowers? I can't remember.

I've got no idea how we got to the borrowers. I was just wondering that myself. No, but it's very safe.

Taiwan is very safe. Little crime, little crime crime, except for the little crime. There's very little, there's very little crime.

It's the borrowers borrowing things. Okay. Very fierce.

What about traffic and transport in Taiwan in Paris? You know, there's a lot of, uh, traffic jams and drivers get very angry and they beat their horns and they have arguments and shake their fists at each other and get out of their cars and in order to argue and then everyone else is beeping constantly. Transport, the Metro is very, very crowded and kind of bit dirty and smelly. Uh, what about in Taiwan? Is it similar? Different? In Taiwan, the public transport is brilliant.

Um, the Metro, which they call the MRT, which stands for Metro Rapid Transit or Metropolitan Rapid Transit, I think. Um, yes, the MRT is spotlessly clean and very affordable. Um, and the stations are all enormous and brightly lit and they've always got staff on duty and then they work really well.

Um, they've always got toilets. I had a friend who visited who was like delighted that there are toilets everywhere, which shouldn't be something to be excited about, but it's true that if you're out and about in Paris and you're looking for a public toilet, it's a nightmare. Yeah.

Yeah. Good luck. You have to go into a cafe and do this performance of like, Oh, I'm terribly sorry.

Can I use your toilet? We have to buy a coffee at the counter. Yeah. Which just makes you need a toilet more.

Exactly. It's the opposite of what you want. It's awful.

Um, yeah, here all of the MRT stations have toilets and everywhere else as well. There's just public toilets everywhere. Um, the traffic is, is good.

I don't drive here. I haven't driven since the day I took my driving test in Paris about seven years ago. So I don't drive.

You're a paper driver. That's what they call you in Japan. Do they? That's good.

But even the licence isn't made of paper anymore, but maybe it still is in Japan. Even though, yeah. But as far as I know, people still use that expression.

But when I was living there, yes, people would, for some reason that it came up quite a lot. Uh, people would say, I'm a paper driver. It's like an English expression that they use in Japan.

They would say it in English. Okay. Yeah.

Yeah. Um, so, okay. So you're a paper driver.

Yeah. But yes, I've heard for driving here. It's, um, it can be a bit confusing.

I think the different lanes and things, but I imagine it's like anywhere else when you get used to it, it's fine. Um, yes. And cycling is quite popular and very safe.

People cycle on the pavement though. Um, Oh, that wouldn't go down well in Paris. Or generally anywhere else I've lived or been really.

I don't think I've seen other places where cycling on the pavement is a thing, except for where there's like a designated cycle lane that happens to also be on the pavement. That's a different thing. And here you sometimes have that, but also even when you don't, you can cycle on the pavement.

Really surprised me. Cycling in Paris is like the big sort of divisive issue these days. I mean, you were here.

Yeah. It was like two and a half years ago. So it was kind of the same story, but you know, the, the city's been transformed to an extent with lots of cycle lanes around.

And, uh, you know, people haven't quite learned to handle it yet. You know, the cyclists jump the red lights constantly and pedestrians and cyclists are clashing quite a lot, quite a lot. Um, people don't, people don't behave very well.

Um, so that's a bit of an issue. Hopefully everyone's going to learn how to cycle in this city in a civil kind of way. I used to cycle in Paris.

Yeah, you did. Jumping the lights is, is much more frowned upon here. I think there is in Paris.

Um, sometimes I cycle to work and if I know a crossing well and I can see that nothing's coming, then I might jump the lights. Um, or if it's very early in the morning and there's very little traffic and again, I can check carefully and nothing's coming. Little traffic that that's the borrowers in their cars.

Yeah. But I think I jumped the lights more in Paris. Yeah.

What about pedestrians? Do pedestrians in Taiwan cross the road when there's a red man or do they, you know, like again, going back to my experience in Japan, if we compare that, uh, people would stand in a big group at a crossroads with a completely empty road and everyone will wait until the green man comes on before crossing. And if there's a green man, people will run down the pavement so that they can get there in time to cross the road. So they don't have to stand waiting.

Um, very, very strict. Sorry. I should've done this before.

Okay. Sorry. Sorry.

Sorry. No worries. I will take this opportunity to have a little drink of water.

Drinky drink, drink, drink, drink. Oh, I've been glugging away on my drink without a second thought for you. Sorry.

Refreshing. No, it's okay. I use, I use a water break as a kind of, uh, ad break often.

Oh, okay. I'll take a pause for water and while I'm having my water, I'll insert an ad slot. That's a good idea.

Hmm. Done. Plugged in.

Sorry. I shouldn't have seen that coming. It's all right.

So, um, yeah. So people generally will wait for the green man. They don't break the rules and cross at the red man.

Yeah. On a, on a small road, you can kind of cross wherever's convenient, but definitely on a road with more than, with like a double lanes of traffic, people absolutely wait. Um, yeah.

For the, for the green man. Uh, and the green man here, um, like he, he moves, his legs move like this. Um, and then when you've got, and there's a countdown as well.

And when you've got less time left, he goes faster. He starts like running. It's really cute, but apparently they're going to phase it out.

They're going to get rid of it. I heard. Why would they do that? What they're going to get rid of the running little running man.

That's sad, isn't it? Too much electricity. You know, it's like double the amount of electricity when he runs. Um, one thing, one thing in Paris that, uh, struck me and I'm, I realised I'm mentioning some of the negative things about Paris and there are obviously positive things too.

Um, but one thing that I noticed, especially when I came here is the level of like, uh, friction or disagreement that you see between people. Like you'll see people arguing or complaining and a lot of friction. Um, is there the same thing in Taiwan? Do you see people arguing like car drivers arguing or people in shops arguing or complaining? No, no, you don't see it to the same level at all.

Um, I think, but I think Taiwanese people, I had a Taiwanese student once a long time ago who told me that Taiwanese people are like, um, like the Italians of East Asia, which she meant that they are the most kind of expressive of all the kind of East Asian countries, which I guess, you know, you'd include like South Korea,

Japan, China, um, and other countries nearby, you know. Um, and when I moved here, I did notice that people are, people are quite expressive, I would say. Um, but I think they don't tend to express much anger.

It's very unusual to hear someone like shouting or people kind of arguing. Um, but again, you know, my Chinese isn't perfect. And also I'm only, you know, I'm only seeing sort of certain parts of society.

So I can't say that's a rule all over. Um, but I would say, yeah, less so than in French culture where I think it's, I think French people can be quite, quite direct. It's maybe a culture where it's more accepted to just, you just say if something isn't the way you expected or isn't what you wanted.

And I think in Taiwan, that's less the culture here. There's a more kind of polite, there's a kind of rules of politeness. I don't want to say French people aren't polite because French people are often very polite.

Um, but there's a more kind of rules of maintaining a certain behaviour publicly that I didn't notice as much in France, at least not in Paris. No, I don't want to suggest either that French people aren't polite because French people actually sort of very polite, often more polite than, than in the UK. You know, I'm thinking of the way that people say bonjour and bonsoir to each other.

And you know, there are certain sort of rules of quite clearly defined rules of engagement in terms of the way you address people and the way that you turn up to an event or a dinner party. And it feels a lot more formal sometimes than it is in the UK, for example, where we sort of more quickly will use someone's first name. We kind of take on more informal kind of language patterns and things than they do in France.

In some ways it's more polite and more formal than the UK. Definitely. Yeah.

In some situations. What about in Taiwan? What about the weather? And do you have earthquakes? Yes, we have earthquakes. We had, when was it? About six months after I moved here.

So, yeah, going on two years ago, I think it'd be two years in April. There was a really big earthquake that was the biggest one in 25 years. Yeah, so it must have been just after I spoke to you, I think.

Yeah, and that was a big one. Yeah, I remember that one quite distinctly. It woke me up in the morning and I rushed outside.

I was living in a sublet at the time, the one that had the great spherical mug that I miss very much because it didn't belong to me. So I'd leave it behind. Very sad.

But I was living there and it was a rooftop. So there was a roof terrace at the back of the apartment and I had to run out to the roof terrace. And then there was a building being built quite nearby that I could see it was covered in scaffolding and had that kind of blue plastic sheeting covering it that you get on building sites sometimes.

And I watched that whole building shake from side to side while I was also shaking. And I remember thinking that if that building falls, the whole neighbourhood is going to feel the impact of that. And it was really like it looked like it could fall, but it didn't.

Obviously that would have been big news. And afterwards I was just like, Oh God, I wish I'd taken my phone with me and recorded that because I couldn't solve that footage to the BBC. I think the important thing is that I was lucky to survive the earthquake and should probably not be thinking about whether or not I got it recorded.

So yeah, that was a really big one. Actually, I say I'm lucky to survive it, but Taiwan had an incredibly low death toll from that earthquake considering the size of the earthquake. I think in total, I think under 20 people died in the earthquake and a lot of them were hikers.

So there was rockfall and you're just very unlucky if you're hiking in a gorge or something at that point and there's rockfall, you can't predict that. And the buildings are designed to deal with earthquakes. They flex and shake.

This is again, same in Japan. Obviously they get a lot of earthquakes there and I experienced a few of them, you know, a few when I was up high in buildings and the building sways left and right, which is an extraordinary experience. It feels like someone is bumping the building.

It's like someone's pushing, like you're sitting on a chair and someone's pushing your chair and then the building sways left and right and looking out the window, you see everything around you. It's like, oh my God, the way it sways and then bumps and sways again. Yeah, what a crazy thing that is to experience if you've never experienced it before.

Yeah, it is quite scary. There've been some others since that big one, but nowhere near as big, luckily. Yeah, okay, thank goodness for that.

Have you had any misadventures out there? Misadventures. Or adventures. Misadventures.

I'm just thinking of things in the past, like you've talked about missing trains. Oh no, yeah, that was a bad day. I think about that quite a lot.

You wake up in the middle of the night. I still think about it. Wrong platform.

Which platform? A friend of mine here, well, I don't know him very well, but a guy I know here missed a train once and he accidentally got on the wrong train. They've got a really good high-speed rail service in Taiwan that can take you kind of all over the country and he accidentally got on the wrong high-speed rail all the way down to the south of the country, like the furthest it goes. And he realised once he was on it, but obviously it doesn't stop very often, right? Because it's high-speed, so it only goes to three or four stops on the way.

So when he was on the way and he realised he was on the wrong train, he went and told a guard who didn't speak very good English, but they managed to communicate with each other. And the guard just sort of, at the final stop, he just like escorted him off the train and gave him to another guard, who then like escorted him along onto another train that took him back to where he'd come from. So it was like a whole day of him just sitting on a train being like, oh no, I got on the wrong train.

But they were so nice about it, apparently, you know, they didn't make him buy a ticket or anything. They were just like, well, that was silly. Off you go.

Yeah, yeah, yeah. It's when you don't want to get on the wrong train when it's a high-speed train taking you to the opposite end of the country. So unlucky.

I mean, it's a small country, but still. Still, indeed. Still, yes.

So no, misadventures, no. I mean, I think I've been very lucky in Taiwan. It's also a country where it's very convenient as a country.

It's very kind of set up to make life easy in many ways. There's still some things that are strangely low-tech, like banking is quite low-tech still. So I have like a checking book, a banking book, which you just don't get in, for example, in the UK, you don't get that anymore.

You know, it's all kind of digital. You can get printed statements if you still want to, but here I've got a banking book. And so some things can be quite low-tech, but overall, I would say, yeah, the country's kind of set up to be convenient, which I think reduces the risk of misadventures, as you said.

Because that time that I caught the wrong train in Paris, it was 100% because of bad signage on the platform. So yeah, it drove me mad. The signage here is really good.

Yeah. You've talked before about the tip-top signage. I'm so obsessed with it.

How satisfying. Going back to your Chinese, you mentioned before, it's all right. Yeah, it's all right.

I'm just curious about a couple of things. So one is that you, before you said you were using an app to improve your Chinese, do you remember that? You said you were using an app called Skrita? I still am. You still are? Okay.

So how would you rate- Yeah, I've used it every day since I moved to Taiwan. Every day? Wow. So that's like a two and a half year streak.

Yeah. Should I check my streak? My streak shows how many days I've lived in Taiwan, which I find so pleasing. It's keeping track of that for me.

Let's see. 918. 918 straight days.

That is an unbelievable streak. So tell me about this app. How does it work? And how would you rate its effectiveness? I would rate it 10 out of 10.

I think it's a great app. Seriously? Oh, wow. What does it do? So you can either input your own vocabulary or you can use their existing decks of vocabulary.

They call it a deck, like a deck of cards, because they are vocabulary cards. So let's imagine you want to learn food and drink vocabulary. So you would look at one of their decks.

I don't know. I looked at one about fruit, for example. And then for each card, it will show you how to write it.

So the stroke order, because when you write Chinese, you've got to write the lines in the correct order. And it'll get you to practise that three times. It'll show you the pronunciation and you can also listen to it.

It will obviously show you the meaning, the definition. So you go through all of those things and then you can test yourself on it. So it will come up with the card and for example, it'll give you the definition in English and you have to write it in Chinese.

If you want to, you can get it to show you the definition and the pronunciation and then you write it or you can do just definition. And it will also check on pronunciation and check on the meaning as well by just showing you the Chinese and you've got to come up with the definition in English. And then when you've done it, so say it asks me to write the word for grape in Chinese, I would write it and then I can say how easy I found it.

So there's four options, which is, which are, English, I speak am. What are the options? I can't remember. There's one that means that I didn't get it right, but it's not fail.

It's more positive than that. Oh yeah. One of them is forgot, meaning I didn't get it right.

Then you can choose hard and you can choose easy. You can choose got it or you can choose easy. So if you click, I forgot it.

Then the next time you review your cards, it will come up. And if you click easy, then it won't test you again for say a week. And then if you click easy again, it wouldn't test you again for like a month because it knows that you know that card.

So it's spaced repetition is what it does. So yeah, showing you the cards that you need. And the reason it's so good is because it makes you write the characters and you have to get the stroke order correct.

So that's, that's the best way to practise Chinese. And that's why it's so good. It doesn't get you to put those words into sentences.

No, it doesn't. But then it kind of comes down to how strict you are with yourself because I would say if I, if I see a word and it asks me the definition and I can tell you the definition, but I couldn't use it in a sentence, I would probably still mark it as a hard word or maybe even forgot. So in your mind, you're kind of, you're considering putting those words into sentences.

You're kind of thinking about, Oh, can I actually use this? Yeah. So that's, that's that thing. There's like the, maybe one of those things that perhaps you do that not everyone would automatically think of doing, which is as well as making sure that you've got the stroke order correct and you understand the meaning.

There's that other vital step, which is like, can I actually use this to say something? And you're always automatically thinking that. And that's part of your process for deciding whether you found it easy or not. Yeah.

But spaced repetition. Yeah. It's a spaced repetition flashcard app.

Yeah. I mean, they work. Yeah, they work.

And the reason why it's such a good one for Chinese is because of that writing function that most spaced repetition apps obviously don't come with. So that's why it's so good for Chinese. And it is, I mean, you're right that it's not testing your ability to use them in sentences, but then that's not really the purpose of the app.

It's really a vocabulary memorisation app. So for that purpose, I would give it 10 out of 10. Definitely.

Yeah. I see. Okay.

Very interesting. I suppose in English, similar apps, any kind of spaced repetition app will do more or less the same thing. But the one that everyone talks about is Anki.

A-N-K-I. I don't know if you've heard of that. Yeah.

I used that one when I first studied Chinese. Yeah. You did.

Okay. It worked all right. Do you think it's decent? Yeah.

Yeah. Yeah. It's good.

And there's, I mean, you could also use things like Quizlet as well. Quizlet is a flashcard app. And the idea of Quizlet is that you input your own information.

So you could also have, you know, if you're studying, I don't know, biology and you need to learn something about the human body, you could put in all of these like body parts and you could test yourself on those, for example. Yeah. Or if you're a subscriber to my premium podcast, you can use the vocab lists that I provide and turn those into flashcard decks if you wanted to.

That would be a good idea, wouldn't it? Great idea. Duolingo. Have you ever used Duolingo? I am using Duolingo.

I used Duolingo to learn a bit of German before I went to Germany a few years ago. And then when I first got here, I did use it for Chinese for a while, but I think it's, the Chinese isn't great. And also it uses simplified characters and Taiwan uses complex characters or traditional characters.

So I wasn't reading the same characters on Duolingo, which is less useful. And I think it's really, really good for more beginner level, certainly in Chinese. So it kind of got to the point where I was just repeating things that I didn't really need and I found it a bit frustrating.

So then I didn't want to lose my Duolingo streak. So I switched to something else. I went back to German for a while.

And then I started doing chess on Duolingo. You can do chess on Duolingo. That's odd.

Yeah. Does that involve learning language as well? No, it's just learning how to play chess. They also do maths and music.

Really? I didn't know that. Yeah. So I picked it mostly because I didn't know anything about chess and I wanted something kind of new and challenging on Duolingo that would keep me going so I wouldn't lose my streak because the German obviously isn't that useful when you live in Taiwan.

And I might go back to it at some point soon because I do like German. I think it's a cool language. And yet the Chinese wasn't great.

So yeah, I changed to chess so I could keep my streak. Do you want to know what my Duolingo streak is? Yes, please. This is from before you moved to Taiwan, I suppose.

Yeah, yeah. Every day, every single day. Yeah.

It's a bit sad, isn't it? 1201 days. 1201 day streak. That is ridiculous.

Duolingo is sad because I haven't done it today. Yeah. Do you not find that- I've done it for 1201 days.

Chill out. Yeah. Duo is the name of the owl, this green owl.

Do you not find that he, she, they, are a bit sort of passive aggressive, a little bit manipulative? Yeah. I turned off all the notifications. And do you know what? Actually, one of the only reasons I have it is because I did rate Squitter 10 out of 10.

But I have to admit, one thing that they don't have is they don't send you a reminder to practise every day. Okay. You don't need it though.

Well, Duolingo, you can set it to send you reminders, but I'm not doing that. I hate all the messages I get as it is. I wouldn't opt into more messages.

But what it does do, as I've just shown you on screen, is it does the sad little owl face that's going like, why haven't you practised yet? So I use that to remind me to make sure I've done my Squitter. Because I have to do Squitter first in the day because I don't want to lose my Squitter streak. Because that's how long- So Duolingo doesn't realise that it's actually helping to promote a competitor.

An app that I pay for. Yes, right. But yeah, the owl though, he can be a bit, he, they, it, I don't know.

It can be a bit sort of like, I'm worried about you. I'm worried about you, Kate. You haven't practised.

I'm worried about you. It's horrible, isn't it? That level of guilt. Guilt-tripping.

Yeah, I don't care because it's not a real thing. It works though. I think that's the thing.

It works. Does it? Do you use Duolingo? No, I mean, it works in terms of it guilt-tripping you into using it. That works.

I don't actually use Duolingo, surprise, surprise. And it's a little bit, I don't know, as controversial as the word, but you get, you know, there's like a community of language learners on the internet, you know, on YouTube, YouTubers, polyglots, the, the internet polyglot community. Um, and quite a lot of people think that Duolingo is rubbish and they, they make videos about how bad it is and stuff like that.

So I was just curious as to whether you found it useful or not. Um, I have to admit, I still don't know how to play chess. Well, there you go.

But you certainly spend a lot of time on Duolingo. Yeah. Yeah, I do.

I have no idea how to play chess. I've got no clue. Really? Yeah.

Okay. Okay. Now I'm going to, can I test your Chinese? Yeah, go on.

All right. How are you going to know if I get it right or not? No idea, but my listeners will know. Oh, that's fair.

I don't mean to put you on the spot, but I do mean to put you on the spot, I suppose. Last time what you did is you told a joke, the librarian joke, which is a great joke because it works across all different languages, right? Um, the joke being man walks into a library, says, um, I'd like fish and chips, please. The librarian says, no, uh, this is a library.

And the person goes, oh, sorry. Oh, fish and chips, please. Great.

And you translated that into Chinese. Now I've got a couple of other jokes for you. I wonder if you could try and translate them into Chinese.

This might be. Okay, cool. They can't be wordplay, right? Because that won't work.

Exactly. So I tried to find jokes that are not based on a double meaning of a word. Okay.

Okay. Um, I don't know if this is going to work. So this is a Tim Vine joke.

Oh, okay. Great. I don't know if this, I don't think this is a wordplay joke, but let's see.

So we'll see. So the joke is this. I rang up my local swimming baths and I said, is that the local swimming baths? And he said, well, it depends where you're calling from.

Okay. It's not a double meaning joke, is it? It's not, but I can't remember how to say local. Is it di dao? I think that's authentic in that sense of local.

I'm going to look up local. Can I do that now? Yeah, of course. That's the joke listeners, right? You notice that it's the, it's the joke is really based around the word local.

Is that the local swimming baths? Well, it depends where you're calling from. Oh, this is hard. Is it dang di? Oh, okay.

Yeah, it's dang di. I'm still trying to find a good translation. Hang on.

Oh no, my keyboard's in French. I know that. I know that problem.

Trying to write a Q and it comes out as an A. It looks like, yeah, so annoying. I think it's dang di. I think that's the correct meaning of dang di.

Okay. So, I think it should be I think it's that, if dang di is correct. So, listeners, if you speak Chinese, you can let us know how Kate got on with that.

Give her a score out of three. Give her a score out of three. Out of three? Why is it out of three? It's just easier, isn't it? What would you prefer, out of ten? Yeah.

It's easy to give a score out of three. It's much easier to rate something. It's my podcast.

I decide the rules. Okay, how about this one? This is a Bob Monkhouse joke. Do you remember Bob Monkhouse? I know of him.

Sort of a TV guy, TV presenter from the 80s. Very funny man. Anyway, his joke is this.

I want to die peacefully in my sleep like my father, not screaming in terror like his passengers. I don't know if everyone got the joke. I want to die peacefully in my sleep like my father, not screaming in terror like his passengers.

So, there's a subtext to the joke, isn't there, Kate? Can you tell us what it is? So, can you do that while I look up the word for passenger? Yeah, I'd be glad to do that. So, let me dissect the frog. So, I want to die in my sleep like my father.

So, his father died in his sleep, died peacefully in his sleep, which is what we all want, isn't it? Really, this is all we can hope for, is to die peacefully in our sleep. I want to die peacefully in my sleep like my father, not screaming in terror like his passengers. So, the second line there tells us, gives us more information.

It tells us that actually his father was probably a pilot of an aeroplane, and he died because he fell asleep while piloting the plane, and the plane crashed, and everybody was killed, including all the passengers who screamed in terror as the plane, no doubt, plummeted towards the ground, or maybe crashed into the side of a mountain, or something like that. So, I want to die peacefully in my sleep like my father, not screaming in terror like his passengers. So, it's a clever joke because it tells you, you read between the lines, and you understand what actually happened, that his father fell asleep while piloting a plane, and everyone died.

What's the Chinese version though, Kate? Hilarious, what a great ending! Okay, so I think, I found a word for passenger, which I think is correct. You know, you should always just be careful of online dictionaries, or dictionaries generally, but I think it's 乘客. 乘 is like the verb for like, to take a form of transport, and 客 is a word that can mean like guest, or visitor, or passenger in this case.

And then I also had to look up terror, and I found 恐惧, is it 恐? No, 恐惧. And then I also had to look up screaming, and I found 尖叫. So, 尖叫, is it? Yeah.

So, I got 乘坐, and 恐惧, and 尖叫. Okay, so, I think it should be 我想要跟我爸爸一样在睡觉的时候安静地 舍去。我想要跟他的乘客一样在恐惧的尖叫舍去。Okay, I think that was a very clumsy translation. Okay, listeners, you can give you a grade out of three, up to three stars for that particular translation.

Okay, good. I'm glad. I'm glad that you enjoyed that part.

I think we've only got about 10 minutes left. So, let's crack on. Well, I wanted to say, we don't have a lot of time left.

So, you mentioned coffee shops, right? Yes. Last time you said on the podcast that you, there you were living in Taiwan, still there, you said that you were struggling to find a place to get a really great cup of coffee in the morning, on the way to work. I did actually receive a few comments.

Not on the way to work. It was more like, sorry, I interrupted you. It was more like, because I was working in the afternoons and evenings, I wanted a coffee shop where I could go and like chill out in the morning and enjoy my morning.

So, not just to pick up a coffee to go, but more like a nice area to stay and spend time. Okay, yeah, so that's what you were looking for. I did get a few comments.

I don't know if I should read them out now. Maybe I'll do that after. But you have a coffee related thing to report, don't you? Yeah, which in many ways is the reason why we ended up doing this podcast again, because I contacted you to tell you about it.

So, a few, I guess like maybe a couple of months ago now, I was up in the north of Taipei in an area I didn't go to very often, but I was there with a friend because she wanted to go to like a homeware store and I was helping her sort out some stuff for her new apartment. So, we went to a coffee shop on our way that's called Intro Coffee. And we were having a very nice time there.

We had all this like delicious, brunchy, brunchy, breakfasty, lunchy food and some very good coffee as well. And then someone came over to us and said, excuse me, are you Kate? And I said, oh yeah, I am. I don't think I know you.

And they said, oh, I listened to Luke's English podcast and I sent you a message because I run this coffee shop and their name was Tian. They were very, very nice. And they said, you know, you said you were looking for coffee shops in Taipei and I found you on Instagram and I sent you this message.

And I realised, I had realised actually already that on Instagram, there's a message requests. And I learned this, I think maybe six months ago. So, any messages that were sent like a long time ago, they've gone now.

So, I had never seen Tian's message. I did realise about six months ago that I had probably missed other messages, but it was way too late. And yeah, Tian offered us coffee, which was delicious.

These like really amazing different types of coffee. One of them was like a coconut milk coffee latte. I can't remember what the other one was.

It was really fresh and minty. And I think it had like soda water as well. And it was like an iced coffee, very refreshing.

It was delicious. And I took a picture and I sent it to you. And yeah, it's thanks to Tian that we decided to do another podcast really, because I messaged you about that.

And it was such a lovely experience. And yeah, shout out to Tian and to Intro Coffee, which is in the north of Taipei. I want to say it's near Shupai Metro Station.

I might have got that wrong. But it's up in the north. And it was delicious coffee and delicious food and a very lovely space, a beautiful space and all based around music and decorated with different types of records.

They do events there as well. And I think they do live music sometimes in the evenings. Yeah, it was beautiful and absolutely great.

And just so lovely to be recognised from the podcast as well. I was there and came over to say hi. Yeah, that is that is really, really lovely.

Very happy that that happened for several reasons. One that you, you found a great place for a morning coffee and a time to spend, you know, enjoying yourself. And yeah, that you had a lovely encounter with a Taiwanese lepster, which is a wonderful thing.

Yes, my leppers are all very lovely. And so I'm very happy that that happened. Great.

I did get some comments. I got some comments after we had that conversation. You talked about struggling to find, you know, your ideal morning coffee place.

I don't know if I shared these with you before, but let me just read them to you now. Just go on. Yeah.

So Mavis wrote in Taiwan, it is a bit different from the UK. We always eat breakfast in the morning, but coffee isn't a must for most people. Coffee culture only really started here in the past 20 years.

So you'll find lots of breakfast shops or food vans open early, but not many cafes. Most cool coffee shops open around 10am or later because for us, cafes are more like a place for afternoon tea, relaxing, reading, or taking a short break from work. So have you, Kate, have you managed to work out your coffee routine? Have you found places where you can... I make more coffee at home now, I have to admit.

But there are some nice coffee shops that I go to sometimes. I'm always up for trying new coffee shops. And also now with my new job, as I said, I work mostly mornings and afternoons.

So I'm now more free to enjoy the majority of Taiwanese coffee shops, which do open later in the day. Yeah. I've actually got some recommendations from listeners.

I wonder if you know any of these places. So this is a comment from Jill. She said, hi, Luke and Kate.

What a surprise knowing that Kate is in Taipei now. I want to recommend a great cafe in Taipei, which opens at 8.30 in the morning with great coffee and food. Sometimes there is a cat in the cafe walking around or sleeping.

It's called the cat.jpg cafe. Oh, I don't know that one. Oh, interesting.

Cat.jpg cafe with its own actual cat. Yeah. Okay.

Like a JPEG photograph. Okay. Shall I look it up now and see if it's close to where I am? I do have the Google maps link for it, which I'll send to you now via WhatsApp so you can have a look and see if it's somewhere you recognise.

While you're doing that, I can share another comment from Chaya. Hi, Kate. Here are some nice coffee shops open in the morning in Taipei.

There's The Folks. Yes, I've discovered that one. That one's great.

Very loud music though, but I like sitting outside. Okay. The Quiet Light.

No loud music, extremely quiet. Also very nice. Sometimes too quiet though.

Like I'm nervous about crunching my toast there. So go there when you want really calm, really quiet, literally the quiet place, but very nice. Yes.

Okay. Wilbeck Cafe. I think there might be a few of those.

Is it like a little chain maybe? Possibly. I don't know. I have had their takeaway coffee, but I haven't eaten in.

It was very good coffee. And Melon Coffee. Oh, I think I know that name, but I don't think I've been to it.

Okay. Yeah. And there's another one that's, I don't know how to read it because it's kind of written, I guess, in Chinese characters.

I'm sending you the name by WhatsApp. Okay. Did you receive that? Oh, Zhen by Zhen, 2.0. So Zhen is the, the character means person, person by person, 2.0. I think I've been to that one.

I'm not sure why it's 2.0 though. I thought that was person because in Japanese, that's the same thing. This symbol with the two lines, curved lines going from one point to two separate points going down.

Yes. Means person in Japanese as well. Person by person, 2.0. I have been to that one.

It's very nice and they do lovely toasts and baked goods as well. So yes, I've been to that one as well. I feel like I'm doing quite well on the list of recommendations.

I think, I think you, you learn, you, you knew all of those. So I knew about them. I'm not sure about Cat JPEG and melon coffee.

I will check them out. Yeah. Okay.

Well, good. I'm glad if those comments have, are going to help you finding the right place for coffee in the mornings. And yeah, look, we've run out of time, which obviously happens.

It was a pleasure to talk to you again, Kate. Yes, it was a pleasure to be here. Yeah.

Very, very glad that things are going well for you over there and everything. And plans to stay or return to Europe? Plans to stay at least obviously for this academic year and next academic year as well. So this academic year ends in June.

So then obviously the next one will end next June. And then after that, I'm not sure. It kind of depends.

Yeah. What things like here, how things are going at my school and, you know, whether or not I need to head back to Europe, because I do feel a bit far from my family here. That's the downside.

Because it is far. So it is. Yes.

Yeah. Listeners in Taiwan, and I do have quite a lot. If you see Kate out and about, say hi.

Yeah. And give me a coffee for a free coffee. Even if you don't work in a coffee shop, Kate, hold on a minute.

Just give me a coffee. Just give her a coffee. You'll be walking around carrying all these coffees.

You won't know what to do with them all. Yes. Yes.

Okay. Brilliant. Thank you so much, Kate. Speak to you again soon.

Yes. Speak to you soon.