

A quick trip south

Episode description

In this week's bonus episode, Andrew talks about a short road trip he took to a small city at the southern tip of South Korea called Tongyeong. Plus in the vocabulary lesson, he teaches you how to use a common idiomatic expression: **to bad-mouth [someone]**.



Note: The transcript has been edited for clarity.

Andrew: Hi there, everyone. My name is Andrew, and this is the Culips English Podcast. Thank you for pressing play and joining me for another English study session. If this is your first time listening to Culips, well, welcome! I'm an English teacher, who's originally from Canada, but I currently live in South Korea. Here at Culips, my team and I, we make lessons for intermediate and advanced English learners from around the world. And we design these lessons to help you improve your English speaking, listening, vocabulary, and communication skills, and also to help you reach your fluency goals, whatever they may be. And along the way, we also teach you about the culture of English-speaking countries. And at the start of each new week, I released a short bonus episode that I hope will motivate you and help you focus on your English practice for the upcoming week.

And this is what you're listening to right now, one of these bonus episodes. There's a transcript that accompanies this episode today, and it's totally 100% free. Everybody can agree that free is awesome, so we made this transcript free for everyone. And I recommend studying along with the transcript, either while you listen to this episode, or maybe even after you listen to this episode. So, to get the transcript, all you have to do is click the link that you'll find in the description for this episode. Or you could visit our website Culips.com.

So, guys, how's it going? What's new with you? I hope everything's going all right. I know there's a lot of craziness in the world these days, but I hope you're all hanging in there and doing OK.

I just returned from a short, two-night trip, and I visited a small port city called Tongyeong, which is located at the very southern tip of the Korean Peninsula. I went there with one of my friends and we took his car, we drove there. It was a road trip, which was awesome. It's the first road trip that I've taken in a while, and it was a lot of fun. We didn't arrive into Tongyeong until quite late at night, the first day that we got there. So, we weren't really able to do much except check into our hotel. We did go for a stroll around the area where we were staying in, but not much was open, it was pretty dead and there weren't even very many people around. Pretty dead, it was pretty dead. Whenever a place is not busy, or it's not bustling, or it's not filled with people, then we can describe that place as being dead. For example, if you go to the shopping mall, and there are not many shoppers in the store, then you could say that, "The mall is dead." Or if you go to the beach, and you're expecting many people to be at the beach, but when you arrive there, there are no people visiting, you could say, "The beach is totally dead. No one's here!"

So anyways, I guess it's much different than Seoul down in Tongyeong because when we went on our late evening walk, it was totally dead. So, the first night then what did we do? Well, we just stayed at our hotel and played chess. My friend and I are kind of geeky, and whenever we get together, we enjoy playing chess. And luckily the hotel where we stayed had a rooftop patio with a nice night view of the harbor. So, we were able to enjoy a few

games of chess in a pretty cool spot, and even the mosquitoes didn't bother us too much. So, that was great.

The next day, we planned to do a hike of one of the local mountains that was on the top of our list of things that we wanted to do in Tongyeong. Now from the top of this mountain, there is "supposedly" an extremely beautiful view of the sea and some of the islands that are just off the coast. Now I used the word *supposedly* because we weren't actually able to do the hike or see the view. When we woke up the next day, it was pouring rain. We are right in the middle of the rainy season here in South Korea and it's really hard to plan a trip this time of the year because you never know when it will pour rain. So, when we woke up that day, it was pouring rain and we just had to hole up at the hotel and try to wait for the rain to stop.

We holed up at the hotel. Holed up. H-O-L-E-D, U-P. Holed up, two words. To hole up means to hide or to stay in one place. It's actually really similar to another phrasal verb that we've talked about on Culips before, recently too, if I recall. Can you think of what that phrasal verb is? It also starts with the letter H. It is to hunker down. Were you thinking hunker down? If so, pat yourself on the back. Now, both of these verbs hole up and hunker down could be used in this situation, because we just stayed in the hotel, in one spot, waiting for the rain to stop.

So yeah, we were holed up in a hotel for the morning, and finally, around two in the afternoon, the rain let up a little bit and turned to just a light, misty drizzle. Drizzle is a very light rain, and so we saw our opportunity to escape from the hotel and to get out and explore Tongyeong. Now at this point, it was already way too late for us to go hiking, but we did want to go and check out some of the city.

So, we walked around, and we saw an underground tunnel that was built to connect two parts of the harbor, that was kind of cool. And then as we were continuing our adventure, we saw a sign for a local Buddhist temple. So, we decided to go and visit it and take a look. It was up in the mountains, like most temples here in South Korea are, but it seemed like it was only a 20 minute or so walk away, so we decided to just go for it. Well, as we were about halfway into our walk to the temple, can you guess what happened?

Yes, the rain came back, and it wasn't just a light rain, but a super-heavy, torrential rain. I mean, it's like turn your shower on in your house on full blast, on full power, and that's the kind of rain it was. It was intense. We did have our umbrellas with us, so we popped them open and continued on our way, but they didn't really do much to help. We got totally soaked all the way from our hats to our shoes. But we just continued on our way, it was too late to turn back at that point. Even though I did end up totally wet, it was still one of the highlights of the trip for me to visit the temple. I've been to many temples before here in Korea, but never any in the pouring rain like that. And it was an amazing experience. It was just so peaceful and totally quiet except for the sound of the rain hitting the ground and the temple roof and the trees. And the mountain itself was surrounded by a heavy, misty rain cloud. And it was really, really just an amazing environment to see the rain

dripping off of the roof and creating puddles. It was almost like I was in a movie or something. It was totally surreal.

Surreal. It felt surreal. Have you heard this word before? Surreal. Do you know what it means the spelling is: S-U-R-R-E-A-L. Surreal is a word that we use to describe situations that feel more like fantasies or dreams than reality. The only other person that we saw up there at the temple was an elderly monk. And he just silently greeted us when we arrived and then continued on with his work. We only stayed at the temple for 20 minutes or so, but it was a really nice way to spend a few quiet and calm moments up there, despite the heavily falling rain. On our way down from the temple, the rain stopped and thankfully it didn't start again for the rest of the time that we were visiting Tongyeong.

Some of the other highlights from the trip included visiting a park called Dara Park which was beautifully located above the sea. And at the park, we watched the sunset, actually. So, we could see on one side, the sunset behind some of the local islands. And then on the other side, we watched the moon rise, it was very, very beautiful.

The following day, before we returned home, we visited a really cool exhibit where we could see and tour full-size replicas of warships that took part in Korea's defense of the Japanese invasions of Korea, way back in history in the late 1500s, and it was amazing to see. And actually, I learned that a lot of the naval battles from that war took place in and around the sea near Tongyeong. Now, I'm not knowledgeable enough to go into the details about the war, but I do know that Korea's naval performance in that war was incredible. And their advanced warship technology, and skilled leadership of one of their talented admirals named Yi Sun-Shin resulted in many victories. So, it was really, really, really interesting to get to walk around and tour through the different kinds of battleships used in the war, including the famous Turtle Ship. There were four ships in total, and they were even docked in the water. So, they were rocking back and forth as we walked around them and toured through them. And in fact, we were the only ones at the exhibit, so we had lots of time to just explore them at our own pace and our own speed. And it was just a really cool experience, and I think, a fantastic way to learn about history.

The only disappointing thing about the trip is that I didn't get to try the local delicacy. Do you know that word, delicacy? Delicacy is a food that is unique and special to a specific area or a specific region or a specific place. The local delicacy to Tongyeong, because of its location right by the sea, is seafood. Now, I don't want to bad-mouth my friend, but he's not really a seafood guy and wasn't into trying any seafood. And to be completely honest with you, I'm also not a huge seafood fan. But I do think I like it more than my friend does, and my wife is a big seafood lover and she's been getting me into it more and more and more, and I've been learning to love it. And I was actually looking forward to eating some of the seafood in Tongyeong.

So, it seemed a bit of a shame that I wasn't able to eat any of the fresh fish or shrimp or clams or oysters, and more that were on display at the local market as I walked through it,

but I guess that just means that I'll have to visit Tongyeong again in the future with my wife next time.

So, everyone, that's really what I got up to last week, was visiting Tongyeong. As for what's new here at Culips, we released a new Simplified Speech episode featuring Kassy and I about our most prized possessions. And if you haven't heard that episode yet, make sure to check it out. Looking ahead, we'll be releasing a new Real Talk episode featuring a practical English lesson about ordering flowers at a florist's. That will be coming out a little bit later this week, so please keep your eyes and ears open for it when it drops. When we say something drops, we mean when it is released publicly. So that episode will drop a little bit later in the week.

And finally, I also want to remind all Culips Members, if you're a Culips Member, this announcement is for you. Guys, we are having our Culips Members live stream happening very, very soon on Tuesday, July 26th at 7:30pm Korean Standard Time. OK, this is Korean time, so if you live in a different part of the world, you have to calculate what time it will be starting in your area. But we'll be hosting the live stream at that time, and I would love for many, many Culips Members to join me. I think I will be the only host this month because Kassy is in the process of moving to Thailand right now. So, I think maybe she won't be fully settled into her new apartment yet. So, she'll probably have to skip this month. But of course, I will be there, and I will be happy to spend some time with you, hang out, we'll practice English together. If you guys have any questions for me, you can feel free to ask and I'll do my best to answer them. And we'll just spend a good 45 minutes to an hour or so practicing English and hanging out together. How do you join the live stream? Well, all you have to do is log in to your Culips.com account and follow the link from the Dashboard.

It's time for this week's vocabulary lesson. Before I let you go, I wanted to focus in on one of the expressions that I used in this episode that I think is a really good one for you to all know it's common, you'll hear it often, and it's a great one to add to your vocabulary. It is: to bad-mouth [someone]. To bad-mouth [someone]. Did you hear it when I said it a bit earlier in this episode? Let's rewind, go back, and take a listen to that part a couple more times.

Now, I don't want to bad-mouth my friend, but he's not really a seafood guy and wasn't into trying any seafood.

To bad-mouth [someone] means to say bad things or critical things about someone, especially behind their back. Now, if you say something behind someone's back, it means that you talk about someone when they're not there. Okay, so it's like you're kind of gossiping with another person and you're saying bad things about someone, but that person isn't even there, OK? That is bad-mouthing someone behind their back.

So, I used this expression, because I wanted to be clear that I wasn't trying to criticize my friend, he's not here to defend himself, right? I'm kind of talking behind his back. He wasn't there to defend himself when I said that he is not a seafood fan. So in fact, this is one of the ways that we use this expression often, is when we're gossiping, or when we're talking about someone behind their back, but we want to give a warning sentence to say that we're going to make a comment that's negative or critical, but we don't want our conversation partner, the person that we're talking to, to take it the wrong way, and think that we're hating that person or that we're trying to criticize that person. So, we can use this kind of warning sentence in this situation. We could say something like, "I don't want to bad-mouth him, but...." And this will just communicate to your conversation partner that although you're about to say something that's a little bit negative about a different person, it doesn't mean that you hate that person or dislike this person.

Anyways, guys, the core meaning that you need to know of to bad-mouth [someone] is, it means that you are saying something bad or negative or critical about someone, usually behind their back. Now I've prepared three example sentences that will help us to understand this idiomatic expression more deeply, and these sentences will illustrate its meaning clearly, so let's listen to them now.

Example sentence number one.

I heard you were bad-mouthing me behind my back the other day. If you have something to say to me, you should at least say it to my face.

Let's break this example sentence down. The speaker said, "I heard you were bad-mouthing me behind my back the other day." So, this means that somebody was saying some bad things or negative things or critical things about the speaker of that example sentence. And that speaker actually learned that the other person was saying these negative things and the speaker confronted that gossip, that gossiping guy about that and said: Hey, if you have something to say to me, you know, if you want to criticize me, or you don't like me or something, and you have something negative to say, don't just go around gossiping and saying it to other people behind my back, but just say it to my face, tell me directly. That's what that example sentence means.

Example sentence number two.

I don't want to bad-mouth Janet or anything, but every time we get together, she's late. I wish she'd try a bit harder to be on time.

Let's break that example sentence down. The speaker of that sentence said, "I don't want to bad-mouth Janet." So, he is introducing to his friends or the people that he is speaking

to, that he is going to make a negative, critical comment about Janet. But that doesn't mean that he hates her or that he really dislikes her or that he is angry with her, it's nothing like that. He's just kind of softening the blow, making the negative comment that he's going to introduce in just a moment, a little bit softer, right? So, he's giving his conversation partners a warning: Hey, guys, I'm gonna say something negative about Janet, but please don't interpret it as meaning that I really, really hate her. Okay, it's kind of got that function as an introduction sentence. So, he goes on to say, every time we hang out, every time we get together Janet's late, and I wish she'd try harder to be on time.

Example sentence number three.

We shouldn't bad-mouth people who are successful. Instead, we should celebrate their hard work and achievements.

Let's break that example down. Here, the speaker says that we shouldn't bad-mouth people who are successful. So, what he's trying to communicate is, we shouldn't say negative things about successful people, or we shouldn't criticize them excessively. And sometimes that's really easy to do, we see, you know, really ultra-rich people or something and we talk behind their back and say bad things or critical things about them. But at least in that example sentence, the speaker says that instead of bad-mouthing them, we should celebrate their achievements.

That is it for this week's bonus episode, everyone. Thanks for making it to the end. And congratulations on starting off your week with an English study session with me. Hope you guys all have a great week, and I will talk to you next time. Take care and goodbye!

Episode credits

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