



## 110. The importance of English

W: Tell me Sarah, how come that the general level of English of French pupils is well below that of their counterparts in Denmark, the Netherlands and Sweden?

Sarah: Ah! That is an interesting question, and I was wondering if you would ever dare asking me! To my mind, there are several reasons.

W: Really? I am curious to know them.

Sarah: First of all, I think French people are very proud, and most of them think that they are understood when they speak French everywhere they go.

W: Sorry Sarah, but this is ridiculous, English with about two billion speakers is far and away the largest global lingua franca!

Sarah: I know, you're absolutely right, but not to forget that with the colonization, a lot of countries are French-speaking, that must be a good enough reason for most of my compatriots.

W: ok. May I just add that in the eyes of some Chinese students, English is more important than their mother tongue, as it is synonymous with better jobs?

Sarah: I ignored it, but it seems entirely conceivable as English has become the working language of the global village. That being said, did you know that fewer and fewer Britons are learning foreign languages? The oft-cited reason is that they don't need to.

W: If you say so, I admit it can be true.

Sarah: So, to explain you the difference of level between France and Scandinavia, it's easy. Most of these northern countries are sparsely populated, and therefore, it would be too expensive to dub all television shows and movies. In consequence, the kids from an earlier age are used to hear English on television, their ears are getting used to the music of the language, and learning is much faster!

W: That must be why their pronunciation is also so good then.



GLOSSARY:

The importance of English: L'importance de l'anglais	Chinese students: des étudiants chinois
To wonder: se demander	A mother tongue: une langue maternelle
To dare: oser	Better jobs: de meilleurs emplois
To understand/understood : comprendre	The working language: la langue de travail
To speak/spoke/spoken: parler	The global village: le village planétaire
To add: ajouter	Britons: les Britanniques
To ignore: ignorer	Foreign languages: les langues étrangères
To become/became/become: devenir	The oft-cited reason: la raison souvent évoquée
To learn: apprendre	Scandinavia: la Scandinavie
To need: avoir besoin, nécessiter	Northern countries: les pays du Nord
To admit: admettre, reconnaître	Television shows: les shows télévisés
To explain: expliquer	Movies: les films
To dub: doubler une voix, un film	Their ears : leurs oreilles
To hear : entendre	The music of the language : la musique de la langue
To get used to : s'habituer à	Pronunciation: la prononciation
The general level: le niveau général	How come : comment se fait-il
French pupils : les élèves français	Well below : bien inférieur
Their counterparts : leurs homologues	Proud : fier
Several reasons : plusieurs raisons	Ridiculous : ridicule
Two billion : deux milliards	Far and away : de loin
Speakers : des locuteurs, qui parlent une langue	French-speaking : francophone
The largest global lingua franca : la langue véhiculaire mondiale la plus pratiquée	Synonymous : synonyme
The colonization : la colonisation	Conceivable : concevable, plausible
Compatriots : des compatriotes	Fewer and fewer : de moins en moins
Sparsely populated : faiblement peuplé	From an earlier age : dès le plus jeune âge
Therefore : donc, par conséquent	Faster : plus rapide
In consequence : en conséquence	