



### **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.

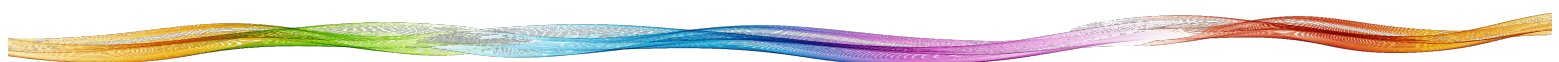
W: ok. May I just add that in the eyes of some Chinese students, English is more important than their mother tongue, as it is synonymous with better jobs?

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	Chinese students
To wonder	A mother tongue
To dare	Better jobs
To understand/understood	The working language
To speak/spoke/spoken	The global village
To add	Britons
To ignore	Foreign languages
To become/became/become	The oft-cited reason
To learn	Scandinavia
To need	Northern countries
To admit	Television shows
To explain	Movies
To dub	Their ears
To hear	The music of the language langue
To get used to	Pronunciation
The general level	How come
French pupils	Well below
Their counterparts	Proud
Several reasons	Ridiculous
Two billion	Far and away
Speakers	French-speaking
The largest global lingua franca	Synonymous
The colonization	Conceivable
Compatriots	Fewer and fewer
Sparsely populated	From an earlier age
Therefore	Faster
In consequence	



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