



English: Language of opportunity

English in China

NARRATOR

In China, interest in studying in English has grown rapidly since the country's economy opened up in the late nineteen seventies.

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Many students now study abroad, particularly in English speaking countries. But there are also English medium universities in China like the University of International Business and Economics in Beijing.

HUANG

By teaching the course in English, I think we can get double benefit because English language proficiency is very important for our students because eventually their career will be in the area of international business and economics so a high level of English proficiency is very important for them. So after going through their I mean fundamental basic kind of a stages to study a subject in English actually can improve their language proficiency a lot. And secondly because a lot of the original text and ideas actually are produced in English so teaching these courses in English can also enable the students to get a better feeling of the subject content.

HUANG

So it doesn't mean that the more you say, you know the more you get carried, not necessarily, it may be but not necessarily.

NARRATOR

Alongside their business study degrees these students are learning how to avoid making mistakes in their spoken English.

HUANG

And these examples of mis-communication they're all linguistic, meaning that some part of the language is not used correctly so the messages are all very funny or doesn't mean anything so I would like to see how well you can understand and explain why they are mis-communicated.

HUANG

Example number one is they say that Japanese garden is the mental home of the Japanese. You know that Japan is quite famous for their beautiful small gardens, and they take you know a lot of pride in their gardens but then when they put this sentence as a kind of advertisement for the Japanese gardens what do you think? Why it is not effective and what is mis-communicated.

STUDENT 1

I think you want to mean the Japanese people want to see Japanese garden uses... maybe spirit home of the Japanese but the mental home is not your right meaning.

HUANG

Ok you know because they say that Japanese garden is so beautiful it is very important for the Japanese so spiritually their thing is their home. But you know the meaning of mental home in English?

STUDENT 2

Mad person.

HUANG

Yeah, yeah mental home is the place is the hospital for...

STUDENT 1

For the people who's minds...

STUDENT 1

Something wrong with their mind Ok.

HUANG

Ok, ok so that's the mental home so meaning that because the mental home is misused here.

XU

I think this course is very interesting and also useful for us to you know in a future professional life I think clear life because use this course we can just avoid some mistakes during the cultural you know communication process.

ZHOU

It's very important for me because my major is international business and economics so when I graduate from school I will do business with foreigners, so learning the subjects in English will help me know more knowledge globally. It is also a challenge for me because some

language knowledge is difficult, I mean there are maybe some difficult words that I can't understand and also the culture is another problem.

HUANG

The difficulty is that if the teacher, his English is not you know enough to use simple languages, to use the very simple language to explain things that's difficult and when the students ask the professor questions he just repeat whatever he has prepared and if the student's English is not good enough to really understand fully the content, then they lose a little bit of learning about the subject content.

NARRATOR

In many non English speaking countries there remains serious concern about the danger of English playing a two dominant role in higher education in the future.

LIZ

It is absolutely clear that the world the way it is now needs a lingua franca or a number of lingua francas. We simply cannot do the international work that we do without having some common language or set of common languages and so it would be fair to say that generally people welcome that there are languages which people around the world share, but it isn't the same as saying that English is welcome.