



NB: This is not a word-for-word transcript

- Rob:** Hello I'm Rob. Welcome to 6 Minute English. I'm joined today by Finn. Hi Finn.
- Finn:** Hi Rob – or should I say 'ni hao' Rob?
- Rob:** Your Chinese is very good Finn but I wonder how many more Chinese words you know? 1,000 perhaps?
- Finn:** (In Chinese: "Not really, I just know a little...")
- Rob:** Now you're just showing off! Not being able to speak a foreign language is a bit of a British **trait** – or a particular British characteristic. We're not very good at it although Finn is an exception, he can speak many foreign languages, can't you?
- Finn:** Not that many – a bit of German, some French, Polish a little, Chinese of course, Hokkien, a bit of Japanese... That's about it.
- Rob:** I'm impressed Finn. Well, now the rest of us Brits are being encouraged to learn at least 1,000 words of another language. We'll talk more about that soon but before I start learning my new words, how about a question Finn?
- Finn:** Très bien!
- Rob:** Do you know which is the second most spoken language in England? Is it:
- a) Polish
 - b) Urdu
 - c) French
- Finn:** I think I know this one, Rob. I'm going to say a) Polish.
- Rob:** OK, well, as always I'll let you know the answer at the end of programme. So, as I mentioned, the British are generally considered to be lazy **linguists** – they just don't bother to learn another language.
- Finn:** I guess the main reason is that when British people travel around the world they find that English is spoken almost everywhere – so they **get by** – they survive on just using their **native language**.
- Rob:** I think, in the past, the education system was also to blame. Learning a foreign language was not **compulsory** – it didn't have to be studied -

when I went to school, we didn't have to study languages to exam level – so I took the easy option and studied photography instead of French! But of course I regret it now. But that wasn't the same for you Finn?

Finn: At first I didn't really like it but you know, I love words, and then one day I discovered the Chinese language and thought this was fascinating, and it's a key to a whole new culture.

Rob: Well, recently a campaign was launched for those of us who didn't share your enthusiasm or have the opportunity to learn another language. The *1,000 Words* campaign is encouraging everyone in the UK to learn at least 1,000 words of another language. It hopes to help Britain increase international trade.

Finn: The group says that a vocabulary of 1,000 words would allow a speaker to hold a simple conversation. It sounds like a good idea.

Rob: Si! Well, let's hear from the former England footballer and TV presenter, Gary Lineker, who is supporting the campaign. Can you hear what three things he says learning another language gives you?

Gary Lineker:

I think it gives you self-satisfaction and self-esteem if you can speak another language when you're travelling. I think it also gives you an edge in a lot of different areas in the workplace, not just football.

Finn: So Gary Lineker says there are three things it gives you; it gives you self-satisfaction, firstly. He means you feel good about learning a new skill. But it can have negative meaning – self-satisfaction - that you are smug or pleased with yourself. I don't think he means that here though.

Rob: He also says it improves **self-esteem** – so you feel good about yourself and it boosts your confidence. Imagine going on holiday to Spain and being able **to converse with** – or speak to – the locals.

Finn: It feels good! And he also mentioned the economic benefits of speaking another language; it **gives you the edge** in the workplace. That means it gives you an advantage, especially if you are dealing with foreign companies.

Rob: And it also shows politeness and respect for other people by showing you have made an effort.

Finn: It's something another footballer, Gareth Bale, has tried to do. Last year he signed for Real Madrid so he tried **to master** – or to be very good at – speaking Spanish so he could talk to his fans. This is how he got on:

Gareth Bale:

(In Spanish: Hello. It is a dream to play for Real Madrid. Thank you.)

Rob: Muy bien! Impressive – I think he was saying it was his dream to play for Real Madrid.

Finn: Rob, your Spanish is very impressive too there. For Gareth Bale, speaking Spanish will help him **fit in** – perhaps make him more accepted by his teammates and his fans.

Rob: But Finn, I have a dilemma. There are so many languages in the world, which one should I learn first?

Finn: Maybe you could start with the UK's second most spoken language?

Rob: Yes, that's the question I posed earlier: what is Britain's second most spoken language.

Finn: I said Polish. Polski.

Rob: Yes, of course you are right. According to the 2011 census, the answer is Polish. The census also found over 104 different languages are spoken in the UK. Before we go, could you remind us of some of the English words we've heard today?

Finn: Yes, we heard:

trait
linguists
native language
to get by
compulsory
self-esteem
to converse with
to give you the edge
to master
to fit in

Rob: Danke schön, Finn.

Finn: Bitte schön!

Rob: OK, well that's it for this programme. Please join us soon again for 6 Minute English from BBC Learning English.

Both: Bye.

Vocabulary and definitions

trait	characteristic
linguists	people who study foreign languages or speak them very well
native language	language of a person's home country
to get by	to just have or know enough to do what you need to do
compulsory	must be done
self-esteem	confidence in your value and in what you can do
to converse with	to have a conversation with
to give you the edge	to have an advantage
to master	to learn how to do something very well
to fit in	to feel like you belong to a group of people and are accepted by them

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