**Lesson: Are you smarter because you know English?**

**Text Source:** <https://www.ted.com/talks/julie_le_are_you_smart_because_you_know_english>

**Warm Up**

* Do you think people who speak English are smarter than people who don’t?
* In your opinion, should speaking English be a method to determine a person’s IQ?

**1. Vocabulary: Before you listen!**

**Directions: *Before you watch today’s lesson video, make sure to get familiar with the meaning and pronunciation of the following words.***

* **struggle with** (something) /ˈstrô-gol/: have difficulty with something [**Spanish:** *pasar trabajo con*]

**Example:** *My parents* ***struggle*** *with English.*

* **prestigious** /pres-ˈtɪ-yyȯs/(adj.): having prestige, honor. [**Spanish:** *prestigioso/a*]

**Example:** *My parents both have* ***prestigious*** *careers.*

* **measure** /ˈme-yshȯr/ (v.): determine the size, amount or degree (noun: measure, measurement). [**Spanish:** *medir*]

**Example:** *You cannot* ***measure*** *someone intelligence so simply.*

* **proficiency** /prȯ-ˈfɪ-ʃėn-sɪ/ (n.): competence or skill in doing something [**Spanish:** *competencia, gran habilidad*].

**Example:** *People praise her English* ***proficiency****.*

* **assumption** /a-ˈsômp-shȯn/ (n.): a thing considered as true without proof [**Spanish:** *suposición*].

**Example:** *That is just an* ***assumption****.*

* **educated** /ˈe-yyu-ˌkeɪ-*r*ed/ (adj.): with a good academic preparation or training [**Spanish:** *preparado, culto*].

**Example:** *My father is an* ***educated*** *man.*

* **look down upon** (someone): to underestimate, to consider someone inferior in some way [**Spanish:** *subestimar, subvalorar*].

**Example:** *People sometimes* ***look down upon*** *him.*

* **judge** /yyôdch/ (v.): express an opinion or conclusion about someone or something [**Spanish:** *juzgar*].

**Example:** *I don’t like to* ***judge*** *people.*

* **alongside** (prep.): close to, next to [**Spanish:** *junto con*].

**Example:** *She works* ***alongside*** *with a translator.*

* **passionate** /ˈpᴂ-shȯ-net/ (adj.): having great passion [**Spanish:** *apasionado/a*].

**Example:** *My dad is* ***passionate*** *about his job.*

* **talented** /ˈtᴂ-len-tɪd/ (adj.): with great talent [**Spanish:** *talentoso/a*].

**Example:** *He is also very* ***talented****.*

* **carry out** (v.): complete, perform a task [**Spanish:** *llevar a cabo, desempeñar*]

**Example:** *I have* ***to carry out*** *a couple of tasks.*

**2. Lesson Video:** **Are you smarter because you know English?**

**Directions: *Watch the lesson video by an Asian student in the US, Julie Le. Then, answer the questions below.***

**2.1. General Comprehension**

* What’s the main point in Julie’s presentation?

**1.2. Specific Comprehension**

* What does she say about her father’s educational background?
* What other examples does she give about educated but “non-English-speaking” people?
* What’s her opinion about the educational system worldwide? Does she think it really measures people’s intelligence?

**3.** **Meaning in Context!**

**Directions: *What do you think Julie means when she states the following phrase?***

1. So, my friends say “one, chew, tree” instead of “one, two, three”. My parents struggle to distinguish the difference between “where” and “wear”.
2. The less foreign you sound or the faster you’re able to speak English is often associated with the more intelligent you are.
3. These compliments are often based off of the typical assumption that English symbolizes wealth, intelligence and experience.
4. If you look at my dad’s personal life and educational journey, he sounds like a pretty smart and educated person, right? But there’s been multiple instances in the US where my dad has been looked down upon because of his imperfect English.
5. When I come back to my home country, Vietnam, I’m seen as this amazing, perfect trigger. Why? You might ask. Simply… because I know English.
6. Jack Ma, the co-founder and chairman of Alibaba Group. He speaks English with a strong Chinese accent, but he’s the richest man of China.
7. Well, the education system around the world has made numbers and exams and test scores a standard measurement of a student’s intelligence. Well, the truth is these numbers don’t really mean anything.
8. The next time you’re thinking of judging somebody based on their English proficiency, just remember (…) that engineer could be the one who studied for more than 16 years of his life and is currently the CFO of a world company.

**4. Word Families (Expanding our Vocabulary)**

**Directions: *With the help of your teacher, identify the word class (noun, verb, adjective, adverb) of the bolded words in the following sentences. Then, fill in the blanks with their related family words in each re-expression. The first item has been done for you as an example.***

1. *My parents are people with these* ***prestigious*** *degrees in engineering and accounting.*

**Noun:** Professionally speaking, my parents have great *prestige.*

1. *English is just a language, not a measure of intelligence.*

**Verb:** Our English proficiency cannot be used to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ our intelligence.

1. *These are* ***typically*** *the most common compliments that I would receive after a short conversation with someone.*

**Adjective:** These are the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ compliments that I would receive after a short conversation with someone.

1. *These compliments are often based on the typical* ***assumption*** *that English symbolizes wealth, intelligence and experience.*

**Verb:** People often \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ that English symbolizes wealth, intelligence and experience.

1. *A person’s intelligence should not be* ***judged*** *based on their English.*

**Noun:** Determining a person’s intelligence based on their English is a wrong \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

1. *Marie Kondo leads and hosts a Netflix series alongside with an* ***interpreter****.*

**Verb:** Marie Kondo leads and hosts a Netflix series and someone \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for her.

1. *They’re* ***passionate*** *and they’re talented, but they happen to not speak perfect English.*

**Adverb:** They are talented and work \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, but they happen to not speak perfect English.

1. *An excel sheet will carry out* ***calculations*** *on my command, but it will not tell me what to do.*

**Verb:** An excel sheet can \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ on my command, but it will not tell me what to do.

1. *Let’s* ***compare*** *this to the education system around the world.*

**Noun:** Let’s make a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ with the education system around the world.

1. *In the words of Bill Gates “I* ***failed*** *in some subjects and exams, but my friend passed in all”.*

**Noun:** Bill Gates’s \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in some school subjects did not mean anything.

1. *The next time you’re thinking of judging somebody based on their English* ***proficiency****, just remember [this].*

**Adjective:** The next time you judge somebody who is not \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ at English, just remember [this].

**5. Grammar in Context! (Review: Sentence Voice)**

**Directions: *Change the voice in the following sentences orally. Active voice sentences should be made passive and viceversa. If the subject is not explicit in the sentence, use a general one: People, they, etc.***

1. My parents do not distinguish the difference between “where” and “wear”.(**active voice**)

**Passive voice:** *The difference between “where” and “wear” is not distinguished (by my parents).*

1. People often use English to measure one’s intelligence.
2. I am told these compliments after a short conversation with someone.
3. English is associated with wealth, intelligence and experience.
4. My dad was raised in the post-war era in Vietnam.
5. My dad has been judged because of his imperfect English.
6. I’m seen as this amazing, perfect trigger.
7. Marie Kondo hosts a Netflix series alongside with an interpreter.
8. Today many students are stressed out by the education system.
9. The education system has made numbers and exams a standard measurement of intelligence.
10. English is nowadays spoken in many countries around the world.

**6. Speaking**

**Directions: Answer the following questions in the form of brief monologues.**

**6.1. Monologue 1: *Types of Intelligences***

* Have you heard about types of intelligence?
* What types of intelligence do you know?
* Do you think a person may have more than one type of intelligence? That is, can a person be good at different things?
* What type(s) of intelligence do you think you have?
* When did you find out? And how?
* Mention some other people you know with different types of intelligence.
* How do you think human intelligence should be measured?

**6.2. Monologue 2: My English Learning**

* Some people do not have any education certificate and speak perfect English; some others have Ph.D. degrees and do not know a word in English. Can you cite some examples?
* In your case, has it been hard for you to learn English?
* How do you think you learn English faster? By writing, listening, speaking or the combination of them all?
* Did anyone ever judge you for not knowing English (or for not speaking perfectly)?
* In your opinion, what’s the success key for an English learner? His/her age, abilities, consistency, type of intelligence?
* Where have you used your English the most? At work? At home? On the street?
* At this point, do you think English can help you learn other languages?

**Annex 1:** ***Video Transcript***

**Are you smarter because you know English?**

(By Julie Lee)

So, my friends say “one, chew, tree” instead of “one, two, three” (1 2 3). My parents struggle to distinguish the difference between “where” and “wear”. Yet, my friends are the same people who are rising college specimens and my parents are people with these prestigious degrees in engineering and accounting.

English is just a language, not a measure of intelligence. Nowadays, people often use English as a meter stick for them to measure one’s intelligence. The less foreign you sound or the faster you’re able to speak English is often associated with the more intelligent you are. You speak English fast; you speak English well; you don’t have an Asian accent. These are typically the most common compliments that I would receive after a short conversation with someone. These compliments are often based off of the typical assumption that English symbolizes wealth, intelligence and experience. I speak English well, I speak English fast, I don’t have an Asian accent; but does that mean that I’m better or smarter than any one of you? Not at all. Let me give you an example.

My dad, he’s right there. My dad is an engineer. Well, my dad’s English is far from perfect but my dad grew up in the post-war era in Vietnam where work and war were favored over education. But he still managed to earn an engineering degree at that time. If you look at my dad’s personal life and educational journey, he sounds like a pretty smart and educated person, right? But there’s been multiple instances in the US where my dad has been looked down upon because of his imperfect English.

In contrast to my dad, me. When I come back to my home country, Vietnam, I’m seen as this amazing, perfect trigger. Why? You might ask. Simply… because I know English. The... a person’s intelligence should not be judged based on their English. For example… Jack Ma, the co-founder and chairman of Alibaba Group. He speaks English with a strong Chinese accent, but he’s the richest man of China. Marie Kondo… she leads and hosts a Netflix series about tidying up alongside with an interpreter. So, what do these people have in common? Well, they’re educated people. They’re passionate and they’re talented, but they also happen to not speak perfect English.

So, another example is an excel sheet. An excel sheet will carry out calculations on my command but it will not tell me what to do. A language is simply a language of numbers, or simply numbers. Let’s compare this to the education system around the world. Today many students are stressed out about test scores and exams, including myself. So, what do these numbers mean? Well, the education system around the world has made numbers and exams and test scores a standard measurement of a student’s intelligence. Well, the truth is these numbers don’t really mean anything. Well, at least they don’t measure your intelligence, because in the words of Bill Gates “I failed in some subjects and exams, but my friend passed in all”. Now he’s an engineer in Microsoft and I’m the owner of Microsoft.” So, see!

Numbers are just numbers and a language will simply be a language. But English is still a very important language. English is one of the most respected universally useful languages in the world. So, the next time you’re thinking of judging somebody based on their English proficiency, just remember that an engineer might struggle to differentiate between “where” and “wear”, but that same engineer could be the one who studied for more than 16 years of his life and is currently the CFO of a world loan company. Thank you.