

Catch Word#91 – Other languages in English

Transcript

Maura: Hello everyone, this is Maura!

Harp: And Harp!

Maura: And we're back, with your Culips English Learning podcast.

Harp: Go to our website, Culips.com, C-U-L-I-P-S.com. There, you can find all our fantastic episodes, where we always focus on natural, everyday English.

Maura: Yeah. And if you become a member, you can see the transcript for this episode and our past episodes, you can get an even more detailed explanation of the expressions we use and a quiz to help check your comprehension at the end.

Harp: Exactly.

Maura: So today we're doing a kind of special version of our Catch Word episode. And usually in our Catch Word episodes, we look at different slang or expressions. We give you similar expressions and examples and explanations and everything you need so that you understand the new expressions.

Harp: But today, we're gonna do something a little bit different. We're gonna go through four expressions that are used every day by native English speakers, but are actually not English words.

Maura: Yes. So, there are lots of different examples, but today we chose four expressions from four different languages that English speakers use as if it was English, but it's not actually English.

Harp: Yup. We have a word from the German language, Japanese, a Spanish expression, and even a French expression. And we use these expressions in English as if they're English.

Maura: Yeah. So, if you hear something like this, it's not strange at all, and English-speaking people treat it just as if you were speaking English because it's so common.

Harp: Yeah. I think a lot of people don't even know what languages these words come from because they're so common and so popular.

- Maura: Yup, for sure. As a kid, you don't question it at all, you just know these words and then maybe when you get a little bit older, you might think, "Oh, that word doesn't really sound English, it's a bit strange." and then you might figure out that the origin is from another language.
- Harp: Definitely.
- Maura: So, this might actually be why English is supposed to have the most words compared to other languages, because we just accept words and expressions from all different kinds of languages.
- Harp: Yup. And then we just make them our own.
- Maura: Yup. We accept them, we put them in a dictionary, and then it's an English word.
- Harp: Definitely.
- Maura: One thing, though, that we do when we take on these English words is we do change the pronunciation a little bit.
- Harp: Yeah. We definitely pronounce them in an English way, rather than whatever way they were pronounced in their native language.
- Maura: Yeah. So, we just make it sound a little bit more English and if there are any accents, usually we don't write the accents because there are no accents in English, really.
- Harp: Yup.
- Maura: OK, so, let's start with the first one. **Achoo!**
- Harp: **Gesundheit.**
- Maura: Oh. Thank you.
- Harp: Yes. So our first word is **gesundheit.**
- Maura: Yes. And it's not an English word.
- Harp: Nope. It's actually a German word.
- Maura: Yeah. So, when people sneeze, in English you could say **God bless you** or **bless you**, or the third option is **gesundheit.**
- Harp: Yup. So if someone sneezes, you can say **gesundheit.**
- Maura: Yup. And it's really fairly common, almost as common as **bless you.**

- Harp: Yup. I think people always say it with a little smile on their face.
- Maura: Yeah. Maybe because they think they're being clever or exotic or something.
- Harp: Definitely. When you say **bless you**, I don't smile when I say it. But when I say **gesundheit**, I always have a little smile on my face.
- Maura: So, **gesundheit**, in German, means *health*. So, saying **gesundheit** is like saying *to your health*, or *I hope you're healthy*.
- Harp: OK. Interesting, because often you sneeze when you're not healthy, when you have allergies or when you have the flu.
- Maura: Right. So, it's like a little wish that the person will get healthy.
- Harp: That's so nice, I didn't know that.
- Maura: Yeah. So, if we have any German listeners out there, our pronunciation of **gesundheit** might not be right, but like we said, we kind of change it to make it sound more English.
- Harp: I'm sure it doesn't sound the way it sounds in German but it sounds good to me.
- Maura: Yeah. OK, so let's give one more example using **gesundheit**, even though, like we said, it's very straightforward, after someone sneezes. We'll give you an example, just to be clear.
- Harp: Definitely. Sounds good.

- Maura: So, what are you doing this weekend?
- Harp: I'm gonna go see that movie.
- Maura: Oh yeah? The one you were talking about?
- Harp: Yeah. I'm so excited. It's coming out on Friday, I'm gonna go and... **Achoo!**
- Maura: Oh, **gesundheit**.
- Harp: Thanks. Yeah, I'm gonna go see it on Saturday night.
- Maura: Ah, let me know how it goes.
- Harp: I will.

- Maura: So, there's a super-casual conversation where someone happens to sneeze and then someone happens to respond with **gesundheit**.

- Harp: Yup. Very common, very popular here in North America.
- Maura: And completely interchangeable with ***bless you*** or ***God bless you***.
- Harp: Definitely.
- Maura: OK, let's move on to our next expression. The next expression is from the Spanish language and, again, our pronunciation's not gonna sound very good to anyone who speaks Spanish, but the expression is ***mi casa es su casa***.
- Harp: Yeah. ***Mi casa es su casa***.
- Maura: Yup. And to be fair, I really didn't try to speak it in a Spanish accent. I tried to show you how English speakers would say it.
- Harp: Yup. I would not say it with any accent, I would say it exactly how I said it. ***Mi casa es su casa***.
- Maura: Yeah. And, this expression literally means *my house is your house*. And so the expression is used when you have a visitor. You might say this expression to mean *feel comfortable, my house is your house, act as if my house was your house*.
- Harp: Yeah, definitely. In English, you could say, "Oh, ***make yourself at home***." "Welcome to my home." You know, "Make yourself comfortable."
- Maura: Yup. So, you could use the English expression, ***make yourself at home***, or you could say ***mi casa es su casa***, which means the same thing.
- Harp: Yeah. Definitely.
- Maura: Now, when I did a little bit of research on the Internet, I found a lot of people saying that this expression was actually more popular in the United States than in Spanish-speaking countries.
- Harp: That's really interesting. Yeah, I have quite a few Spanish-speaking friends, which... Spanish is their first language, and I've never heard them say it, but all my English friends say it.
- Maura: Yeah. I don't know. So, if you're from a Spanish-speaking country out there, let us know if you've actually heard of this expression or if it's used widely or if it's just an American version.
- Harp: Yeah. We use it here a lot, though. When people come to my house I often say it.

Maura: Yeah. I think it's fun. It's a fun little way to say ***make yourself at home and feel comfortable***.

Harp: Yup.

Maura: So, let's give an example now with ***mi casa es su casa***.

Harp: Sounds good.

Maura: Amy, come on in.

Harp: Oh, thanks! Oh, your place is so nice.

Maura: Thank you. Let me show you around a little bit now, and remember: ***mi casa es su casa***.

Harp: Oh thanks, that's nice.

Maura: Yeah, so feel completely at home. Let me show you your room now. Follow me.

Maura: So, there's an example when someone might use this expression. So, if a new person comes to your house and is staying at your house, especially, maybe, overnight, you might use this expression.

Harp: Yeah, exactly. So open the kitchen **cupboards**, get some food, make yourself comfortable, make yourself feel like you're at your own house.

Maura: Exactly. All right, so we've had *gesundheit*, we did ***mi casa es su casa***, and the next one is...

Harp: ***Déjà vu***.

Maura: Yes. ***Déjà vu***, which is French. There are actually tons of expressions in French that we use, but I chose just one that I think is actually really popular.

Harp: Yeah. This is used very, very frequently.

Maura: And one of the reasons why this is used so frequently is because we don't have an English expression to describe this situation, we can only use ***déjà vu***.

Harp: Yeah. That's right. There's no English equivalent; we only say ***déjà vu***, which is now an English expression.

Maura: So, ***déjà vu*** translates to *already seen*. That's the meaning of ***déjà vu*** in English, so it has the feeling of that you've already seen something.

- Harp: Yeah. So sometimes you have that weird feeling where you've seen something before or you've been in that place in that exact time before. You would say **déjà vu**.
- Maura: Right. So, like you said, you're living your life and suddenly you have this feeling like you've been in that situation before. It could be because you actually have been to that place before with people, it could be because you had a dream, or it could be just a weird feeling you get.
- Harp: The funniest story with this expression in my life, it just happened, two, three weekends ago. I went home to visit my family and the five of us were all together for the first time in two, three years, so we went for a drive to the lake and we were having a **barbecue**, it was Canada Day, and my sister, my little sister, she was sitting shotgun, so she was sitting in the passenger seat and all of a sudden she said, "Wow, I'm having a feeling of **déjà vu**." And we were like, "Oh, really?" And she was like, "I really feel like I've already seen this, I've already been here." And then my dad turned the car on to a different road, and she said, "Oh, that's 'cause I used to work over here and I used to drive here every day."
- Maura: I find that people use this expression for all kinds of different feelings or experiences but it's something about recognizing it and the situation feeling very familiar.
- Harp: Yeah. Definitely.
- Maura: And, like we said, there's no English equivalent, so you would use it just like your sister did, Harp. You would say *I feel like I'm having déjà vu*.
- Harp: Yeah, definitely.
- Maura: So, the expression is usually *to have déjà vu*. So, let's give a dialogue example with this one too.
- Harp: Sounds good.

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|--------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Maura: | So, are you still planning your trip this summer? |
| Harp: | Yup. I'm gonna go to Italy, and then I'm gonna do a quick, short trip in Greece... So weird! |
| Maura: | What? |
| Harp: | I just had the weirdest feeling of déjà vu . |
| Maura: | Oh really? Like what? This restaurant? Or this conversation? |

Harp: This restaurant, being here with you, having this exact conversation, that just gave me the weirdest feeling of **déjà vu**.

Maura: Oh weird, I hate that feeling, it's so funny.

Harp: Yeah, it's bizarre.

Maura: OK. So tell me about your trip.

Maura: OK. So, there's another example, casual conversation, and then suddenly, someone has a feeling of **déjà vu**.

Harp: Yeah. Definitely.

Maura: And usually that's how it happens, the person just says "I have **déjà vu** right now," and that's it.

Harp: Or "Yesterday I had **déjà vu**."

Maura: So, we've talked about Spanish, we've talked about German, we've talked about French, and now the last one is Japanese.

Harp: Yes, It's a fun Japanese expression that we use all the time in English.

Maura: This word is **sayonara**.

Harp: **Sayonara**.

Maura: Yes. And, again, if you're Japanese, you know what this word means. And I was asking Yoshi, who works at Culips, what is the actual meaning of **sayonara** in Japanese? And he told us that it really just has the meaning of *goodbye*.

Harp: But in English, when you say **sayonara**, it's like *goodbye* but it's like a final goodbye; you're never gonna see the person again.

Maura: Right. It's like *goodbye forever*. And when I think of this expression, I think of action movies, American films where the good guy is just about to kill the bad guy and defeat the enemy forever and he might say something like that, **sayonara**, and then they kill him and he's dead forever.

Harp: Definitely. Or kids playing a video game, again, like an action video game, where they're winning and they're about to win and then they say **sayonara**.

Maura: Yup, yup. So, in English, the meaning is a little bit different than in Japanese. When we say it, it means *goodbye forever* and you're happy about that goodbye. I also think about, maybe, someone that you don't like, maybe someone that you work with.

Harp: Yeah. And if they quit and they're leaving, you can say **sayonara**.

Maura: Yeah. But you probably wouldn't say it to them.

Harp: No.

Maura: Because they would know that you were saying *goodbye forever*, but you could say it quietly to yourself or maybe to your friend, so it means that you're happy to see this person for the last time.

Harp: Yup.

Maura: OK. Let's give a dialogue example with **sayonara** now.

Harp: Sounds good.

Maura: This is the end. Only one of us can survive.

Harp: Let's see who's gonna win.

[Fighting sounds]

Maura: Ugh, you've got me now.

Harp: It was a good fight, but **sayonara**!

Maura: So, that was fun.

Harp: Yup. We're like action film stars right now.

Maura: Yup. We just created an action scene for you.

Harp: Yup, brought to you by Culips.

Maura: So, the expressions from other languages that we looked at this episode...

Harp: For sure. We started with *gesundheit*.

Maura: Which you say after someone sneezes.

Harp: Yup, and then we moved on to...

Maura: **Mi casa es su casa**.

- Harp: Which you say when you welcome someone to your house.
- Maura: Yup, and then the next one was **déjà vu**.
- Harp: Which is when you have that feeling that you've already seen something or you've already done something before.
- Maura: Yeah, and the last one was **sayonara**.
- Harp: Which is *goodbye forever*.
- Maura: Yes. So, there are tons more expressions that we take from other languages and use in English but these are just four to give you a little taste.
- Harp: Yeah, and maybe we'll put some more in the Learning Materials. Check it out.
- Maura: Yeah, check it out. So, thanks so much for listening and sorry for our bad pronunciation if you speak any of those languages.
- Harp: Yes. And definitely not **sayonara**. We hope to hear from you and we hope that you listen to us again.
- Maura: Yes. So, don't forget to visit our website, it's Culips, C-U-L-I-P-S.com, and see everything that we have to offer there.
- Harp: Bye everyone!
- Maura: Bye!

Detailed Explanation

Achoo

This is the sound that you make when you sneeze! Words that represent sounds like this one are funny, because the words often don't look exactly like the sound sounds. But **achoo** is how the sneezing sound is often written, even if it doesn't sound exactly like that when you actually sneeze. You might also see **hachoo** or **ah-choo**.

Words that represent sounds like this are not really written very often. This is because there's usually no reason to write out a sound like this. You might see these words most often in something like a cartoon, a comic book, or in some other kind of story.

Here's a little list of common words for some other sounds that we make:

sniff/sniffle	ahem
cough	grunt
argh/urgh	phew

Gesundheit

This is a German word that English-speaking people sometimes say to someone after they sneeze. As we mention in this episode, **gesundheit** means *health* or *to your health*. This word is even in most English dictionaries!

The reason that English-speaking people started using this German word is unknown. Wishing someone health after they sneeze, which is often a sign of sickness, seems like a kind and understandable thing to do, but why we use a German word to do it remains a mystery.

After someone says **gesundheit** to you, a proper response is to say *thank you* or *thanks*.

(God) bless you

After someone sneezes, you can say *gesundheit*, **bless you**, or **God bless you**. These are really the only expressions to use in English after someone sneezes. Of course, if someone has a very big sneeze or sneezes many times in a row, you might also ask, *are you all right?*

You can say **God bless you** or just **bless you**. There are two explanations for why this is the response to a sneeze. One is that, as with *gesundheit*, when someone sneezes, they might be sick. Saying **bless you** is simply a way to wish the person well. The other explanation is that people used to believe that when you sneezed, it was a spirit passing through you. In this way, **God bless you** was used to mean that they hoped your spirit was well.

Nowadays, we use these expressions as a way to be polite and show concern for someone, without thinking much about the meanings, but they continue to be widely used.

Mi casa es su casa

This Spanish-language expression is widely understood by English speakers, especially Canadians and Americans. As we say in this podcast, the expression literally means *my house is your house*. People use this expression to welcome people into their homes and to invite them to feel comfortable, as if it were their home too.

This expression invites people to feel comfortable and act as they would in their own home. For example, if they want a drink and the host is in another room, the guest can just go into the kitchen and get it themselves any time they want. **Mi casa es su casa** is often used when someone is visiting the home of another person, usually for the first time and/or for an extended period of time, like overnight.

Make yourself at home

This expression, **make yourself at home**, is used just like *mi casa es su casa*. If someone feels *at home*, this means that they feel comfortable, like they belong. When a host says this expression to their guest, it means that they want the guest to do whatever they would like to feel comfortable, like they are at home.

This expression can also be used in places that are not homes, in any place where someone is invited to get comfortable.

Here's an example with this expression used somewhere other than in a home:

Vincent: Welcome to the office. This is your desk here. **Make yourself at home**.
Nicholas: Thanks! I will.

Cupboards

This is a funny word because it is not pronounced as it is spelled. Listen again to this episode to hear Harp say **cupboards**. **Cupboards** are the storage space in kitchens and bathrooms that are attached to or in the walls and have doors on the front and shelves inside.

The *p* in **cupboard** usually isn't pronounced at all, so the word sounds more like *cuh-board*, or sometimes like *cuh-bird*, depending on the speaker. Sometimes English pronunciation is difficult, because lots of words aren't really spelled like they're pronounced. This is one of those cases!

Barbecue

This is a word that you often see abbreviated. **Barbecue** is most often abbreviated to **BBQ**. The word **BBQ** is not pronounced as letters, but spoken as the full word, **barbecue**. In any professional or formal writing, this word should be written out in full, but on signs or in stores it's often written just as **BBQ**. It can also be written in the lowercase, as **bbq**.

Déjà vu

Déjà vu is a French expression that's widely used in English conversation by native English speakers. In French, the expression should always have accents on the e and the a, but since English doesn't generally use accents, many people write this word in English without them. However, most—maybe even all—English dictionaries do include the accents in this word, so if you want to be as correct as possible, you should use them too.

This expression is used in a few similar but slightly different ways. **Déjà vu** means that you have the feeling that you've had an experience before, even though you're actually experiencing it for the first time. Some people, like Harp's sister, use the expression **déjà vu** when they feel like they've done something before, and then they discover that they actually have! Technically, this is not really **déjà vu**, but so many people use it this way that it can mean that too.

Like we say in this episode, people most often say *to have déjà vu*. You can also use any variation of *to have a feeling of déjà vu* or *to have a sensation of déjà vu*. Something can give you **déjà vu** or it can feel or seem like **déjà vu**.

Here are a couple examples:

Ted: Hi.

Felix: Hi... Oh, wow. I just had the strangest feeling of **déjà vu**.

Ted: Cool. I like when that happens.

Cindy: So, I went to a concert last night and it totally felt like **déjà vu**.

Amanda: Oh, really? Why?

Cindy: I think it was because I went to another concert at the same place, like 10 years ago.

Déjà vu can also be used in another related way. It may be used when some event, usually something negative, happens again or seems to repeat itself. For example, if you went camping and it rained a lot, and then the next time you go camping it rains again, you can say it's like **déjà vu**. If your television stops working during an important show, and then breaks down again during another important show, you could also use this expression.

Here are a couple examples using **déjà vu** in this way:

Nina: So, we made plans to get together and then he cancelled at the last minute.

Heather: Oh, no. It's **déjà vu**. It seems like he's always doing that to you.

Mike: My new car just broke down.

Fred: **Déjà vu**! Your old car was always breaking down too.

There are so many expressions from French that we use in English. Here's a short list of a few other French expressions that have been incorporated into English:

Rendezvous (used slightly differently in English than the original French meaning)

À la mode (also used differently in English than the French meaning)

Bon appétit/Bon voyage

Du jour

Raison d'être

Joie de vivre

Bravo

Sayonara

Here's a Japanese word that's widely understood and often used by English speakers. In English, **sayonara** means *goodbye forever*, that you're glad to say goodbye to someone and know that you won't see them again. This word is most often used in movies and television, but a person might also say it in everyday conversation when they're happy to know that they will never see a certain person again.

Like we say in this episode, people often do not say **sayonara** directly to the person they are happy to see for the last time, since this would be very rude. Instead, someone might say it while talking to someone else about the person leaving. In movies, **sayonara** is usually said directly to the person (often a villain), but this isn't really realistic.

Here are couple of realistic examples of **sayonara**:

George: I'm so happy that Stan is quitting. He's such a terrible boss.

Stephanie: I know! **Sayonara** Stan!

(Stan is not present)

Amanda: Tomorrow is Jack and Edward's going away party. Are you going?

Bob: Yep. Jack is such a good guy, but I can't wait to say **sayonara** to Edward.

Quiz

1. Which word represents the sound of a sneeze?
 - a) sniff
 - b) ahem
 - c) achoo
 - d) phew

2. What is the English translation of the German word *gesundheit*?
 - a) health
 - b) spirit
 - c) tissue
 - d) sickness

3. When would you use the expression *mi casa es su casa*?
 - a) when someone is leaving your home
 - b) when you stay at a friend's home
 - c) when you receive an invitation from a friend
 - d) when you welcome a guest to your home

4. What is an English equivalent of *mi casa es su casa*?
 - a) Make yourself at home.
 - b) Take yourself home.
 - c) My case is your case.
 - d) Go home to your home.

5. Which of the following words mentioned in this episode have a pronunciation significantly different from its spelling?
 - a) barbecue
 - b) cupboard
 - c) home
 - d) health

6. The French expression *déjà vu* directly translates to what in the English language?
 - a) been here before
 - b) saw yesterday
 - c) already seen
 - d) experienced this

7. What is the abbreviation for *barbecue*?
 - a) DQ
 - b) BBC
 - c) BBQ
 - d) BBE

8. Where is the most common place to hear *sayonara* in English?
 - a) on the street
 - b) at work
 - c) in films
 - d) on the radio

Answers

1.c 2.a 3.d 4.a 5.b 6.c 7.c 8.c