

**Comment by Margaux**

I find it very interesting that you ask me this question. This topic comes up regularly when I talk to my family. My impression has developed over the last few months.

When I was younger, I was always very happy to be able to speak German. I felt very useful when I could help German people. I worked as a waitress in Wissembourg and also in the bakery, so I had a lot of experience with German customers. For me, there are simply two categories: the friendly customers and the "Customer is King".

There was a story that changed my attitude. I was 15-16 years old and worked in the café "La Pépinière". I was serving them, and a woman wanted a special tea. I could translate/suggest some, but still not all of them. And she talked so badly about me that I was honestly shocked. Because she expected me to speak perfect German in order to serve her properly.

Stories like that have happened to me a few times. When I was in Australia, I was also happy when someone helped me. But it shouldn't be taken for granted that we French people always have to speak German. When we come to Germany, we automatically speak German, but the opposite is rarely the case. And yet we make the effort to speak German.

The Germans could simply ask if we speak German or use a few French words (e.g. bonjour, merci, au revoir). Our region enjoys the wonderful advantage of proximity between France and Germany. And our friendship is also very important, but I have the feeling that the French and Germans are always in competition.

And that's a real shame, because each part has advantages that could easily be shared.

**Here is a multiple-choice quiz designed to test comprehension.**

1. Why did the author feel useful when speaking German?
  - A) Because they enjoyed learning new languages.
  - B) Because they could assist German-speaking customers.
  - C) Because it was required for their job in the café.
  
2. What types of customers does the author categorize?
  - A) Regular and irregular customers.
  - B) Friendly customers and demanding customers.
  - C) Friendly customers and "Customer is King" customers.
  
3. What incident changed the author's attitude towards speaking German?
  - A) A woman complained about the café's service.
  - B) A woman criticized her for not speaking perfect German.
  - C) A woman was unhappy with the tea selection.
  
4. At what age did the author have the changing experience in the café?
  - A) 15-16 years old.
  - B) When they first started working.
  - C) During their later years of work.
  
5. What is the author's opinion on the expectation of French people speaking German?
  - A) It should be considered a courtesy, not an obligation.
  - B) It is an unnecessary expectation.
  - C) It is important for cultural exchange.
  
6. How does the author suggest Germans could improve their interaction with the French?
  - A) By learning to speak French fluently.
  - B) By using simple French words or asking if the person speaks German.
  - C) By avoiding speaking German altogether.

7. What advantage does the author acknowledge about the region?

- A) The competitive nature between France and Germany.
- B) The close proximity and potential for shared benefits.
- C) The unique culinary traditions of each country.

8. What emotion did the author feel when criticized by the German woman?

- A) Embarrassment.
- B) Anger.
- C) Shock.

9. Why does the author mention their experience in Australia?

- A) To highlight the importance of language skills abroad.
- B) To compare it with their experiences in France.
- C) To emphasize the value of assistance from locals.

10. What feeling does the author express about the French-German relationship?

- A) Disappointment over the perceived competition.
- B) Happiness about the cultural exchanges.
- C) Indifference towards the regional advantages.