



**It's official: women are better at English than men. World's largest English proficiency index reveals Scandinavians on top and Libya the worst of 54 countries.**

*- EF Education First's English Proficiency Index reveals wide gaps in English skills across the world*

Hong Kong (October 24, 2012) Women are better at English than men. This is one of many findings officially reported today in the EF English Proficiency Index (EF EPI), the world's most in-depth ranking of English ability. The Swedes are the best English speakers of all based on a survey of 1.7 million adults in 54 countries and territories in five continents.

"English is key to innovation and competitiveness", says Michael Lu, Senior Vice President of EF Education First. "The EF EPI ranking should be a wake-up call to countries falling behind their neighbors—because today's report shows that poor English is linked with less trade, less innovation and lower income."

Key points revealed by the EF EPI include:

- Italy, Spain and Portugal, countries at the heart of the euro zone crisis, are being dragged down by poor English. EF's research suggests that English skills are strongly linked with how much exports contribute to an economy (p. 12 of the report). All three countries are among the bottom in Europe in proficiency.
- There are wide disparities between the BRIC countries, the developing nations competing to be future economic superpowers. Brazil is ranked at only 46<sup>th</sup>, much lower than China at 36<sup>th</sup>, Russia at 29<sup>th</sup> or India—where English is an official language—at 14<sup>th</sup>.
- The gap between men and women is widest in the Middle East and North Africa, where female scores are considerably higher. This highlights the fact that English could prove key to greater opportunities for women in developing nations. Other countries where men are far worse than women are Italy and China.
- South Korea, at 21<sup>st</sup>, and Japan, at 22<sup>nd</sup>, perform disappointingly badly for wealthy countries near the top of global rankings of academic achievement. This is surprising because they come in well behind several lower-income countries, including Hungary (8<sup>th</sup>) and Poland (10<sup>th</sup>).

This year's EF EPI also analyzes English scores by region, age and gender for select countries.

About the EF English Proficiency Index (EF EPI)

The EF EPI ([www.ef.com/epi/](http://www.ef.com/epi/)) ranks the English proficiency of 54 countries and territories using data from 1.7 million adults around the world. The EF EPI is published by the world's leading international education company, EF Education First ([www.ef.com](http://www.ef.com)), which specializes in language programs, academic degrees, educational travel, and cultural exchange programs.

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