

Coffee Break **French**

Season 4, Episode 36

Language Study



CoffeeBreak
French

SEASON 4

Mark: Bonjour tout le monde et bienvenue à Coffee Break French! Moi, c'est Mark.

PBH: Et, moi, c'est Pierre-Benoît!

Mark: Et nous sommes de retour avec votre podcast supplémentaire avec la leçon numéro 36 de la quatrième saison de Coffee Break French!

PBH: Déjà!

Mark: Déjà! OK, as usual we're going to go through this text in great detail: we'll listen to it paragraph by paragraph, and then we'll talk about the language contained therein. Alors, Pierre-Benoît, est-ce que tu es prêt?

PBH: Moi, je suis prêt.

Mark: Allez, on y va!

PB: Allons-y!

Mark: Premier paragraphe.

Salut Gabrielle. Ouhlala, pas si vite! Je trouve que tu précipites un peu trop les choses. Je préfère y aller doucement mais sûrement. Donc je ne pense pas qu'elle prenne peur

mais je crois que l'on va attendre un peu avant que tu ne la rencontres. La soirée de mercredi s'est bien passée. Nous sommes allés voir Gatsby le magnifique en version originale! Tu avais raison : c'était très intéressant et beaucoup mieux en VO. Je ne suis pas vraiment fan de Léonardo DiCaprio mais je dois reconnaître que dans ce film, il dépasse largement les autres acteurs.

Mark: So, of course, at the beginning of this particular email, Matthieu is a little worried that Gabrielle is getting ahead of herself. She is interested in coming to Paris to meet Sylvie, but he says, "not so quickly":

PB: [Ouhlala, pas si vite!](#)

Mark: He uses a nice verb, [précipiter](#). Listen to this sentence.

PB: [Je trouve que tu précipites un peu trop les choses.](#)

Mark: [Précipiter](#) to go fast, to go quickly; and [précipiter les choses](#).

PB: Yes, it's a set phrase, and that's basically to rush things.

Mark: So I think, I find that you're rushing things a bit. [Je trouve que tu précipites un peu trop les choses. Alors, il continue.](#)

PB: [Je préfère y aller doucement mais sûrement.](#)

Mark: We've heard that one before. I prefer, literally, to go there, slowly but surely.

PB: Yeah, the use of **doucement** though. Very interesting how French people use **doucement** rather than?

lentement
slowly

Mark: **Lentement.**

PB: **Très bien.** ... And it's not accurate. We should say **lentement** more often, but it's been accepted. It's the evolution of the language and now **doucement** is used.

Mark: **Doucement.** OK. **Je préfère y aller, parce qu'on y va** - we go there, so we go at things a little more slowly but surely. **Je préfère y aller doucement mais sûrement.** And in this next sentence, of course we've already talked about this in our other episode, so let's have a listen to the sentence.

PB: **Je ne pense pas qu'elle prenne peur mais je crois que l'on va attendre un peu avant que tu ne la rencontres.**

Mark: It is of course a fantastic sentence with lots of interesting grammatical points, but we've already spoken about them, so let's just go ahead with a nice translation. I don't think that she'll be scared off, that she'll get scared, but I think that we should wait a little before you meet her: **que l'on va attendre un peu avant que tu ne la rencontres.** OK, so he goes on.

PB: **La soirée de mercredi s'est bien passée.**

Mark: So, Wednesday evening went well - **s'est bien passée. La soirée de mercredi.**

PB: **Mercredi, oui.**

rigoler

to giggle, to laugh

Mark: Pourquoi tu rigoles?

PB: I always have a smile on my face when I say
mercredi.

Mark: And why would that be?

PB: It goes back to my childhood memories.
Mercredi, if you think about the first three
letters...

Mark: Oh, I see where you're going with this, ok.

PB: And when I was a young kid we were not
allowed to say any bad words.

Mark: Des gros mots.

PB: Des gros mots, yes. And my dad sometimes
would get angry or annoyed and would start
to say mer... and then finish the word -credi.

Mark: Credi.

PB: I think we've got the equivalent in English with
the word sugar.

Mark: Let's not go any further with that one.

PB: Non, non. But I think it's interesting for the
cultural aspect of the word.

Mark: Absolutely. Maybe there's another series in
French about foul language, I don't know! We
can think about that one - Coffee Break
Naughty French. Anyway, let's get back to
this...

PB: Le cours du mercredi. It would be so good!

Mark: OK, so Matthieu goes on:

PB: Nous sommes allés voir Gatsby le Magnifique
en version originale!

Mark: So they did in fact go to see The Great Gatsby in the original version, in English.

PB: Tu avais raison : c'était très intéressant et beaucoup mieux en VO.

Mark: So as we know Gabrielle had suggested that they go and see it in version originale, VO, and Matthieu agrees. In fact he says "you were right": tu avais raison. Remember it's avoir raison, avoir tort. To be right, to be wrong. Literally, "to have right" or "to have wrong". C'était très intéressant et beaucoup mieux en VO. And much better in version originale.

PB: Je ne suis pas vraiment fan de Leonardo DiCaprio mais je dois reconnaître que dans ce film, il dépasse largement les autres acteurs.

Mark: It's quite an interesting expression there, because it's certainly different from how we would say it in English. He says that he's not really a fan of Leonardo DiCaprio, mais je dois reconnaître, but I must recognise, que dans ce film, that in this film, il dépasse largement les autres acteurs. Dépasse, c'est ce que l'on fait dans une voiture.

PB: Avec une voiture you overtake. Ou doubler, dépasser, doubler une voiture.

Mark: But here?

PB: Here I think it's the idea of he's above them all.

Mark: He's overtaking them, or perhaps better, as you say, he's much better.

PB: I suppose it's like in the **Tour de France** when you overtake that's you basically at the front, the top guy,.

Mark: So **il dépasse, dépasser**, the verb, **il dépasse largement**, widely. He's widely better than the others, or he's much better, he's way above the other actors. **Très bien**. OK, a fairly straightforward paragraph there. Let's have a listen to our second paragraph now.

Tiens au fait, les affaires reprennent au boulot. On vient de me donner un nouveau contrat. Cette fois-ci pour un client à Dubaï. Du coup, je vais vraiment devoir me remettre à l'anglais. On m'a déjà prévenu que je devrai aller à Dubaï afin de rencontrer notre client. Les façons de travailler sont tellement différentes par rapport à chez nous qu'il est primordial d'aller sur place pour comprendre comment la boîte fonctionne. J'ai hâte d'y aller, même si cela n'est pas demain la veille ! Par contre, ce projet est encore plus compliqué que le précédent, celui avec les Canadiens, et donc, ça promet d'être difficile ! Tiens d'ailleurs, celui-là je l'ai fini hier et ils ont été enchantés de mon travail. Ils m'ont d'ailleurs invité à leur rendre visite à Québec dès que je le veux !

Mark: OK, so here we've got Matthieu talking about his work and he uses some interesting language in this paragraph. Let's go back through what he says. He begins.

PB: *Tiens au fait, les affaires reprennent au boulot.*

Mark: It's nice this one. *Les affaires reprennent au boulot.* Literally, business is taking off again, I suppose more like "business is picking up". Things are picking up, things are increasing. Things are getting better at work.

PB: Yes, they're selling more things.


Mark: Exactly. *Les affaires reprennent au boulot.* And indeed, he's just been given a new contract.

PB: *On vient de me donner un nouveau contrat.*

Mark: And this time it's an interesting one because the client is not in France.

PB: *Cette fois-ci pour un client à Dubaï.*

Mark: Dubaï. So he is going to have to get back into his English. Let's have a listen to this phrase.



Je vais vraiment devoir me remettre à l'anglais.

Mark: So he's going to have to get back into his English because the business that he's going to be doing in Dubai will be conducted in English. *Je vais vraiment devoir me remettre,* literally to put myself back on English.

PB: Yes, the expression is *se mettre à quelque chose* which is "to start up something", but here it's *se remettre* so he did it when he was younger and now he's got to basically brush up his English.

Mark: So after having started this if he's thinking "I have picked up my English again", then let's see if our listeners can work out how he would say "I have picked up my English again" using *se remettre*. So that would become?

PB: *Je me suis remis à l'anglais.*

Mark: *Je me suis remis à l'anglais.* So I started off learning English: *je me suis mis à l'anglais.* And I picked up again with English: *je me suis remis à l'anglais.* Could we have another example of this?

PB: Yeah, if you were in a school, if you were talking to your child and your child says to you *j'ai fini de manger et maintenant je vais me remettre à mes devoirs.*

Mark: OK, so I'm going to pick up my homework again, I'm going to get back to my homework: *je vais me remettre à mes devoirs. Donc Matthieu continue.*

PB: *On m'a déjà prévenu que je devrai aller à Dubaï afin de rencontrer notre client.*

Mark: OK, so we're seeing that *afin de faire quelque chose* again, which we've seen before: *on m'a déjà prévenu* I have already been warned, I've been told, that I'm going to have to, or I will

have to go to Dubai, so that I can meet my client, *afin de*, in order to meet my client. And Matthieu goes on to explain a little about what this is the case.

PB: *Les façons de travailler sont tellement différentes par rapport à chez nous qu'il est primordial d'aller sur place pour comprendre comment la boîte fonctionne.*

Mark: *Primordial*. That's not exactly a word we would use every day, but perhaps more common in French?

PB: *Il existe! Il existe en anglais.*

Mark: *Il existe. Primordial.*

PB: *Primordial* or *primordial*?

Mark: *Je ne sais pas.*

PB: It's crucial to know, it's primordial to know!

Mark: It's not really the kind of word I use every day, but anyway *primordial* in French is probably more used.

PB: Yes, we use *primordial* and *crucial*. *Vraiment très important.*

Mark: So let's have a look at this: *les façons de travailler sont tellement différentes*. So the way of working over there in Dubai is so different from how it is here, so obviously there is a different way of working, where the clients are in Dubai, that it's very important to go and see how things work "on the ground", *sur place*. *D'aller sur place pour comprendre comment la boîte fonctionne*. So it's very important that

they go to see how things are working on the ground in order to be able to supply them with a good service.

PB: And obviously here, Mark, we could have said *y aller en personne*.

Mark: *En personne* of course, so "in person". It's important to have someone there "in person" or to go there in person.

PB: So it's the idea that someone is physically here.

Mark: Exactly, so they're going to send someone to Dubai to see exactly what it's like in person, to have someone on the ground there to understand how the company works rather than just doing it by video conference or whatever it happens to be.

PB: *Exactement. La boîte*.

Mark: *La boîte*. *La boîte* is an interesting word as well as it's quite a colloquial way of referring to a business. *Une boîte*, literally "a box". But it's also used in a different context.

PB: Oh yes, with younger people.

Mark: *Aller en boîte*.

PB: *Oui*. To go to a nightclub, to go dancing.

Mark: A discotheque!

PB: That would be *aller en boîte* whereas if I say *je dois passer à la boîte* that would mean I need to go work, or to go the office *pour 5 minutes, d'accord*.

Mark: *Il ne faut pas confondre les deux*.

PB: Non.

Mark: OK, let's continue.

PB: J'ai hâte d'y aller, même si cela n'est pas
demain la veille!

Mark: That's a nice phrase. J'ai hâte d'y aller, of
course, I can't wait to go there, literally "I have
haste of there to go": j'ai hâte d'y aller ... j'ai
hâte d'y aller, même si cela n'est pas demain la
veille!

PB: What a lovely expression!

Mark: Indeed. We're saying it quite slowly there, cela
n'est pas demain la veille! And let's think about
what it means: it is not tomorrow that is la
veille for example du départ de Matthieu pour
Dubai. So it's not tomorrow that he's going to
be heading to Dubai - he's got plenty of time
to think about it: cela n'est pas demain la
veille!

PB: It's not going to happen tomorrow.

Mark: It's not going to happen tomorrow, yeah.
There's time. Don't worry - hold your horses!

PB: It's a nice expression and I think that every
time I use it I tend to say it quite fast, as a set
phrase, especially the demain, I tend to
contract it, so I would tend to say something
like ce n'est pas d'main la veille!

Mark: Ce n'est pas d'main la veille!

PB: Ce n'est pas d'main la veille!

Mark: There are other contexts where we could use
this same expression, though.

PB: Yes, you know, something that someone is trying to achieve and you say *ce n'est pas demain la veille!* meaning I don't think she's going to manage or he's going to manage to do that in the next few days.

Mark: That'll be the day, perhaps?

PB: That'll be the day, or that'll be right. Could be very sarcastic there.

Mark: Or perhaps if someone is in a new relationship and you are thinking, "oh should I buy a hat for the wedding?"

PB: *Ah non! Ce n'est pas demain la veille!*

Mark: So it's a nice expression we can use in different ways.

PB: I suppose "let's not get carried away here".

Mark: OK. *Très bien. Donc Matthieu continue.*

PB: *Par contre, ce projet est encore plus compliqué que le précédent, celui avec les Canadiens, et donc, ça promet d'être difficile!*

Mark: So we already remember that Matthieu previously had been working on an account with the Canadians, with a Canadian client, so he says *par contre*, however, *ce projet est encore plus compliqué*, it's even more complicated, *que le précédent*, than the last one, *celui avec les Canadiens*, the one with the Canadians, *et donc, ça promet d'être difficile*, literally it promises to be difficult. We're fairly certain that this one is going to be a real stinker!

PB: That's quite nice, that **promettre de** plus infinitive. **Ça promet** or **cela promet d'être plus difficile**. **Ça promet d'être intéressant, ça promet d'être...**

Mark: **...important.**

PB: **Très bien.**

Mark: We're guaranteed that this one is going to be important, interesting, or whatever. OK, so he also finds out or mentions something about the Canadian project.

PB: **Tiens d'ailleurs, celui-là je l'ai fini hier et ils ont été enchantés de mon travail.**

Mark: So he's just finished the Canadian project. He says **celui-là**, that one, talking about the one he's just mentioned, **celui-là je l'ai fini hier**, I finished it yesterday, **et ils ont été enchantés de mon travail**, and they were enchanted with his work: **ils ont été enchantés de mon travail.**

PB: **Très bien.** And I like the start of this sentence with **tiens d'ailleurs**. **Tiens d'ailleurs**, by the way.

Mark: **Tiens!**

PB: Or "on this topic" would work as well here.

Mark: And we've got **d'ailleurs** again in this next sentence, every so slightly different in the meaning:

PB: **Ils m'ont d'ailleurs invité à leur rendre visite à Québec dès que je le veux!**

Mark: So here the **d'ailleurs** is more a "besides", and besides they've invited me to visit them in

Quebec City - à Québec would mean Quebec City as opposed to au Québec which is in the province of Quebec, dès que je le veux, as soon as I want.

PB: C'est bien ça. D'ailleurs could be translated as "actually" as well.

Mark: Yeah, that's good.

PB: They've actually invited me...

Mark: Ils m'ont d'ailleurs invité. And it's nice there: ils m'ont d'ailleurs invité - they're splitting up the perfect tense. Ils m'ont d'ailleurs invité à leur rendre visite, remember we use rendre visite à quelqu'un, but if you're visiting a monument or a museum, you can use visiter. We know this already. And just to confirm there it's à Québec. Normally it would be au Québec if you're referring to the province of Quebec, but here we're talking about Quebec City so it's à Québec. On va continuer avec notre troisième paragraphe.

Changeons de sujet et parlons un peu de toi.
Je suis content que tu ailles mieux et que tu aies retrouvé la pêche. Je me doutais bien que tu y arriverais, tu es la fille la plus forte que je connaisse. En plus, tu as les pieds sur terre donc je sais que tu ne vas pas te laisser aller. Pourquoi voudrais-tu que je te trouve bête de vouloir t'inscrire sur un site de rencontres ? Il y

a de plus en plus de personnes qui s'inscrivent sur ces sites. J'en connais un certain nombre qui se sont rencontrés de cette façon et maintenant ils sont même mariés. Il n'y a pas de honte à avoir.

Mark: Matthieu begins with a lovely expression there that we can use in many situations, indeed to change the subject.

PB: *Changeons de sujet.*

Mark: Let's change the subject, and notice it's *changer de sujet: changeons de sujet*, and let's speak a bit about you: *et parlons un peu de toi.*

PB: *Je suis content que tu ailles mieux et que tu aies retrouvé la pêche.*

Mark: We've already spoken about that phrase - that appeared in our main episode for this week. I am happy that you're feeling better and that you've found, literally, your peach. That you're feeling peachy again, that you're back on form.

PB: *Je me doutais bien que tu y arriverais, tu es la fille la plus forte que je connaisse.*

Mark: So let's just think about the *je me doutais bien que tu y arriverais*, so I didn't doubt for a minute that you would arrive there, as in, that you would get your oomph back. I wasn't at all

concerned that you wouldn't find your *pêche* again.

PB: And it's interesting that in French here it's not negative, it's positive: *je me doutais bien*, I was sure, *que tu y arriverais*.

Mark: He gives the reason, and of course we've already spoken about this phrase too.

PB: *Tu es la fille la plus forte que je connaisse*.

Mark: And then he goes on to give a little more of a definition of why he thinks this is the case. Let's have a listen:

Tu as les pieds sur terre donc je sais que tu ne vas pas te laisser aller.

Mark: *Tu as les pieds sur terre*, so you have got your feet on the ground.

PB: Your feet firmly on the ground.

Mark: *Donc je sais que tu ne vas pas te laisser aller*. You're not going to let yourself get carried away, let yourself go.

PB: It's a lovely expression. *Avoir la tête sur les épaules* is an expression we could use as well.

Mark: Yes, to have your head screwed on the right way. *Avoir la tête sur les épaules*, or in this case *avoir les pieds sur terre*. We've spoken about these ones before. OK, Matthieu then goes on and asks Gabrielle a question:

PB: Pourquoi voudrais-tu que je te trouve bête de vouloir t'inscrire sur un site de rencontres?

Mark: It's probably more a rhetorical question in a sense: why on earth would you want me to find you silly for wanting to sign up to a dating site. *Pourquoi voudrais-tu*, why would you want, *que je te trouve bête*, that I find you silly, or why would you want me to find you silly, *de vouloir t'inscrire*, for wanting to sign up, *sur un site de rencontres*, on a dating site?

PB: I hope you noticed the lovely subjunctive there!

Mark: Absolutely. We don't really hear that subjunctive: *pourquoi voudrais-tu que je te trouve...* That's really a subjunctive in there, but it's exactly the same as the indicative. OK.

PB: *Il y a de plus en plus de personnes qui s'inscrivent sur ces sites.*

Mark: So Matthieu here is telling Gabrielle that she needn't worry: there are lots of people who sign up on these sites, in fact there are more and more people who are using dating sites.

PB: *J'en connais un certain nombre qui se sont rencontrés de cette façon et maintenant ils sont même mariés.*

Mark: So I know quite a few people, *un certain nombre*, a certain number of people, *qui se sont rencontrés de cette façon*, who met each other in this way, *et maintenant ils sont même mariés*. So, Matthieu reassures Gabrielle who,

herself, was a bit embarrassed telling Matthieu that this was the case and he reassures her with a lovely expression. Let's have a listen.

Il n'y a pas de honte à avoir.

Mark: Now we know **avoir honte** which means to be ashamed or to be embarrassed, **avoir honte** so he's saying "there is no shame to have": **il n'y a pas de honte à avoir**.

PB: Again, it's an idiomatic expression, it's a set phrase. A beautiful phrase to use.

Mark: And it's also worth pointing out: **il n'y a pas de honte**. Now that is because that **h** that begins **honte** is an **h aspiré**!

PB: **Très bien**.

Mark: So we don't say **il n'y a pas d'**, d-apostrophe, **honte**, it's **il n'y a pas de honte**. So it's an H that counts at the beginning of the word **honte**. OK **très bien**. Let's have a listen to our final paragraph.

Le seul petit conseil que je voudrais te donner est de faire attention aux personnes que tu pourrais rencontrer. On peut toujours faire de mauvaises rencontres. Mais que dis-je, on dirait un vieux qui parle, tu n'es plus une enfant, tu sais ce que tu fais! Par contre, ne te

jette pas dans les bras du premier venu juste parce que tu ne veux pas être seule. Il vaut mieux être seul que mal accompagné tu ne crois pas ?! Bon allez je dois te laisser, j'ai du pain sur la planche avec ce nouveau projet.
Bises, Matthieu

Mark: So there is one little piece of advice that Matthieu does want to give to Gabrielle.

PB: *Le seul petit conseil que je voudrais te donner est de faire attention aux personnes que tu pourrais rencontrer.*

Mark: So he wants her to *faire attention, to look out for, to be careful with the personnes que tu pourrais rencontrer.* with the people that you might meet.

PB: Nice translation of *pourrais* there.

Mark: Might, may. The people that you may meet, the people that you might meet. Could meet literally.

PB: *On peut toujours faire de mauvaises rencontres.*

Mark: *On peut toujours faire de mauvaises rencontres.* One can always have bad meetings, you can always have unfortunate dates.

PB: Bad encounters, yeah, the idea of meeting someone a bit dodgy.

Mark: And then our next expression which we've already talked about.

PB: Mais que dis-je, on dirait un vieux qui parle, tu n'es plus une enfant, tu sais ce que tu fais!

Mark: What am I saying? You'd honestly think it was an old man talking. You're no longer a child: you know what you're doing! However...

PB: Par contre, ne te jette pas dans les bras du premier venu juste parce que tu ne veux pas être seule.

Mark: So, don't throw yourself into the arms of the first person who comes along, du premier venu juste parce que tu ne veux pas être seule. just because you don't want to be on your own.

PB: And then after that we've got a lovely phrase here.

Mark: Yes, let's hear it.

PB: Il vaut mieux être seul que mal accompagné tu ne crois pas?!

Mark: It's better being alone than being with the wrong person, don't you think? It's almost time for him to finish because he has a reason to finish. Let's have a listen to this wonderful phrase.

PB: Je dois te laisser, j'ai du pain sur la planche avec ce nouveau projet.

Mark: I have got literally some bread on the board with this new project. We've spoken about this early on in this season of Coffee Break French,

but it's a wonderful expression to say. I've got a lot on my plate with this new project. Voilà!

PB: Il y avait de très bonnes expressions dans cet épisode.

Mark: Oui tout à fait. Donc nous espérons que cela vous a plu, comme d'habitude.

PB: Puis, nous, on va y aller parce qu'on a encore du pain sur la planche!

Mark: Eh oui! C'est ça. Allez, bonne semaine à tous et à très bientôt.

PB: Au revoir.



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