



Cambridge International AS & A Level

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

9093/43

Paper 4 Language Topics

May/June 2023

2 hours 15 minutes



You must answer on the enclosed answer booklet.

You will need: Answer booklet (enclosed)

INSTRUCTIONS

- Answer **all** questions.
- Follow the instructions on the front cover of the answer booklet. If you need additional answer paper, ask the invigilator for a continuation booklet.
- Dictionaries are **not** allowed.

INFORMATION

- The total mark for this paper is 50.
- The number of marks for each question or part question is shown in brackets [].

This document has **4** pages. Any blank pages are indicated.

Section A: English in the world

Question 1

Read the following text, which is an article from *The Guardian*, a British newspaper. It was published in 2020.

Discuss what you feel are the most important issues raised in the text relating to the changing use of English in the world. You should refer to specific details from the text as well as to ideas and examples from your wider study of English in the world. [25]

Africa's colonisation of the English language continues apace

The British empire forced its colonies to abandon their own languages. Now they are making English their own.

There is one expression I have grown up hearing from relatives of a certain age, but never been able to accept. It's the description of Twi – the Akan language spoken by my family – as 'the vernacular', a term which implicitly compares it with the colonial language, English, and somehow finds it wanting. The word itself is a revealing symptom of the colonial project. Just as nations like the Yoruba, with a population of more than 40 million, were patronisingly described as 'tribes', when in fact they were substantial nations, African languages were downgraded to 'the vernacular'. It's a term more befitting of a regional dialect than a nation's language, with its own history, politics and literature. 5

The attempt to discourage Africans from speaking our own languages not only failed, but has had the glorious result of backfiring, to the extent that now Britain's own inhabitants are officially adopting African vocab. This month the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) added Nigeria's first entries to already recognised gems like 'howzit' from South Africa. Other Africans will recognise lots of the latest lingo to get the OED stamp – 'chop', to eat or to misappropriate funds; 'next tomorrow', the day after tomorrow; 'sef', a great pidgin flourish for emphasis. 10

Nigeria's relationship to the English language, like that of all English-speaking African nations, is a complicated one. Chinua Achebe – one of the legends – wrote of the English language, 'we may go on resenting it, because it came as part of a package deal that included many other items of doubtful value, especially the atrocities of racial arrogance and prejudice which may yet set the world on fire ... If [English] failed to give them a song it at least gave them a tongue for sighing.' 15

English was imposed on Africans by force. 'In Kenya, English became more than a language: it was the language, and all the others had to bow before it in deference,' wrote the great Kenyan novelist Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o. In his seminal book *Decolonising the Mind*, he described children at his English-speaking school in Nairobi being punished if they were caught speaking Gĩkũyũ. 20

The great thing about language though, is that it waits for no one. While calls to decolonise curricula¹ seem likely to continue falling on deaf ears, culture moves on. Several years ago I wrote about how the situation of 'the Queen's English' in Ghana – once associated with superior education and intelligence – has become more perilous, with the potential to attract derision under the acronym LAFA – locally acquired foreign accent. 25

¹ *curricula*: plural of 'curriculum'; the subjects studied in a school or college

Section B: Language and the self

Question 2

Read the following text, which is an extract from an article from the *Language Magazine* website, published in 2019.

Discuss what you feel are the most important issues raised in the text relating to the ways in which language can shape and reflect how individuals think. You should refer to specific details from the text as well as to ideas and examples from your wider study of Language and the self. [25]

Love & Other Emotions Prove to not be Universal Across Languages

Humans have a breadth of emotions and are on a constant search to express them through language, though sometimes we find that words in one language don't have a translatable counterpart in another. Norwegians say *forelsket*, which describes the feeling and experiences at the very beginning of falling in love, while the indigenous Baining people of Papua New Guinea say *awumbuk* to describe a social hangover that leaves people unmotivated and lacking energy for days after the departure of overnight guests. Author Joshua Conrad Jackson states, 'Translation dictionaries, for example, suggest that the English word *love* can be equated with the Turkish word *sevgi* and the Hungarian word *szerelem*. But does this mean that the concept of "love" is the same in English, Turkish, and Hungarian?' While there are different words for specific emotions in various languages, one may ask – do people experience emotions differently depending on the languages they speak? A new study suggests so. 5

The study, 'Emotion semantics show both cultural variation and universal structure', was published in *Science*¹, and studied emotion semantics across a sample of 2474 spoken languages from 20 different language families using 'colexifications' – instances where a single word has multiple meanings. 10

There is a growing recognition that emotions can vary greatly in their meanings across languages and culture, and that emotional concepts such as 'anger' and 'sadness' do not derive from actual brain structures, but from humans making socially-learned inferences about the meaning of the word and the actual bodily feeling associated with the word. 15

The researchers found significant differences in how emotions were conceptualized across languages and culture – three times more variation than in terms describing color. Emotion concepts had different patterns of association in different language families. For example, 'anxiety' was closely related to 'fear' among Tai-Kadai languages, but was more related to 'grief' and 'regret' amongst Austroasiatic languages. By contrast, 'anger' was related to 'envy' among Nakh-Daghestanian languages, but was more related to 'hate,' 'bad,' and 'proud' among Austronesian languages. Researchers interpreted these findings to mean that emotion words vary in meaning across languages, even if they are often equated in translation dictionaries. Interestingly, some Austronesian languages paired the concept of love, a typically positive emotion, with pity, a typically negative one. 20

On the other hand, researchers also found underlying similarities. Language families tend to differentiate emotions based on how pleasant and exciting they are, so for instance words expressing fear were unlikely to be grouped together with those that express joy. 25

'This is an important study,' says William Croft, a professor of linguistics at the University of New Mexico. 'It's probably the first time an analysis of the meanings of words has been done at this scale. One of the novel things about this project is that the findings show both universal and culture-specific patterns,' Croft adds. He points out, however, that because some of these families cover a large number of languages across a wide geographical area, it will be important to further examine the underlying cultural factors. 30

¹ *Science*: a scientific journal

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