

Section A: English in the world

Question 1

Read the following texts. Text A is an extract from an article published on the Morocco World News website in 2019. Text B consists of four online comments written in response to this article.

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

Text A

Can Morocco Shift to Teaching in English in its Schools?

In the short term, the education system is currently tied fast to the French language. But the country is heading slowly to giving preference to English.

The Moroccan Parliament has passed a controversial new bill to reform the education system. The new law has provoked a political crisis, due to a new language policy called 'linguistic alternation', the tricky shift to teaching scientific and technical courses in foreign languages instead of standard Arabic. 5

Further revelations about the bill's contents show that French will indeed be used more in schools, but English, too, has gained ground in the kingdom's schools.

It is clear that the latest policy is a win for the economic and cultural dominance of French in Morocco, since most science courses are going to be taught in French. Conservatives are saying it is a threat to the Moroccan 'Arabo-Islamic' identity. But the question of the relevance of English within Morocco is still being debated. 10

English is explicitly required, in this piece of legislation, as a mandatory course for vocational schools and universities. Additionally, there is room for university degrees taught entirely in English as professors and researchers are required to master English as an essential element in their work. 15

The bill has put in place an optimistic goal that a student with a baccalaureate degree – the diploma that marks the completion of high school – should master standard Arabic and Amazigh (Berber), as the two official languages, in addition to French and English. 20

Morocco is looking to strengthen its position in the world and within Africa. Looking for new markets and getting more jobs for the growing numbers of young graduates is an urgent matter for the country. Government officials are aware of the importance of having a workforce trained to communicate in English to enhance foreign investment and to expand the private sector in Anglophone African countries. 25

For the current situation of Morocco, there is no perfect choice in terms of language policy. In the short term, the education system is tied fast to the French language. But the country is heading slowly to giving preference to English.

Text B**Karim Cherki**

This is a sad day for all Moroccans; every country is proud of their language and here we are incapable of mastering Arabic or French or English. We are losing our identity.

Mini Ha

I'm an English teacher in Morocco. Morocco needs to wake up and realize that high paying careers EXPECT you to speak English, not French. Give these children a fighting chance in the global market by teaching them English.

5

Mroane Oitache

Keep French, for the moment; Arabic will never die. English is a must to go further.

Mo Ahddoud

Accepting you keep Arabic as an obvious. Morocco has high calibre university students with limited job opportunities. The question for me is which language will help them most to get a job and that's why I think English.

10

Section B: Language and the self

Question 2

Read the following text, which is an extract from an article published on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation website in 2018.

Discuss what you feel are the most important issues raised in the text relating to the ways in which language can shape and reflect personal and social identity. 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]

The Accent Effect

Why some people try to chip away at their accent

Whenever Mariya Miloshevych met new people, they were left with the impression that she ate borscht¹, drank vodka and went by the name Natasha.

These were not tidbits the 21-year-old revealed in conversation but what the listener presumed solely based on her accent, she said. 'When people would hear my accent, it'd be a couple of jokes about being Russian. I would correct them with the fact that I'm Ukrainian and that would just be written off,' she said. 'A lot of small things people assume about you as soon as they hear your accent are totally wrong and don't relate to the kind of person you are.' 5 10

Miloshevych left Ukraine for Toronto in 2013 with a strong grasp of the English language overlaid with what she calls a 'really thick Ukrainian/Russian accent.' As an aspiring actress, she deemed that accent 'one of my weaknesses. It's really hard to get in an audition room when you have an accent. Rather than being treated as the other people, you are falling into a category of foreigners who can't really maintain the role.' 15

Feeling it hindered her craft and shut her out of dream gigs, she sought out accent reduction from voice and dialect coaches, taking sessions over three years in Toronto and Vancouver, where she now resides, and doling out over \$1,000. She credits the exercises with softening her accent and feels it is now only a subtle one. 'Now I'm considered as someone on their own level, as a person who just sounds slightly different but doesn't necessarily come across as someone who is foreign.' 20

Accent reduction and accent modification refer to terms used by businesses that strive to change how a person pronounces in English. The problem is, there is no standardization in the field, says Murray Munro, a linguistics professor at Simon Fraser University.

'When I hear the expression "accent reduction" that already makes me uncomfortable because it somehow implies that the stronger the accent, the worse it is and you want to trim away at it and get rid of it and that's not necessarily true.' 25

Toronto-based speech pathologist Bonnie Gross recognizes that it is difficult to lose an accent entirely. But having worked with hundreds of clients, she said 'it's possible to reduce the accent. I do it every day with people from all over the world.' Gross said most often, her clients feel or have been told their accent is affecting their job prospects or that they can't be understood. Employers approach her, too, wanting to refer an employee. 30

For Munro, whether you speak with a 'foreign' accent or like a local, intelligibility is key. But 'having an accent is not the same thing as lacking intelligibility,' he said. 'People

often confuse the two. We've shown quite conclusively that it's possible to have a very strong accent and yet be perfectly easy to understand, to be perfectly intelligible, be a good communicator.'

Notes:

¹ *borscht*: a soup made with beetroot, common in Eastern Europe

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