

Section A: English in the world

Question 1

Read the following text, which is an extract from an article published on the BBC website in 2017.

Discuss what you feel are the most important issues raised in the text relating to the growth of English as a 'global' language. 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]

The International Companies using only English

A growing number of global firms are using English as their main language – even if they are based in Japan or France.

Nearly every meeting Keiko Claassen must attend at work is held in English. No big deal – except that her company is based in Italy and she's Dutch. 5

At ITT Motion Technologies, an Italy-based engineering company where Claassen is executive director of communications, every senior staffer is expected to speak English and most communications are delivered in English. While it's not considered an official corporate language, with 4,500 employees working in several countries, including Japan, China, India and Germany, it's the only language that everyone can generally speak in common – even if speaking doesn't always mean fully understanding. 10

In other firms, such as France-based food services company Sodexo, English is being adopted as an official language. After years of translating emails, webinars and other materials into as many as eight languages, including French, English and Spanish, or holding massive town-hall meetings in multiple languages, the company announced in January that its senior leadership team would be embracing English. By year-end, it'll be English-only for the leadership teams that are responsible for its 500,000 employees across 80 countries. 15

For most of these companies, including Sodexo, the aim is simple: by communicating exclusively in a single language, leaders in South America can collaborate with colleagues in France or the US. It's also part of a larger cultural shift for the company, says Kim Beddard-Fontaine, Sodexo's group vice-president of employee and change communication. 20

'Businesses are organised globally and not regionally these days,' she says. 'We want to become more efficient by collaborating across geographies. English is an enabler of that.' 25

English for everyone

This shift is not a throwback to colonialism or a play for cultural superiority. In Europe, nearly 80% of children in their primary years are learning English, while a 2013 survey by the 21st Century Education Research Institute in Beijing found that 70% of Chinese parents want their children to learn the language to help them get into better schools. 30

'It's also one of the most succinct, simple languages to learn,' says Lin Xie. 'It's a required formal language of study in many schools in different countries.'

Sodexo, in theory, could have made its official language French – it is a 50-year old French company, after all – but only 35,000 of its staff work in France, while 125,000 live in the US. Says Beddard-Fontaine: 'I think if we decided to make French the company's global language we would have had a revolt on our hands.' 35

Since the change is primarily for the company's 200 executives and its 1,600 senior leaders, lower level staffers, many of whom don't speak English, will continue to receive communications in different languages. Still, that may change at some point, too, she says. As well, materials might be translated into fewer languages in future.

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'It's an absolute must that we move to English,' says Beddard-Fontaine.

Section B: Language and the self**Question 2**

Read the following text, which is an extract from a 2018 article published on the website of the *Metro*, a British newspaper.

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]

Can we have gender equality if we're still using gendered language every day?

We can talk about language and sexism till the cows come home.

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Language is constantly changing and there is no 'proper' way of talking, so if we can change a few words here and there, and it makes a difference to a person or group, then it is indeed a small step to bigger change.

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