

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES AND RESEARCH

9239/13

Paper 1 Written Examination

May/June 2016

1 hour 30 minutes

RESOURCE BOOKLET



READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

This Resource Booklet contains Documents 1 and 2 which you should use to answer the questions.

You should spend approximately 10 minutes reading the documents before attempting to answer the questions.
This is allowed for within the time set for the examination.

This document consists of **3** printed pages and **1** blank page.

The documents below consider issues related to cultural heritage. Read them **both** in order to answer **all** the questions on the paper.

Document 1: adapted from *Disappearing Languages*, an article written by Dr Rosemarie Ostler. The author has a PhD in Linguistics and is a writer in the US. The article was first published in 1999.

Many linguists predict that at least half of the world's 6,000 or so languages will be dead or dying by the year 2050. Languages are becoming extinct at twice the rate of endangered mammals and four times the rate of endangered birds. If this trend continues, the world of the future could be irreversibly dominated by a small number of languages. So, we need to recognise the danger signs.

Language extinction is accelerating today due to population pressures and the spread of industrialisation. The global economy often forces small, unindustrialized communities to choose between using their traditional language or a widespread language and participation in the larger world. East Africans need to speak Swahili for success and Central Europeans need to speak Russian. Linguist Leanne Hinton believes that even strong national languages might have some worries. The European Union, for instance, is increasingly concerned that English will eventually replace some European languages, since it's the only language that many Europeans have in common.

Policies that repress certain languages are common in many parts of the world. East African countries actively encourage citizens to abandon tribal languages in favour of Swahili or another 'unifying' common language as a way of promoting loyalty to new governments. Minority languages are routinely repressed as a way of repressing the minorities themselves.

Replacing a minor language with a more widespread one may even seem like a good thing, allowing people to communicate with each other more easily. But language diversity has important benefits. Stephen Wurm, in his book the *Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger of Disappearing*, tells of one medical cure that depended on knowledge of a traditional language. Northern Australia experienced an outbreak of severe skin ulcers that resisted conventional treatment, but Aborigines told the nurse about a lotion taken from a local medicinal plant that would cure the ulcers. Similar incidents have resulted in searches throughout Australia for medicinal plants known to aboriginal people through their languages and traditional cultures. The search has to be fast, as when the languages go, the medical knowledge stored in them will also go.

Things are stacked heavily against the world's minority languages. Michael Krauss, Director of the Alaska Native Language Center, suggests that as many as 90% of languages could become extinct by 2100, but the case isn't hopeless. He claims, "If people become wise and turn it around, the number of dead or dying languages could be more like 50% by 2100." We've seen that, with effort, plants and animals can be brought back from the edge of extinction. Languages, too, can be turned around. In fact, they have an advantage over biological species because they can be revived even after they have died.

We face two alternative scenarios for the future. In one, the world becomes increasingly homogenized as minority cultures and their languages are swept away in the oncoming tide of standardization. The accumulated knowledge of thousands of years disappears. In the other scenario, minorities keep their cultural heritage, and minor languages continue to exist alongside larger ones. So, we should take action now to save the rich diversity of languages and the benefits they bring.

Document 2: adapted from *Effects of English Language on National Development*, an article written by Olofin Alabi Olusoji. The author is a higher education lecturer in Nigeria and has a Master's degree in English as a Second Language. The article was written in 2012.

Nigeria is made up of more than 250 ethnic groups and it has been estimated to have at least 4000 languages. This creates many problems, so there is a need for a common language to enable effective communication. However, the question is, 'Which language should be used as Nigeria's national language?'

Choosing a national language is difficult. Some Nigerians rightly believe that the chosen language will gain upper status and all other languages will then be less important. Finding a common national tribal language would be a very difficult, if not an impossible, task. This is because the choice of any tribal language as a national language would certainly lead to feelings of jealousy and a fear of ethnic domination, which may even lead to the total collapse of the entire nation.

However, the English language, because of its neutrality, has gained acceptance as a common language among the different ethnic groups in Nigeria. English has continued to play such a unifying role to the extent that it has become the country's second language. There is no doubt that Nigeria as a country has benefited tremendously through the use of the English language which has helped it to develop in many ways. The major foundation for the success of Nigerian businesses is the use of English as a language of national communication.

Additionally, politics in Nigeria would have been more difficult, but for the use of English language when addressing political audiences at different events across the country. This alone has contributed a lot to the existing unity in Nigeria.

One other major benefit is in education. With English as a second language it is now possible for Nigerians, regardless of ethnic background to study in any part of the country. Some Nigerian academics like Obayan strongly oppose the use of English as the language of education. He states, "The first problem which faces the Nigerian child learning English is how to adjust the mouth and ears to the new language, which is very different from most Nigerian languages". So, the Nigerian government has solved the problem by ensuring that instruction in the primary school is initially in the language of the local community and only at a later stage, English.

The fact remains that, unlike the English language, none of the tribal languages has the linguistic capacity to handle the teaching of subjects like physics, chemistry and mathematics. This fact is supported by the Nigerian academic Adedeji when he says, "Science students need language to help them define concepts and describe substances, objects, locations and processes, report facts, draw inferences, make conclusions, classify items and make generalisations."

We are therefore able to conclude that the evidence shows that there is no doubt that Nigeria can claim greater achievement through her adoption of English as a second language.

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