The Death of Language

A language is dead when nobody speaks it any more. And it is dying when a very small number of people speak it. A good example is Kasabe, an African language. The last speaker of Kasabe, a man called Bogon, died on 5th November 1995. His children and grandchildren did not speak or understand Kasabe. So when Bogon died, he took his language with him. There are no records of Kasabe, and in a short time, nobody will remember it.

Not only minority languages like Kasabe are in danger. It is difficult to make calculations but some experts think that if a language has less than 20,000 speakers, it is in danger. This includes two out of three languages in the world. Other linguists believe that more than half of the world’s languages will die in the next half century.

Why is this important? When you learn another language, you learn more than a new way to communicate. In Slovakia, people say: ‘With a new language you receive a new soul,’ and in France: ‘A person with two languages is two persons.’ It is sad to think that much of the history and culture of the world will disappear with future language death.

1 True or false?
1. Kasabe is a dead language.
2. Bogon’s children couldn’t speak Kasabe, but they could understand it.
3. If a language has less than 20,000 speakers, it is dead.
4. Many languages will die in the next 50 years.
5. When a language dies, a part of the history and culture of the world dies too.
VOCABULARY

3 a. Look at the underlined words in the text and decide if they are verbs (V), nouns (N) or adjectives (A).

1. dead  A  5. receive  O
2. speaker  O  6. soul  O
3. linguists  O  7. death  O
4. die  O

b. Complete these sentences with the words in Exercise 3a.

1. Linguists know a lot about languages.
2. If a language is nonexistent, it does not exist any more.
3. If you obtain something, you get it or obtain it.
4. A person who can communicate in a language.
5. is the opposite of life.
6. When languages disappear, they disappear.
7. The part of a person.

4 a. Put the letters in order and discover eight adjectives.

1. flueus  useful
2. yase
3. tifudlicf
4. oclo
5. nuf
6. neigtrisetn
7. rognib
8. drah

b. Complete these sentences with your opinion. Use adjectives from Exercise 4a.

1. I think English is because
2. Learning languages is because

5 Use the correct form of the verbs in the box to complete the sentences.

- have
- chat
- understand
- do
- get

1. I usually online with people from other countries.
2. He always Linguistic research on the internet.
3. you sometimes conversations with native speakers?
4. You can lots of information on the internet if you know English.
5. It is sometimes hard to native speakers of English.

6 Use the words in the box to complete the text.

- improve
- chats
- communicate
- do
- get
- writes
- reads
- travel
- watches
- listens
- goes

Gloria is taking an English course. Her English is good and she does a lot of things to improve it. She 2 to songs, American films, online and with a South African friend. She 4 English magazines and letters to a Canadian penfriend. She is a good student, but she doesn’t always her homework. She thinks it’s boring!

She is interested in learning English because she wants to around the world when she finishes school. She knows that English will help her to with people from different countries and to a better job.
1. Complete the sentences with the correct form of the present simple.

1. Peter’s Spanish class __________ (start) at eight o’clock every day.
2. Miriam often __________ (take) Portuguese private lessons at home.
3. Dan and Harry always __________ (travel) to France on holidays to practice their French.
4. A language is dead when nobody __________ (speak) it.
5. About 960 million people __________ (speak) Mandarin Chinese in the world today.

2. a. Complete the questions.

1. What __________ does Kim do? She studies in a bilingual school in London.
2. What time __________ she get up? She gets up at 7 o’clock.
3. Does __________ she go to university? No, she doesn’t.
4. Where __________ the bus? She catches the bus on the corner of her street.
5. When __________ the bus come? The bus comes at about a quarter to eight.

b. Look at the picture of Kim and write sentences.

1. Kim / wait / for the bus __________ Kim’s waiting for the bus.
2. She / carry / heavy bag __________
3. She / wear / a school uniform __________
4. Kim / not listen / music __________

3. Complete with the correct form of the present simple or the present continuous.

Kim __________ (is thinking) about her day at school and she __________ (not listen) to her friend, Hannah. Hannah __________ (want) to go to a party on Saturday, but Kim __________ (not like) parties. Hannah and Kim __________ (go out) a lot together and Hannah __________ (be) a good friend. Hannah says, ‘Well, __________ (you want) to go?’ And Kim answers, ‘OK. What time?’

4. Complete the text with an appropriate form of the verbs in brackets.

My name is Birinder and I live in London. I __________ (can speak) three languages: English, Hindi and Swahili. I learnt Swahili when I lived in Africa. My Swahili isn’t very good now, but I __________ (like / practise) it. I __________ (can / read) it, but I __________ (not / can / write) it very well. When I was small, I __________ (could / say) a lot of things in Swahili.

I’m bilingual because my parents are from India and I always speak Hindi to them. My mother __________ (like / talk) to me in English, but I __________ (hate / speak) English at home – it doesn’t feel natural. I __________ (not / mind / speak) English at school. I __________ (love / listen) to my English friends. Their English sounds great!
5 Write sentences with **can, can’t, could or couldn’t**.

1. Kids / learn languages easily

   *Kids can learn languages easily.*

2. Some people / speak 7 or 8 languages

3. Last year / I / visit Sidney / but / I / not study English

4. Spanish speakers / understand some Portuguese

5. Last year / he / not tell a joke in English

6. I / not pass my last Japanese test

6 Complete the dialogue with the correct form of **can**.

**Alex:** How many languages **1** **can you** (you) speak?

**Katie:** Well, **2** **(I) speak English, Spanish and French. My mum’s Spanish and I lived in France when I was small.**

**Alex:** No, **4** **(I / not) only speak English, but I’m learning French.**

**Katie:** Wow!

**Alex:** Well, **7** **(he / not) remember much Russian – he studied it at school a long time ago.**

1 **Listen to Tom and Emma talking on the phone. Where are they?**

   a. They’re on holiday with their family in Spain.
   b. They’re staying with a Spanish family.
   c. They’re at a language school in Spain.

2 **Listen again and tick (✓) the words you hear.**

   1. family ✓
   2. parents
   3. children
   4. friends
   5. holiday
   6. mistakes
   7. languages
   8. grammar

3 **Listen one more time. Circle the correct option.**

   1. Emma’s family ...
      a. are helping her learn Spanish.
      b. didn’t understand her.
   2. Tom’s family ...
      a. have a boy his age.
      b. don’t have any children.
   3. Tom is meeting ...
      a. a lot of girls.
      b. a lot of girls and boys.
   4. Emma is learning a lot of ...
      a. grammar.
      b. new vocabulary.
   5. Tom is ...
      a. speaking a lot of Spanish.
      b. studying a lot of grammar.
   6. Emma doesn’t like ...
      a. speaking Spanish.
      b. making mistakes.
   7. Tom thinks it’s important ...
      a. to enjoy yourself.
      b. to write things down.
1. Complete Cathy’s profile.

Cathy Pitt, 15
Country: Canada
Languages: English, French
Likes: ☻☻ playing computer games, ☻☻ online
☻☻ computers, action films, pop music
Dislikes: ☹☹☹ to airports, ☹☹☹ by plane
☻☻☻ horror films, rock music
I can … draw animals, ☻☻ ☻☻ football and ☻☻ ☻☻ salsa.
One day I want to … visit South America.
And I want to be a graphic designer!
Write to me at cathypitt@net.com

2. Answer about Cathy.

1. Where is she from?
   She’s from Canada.
2. How old is she?
3. How many languages can she speak?
4. What place does she want to go to one day?
5. Does she like horror films?
6. What does she like doing?
7. What is her email address?

3. Use the information in the profile and your own ideas to complete the sentences.

Pay attention to the words in bold!

1. Cathy … but she can’t speak Spanish.
   Cathy can speak English and French, but she can’t speak Spanish.
2. She likes playing computer games and
3. She wants to be a graphic designer because
4. She loves action films and
5. She loves action films but
6. She doesn’t like going to airports or
7. She can draw animals and

4. Complete this profile with information about an ideal friend. Use your imagination!

Country: 
Languages: 
Likes: 
Dislikes: 
I can …
One day I want to …
Write to me at

Sample Unit
SELF-CHECK

VOCA BULARY

1. Use adjectives to complete with your opinion.
   1. Learning English is ________________.
   2. Airports are ________________.
   3. The internet is ________________.
   4. Languages are ________________.

2. Complete the verbs.
   1. She ________________ two languages.
   2. They often ________________ the internet.
   3. We ________________ on MSN every day.
   4. You never ________________ your homework!

3. Match.
   1. When I finish school, I want to get ...
   2. She likes travelling to ...
   3. He uses English for writing ...
   4. We sometimes do ...
   5. Languages help you to communicate...
      a. with people.
      b. other countries.
      c. emails.
      d. a good job.
      e. research on the internet.

GRAMMAR

4. Complete with an appropriate form of the words in brackets.
   1. They sometimes ________________ [visit] other countries.
   2. We ________________ [not / like / wait] at the airport when planes are delayed.
   4. We ________________ [can / speak] Chinese.
   5. He ________________ [not / could / understand] French when he was small.
   6. She ________________ [hate / travel] by plane.
   7. They are at the information desk. They ________________ [ask] about flight IT789 to Italy.

5. Write yes / no questions using the words in brackets.
   1. ________________?
      Yes, she can. [understand English songs]
   2. ________________?
      Yes, they do. [like travelling]
   3. ________________?
      No, he isn’t. [carry a suitcase]
   4. ________________?
      No, I couldn’t. [swim when you were 4]
   5. ________________?
      Yes, she does. [do community work]
   6. ________________?
      No, they don’t. [help at home]
   7. ________________?
      Yes, I do. [hang around with friends]
   8. ________________?
      No, he doesn’t. [read in bed]

ENGLISH IN USE

6. Answer with true information about you.
   1. What do you sometimes do at weekends?
   2. What are you doing right now?
   3. What can you do in English?
   4. What could you do in English two years ago?
   5. What do you like doing?
   6. What do you hate doing?
   7. When do you do your homework?
   8. Who do you like spending time with? Why?