



University of Kelaniya – Sri Lanka

Centre for Distance and Continuing Education

Bachelor of Arts (General) Second Examination (External) – 2021

August 2024

Career Based English

CBEN 28223 – English in Today’s World

No. of questions : 05

Time : 3 hours

Total marks : 80%

Index No :

Answer all questions on this paper

Question No.	Marks	
	Examiner 01	Examiner 02
01		
02		
03		
04		
05		
Total (80%)		

Part 01- Reading Comprehension (20%)

Read the following passage and answer the questions.

How humans evolved language

A

Thanks to the field of linguistics, we know much about the development of the 5,000-plus languages in existence today. We can describe their grammar and pronunciation and see how their spoken and written forms have changed over time. For example, we understand the origins of the Indo-European group of languages, which includes Norwegian, Hindi and English, and can trace them back to tribes in eastern Europe in about 3000 BC.

So, we have mapped out a great deal of the history of language, but there are still areas we know little about. Experts are beginning to look to the field of evolutionary biology to find out how the human species developed to be able to use language. So far, there are far more questions and half-theories than answers.

B

We know that human language is far more complex than that of even our nearest and most intelligent relatives, like chimpanzees. We can express complex thoughts, convey subtle emotions and communicate about abstract concepts such as past and future. And we do this following a set of structural rules, known as grammar. Do only humans use an innate system of rules to govern the order of words? Perhaps not, as some research may suggest dolphins share this capability because they are able to recognize when these rules are broken.

C

If we want to know where our capability for complex language came from, we need to look at how our brains are different from other animals. This relates to more than just brain size; it is important what other things our brains can do and when and why they evolved that way. And for this there are very few physical clues; artefacts left by our ancestors don't tell us what speech they were capable of making. One thing we can see in the remains of early humans, however, is the development of the mouth, throat and tongue. By about 100,000 years ago, humans had evolved the ability to create complex sounds. Before that, evolutionary biologists could only guess whether or not early humans communicated using more basic sounds.

D

Another question is, what is it about human brains that allowed language to evolve in a way that it did not in other primates? At some point, our brains became able to make our mouths produce vowel and consonant sounds, and we developed the capacity to invent words to name things around us. These were the basic ingredients for complex language. The next change would have been to put those words into sentences, similar to the 'protolanguage' children use when they first learn to speak. No one knows if the next step – adding grammar to signal past, present and future, for example, or plurals and relative clauses – required further development in the human brain or was simply a response to our increasingly civilized way of living together.

Between 100,000 and 50,000 years ago, though, we started to see evidence of early human civilization through cave paintings; for example, no one knows the connection between this and language. Brains didn't

suddenly get bigger, yet humans did become more complex and more intelligent. Was it using language that caused their brains to develop? Or did their more complex brains start producing language?

E

More questions lie in looking at the influence of genetics on brain and language development. Are there genes that mutated and gave us language ability? Researchers have found a gene mutation that occurred between 200,000 and 100,000 years ago, which seems to have a connection with speaking and how our brains control our mouths and faces. Monkeys have a similar gene, but they did not undergo this mutation. It's too early to say how much influence genes have on language, but one day the answers might be found in our DNA.

Adapted from: <https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/sites/podcasts/files/LearnEnglish-Reading-C1-How-humans-evolved-language.pdf>

1. Select the appropriate heading for each part of the text given (A-E) (2 × 5 = 10 marks)

What we know?	How linguistic capacity evolved ?	How unique are we?
The physical evidence	The tiny change that may separate us from monkeys	

- A.
- B.
- C.
- D.
- E.

2. Answer the following questions (2 × 5 = 10 marks)

- 1) Which field helps us to understand the growth of languages?
.....
- 2) What are the reasons to consider human language to be complex?
.....
- 3) Apart from humans name another species that use an innate system of rules to govern the order of words? What is the evidence suggested in the text to prove this fact?
.....

- 4) Apart from the brain size, what is the other factor determining language capability?
.....
- 5) According to the research, when has the gene mutation which is linked with speaking happened?
.....

Part 02- Grammar & Vocabulary (15%)

A) Re-write the following sentences with the equivalents of the underlined words in the variety of English indicated in brackets. (1× 10= 10 marks)

1. They went to the **movie theatre** to watch the new **movie**. (In British English)
.....

2. He **booked** a hotel to stay on his **holidays**. (In American English)
.....

3. Walk down the **sidewalk**, pass the **gas station** and you will find my house on the right. (In British English)
.....

4. The newsagent spoke to the **receptionist** first. (In American English)
.....

5. They usually have some **cookies** and **crackers** in the evening. (In American English)
.....

B) Select and underline the appropriate phrasal verb to complete the following sentences (1×5= 5 marks)

1. I agree (for/ with) your decision.
2. It all boils (down/ up) to who is more capable and powerful.
3. I bumped (in to/ on to) one of my oldest best friends.
4. They dragged (in/ on) the meeting for no reason.
5. I am looking forward (to/ for) my birthday.

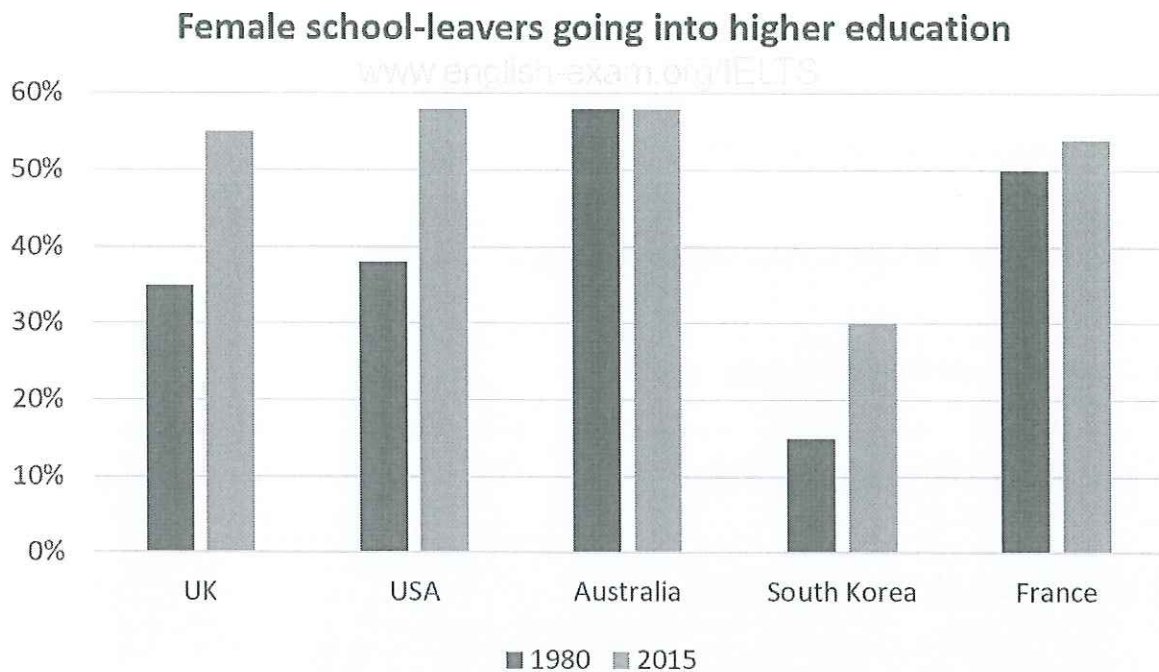
Part 03- Politically Correct Language (10%)

Rewrite the following sentences using politically correct language. (1× 10= 10 marks)

- 1) The **chairman** addressed the meeting with such enthusiasm.
.....
- 2) All these **man-made** products are causing more harm to human bodies than good.
.....
- 3) The **blind** student needs to be assessed in another way.
.....
- 4) She is on a diet because she is **fat**.
.....
- 5) The **waitress** did not carefully listen to our order.
.....
- 6) Please tell your **Christian name**.
.....
- 7) Our **maid** cooks us delicious meals.
.....
- 8) He became **deaf** after the incident.
.....
- 9) He **went mad** after coming home from the war.
.....
- 10) Some **prostitutes** were caught by the police yesterday.
.....

Part 04- Data Commentary (15%)

The following bar chart compares the percentages of female school leavers going into higher studies in different countries in the years 1980 and 2015. Write a data commentary making comparisons where relevant and reporting the main features. (100- 125 words) (15 marks)



Part 05- Essay Writing (20%)

Select one topic from the following topics and write an Essay (200-250 words) (20 marks)

- 1) Inequality and poverty in Sri Lanka.
- 2) Importance of politically correct language.
- 3) Let us wipe away the racial discrimination from our country.