



LANGUAGE LEARNING



Examiner: Is it considered important in your country to learn foreign languages?

Candidate: More than just important, it's considered essential. The English poet John Donne said: 'no man is an island', and I think in this day and age that is also true of countries: we are all intricately connected. A country that wants to do business abroad and export its goods has to know how to communicate with foreigners, and that means speaking foreign languages.

Examiner: What, in your opinion, is the best way to learn a language?

Candidate: Undoubtedly, the best way is to go and live in a country where the language is spoken as a native language. But that is not enough - I have friends who have done just that, but they stuck together with people who spoke their language and so they hardly learnt anything. You have to immerse yourself completely in the language and the culture. This takes courage but is well worth the effort. One of my friends went to study in England and got an English boyfriend. Her English improved dramatically in just a few months, so arguably that's the best way!

Examiner: Why are some people seemingly better at learning languages than others?

Candidate: It's true that some people seem to pick up language really easily. Being bilingual from a young age certainly helps because the more languages you speak, the more easily you acquire a new one. Another major factor is motivation: two people can study the same materials for the same number of hours but the person who is more motivated will learn more and remember better what they've learnt. I really believe that the more you care about learning a language, the more effortlessly you will pick it up.

Examiner: How do people in your country feel about English being the world language?

Candidate: I don't think most people feel anything exactly; they just see it as something inevitable. They don't fight it because that would just leave them trailing behind other countries that embrace English as the global lingua franca. Not learning English would leave us economically disadvantaged.

Examiner: Do you think the culture of English-speaking countries, as well as the English language, dominate the world?

Candidate: The rise of the Internet has certainly increased the dominance of English, and therefore also the spread of English and American ways of seeing the world. I think we are all expected to conform. Also, the majority of young people in my country like to watch American films and listen to American music: it's considered trendy to do so. So, yes, I would definitely say that the culture of English-speaking countries holds much sway all over the world.