

Read the article and answer the questions.

English never stops changing

All languages are in flux. In other words, they are constantly changing. This is especially true of English, which is a real global language. There are now three times more non-native speakers of English than natives. About one billion people speak it as a foreign language, while only 360 million speak it as a mother tongue. So why is English changing and is this a good thing?

One reason is globalisation. Today business meetings can be held with people from all over the world – for example, Brazil, Nigeria and Japan. Nearly always, the only common language spoken will be English. This has led to the creation of a new language variety called International English. It's a kind of English which speakers from all countries can use to talk to each other.

English plays a different role in different countries. In Singapore, Hong Kong and the Philippines, English is spoken as a second language. In the Philippines, Tagalog (the country's main language) and English merge to create a variety called Taglish. But some local languages don't merge with official languages in this way, and they are in danger because fewer people speak them.

The use of slang also changes a language. For example, colloquial terms such as *innit?* (*isn't it?*) and *like* are used so much in contemporary English that they are now a kind of punctuation. But if people use these terms to communicate, maybe they should count as real words.

The fact is that a language evolves because new words are constantly being added to it. Nouns such as *emoticon*, *spam* or *blog* and verbs like *google*, *photoshop* or *skype* have all been introduced into the English language thanks to digital technology, and they will be with us for a long time. There is much discussion about whether these words should be in the dictionary or not – and some new words never make it into dictionaries. But at the same time, some words and languages that have been with us for a long time are disappearing.

Task 1. Answer the following questions.

1. Why is English considered to be a global language?

2. How many people speak English as a second language?

3. What is International English?

4. Why are some local languages in danger?

5. How does slang change a language?

6. Why are words like *emoticon*, *spam* or *blog* now part of the English language?

Task 2: Discuss the questions with your friends.

1. Do you think your language is changing as much as English? If so, how?

2. Should we try to control what new words are introduced to our language?

3. What could be done to help languages with fewer speakers?

ANSWER KEY

Task 1.

1. Why is English considered to be a global language?

Large numbers of people speak it around the world.

2. How many people speak English as a second language?

about one billion

3. What is International English?

English which speakers from all countries can use to talk to each other.

4. Why are some local languages in danger?

Fewer people speak them and they can't merge with official languages.

5. How does slang change a language?

It becomes part of it.

6. Why are words like *emoticon*, *spam* or *blog* now part of the English language?

They come from new technology.

Task 2.

Students' own answers.