

Over the past decades, English has become the most important global language for international communication. For example, in many international companies English is used for communication regardless of the employer's or employees' mother tongue. While this development has brought huge advantages for these companies, it has also created socio-economic, ideological, and ecological problems.

As regards the socio-economic effects, it can be observed that the number of languages spoken worldwide decreased from more than 14 000 to approximately 6 000 from 1500 to 2000 (Graddol 2006: 60) while English has spread all over the world over the past centuries. Consequently, many "non-English mother-tongue speakers feel their mother tongue or identity threatened" (Hanson 1997: 22). Yet, a people's culture would certainly not disappear with its language as language is only one constituent that determines culture, even if it is an important one.

Another major point that is worth mentioning in this context are the potential ideological problems of the spread. As many non-native speakers use variations of English and have changed their attitude towards speaking or writing correct standard English, which means that they do not bother about making mistakes or using formal expressions anymore, scientists fear that a new global form of English may emerge which may result in neglecting today's standards of the English language.

However, the most important point when it comes to having English as a global language for international communication is the ecological impact of the development. With many big companies trading globally, using English for communication has the advantage that there are three times as many non-native speakers than native speakers of English. Using English at international conferences and meetings thereby saves them huge amounts of money they would otherwise have spent for interpreters. At the same time, the Internet plays another crucial role companies have to consider. As 35.6% of internet users have English as a first language (Thurlow et al. 2004: 121), it is of vital importance for businesses to be able to communicate with them in their English mother tongue in order not to lose them as customers or to win them as potential customers in the first place.

In conclusion, having English as a global language for international communication can be seen as a threat as well as a benefit. While its global spread might pose socio-economic, ideological, and ecological problems on the one hand, its benefits for the economy cannot be denied. Consequently, with English being of vital importance for companies doing business globally, English will continue to spread.

Grammar Band 4**Justification**

The candidate is able to use a range of complex structures as can be expected in advanced writing (cf. band 5), e.g. subordination, modal auxiliaries, relative clauses or parallelism. However, there are (few) grammatical inaccuracies in the text, which do not impede understanding (e.g. possessive endings, *another major point ... are the potential ideological problems, may result in neglecting today's standards*).

NB: This script represents band 4 for grammar, but the benchmark score cannot be generalised to other scale criteria.