

Don't insist on English

[listening comprehension questions]

Author: Patricia Ryan

Date: Dec 2010

Time: (10:35)

Level: **** [B1/B2]

TED TALKS Link: http://www.ted.com/talks/patricia_ryan_ideas_in_all_languages_not_just_english

Check these words before listening:

Key vocabulary

1. Dubai / the Gulf / Abu Dhabi / Kuwait / Kenya / (places)
2. Undisputed
3. To recruit
4. To morph
5. A school curriculum
6. To be on the bandwagon (idiom)
7. Linguistic ability
8. Monolingual
9. Dutch language
10. A gatekeeper
11. A segment of society
12. Self-fulfilling prophecy
13. The Islamic golden age (google this)
14. Germanic languages
15. The dark ages in Europe 500-1000 AD
16. Arbitrary
17. Einstein (google him)
18. Remedial/ dyslexic
19. Prohibitive
20. A divide
21. A circular concept
22. Forelimbs and hind limbs of an animal
23. To someone credit for something
24. Kerosene lamp / solar lamp
25. Far-reaching consequences
26. Metaphorical

Copyright: These materials are photocopiable but please leave all logos and web addresses on handouts. Please don't post these materials onto the web. Thank you

Don't insist on English

TED TALK: Patricia Ryan [Dec 2010. 10:35]

Explain what you understand

1. What is the topic of her talk?
2. What is important about the reference to learning names of plants in Arabic from grandparents and great grandparents?
3. What 'sad' fact does she say about languages?
4. Why was the recruitment of English teachers 25 years ago mutually beneficial to Kuwait and the UK?
5. What has happened to English in the last 25 years? What is significant about the example of the mono-lingual Dutch speaker?
7. What are the reservations she points out about English as a global language?

8. What's the main negative point mentioned about tests?

9. What is said about employment?

10. Why was the Kenyan boy given a Heroes award?

Critical thinking- *What do you think of this lecture? What is she exactly trying to say? What's wrong with the globalisation of English? One language means better communication and understanding? She suggests that translation should be done but surely some phrases, words don't translate the same, possibly meaning a misunderstanding of idea or concept? What solutions does she offer for the poor, no testing systems, keeping native languages? Anything else?*

Don't insist on English ANSWERS

TED TALK: Patricia Ryan [Dec 2010. 10:35]

1. What is the topic of her talk?

Language loss and globalisation of English

2. What is important about the reference to learning names of plants in Arabic from grandparents and great grandparents?

It is to show the effect of communication across generations

3. What 'sad' fact does she say about languages?

That they are dying at an unprecedented rate. A language dies every 14 days - is there a connection with the globalisation of English??

4. Why was the recruitment of English teachers 25 years ago mutually beneficial to Kuwait and the UK?

For Kuwait it helped modernisation and to empower the citizens through education and for the UK it was oil.

5. What has happened to English in the last 25 years? What is significant about the example of the mono-lingual Dutch speaker?

It has morphed into a massive international business. the Dutch speaker example is that a person shouldn't be rejected from entering university just because their level of English isn't high enough. More important points should be considered especially if the degree is not based solely on English. i.e. computer coding.

7. What are the reservations she points out about English as a global language?

Against using it as a barrier. English can become quite arbitrary. Only one or two main languages could be disastrous. E.g. Access to study.

8. What's the main negative point mentioned about tests?

The poor can't access them so they are being excluded. Also, that some of the great people like Einstein didn't need English tests.

9. What is said about employment?

'Education is the great divide'. The best jobs go to people out of Western Universities.

10. Why was the Kenyan boy given a Heroes award?

Because he invented a cost-free solar lamp so the children in his village could study at night.