



Cambridge International AS & A Level

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

9093/42

Paper 4 Language Topics

October/November 2023

2 hours 15 minutes



You must answer on the enclosed answer booklet.

You will need: Answer booklet (enclosed)

INSTRUCTIONS

- Answer **all** questions.
- Follow the instructions on the front cover of the answer booklet. If you need additional answer paper, ask the invigilator for a continuation booklet.
- Dictionaries are **not** allowed.

INFORMATION

- The total mark for this paper is 50.
- The number of marks for each question or part question is shown in brackets [].

This document has **8** pages. Any blank pages are indicated.

Section A: English in the world

Question 1

Read the following text, which is an extract from a blog published on the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) website in 2021.

Discuss what you feel are the most important issues raised in the text relating to the changing use of English in the world. You should refer to specific details from the text as well as to ideas and examples from your wider study of English in the world. [25]

Introducing Bermudian English

Over the past year I've had the pleasure of working with the OED as a consultant on a set of new Bermudian English entries. While the addition of this batch of words is particularly exciting for me as a Bermudian, it is also a landmark moment for the OED and for World English enthusiasts. With an estimated 65 000 speakers, Bermudian English is the smallest national variety yet to be represented in the OED. It's also one of the oldest; settled in 1612, Bermuda was one of the very first places – after Jamestown, Virginia – where English was spoken outside the British Isles. 5

Bermuda's location is probably one of the reasons why its dialect has been under-studied for so many years, even among scholars of lesser-known varieties of English. Linguists classify World Englishes into groups including the *British Isles* and the *Americas and the Caribbean*, and while Bermuda has links with both of these areas, it does not neatly fit into either category. 10

Culturally, too, Bermuda is complex. Bermudians are descended from enslaved West Africans and indigenous North American peoples; white British settlers; Scottish and Irish indentured servants; and Caribbean, American, and Portuguese migrants from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Since it had no indigenous population, Bermuda was not a site of significant language contact and never formed a creole. Instead, a range of English dialects came into contact with each other over the island's 400-year history and formed a new one – what linguists call a 'koine'. While geographically remote, Bermuda was anything but disconnected over the course of its long history and was exposed to diverse English input. Alongside British colonial influences, Bermuda had close links with the Caribbean and the southern American states from the seventeenth century onwards. 15 20

These diverse influences and long history have resulted in an unusual English variety that is often said to sound American or West Indian to a British ear, and quaintly British to American listeners. While it's true that Bermudian English shares a range of words and sounds with British, American, and Caribbean Englishes, it also has many unique features, meaning it's probably most accurate to say that it's a dialect in a category of its own. 25

Some of the 15 Bermudian words added to the OED: 30

aceboy – a close male friend; found in an African-American English source in 1951

Gombey – a Bermudian folk dancer; may have its etymological roots in a Bantu language

chopse – to talk excessively, gossip, or chatter; the OED entry includes evidence from the English midlands in the late 1800s

wrinched – scolded; one of the youngest Bermudian words, with the earliest quotation coming from Twitter in 2009

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Onion – a term for a Bermudian; derived from the major export crop from the 1800s until the early twentieth century.

Section B: Language and the self

Question 2

Read the following text, which is an article from *inews*, a British news website. It was published in 2021.

Discuss what you feel are the most important issues raised in the text relating to the ways in which language can shape and reflect personal and social identity. You should refer to specific details from the text as well as to ideas and examples from your wider study of Language and the self. [25]

Why I'm no longer changing my Indian phrases around my white friends

I'm making an active effort to use Indian phrases around my white friends. Sounds simple when I put it like that but trust me, it isn't.

I've been altering the way I speak since before I can remember. I've made conscious decisions to change my vocabulary when I speak to someone outside of my Indian community. I've even changed the way I'd speak around my friends, people I've known for years while growing up in Leeds¹. When typing out a message or chatting over FaceTime, I've opted for the English equivalents.

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This seemed easier than having to explain everything I meant, and I felt embarrassed. Saying these terms around people who don't know them felt nerve wrecking. I didn't want to be judged and I was worried others wouldn't understand me. I was changing my words to avoid an inconvenience for others.

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Words like *thada* (cold), which I would use to describe how winter weather makes me feel. *Achar* (pickle) is my favourite side to pair with every curry and *sabji* (vegetable-based curry). However, the words that bothered me the most were *mamma* (uncle) and *massi* (auntie). These terms we use to refer to our aunts and uncles hold a great meaning and prestige in our community. These terms are a sign of respect, so I felt increasingly guilty for changing them.

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In fact it was when I stumbled over my words speaking to my massi a couple of months ago that I realised how code-switching between my community and white friends was becoming unmanageable. I was overwhelmed and stressed out by everyday conversations and I felt like I was losing my identity. So recently I decided to introduce Indian phrases back into my conversations.

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I started with messages and texts; I thought this way I could edit my words and change it back to my familiar Indian phrases. The reactions I was met with were little to nothing at all. I realised that my friends aren't fazed by this vocabulary and it's probably because they're aware of my Indian background. They'd ask what words mean but it didn't cause any discomfort or awkwardness. If anything, it was nice explaining parts of my culture.

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After texts, the inevitable next step was actively saying these words out loud to my friends.

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Making this change has enabled me to speak more freely about my culture and feel like myself. The level of embarrassment has diminished because I'm embracing parts of myself instead of hiding from them. I'm realising that I love speaking about my culture and I shouldn't feel ashamed by it because there are so many amazing aspects to be shared.

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We need to normalise the use of phrases that come from our backgrounds because they're a part of us. We should be proud of our identities, not hide away from being ourselves. There are so many communities that exist around us; instead of changing to fit into one, we need to acknowledge that there's so much more out there.

¹*Leeds*: a city in England

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