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CAMBRIDGE
International Education

Cambridge International AS & A Level

ENGLISH LANGUAGE **9093/41**

Paper 4 Language Topics **May/June 2026**

2 hours 15 minutes

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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 [ ].

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Section A: English in the world

Question 1

Read the following text, which is the opening of an article published on the language learning website *Babbel* in 2023.

Discuss what you feel are the most important issues raised in the text relating to the causes and effects of the expansion of English around 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]

The War On Local Languages: How Linguistic Hegemony Threatens Education In The Developing World

As global and regional languages dominate our schools and our media, what happens to local languages – and what are the consequences?

New Delhi, India. I am waiting for a taxi in a dilapidated neighborhood near South Extension, surrounded by building sites filled with broken concrete blocks and curious goats. A 12-year-old Indian boy introduces himself to me. He takes out a dog-eared notebook and reads, haltingly:

‘Acids and bases are crucial components in the study of chemistry.’

When I ask him, first in English and then in Hindi, what that means, he has no idea. He says the teacher wrote it on the board and he copied it down. Several times he asks me to read it out loud and mimics my pronunciation. The taxi arrives.

This anecdote is neither uncommon nor unusual in the subcontinent, or indeed many parts of the developing world. One consequence of globalization is the growing linguistic hegemony of global languages – particularly English. This presents education systems all around the world with a headache: people want their children to learn English, many schools offer English-medium instruction, and textbooks written in English are ubiquitous. But all too often teachers can’t speak it and children can’t understand it, and so a dangerous cycle begins – one in which people never learn to truly think, write or read in their own language.

The toll of linguistic hegemony: the cost of ignoring local languages

The desire of parents, politicians and educators to give children access to a language that promises access to higher education and better jobs makes perfect sense. But in their haste to expose students to global (English) or regional (e.g. Hindi) languages as early as possible, local languages are being neglected. Recent research from low- and middle-income countries indicates that ‘use of home language as a learning resource is uncommon’, a major contributing factor to poor literacy rates. The Tibetan education system is a prime example: from 1960 until the policy of ‘Tibetinization’ in the 1990s, the education system, modeled on the Anglo-Indian system, did not use Tibetan as the language of instruction, and the resulting academic outcomes were dismal.

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Let's be clear: there is absolutely nothing wrong with teaching other languages in school – in countries like the Netherlands or Denmark it's quite normal to learn four or more languages – but it's important that students have a strong first language base to draw from. There is also a distinction to be made between learning a language, and learning a subject in another language. The jury is very much still out on whether it's beneficial for students to study a subject like history or science in a language they can't speak fluently, let alone one that they don't speak a word of.

35

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Section B: Language and the self

Question 2

Read the following text, which is the opening of an article published on the *BBC* website in 2024.

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]

Not all employers are tolerating Gen Z's laid-back language

In the quest to be themselves, many young workers communicate casually.

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They want to be natural – they want to be themselves.'

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