Language barriers holding back global science

4th January, 2017

New research says that language barriers are holding back science around the world. English is widely accepted to be the language of science, but one-third of research is not published in English. This means a lot of important research is not seen or read by scientists and researchers. The research is from the University of Cambridge. Researchers said important science is being missed at the international level. They said science journals should publish basic summaries of a study's key findings in multiple languages. They also said universities around the world should translate their research into different languages, especially Chinese, French, Portuguese and Spanish.

Many international companies are now asking all their staff to communicate only in English. They hope this will reduce language barriers. The German carmaker Volkswagen has just announced that English and not German is its official language. VW executives said the switch to English was to attract employees. The Japanese carmaker Honda has also announced that all its staff must use English by 2020. Researcher Tatsuya Amano said: "I believe the scientific community needs to start seriously tackling this issue." He used the example that important research about avian flu in China initially went unnoticed by the World Health Organization because it was published in journals in Chinese.

Sources: *science20.com / qz.com / hindustantimes.com*

Writing

There should only be one language in the world – English. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

research / language / barrier / science / international / key / multiple / translate / international / communicate / staff / official / switch / community / carmaker / flu

True / False

a) The article says language barriers are holding science back in Europe. T / F

b) Nearly half of all global research is not published in English. T / F

c) Researchers said journals should print whole articles in many languages. T / F

d) Researchers said universities should translate research. T / F

e) The official language in the German carmaker Volkswagen is now English. T / F

f) The official language in the Japanese carmaker Honda is now English.   T / F

g) A researcher said the scientific community should tackle this issue.   T / F

h) The WHO initially missed research on avian flu because it was in Chinese. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

1.	**holding back**	a.	important
2.	**accepted**	b.	particularly
3.	**publish**	c.	at first
4.	**key**	d.	blocking
5.	**especially**	e.	lessen
6.	**staff**	f.	change
7.	**reduce**	g.	believed
8.	**switch**	h.	addressing
9.	**tackling**	i.	employees
10.	**initially**	j.	issue

Discussion – Student A

a) What happens if there are language barriers?

b) How can we make sure more research is seen?

c) What language would be best for a global language?

d) How difficult is it for an international company to switch to English?

e) How will English make your life better?

f) What languages should research be translated into?

g) What advantage does English give you in life?

h) What questions would you like to ask the researchers?

Phrase Match

1. holding back science
2. one-
3. important research is not seen
4. science journals should publish basic
5. in multiple
6. They hope this will reduce
7. English and not German is
8. the switch to English was to attract
9. start seriously tackling this
10. research about avian flu in China initially

a. languages
b. summaries
c. its official language
d. third of research
e. employees
f. went unnoticed
g. around the world
h. language barriers
i. or read by scientists
j. issue

Discussion – Student B

a) What do you think about what you read?
b) How important is English in your life?
c) Would it be better to have just one language in the world?
d) Why is language holding back science?
e) How can we make sure more research is in English?
f) How useful is it to have summaries in English?
g) What do you need to read English for?
h) What difficulties do you have reading English?

Spelling

1. English is ilwdye accepted
2. one-third of research is not updlsehbi in English
3. imotrpnta science is being missed
4. publish sibac summaries
5. upmeltli languages
6. alttsrane their research
7. tonmacucmie only in English
8. this will reudec language barriers
9. English and not German is its oafficil language
10. taattrc employees
11. start seriously ktncilga this issue
12. iyniiltal went unnoticed by the World Health Organization

Role Play

Role A – Science
You think knowing English is best for moving science forward. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least useful of these (and why): love, a job or travel.

Role B – Love
You think knowing English is best for love. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least useful of these (and why): moving science forward, a job or travel.

Role C – Job
You think knowing English is best for a job. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least useful of these (and why): love, moving science forward or travel.

Role D – Travel
You think knowing English is best for travel. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least useful of these (and why): love, a job or moving science forward.

Speaking – Advantages

Rank these with your partner. Put the biggest advantages of speaking English at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- science
- love
- job
- movies
- travel
- Internet
- novels
- friends

Answers – Synonym Match

1. d	2. g	3. j	4. a	5. b
6. i	7. e	8. f	9. h	10. c

Answers – True False

a	F	b	F	c	F	d	T	e	T	f	F	g	T	h	T

Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.