

UNIT 3 WHO NEEDS THE LOCAL LANGUAGE?

UNIT OVERVIEW

In this unit, students will:

- 🎧 Read a dialogue between Richard and Peter.
- Answer open-ended comprehension questions to show understanding of the dialogue.
- 🗣️ Consider four alternative opinions about learning the local language and the attitudes of foreigners who work abroad, and decide which person makes the strongest point.
- Study the Opinion Network to learn expressions for responding to someone's opinion.
- Extend the Topic by talking about becoming international.
- Read a Culture Corner extract about reasons people have trouble learning a foreign language.
- Share ideas about travel and the perfect trip abroad.
- Watch a follow-up video extract from Scott giving his views about learning the local language.
- Take the Unit Test.

Authors' Introduction

Go to impactseries.com/issues to listen to Joseph's unit introduction.

The Issue

In this unit, two foreign employees of a company in Thailand discuss the importance of learning the local language. Peter is trying hard to learn Thai, but Richard has given up. Peter thinks that it's important to learn the local language, but Richard thinks that because English is an international language he doesn't need to worry about it.

Questions Raised

- If English is an international language, how important is it to learn the local language when abroad?
- Is speaking the local language important when doing business, or is English enough?
- What do you think about the attitudes of people who DON'T learn the local language?
- Why do some people learn languages well, and others don't? Does this depend on motivation and interest, or are some people simply not good at learning foreign languages?

To Keep in Mind

- This topic touches on issues of nationalism. Some people may take offense at the idea of someone coming to live in their country and not trying to learn the local language.
- Many students feel that foreigners who come to their country should learn their language, but they may feel less confident that they would work hard to learn a new language in a country that they might work in.
- Most people agree that learning a local language is a good thing. However, they may have very different ideas about why some people choose not to learn a foreign language when they are abroad.

TEACHING GUIDE

Getting Ready

→ Have students work in pairs. They may not know the answers, so tell them that they should guess. To make the interaction richer, students can ask each other how confident they are about their opinion. Support language such as the following can go on the board:

Example:

I think the answer is _____. I am very/not very confident about my answer.

Teaching tip: The answers to this activity are at the bottom of the page. One student can be the “teacher” and have access to the answers while “quizzing” the other student, who should cover the answers.

Situation

→ Explain the situation. Make sure that students understand that Richard and Peter are foreigners living in Thailand. Have students work in pairs, reading the passage silently before practicing it with a partner. Tell students to look up any important words that they don’t know before going on to verbal practice. Have students practice the dialogue verbally while looking at the book, then have them practice again with the book closed. Because students usually want to look at the dialogue, tell them they are permitted to look at the dialogue, but not while they are speaking. (They may not simply read off the page.) If time permits, read the dialogue a final time while listening to the audio CD.

Teaching tip: To organize the activity efficiently, have students choose whether they will be student A or student B. Do this before giving students instructions for the activity. Then you can assign roles or tasks to A or B. For example, “Student A will be Richard and student B will be Peter.” This way, students don’t need to spend time discussing among themselves who will be who, who is going to start, etc.

Check Your Understanding

Answer Key (sample answers; wording may vary)

1. He had to study Thai.
2. He only knows the basics.
3. He thinks it’s not that important.
4. That learning a language takes a lot of time.
5. He thinks they should speak better English.

What Do You Think?

→ After you check students’ understanding of the story using the comprehension questions, students discuss their opinions on learning local languages. Have students choose the opinion in Activity A that makes the strongest point. It’s important that they understand that they don’t have to agree with the opinion. The discussion in Activity B should be done in pairs. Encourage students to use the sample language in the Opinion Network.

Teaching tip: This section contains some important vocabulary that some students may not know, including *local staff*, *spoiled*, and *it’s crazy*. The teacher may want to review these expressions before having students do the activity.

Culture Point: There are several things that make the Thai language difficult for foreigners to learn. One obstacle is the differing levels of politeness. These can be categorized as “street” Thai (informal, with family and friends), elegant Thai (the official and written version), rhetorical Thai (used for public speaking), religious Thai (used when addressing monks), and royal Thai (used when addressing the royal family or describing their activities.) Also, Thai has its own distinctive script (alphabet) which must be learned in order to read the language. In addition, pronunciation is complicated by the fact that Thai is a tonal language with five tones.

Extending the Topic: Becoming International

→ Have students work individually when filling out the ranking activity, and in pairs (or threes) for the follow-up discussion.

Give students plenty of time to read the items that they are ranking. The more clearly they have understood these statements and thought of their own ideas, the easier it will be for them to do the following discussion activity.

Extra Activity: Debate

If there is time, consider doing the Extra Activity, a debate. Set up the debate by dividing the class into groups of four. Two students (students A and B) think learning English is the best way to become international. The other two students (students C and D) think learning English is not important. Note: even if students prefer the opposite position, assigning the positions—or beliefs—randomly can be good practice for developing critical thinking.

Give the groups time to prepare a list of reasons and examples. Have the first group present their reasons while the other group listens. The opposing group should take notes and prepare any questions they might have. Repeat the same method for the second group. You can allow the groups to exchange ideas a few times until they are finished, or you can set a time limit. At the end, ask students to decide which group had the better argument. You can ask a few groups for examples of what was said.

Culture Corner

Have students work in pairs or groups of three. Students read through the list of reasons why learning a foreign language is difficult. Give them an opportunity to ask about unknown words. Then write a few questions on the board for discussion. For example: Do you think learning English is difficult? If yes, which of these reasons make learning English difficult? Can you add any more reasons?

Sharing My Ideas: Travel abroad—the perfect trip!

→ Choose

Students should prepare a presentation about a trip that they want to take. They may not understand that the titles in the Choose section are related to travel themes. For example, they may want to go to the Grand Canyon as part of a trip themed with “nature.” Give some examples of trips that could be taken related to the different themes. Be sure students have enough time to fully understand the themes and think about their own topic.

→ Prepare and Rehearse

You can prepare other questions about the trip students will take to give them ideas for additional information they might want to include in their presentation. For example: Whom will they go with? Why are they interested in this place? How much will it cost? What will they need to do to prepare? Be sure to point out the Language Hints.

The goal of the rehearsal phase is for students to practice their presentation, and also to add more information to the presentation. You can give a minimum amount of time, two or three minutes, for example. Students who have trouble speaking that long during the rehearsal phase can be told that they need to add more information. Have their partner give them help. To give the students a chance to practice the Presentation Tip, go over the tip during or before the Rehearse step.

Sample Presentation

I would love to go to Paris. I think it's a romantic city. I would like to spend a month there. Let me tell you about what I would like to do there. I want to see famous places, like the Eiffel Tower, but I also want to learn French. So I will take classes while I am there. I especially want to eat good French food. I will try a different restaurant every day. My goal is to learn about French language and culture. Someday I'd like to try living in Paris. I heard that it's the most beautiful city in the world. I hope I can save enough money to take my trip.

→ Present

Have students change partners, or put them in small groups. Go over the Listener task as a whole class. Encourage students to take notes.

If you are using the assessment guide below, go over each point with the whole class before students begin their presentations. (This could also be done during the Rehearse step so that students have time to prepare for or practice each assessment point.) Be sure to remind your students that communicating their ideas is more important than trying to use perfect English!

Assessing the Activity

Create a handout with a rating grid such as the one below, or simply write it on the board. (Note: For more information on student assessment and ways to modify the assessment system, see Assessing the Activity, Unit 1.)

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| 1 – The presenter was easy to understand. | ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ |
| 2 – I understood where the presenter wants to go. | ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ |
| 3 – I understood what the presenter wants to do there. | ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ |
| 4 – The presenter used the Language Hints. | ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ |
| 5 – The presenter showed excitement about his or her topic. | ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ |

When students are working in pairs, have each student evaluate the other. If a student presents in front of a small group or in front of the class, have each student evaluate him or her. A rater can give up to 5 stars for each category, so the maximum score for any presentation is 25 stars.

Of course, you can also give your own assessment, along with positive suggestions for how the presenter can improve next time.

PERSONAL OPINION

→ If you have downloaded the video clip or have access to the Internet in class, play the video clip. The first time, have the students watch with books closed. Ask questions to see if the students have understood the gist of Scott's opinion. Then have them look at the summary. See if they can fill in the missing words. Play the extract once or twice more. Then check the answers.

Answer Key

Scott

If you go anywhere to live for an extended period of time, you need to make the effort to learn that local language. It shows a lot about your willingness to learn about the culture, and I pretty much can guarantee that if you take the time to learn that language, the people around, whether or not they speak English, will respect you more. That has been my experience in living in Japan, so I would urge all people to make an effort to learn the local language. If you've lived in a place for only one year or something like that, then there's no way you can help it, but after four years or so, there's no excuse not to try.

Video Script

I think that if you go anywhere to live for an extended period of time, you need to make the effort to learn that local language. I think it shows a lot about your willingness to learn about the culture, and I pretty much can guarantee that if you take the time to learn that language, the people around you, whether or not they speak English or not, will respect you more. Ah, that has been my experience in living in Japan, so I would urge all people to do that. If you've lived in a place for only one year or, or something like that, there's no way you can help it, but after four years or so, there's no excuse not to try.

UNIT TEST

→ Make copies of the Unit Test for each student. Distribute the copies and allow about 15 minutes for the class to complete the test. Correct the test in class.

A. Understanding the Situation: The focus is on understanding the story in the Situation. Students answer five multiple-choice questions.

B. Vocabulary: The focus is on understanding vocabulary from the Situation or the Extending the Topic sections. Students fill in three missing words of a short paragraph that summarizes the Situation.

C. Expressions: The focus is on checking students' understanding of expressions or phrases from the What Do You Think? and Opinion Network sections. Students answer two multiple-choice questions.

Answer Key

A. 1. b 2. d 3. c 4. b 5. d

B. admires, local, productive C. 1. b2. c

LINKS

If you would like the class to do additional research on Thailand, here are some useful links:

Learning Thai: <http://www.learningthai.com/>

Thai Travel guide: <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/worldguide/thailand/>

Thai culture tips: <http://www.orientexpat.com/thailand/culture.html>