Talking about language

VOCABULARY PRACTICE
ADVANCED | C1

Name: _____ Date: _____

1 Match each advanced term with its definition.

1 language ideology ____	**a** beliefs and attitudes about language that shape social judgements, often unconsciously
2 prestige dialect ____	**b** the socially dominant, high-status variety of a language
3 covert prestige ____	**c** the hidden social value some non-standard varieties hold within a group, despite lacking overt status
4 linguistic imperialism ____	**d** the imposition of one language over others through political or economic power
5 metalinguistic awareness ____	**e** the ability to think and reflect consciously about language as a system
6 code-mixing ____	**f** mixing elements of two languages within a single utterance
7 language death ____	**g** the complete cessation of a language's use, typically as the last speakers die
8 heritage language ____	**h** a language associated with a person's family or ancestry but not necessarily fluently spoken
9 nativisation ____	**i** the process by which a borrowed or imposed language develops distinct local features
10 linguistic hegemony ____	**j** the dominance of one language's norms and practices over others within a society

2 Choose the most precise term for each context.

1 Unconscious beliefs shaping judgements about language are language ideology / neutral observation.

2 The socially dominant, high-status language variety is a prestige dialect / a stigmatised variety.

3 The hidden social value of a non-standard variety within a group is covert prestige / overt status.

4 The imposition of one language through power is linguistic imperialism / voluntary adoption.

5 Conscious reflection on language as a system is metalinguistic awareness / unconscious fluency.

6 A language's complete cessation of use is language death / temporary decline.

7 A language connected to ancestry but not fluently spoken is heritage language / a first language.

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8 The dominance of one language's norms over others is linguistic hegemony / equal coexistence.

3 Match the verbs with the noun phrases to form academic collocations.

1 codify ____	**a** a non-standard variety
2 stigmatise ____	**b** an endangered language
3 revitalise ____	**c** linguistic norms
4 legitimise ____	**d** social identity
5 index ____	**e** regional variation
6 homogenise ____	**f** a heritage language
7 preserve ____	**g** bilingual identity
8 negotiate ____	**h** a standard dialect

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4 Complete the analysis with terms from the box.

code-mixing | covert prestige | heritage language | language death | language ideology | linguistic hegemony | linguistic imperialism | metalinguistic awareness | nativisation | prestige dialect

Sociolinguists studying language attitudes examine 1 _____, the often unconscious beliefs that lead speakers to judge some varieties as more correct or educated than others. A 2 _____ typically enjoys institutional support through education and media, while non-standard varieties may nonetheless carry 3 _____ within their own speech community, signalling authenticity or belonging despite lacking wider social status. Colonial history has left many regions grappling with 4 _____, as imposed languages gradually spread through institutions, though these languages often undergo 5 _____, developing distinctive local features over generations. Where a dominant language's norms increasingly displace local alternatives across a society, scholars describe a broader pattern of 6 _____. Migrant families often navigate complex relationships with a 7 _____, maintained across generations with varying fluency, while multilingual speakers frequently engage in 8 _____, blending elements from multiple languages within a single conversation. Without active revitalisation efforts, endangered languages risk 9 _____ as fluent speakers age, though strong 10 _____ among younger bilinguals can support preservation even amid declining everyday use.

5 Read the text and answer the questions briefly.

Language, power and legitimacy

Sociolinguists increasingly argue that judgements about correct or incorrect language use are rarely purely linguistic; they typically reflect broader social hierarchies, with prestige dialects often corresponding to the speech patterns of historically dominant social groups rather than any inherent linguistic superiority. This perspective reframes language ideology as a mechanism of social power rather than a neutral, objective assessment of correctness, since the specific features labelled ungrammatical or uneducated frequently overlap closely with the patterns of marginalised communities. Recognising covert prestige within non-standard varieties, researchers argue, offers a necessary corrective to purely deficit-based views of linguistic diversity, though changing deeply embedded public attitudes remains considerably slower than academic consensus might suggest.

1 What do sociolinguists increasingly argue about judgements of correct language use? _____

2 What do prestige dialects often correspond to, rather than inherent superiority? _____

3 How does this reframe language ideology? _____

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4 What frequently overlaps with patterns labelled ungrammatical or uneducated? _____

5 What does recognising covert prestige offer, according to researchers? _____

6 What remains considerably slower than academic consensus? _____

6 Replace the words in bold with a precise term or collocation.

1 The dominant language's norms increasingly displaced local alternatives. _____

2 The non-standard variety held hidden social value within the group. _____

3 The borrowed language developed distinct local features over time. _____

4 The language ceased to be used as its last fluent speakers died. _____

OVER TO YOU

Write a 160-190 word critical commentary on how language attitudes reflect and reinforce social hierarchies, distinguishing observation from inference.

[ ] Use at least twelve target expressions. [ ] Include four academic collocations. [ ] Maintain a precise, balanced register.

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ANSWER KEY

1 Advanced terms

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

2 Precise terms

1 language ideology 2 a prestige dialect 3 covert prestige 4 linguistic imperialism 5 metalinguistic awareness 6 language death 7 heritage language 8 linguistic hegemony

3 Academic collocations

1 h codify a standard dialect 2 a stigmatise a non-standard variety 3 b revitalise an endangered language 4 c legitimise linguistic norms
5 d index social identity 6 e homogenise regional variation 7 f preserve a heritage language 8 g negotiate bilingual identity

4 Analysis

1 language ideology 2 prestige dialect 3 covert prestige 4 linguistic imperialism 5 nativisation
6 linguistic hegemony 7 heritage language 8 code-mixing 9 language death 10 metalinguistic awareness

5 Reading - suggested answers

1 That they are rarely purely linguistic; they typically reflect broader social hierarchies.
2 The speech patterns of historically dominant social groups.
3 As a mechanism of social power rather than a neutral, objective assessment of correctness.
4 The patterns of marginalised communities.
5 A necessary corrective to purely deficit-based views of linguistic diversity.
6 Changing deeply embedded public attitudes.

6 Precise terms and collocations

1 linguistic hegemony 2 covert prestige 3 nativisation 4 language death

Over to you

Answers will vary. Look for conceptual precision, evidence-aware reasoning and balanced evaluation.