1 Spoken language and social groups

The following text is a transcription from a television interview conducted in 2013 on CNN (an American news channel). Max Foster (MF) is talking to Prince William (PW), who is second in line to the British throne. Prince William is talking about bringing his first son, George, home from hospital after his birth. Catherine is his wife and Lupo is the family's pet.

Discuss ways in which the speakers are using language here to communicate and how their language is affected by the context. You should refer to specific details from the transcription, relating your observations to ideas from your wider study.

PW: well (.) yeah (.) hes a little bit of a rascal (.) put it that way (.) so he either reminds me of my brother or me when i was younger (.) im not sure (.) but (.) um (.) hes (.) uh (.) hes (.) uh (.) hes doing very well at the moment (.) hes (.) he does like to keep having his nappy changed (.) and //

MF: did you do the first nappy ↗

PW: [smiles] i did the first nappy (.) yeah (.) exactly

MF: a badge of honour

PW: well (.) its a badge of honour (.) exactly (.) um (.) i wasnt allowed to get away with that (.) i had every midwife staring at me (.) going (.) YOU do it (.) YOU do it //

MF: [laughs]

PW: (. ) but (.) uh (.) no (.) hes (.) hes a little (.) hes growing quite quickly actually (.) but hes a little fighter (.) he kind of um (.) he wriggles around quite a lot (.) and he doesnt want to go to sleep that much (.) which is a little bit of a problem (.) but hes //

MF: so youre up at night //

PW: a little bit //

MF: youre pretty tired

PW: not as much as CATHERINE (.) but (.) um (.) you know (.) shes (.) er (.) shes doing a FANTASTIC job

MF: and how is she (.) okay ↗

PW: yes (.) shes very well (1) for me (.) catherine (.) and now little george (.) are my priorities (.) and lupo (.) um (.) and so //

MF: i was going to ask you about lupo //

PW: yeah 25

MF: hows LUPO coping ↗

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PW: er (.) hes coping all right actually (.) i mean (.) as a lot of people know (.) who have got pets and bringing a newborn back (.) they (.) they take a little bit of time to adapt (.) but (.) um (.) no (.) hes been all right so far (.) hes been sulking sort of around the house a bit (.) so hes (.) er (.) hes perfectly happy

MF: and how are you about going back to work.

PW: well (.) as a few fathers might know (.) im actually quite looking forward to going back to work [laughs]

MF: [laughs] get some sleep

PW: [smiles] get some sleep (.) exactly (.) yeah (.) so im just hoping the first few shifts i go back i dont have any night jobs
2 English as a global language

The passage on the next page deals with the idea of ‘Globish’ as a simplified, global form of English. It is an extract from an international business blog entitled *Globish or Gobbledygook?*

Discuss what you feel are the most important issues raised here relating to the changing use of English as a global language. You should refer to specific details from the passage as well as to ideas and examples from your wider study.
Globish or Gobbledygook?

Over the past century, there have been several attempts to create a universal language. Forget Esperanto or Anglish, Globish is the latest constructed dialect to set tongues wagging worldwide. But can a 1500 word vocabulary really get your global message across?

Globish is an economical version of English designed to aid conversations between non-English speakers. In 2004, Frenchman Jean-Paul Nerriere, compiled a list of 1500 high-frequency words to create an ‘English-lite’ for the boardroom, free of idioms and complex syntax. And since it takes much less time to learn than full English, Nerriere saw no reason for Globish not to become “the worldwide dialect for the third millennium”.

Nerriere witnessed the ease with which two men with limited English conversed and decided it should form the basis for a global language. But should two men’s attempts to get by form the inspiration for an international communication tool? And should people be encouraged to limit themselves to a set vocabulary?

Interpreter Simon Kuper recently experienced the limitations of Globish on its home turf: an international business conference. “Germans, Belgians and French people stood up and, in monotones and distracting accents, read out Globish speeches that sounded as if they’d been turned into English by computers,” he explains in his blog.

“Sometimes the organisers begged them to speak their own languages, but they refused. Meanwhile the conference interpreters sat idle in their booths.

Yet whenever a native English-speaker opened his mouth, the audience listened. The native speakers sounded conversational, and could make jokes, add nuance. They weren’t more intelligent than the non-natives, but they sounded it, and so they were heard.”

While Globish may have begun with good intentions, it’s clear that the more it becomes institutionalised the more it will dilute, rather than develop international business communications.

As Gloria Gibbons, a member of the Health Communications Council, recently wrote in Pharmaceutical Marketing Europe: “We are in danger of watering down our communication in the name of global democracy.”
3 Language acquisition by children and teenagers

The following text is a transcription of a conversation between Megan (age 2 years, 6 months) and her mother. They are talking while Megan does some drawing. Alice is Megan's baby sister and Molly and Bad Bear are two of Megan’s toys.

Discuss ways in which Megan and her mother are using language here. You should refer to specific details from the transcription, relating your observations to ideas from your studies of language acquisition.

Megan: [looks for a brown colouring pencil] i want the brown (1) wheres the brown

Mother: where was alice

Megan: there

Mother: when you were napping (1) where did she go

Megan: to the hospital

Mother: to the doctor

Megan: yeah

Mother: what did she get at the doctors

Megan: shots

Mother: she got shots (1) how do you think that made her feel

Megan: [laughs] sad

Mother: (9) what happens when baby sister cries

Megan: [laughs] she goes (.) she wants (.) she go BAAAA (.) baby sister

Mother: what do you do when she cries

Megan: i yell sometimes

Mother: you do (.) aah (1) what do you do other times

Megan: i dont know

Mother: oh

Megan: i dont know to alice or bad bear

Mother: right

Megan: or molly (.) shes sleeping

Mother: your doll

Megan: yeah (.) but you have to be quiet though (.) shes asleep (.) if you dont (.) youll talk louder and yell (.) then i'll have to go get them
Mother: oh (. ) okay (. ) so we’ll be quiet for your dolls
Megan: yeah
Mother: okay
Megan: no (. ) bad bears not a doll
Mother: hes NOT
Megan: no (. ) but thats MOLLY
Mother: mollys a doll
Megan: yeah (. ) but not bad bear
Mother: okay
Megan: (5) [holds up brown pencil] this is colour of brown
Mother: right (1) what are you colouring
Megan: a pony (2) see all this colour right here (1) im drawing this
Mother: so how do you feel about being a big sister (2) do you like being a big sister megan
Megan: (3) [points to shape on paper] thats a triangle
Mother: very good