1 Spoken language and social groups

The following text is a transcription of part of a conversation involving four adults. David and Rachel have been staying with their friends, John and Shauna, and are leaving to catch a train home early the next morning.

Discuss ways in which the speakers are using language here to communicate. You should refer to specific details from the transcription, relating your observations to ideas from your wider study of spoken language and social groups.

Shauna: its probably about (.) er (.) a fifteen minute walk
John: quick (.) a quick walk
Rachel: oh i'll (.) we can do that cant we
David: mm (1) so we need to leave here (.) need to leave here at six thirty
John: do you want to know where the station is
Rachel: might help mightnt it [laughs]
David: might be useful
Rachel: which way do we go
John: go out of the driveway (.) so you turn right
Rachel: yeah
John: ok (.) so facing out towards the road (.) our road (.) you go right all the way down to the roundabout
Rachel: just go to the roundabout
John: the first roundabout
David: the roundabout
John: so the first roundabout (.) then you go left there (.) then the next roundabout has the shops
Shauna: the shops
Rachel: yeah
John: and you do a right and a left
Rachel: so (.) left (.) so right out of the house (.) left right left
John: yeah (.) so when you get to the shops and the roundabout you want to do a right there (.) at the shops

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David: lets draw a little map

Rachel: yeah draw a map

//

John: and theres a little road that goes down to the station (.) youll see a sign

//

Shauna: have you got an iphone↗

Rachel: no (.) why↗

David: just do a quick sketch

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Rachel: yes (.) lets do it the old fashioned way

David: so you say its (.) its about fifteen minutes brisk walk

Shauna: it wont take more than fifteen minutes

John: it used to take me thirteen minutes to walk when I went down there every morning

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Rachel: we're brisk aren't we↗

John: so fifteen minutes will do

1 *roundabout*: a road junction at which traffic moves round a central island to reach one of the roads converging on it.

**TRANSCRIPTION KEY**
(1) = pause in seconds
(.) = micro-pause
underlined = stressed sound/syllable(s)
// = speech overlap
*[italics]* = paralinguistic features
↗ = upward intonation
English as a global language

The following passage deals with the idea of ‘Globish’ as a simplified, global form of English. It was published on Forbes.com, an international business website, in 2012.

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.

A New International Business Language: Globish

English is the global language of business, yet English is also the native tongue of relatively few people, and it is notoriously hard to learn. What can be done? Jean-Paul Nerrière came up with an answer: Globish, a kind of simplified English that is vastly easier to use and can work almost as well as a full command of the language in most business situations.

Nerrière, a Frenchman, was an international vice president of marketing at IBM when he noticed a pattern in how non-native English speakers communicated at conferences. He observed that when a Japanese employee met a Belgian, a Chilean and an Italian, they managed. None spoke English brilliantly but each knew the others were making mistakes too. When an American or British manager walked in, everything changed. The native speakers of English talked too fast and used mysterious expressions.

The secret was to employ a stripped-down vocabulary and, crucially, avoid all figurative language and never tell jokes.

So Nerrière developed a list of 1,500 English words that he is convinced you can use to communicate just about anything, and he has been building a business in training people to speak with that basic vocabulary. At his website, globish.com, Nerrière describes his simplified tongue in a seven-minute video done entirely in Globish. It doesn’t sound crude or lacking, though Nerrière retains a strong French accent.

Is this really a language? Or is it really a kind of pidgin, a stepping stone to a language? Robert McCrum, of the Observer, who has written a book titled Globish, says it’s actually designed to be a barrier to full English:

“A good European, Nerrière, describes Globish as a device that will ‘limit the influence of the English language dramatically’. He says: ‘I am helping the rescue of French, and of all the languages that are threatened by English today but which will not be at all endangered by Globish. It is in the best interests of non-Anglophone countries to support Globish, especially if you like your culture and its language.’”

The need for a global language is a big part of the fact of globalization, and the dominance of English looks inevitable for a good long time to come. Those with a gift for learning languages are bound to have a big advantage. For everyone else, why not start with Globish?
3 Language acquisition by children and teenagers

The following text is a transcription of a conversation between Alice (age 2 years 0 months) and her mother. Alice is in the bath with James, her brother, who is 4 years old.

Discuss ways in which Alice 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.

Mother: what are you doing
Alice: im (3) bath
Mother: did you wash your face
Alice: yes
Mother: what did you have all over your face
Alice: yoghurt
Mother: yoghurt (. ) did you
Alice: yes
Mother: was it everywhere
Alice: yes
Mother: whos in the bath with you
Alice: james
Mother: and is it nearly bedtime
Alice: yes (1) yes
Mother: it is
Alice: it is (2) ni ( . ) nighttime
Mother: night time
Alice: nighttime (1) [turns to James] james
James: yeah
Alice: [whispers] nighttime
Mother: are you going to nursery tomorrow
Alice: yes
Mother: whos at nursery
Alice: boys
Mother: boys
Alice: yes (1) horrible boys
Mother: oh (1) horrible boys
Alice: yes
Mother: and what about your friends
Alice: danielle
Mother: yeah (1) are you going to see danielle
Alice: yes
Mother: who else
Alice: (5) LILY
Mother: who
Alice: LILY
Mother: who else
Alice: harry
Mother: harry (1) is harry at nursery
Alice: yes (2) and natasha
Mother: natasha too
Alice: yes (2) danny aswell
Mother: danielle or danny as well
Alice: mummy aswell
Mother: mummy will take you to nursery and come home and then get you later

TRANSCRIPTION KEY
(1) = pause in seconds
(.) = micro-pause
underlined = stressed sound/syllable(s)
[italics] = paralinguistic features
[UPPER CASE] = words spoken with increased volume
↗ = upward intonation