**ER 11.1 *The Franks’ Language***

In the fifth century, the people known as the ‘Franks’ moved into Gaul – the European region based around France – from their homeland in the Rhein area. Their local language was known as the ‘lingua franca’. The French connection can be seen in the modern German word for France: *Frankreich*, the ‘realm of the Frank’. When the Franks went on the Crusades, the word ‘Frank’ came to refer to any Western European, and indeed the word *firangi* is still used in India to refer to a foreigner.

As we have seen, a lingua franca can be intra-national (as it is in India), used in one country as a means of communication between native speakers of different languages. Or it can be inter-national, for communication between different countries. We can also now speak in terms of a global lingua franca.

You may wonder what the appropriate plural form is for the term. Some people assume it is Latin, and use the Latin plural *linguae francae*. In fact the term comes into English from Italian, and is now in such common use in English that the English plural *lingua francas* seems appropriate. This is the one we are using.