

Section A

1. How does President Obama seek to close the social distance between himself and his Australian audience in lines 3 –6? 3 marks

Obama jokes that Australian English is a ‘foreign language’ and refers to it as ‘Strine’, a lexeme that purports to reflect the way Australians pronounce ‘Australian’, mimicking the flattening and assimilation of syllables into one broad vowel sound. He is friendly and flattering as he indicates that he ‘love[s]’ the Australianism ‘earbashing’, which he intends to use in Washington.

2. Comment on the effect and purpose of the syntactic patterning in lines 14 - 16. 4 marks

The three sentence fragments (or minor sentences) in these lines suggest similarities in the ways that America and Australia were settled, after European occupation. They are lexically and syntactically parallel in that they begin with a plural noun as subject which is followed by a subordinate (relative) clause, “Ancestors who... Settlers who... Dreamers who... The antithesis ‘some by choice, some in chains’ contains a repetition of the ‘ch’ sound (consonance) and this feature underlines the contrasting elements in the phrase. In these ways the lines are carefully crafted, celebrating the heroism of the people who populated both countries.

3. Comment on the semantics in lines 19 – 29. 2 marks

In these lines, Obama links the apology to Indigenous Australians for the Stolen Generations (‘a historic gesture of reconciliation’) to ideas of a ‘fair go’ and ‘a painful past’. Obama wants his listeners to infer that he is talking about racism in Australia and America, which he claims is being overcome, as evidenced by the Sorry speech and his own election as the first African American President of the United States.

4. What are the purposes and register of this text? Illustrate your answer with examples. 3 marks

Obama’s purpose is to stress the friendship and shared experience of the two countries. In doing this he presents a justification for his visit to Australia, ie, ‘to mark the 60th anniversary of [the] unbreakable alliance’. He uses formal, standard English (eg, ‘vernacular’) and employs rhetorical flourishes, such as alliteration (‘hearts and hands’), consonance (‘choice...chains’), antithesis (line14) and parallelism (lines 13-16) to make his address engaging. He also uses some informality in his register, such as humour (‘earbashing’, ‘Strine’) and Australian cliché (‘Lucky Country’, ‘sweeping plains’) to minimise the social distance between himself and the listeners. Obama also wants to acknowledge Indigenous Australians and makes a point of noting that he will ‘become the first US president to visit the Northern Territory [and to...] meet the traditional owners of the land.”

5. Discuss how three of the following features are used to achieve the purpose of the text: collocation; ways in which Americans and Australians are named; metaphor; idiom; lexical patterning 3 marks

- collocation (Lucky Country, hearts and hands)
- ways in which Americans and Australians are named (use of pronouns progresses from I and you, to collective nouns – generations, settlers – to we, our.)
- metaphor (inspire, spirit, ‘pushed west’, ‘thread ...tapestry of our nations’ , ‘bonds run deep’, painful past)
- idiom (fair go, Strine, earbashing)
- lexical patterning - repetition (lucky country, lucky; inspired, spirit; fair chance, fair go; felt familiar, felt like home)

These features support Obama’s purpose of making the links, and highlighting the similarities, between Australians and Americans. The use of collocations and idioms shows he has engaged with Australian identity and is able to use these features appropriately and with humour. The metaphors add an inspirational quality to the speech, using dramatic and graphic images to emphasise the common experience of the two nations, including Indigenous peoples. The lexical patterning demonstrates a crafted speech that links ideas and provides signposts for the listener, thus engaging the audience and ensuring that the important points Obama makes are understood and followed.

Section B Analytical commentary Birds of Paradise

The main purpose of the interaction is to make small talk before getting round to the real purpose of B and M’s visit. M introduces a topic that is of interest to all of them and consequently all participants contribute to the discussion. Thus the social purpose of establishing rapport amongst the four speakers is met by this small talk. As the conversation progresses other purposes emerge as M tries to advise S and L how to get the most from the Birds of Paradise, and B seeks to reinforce M’s advice and also to contribute his own stories about the plant. L is receptive to the advice but S questions it in an almost defiant way, refusing to listen to M’s expert opinion. The relationships between the speakers are friendly but also slightly competitive.

The turn-taking is somewhat disorderly as speakers eagerly try to gain the floor. There are interruptions and overlaps (lines 13, 20, 38, 39 and 40) that prevent B from telling his story about the plants, with S, M and L all speaking over him or not letting him finish. When S talks over B in line 13, B responds with a polite question in line 14 in an attempt to preserve his own face by paying attention to S’s face needs, ie, showing interest in S’s statement. The overlaps in lines 19 and 20 are indicative of a struggle to gain the floor, with B continuing determinedly with his story in line 21.

M is a dominant speaker in the transcript, asserting his authority and knowledge, eg, by stressing the adjectives he uses to describe the plants (lines 20, 31, 40). S briefly tries to assert his own authority by declaring that he doesn’t want them to get too big (line 43), which is an attempt to protect his negative face needs in the light of M’s insistence that the plants won’t grow in pots. S emphasises

the fact that the plants don't require much care, which is what he likes about them (lines 44-45), also to protect his negative face needs, ie, his need not to be imposed upon.

Lexical cohesion is achieved by the speakers, who all use words to describe the size of the plants and to follow the course of the discussion, starting with 'monster' in line 12, 'big' in line 14, 'a beauty' in line 22, 'big' in line 25, 'enormous' in line 29, 'huge' in line 31, 'huge' in line 55. This illustrates that the participants wish to be cooperative, by reinforcing the facts about the plant's size, and by adding to the shared understanding about it.

Deixis is an important feature of the conversation. The name of the plant is given in line 3, and not mentioned again until line 49, yet all the speakers are aware of what they are discussing. Words used to refer to the plant are: 'they, they, them, plant, one', and all the speakers understand what is referred to, not requiring any explanation. The conversation is spontaneous and reliant on shared understanding, illustrating the relatively close distance between the interlocutors.

The questioning intonation (line 31) shows that L is keen to gain M's expert advice about the plants, in deference to his expertise. Other questions request clarification (2, 13, 14) or express disbelief, which reinforce the relative dominance or authority of M compared to others in the conversation. The incidents of non-fluency, such as repetition (lines 32 – 32, line 14) indicate that the speakers are struggling to gain the floor. L's short narrative about her friends' plants (lines 24 – 27) is spoken rapidly as she tries to ensure that her turn is not interrupted, as has happened before. L's incantation: 'minimum maintenance...maximum pretty' (lines 50, 52) is emphatic and serves to draw the discussion to a close by summarising what the previous speakers have said. L has the final say, in her statement that reinforces the agreed idea that the plants are very big, which others have already stated and which therefore will not produce further discussion on the topic. In effect, L draws the discussion to a close with her summary statement, signalling there will be a change of topic to follow.

The register is a mixture of informal ('monster', 'beauty') and slightly technical lexis ('agapanthus', 'split them'). A few examples of non-standard forms ('them pots' line 1, 'them birds of paradise' line 3) indicate the social class of the participants, and the relaxed and familiar relationships. The register supports the purpose of the conversation, ie, to establish or maintain social relationships between the participants, and to promote a common topic of conversation that all can participate in.

Section C Essay

7. Has politeness disappeared from public discourse in Australia?

- distinction between politeness and political commentary – where to draw the line? Enshrined in parliamentary privilege for politicians.
- respect for face needs – rules are different in public domain of personal interactions. Aim is often to destroy reputations and thus face needs are deliberately threatened.
- examples include: 'ditch the witch' banners; 'misogyny speech'; asylum seeker discourse; example in stimulus – Eddie McGuire.
- argument about free speech – when is it OK to incite prejudices in the name of free speech and open dialogue?

- role of social media in public discourse – rules, etiquette, eg, Twitter regulating tweets, requesting individuals to cease or Facebook withdrawing posts

8. Australia’s national identity is asserted through the distinctiveness of spoken Australian English. Discuss.

- accent is distinguishing in all cultures. Lexicon, idiom, politeness all contribute to the distinctiveness of identity.
- traditional Australian idioms no longer so common.
- electronic communication has levelled the standard and means many other varieties have been incorporated into SAE.
- Attitudes - Australian identity no longer enshrined in the language for Gen Y and younger. But in literature and in public institutions, SAE still has a place and is recognised, eg, Obama’s speech to Parliament.
- examples from Sounds of Aus
- examples of Australian English in social media that reflect distinctiveness of Aus English.
- examples from Radio National program, *Mongrel Nation*

9. The wider the language repertoire of individuals, the greater their opportunities in society are likely to be. Do you agree?

- knowledge of and facility with SAE is empowering, opens up opportunities and access for individuals to employment, education, relationships.
- need to have multiple registers in order to identify oneself with various groups, eg, interest groups, age groups etc.
- covert and overt norms suggest that individuals need to be able to access different varieties in order to be able to communicate and to reflect their multiple identities, eg, as employer, as parent, as nurse or as taxi driver.
- ability to write appropriately for the audience is important in order to achieve purpose and to successfully communicate.
- predictive text in messaging causes problems and embarrassment when spelling is incorrect or words are replaced.
- attitudes to use of ‘correct’ language still prevalent – it is an expectation, and failure to be able to use the appropriate register for a given situation is regarded negatively – with scorn, as a marker of social class or age, etc.