2014   English Language GA3: Examination

GENERAL COMMENTS

The 2014 English Language examination consisted of three sections. Section A had six short-answer questions and was worth a total of 15 marks. Section B, an analytical commentary, had one question worth a total of 30 marks. Students could choose one of three essay topics in Section C, which was worth 30 marks. There was one text in Section A and one text in Section B. Text 1, in Section A, was a self-help column consisting of 23 lines of text. Text 2, in Section B, was a television broadcast consisting of 97 intonation units.

Section A, which required students to respond to short-answer questions, was completed reasonably well, but it did reveal some gaps in students' knowledge. It was evident that some students were unfamiliar with anaphoric referencing (Question 2), phonological patterning (Question 3) and syntactic patterning (Question 5). Many students were familiar with cohesive devices, as required in Question 6; however, failure to read the question properly meant that many students missed out on valuable marks in this four-mark question.

Section B required students to write an analytical commentary, and it was evident from responses that students had practised this skill. Students were clearly aware of the need to establish the context, social purpose and register, and most managed to cover these features in an introductory paragraph. Various stylistic and discourse features were discussed throughout the commentary, although with varying degrees of success. Students need to recognise which features take priority in an analytical commentary – in a spoken text such as this, prosodic features, topic management, turn-taking and conversation strategies are of the utmost importance. A great number of students failed to analyse prosodic features, to their detriment, and a number failed to address the different sections of the transcript (for instance, the interview with the Naval Cadet).

Section C required students to choose one of three essay topics. Question 8 was by far the most popular topic, followed by Question 10, then Question 9. Generally, most responses were well structured and adhered to essay-writing conventions (introduction, body paragraphs and conclusion). Students referred not only to the stimulus material provided, but also to contemporary examples and recent events. Many students were obviously familiar with current issues concerning the use of language and drew on examples from politics, social media and their own linguistic environment to support their discussion. Students must be wary, however, of reproducing essays on similar topics they have written during the year; it is vital to read the stipulated essay question carefully and answer appropriately, paying attention to key words and referring to at least two subsystems in their response.

Advice to students
- This study requires a sound knowledge of grammar. Students must familiarise themselves with all aspects of metalanguage and grammar from the study design and practise answering short-answer questions similar to those typically found in Section A of the exam. Section A typically reveals students' lack of grammatical and linguistic knowledge.
- The careful reading of a question, or essay topic, is vital if a student is to attain high marks. Many students missed out on marks for Section A, Question 6, not through lack of knowledge, but through careless reading of the question. In Section C, students must ensure that their essay responses are relevant and on-topic.
- In Section B, it is important to ascertain which stylistic and discourse features to focus on – cohesion and coherence, for instance, are of less importance in a spoken transcript than in a written one. Prosodic features should always be addressed in any commentary on a spoken transcript.
- Students should not write their essays based purely on the stimulus material provided. The stimulus must be referred to in some way in the essay, but writing a paragraph on each of the stimulus prompts and nothing else is to be discouraged.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Note: Student responses reproduced in this report have not been corrected for grammar, spelling or factual information.

This report provides sample answers or an indication of what answers may have included. Unless otherwise stated, these are not intended to be exemplary or complete responses.

The statistics in this report may be subject to rounding errors resulting in a total less than 100 per cent.

Section A – Short-answer questions

This section consisted of Text 1 – a self-help feature from *The Big Issue* on the topic of greetings etiquette.

Question 1

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	8	45	27	19	**1.6**

The register of the text was mixed, exemplifying elements of both formal and informal registers. Students needed to observe that the first letter in particular was more formal in register than the second letter, and needed to identify linguistic features that demonstrated this. Examples of formality included formal letter greetings ('Dear' line 3), formal lexis ('etiquette' line 5, 'keen' line 10) and jargonistic terms such as 'rogue operator' (line 6) and 'group-therapy' (line 16). Examples of informality included colloquialisms ('slap together' line 20, 'fist-bump' line 17), creative word formations ('high-*pi*' line 18), contractions ('it's', 'I'm'), first-person pronouns and use of sarcasm.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

The register of this text is moderately informal, with features of formality, Informal features such as contractions, 'it's' (line 5, 19) and sentence-initial conjunctions 'But' (line 6) are present throughout the text, helping to create a light, humorous mood. Features of formality include polysyllabic lexemes 'unpalatable' (line 15) and 'alternative' (line 19).

Question 2

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	17	29	54	**1.4**

Students were required to use metalanguage to explain the function of 'this' in line 8; anaphoric reference, demonstrative pronoun or deixis were suitable terms to use in this instance. The function is to refer back to the situation described in the previous sentence – the awkwardness when confronted with a greeting situation in Australia.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

The lexeme 'this' is an example of anaphoric referencing as it refers back to the previous sentence "I never know what to do…in any situation" (line 7-8). This anaphoric referencing provides a cohesive tie and reduces lexical density by not having to state out the previous statement again.

Question 3

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	45	17	38	**1**

Examples of phonological patterning included:
- alliteration: (Gr)ating (Gr)eetings (line 1), (S)cared (S)aluter (line 12, 13)
- assonance: Qu(i)ck F(i)x (lines 1, 3), h(i)gh-f(i)ve (line 16)
- rhyme: h(igh)-p(i) (line 18)
- consonance: qui(ck) fi(x); gra(t)ing gree(t)ings (line 1)
- rhythm: listing on lines 16 and 17
- onomatopoeia: slap together (line 20), bump/bumpy/bumped (lines 8, 17).

Functions included:
- support humorous tone by creating made-up, playful titles
- make titles/names catchy
- entertain readers.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

Phonological patterning is utilised in this text in line 1, "Grating Greeting". This is an example of alliteration and is used by the author to create a memorable heading for the audience through the repetition of the initial phoneme /gr/.

Question 4

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	4	16	79	**1.8**

Students were required to show how the purposes **differed**. For example, the first letter used brackets to provide an optional element, an anecdote or additional information, whereas the second letter used brackets to provide a justification, to add humour or to explain why the greetings are dangerous.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

> *In the first letter, the parentheses are used to recount a short story of an 'awkward moment' (line 8) that the writer encountered. In the second letter they are used to explain why some of the different greetings are 'dangerous or unpalatable' (line 15). They also serve a comical purpose as some are far-fetched "wave (causes wind)" (line 17).*

Question 5

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	12	22	66	**1.6**

Students were required to use metalanguage such as 'listing' or 'parallelism' to describe the syntactic patterning in lines 16 and 17, and to provide some comment on its use in this instance, such as reducing lexical density, creating rhythm or building humour.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

> *The writer uses listing in lines 16-17 to identify all the different greeting options an individual could use and why they are either 'dangerous or unpalatable' (line 15). The lack of conjunctions in this list suggests that it is continuous or never-ending. The use of parallelism (noun-phrase, adverbial) creates rhythm in the text, making it more interesting for the reader.*

Question 6

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	40	13	25	8	15	**1.5**

Students needed to demonstrate how cohesion **between** the two letters was achieved, not simply cohesion within the text as a whole. They also needed to be wary of the difference between cohesion and coherence (see *VCE English Language Study Design*, page 23 under 'Discourse'). Possible answers included:

- repetition/repeated lexis: 'national standard' (lines 5 and 14), 'greetings' (lines 4 and 15)
- repetition of the opening 'Dear' (lines 3 and 13)
- anaphoric referencing: 'this' in line 14 refers back to the problem stated in the first letter
- hyponomy/semantic field: domain of greetings, types of greetings (lines 16 and 17, which are the subject of the first letter, 'greetings etiquette' (lines 4 and 5)
- question/answer format: Scared Saluter asks a question, which is answered in the second letter.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

> *Lexically, cohesion is achieved through repetition. Repetition of the proper noun/adjective 'Australia/Australian' (lines 4, 18) allow for cohesion between the two letters by showing that both letters address the problem with Australian society.*
>
> *Semantically, cohesion is achieved through the use of a semantic field from the domain of greetings. Both letters use lexemes from this semantic field: letter 1 uses the noun 'hugger' (9) and the verb 'kissing' (9), while letter 2 offers the nouns 'handshake, high-five and hug' (16).*

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Section B – Analytical commentary

Question 7

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	Average
%	1	1	1	1	2	4	7	10	15	15	15	12	8	5	2	0	**8.9**

The text was a transcript of an ABC television broadcast of the Royal Australian Navy Fleet Review Spectacular, commemorating the centenary of the arrival of the first Royal Australian Navy fleet into Sydney Harbour. The transcript consisted of dialogue between two hosts, an interview with a Naval Cadet and a brief conversation with Prince Harry.

Features of the text included:
- the social purposes of the event: to provide information and description to a wide audience, and to entertain and help people feel involved
- the occasion is serious and ceremonial, but also festive and cheerful, hence the presence of both formal and informal registers
- the rehearsed/semi-scripted sections of text, in which facts and figures are explained, contrasting with the spontaneous dialogue between the hosts and in the interview section with the Naval Cadet
- the smooth turn-taking and lack of overlapping in the script
- lexical fields (warships) and place names around Sydney; use of adjectives and adverbs for colour and emphasis
- standard opening/discourse features from SB when introducing herself and the event
- use of rising/falling pitch to pass/maintain the floor
- inference required from the audience to understand the joke about Prince Harry in line 67
- non-fluency features from the Naval Cadet due to her inexperience in front of a TV camera and having to think on her feet
- use of supportive comments/backchannelling from presenters
- use of prosodic features such as emphatic stress, slow speech, rising/falling intonation and the effects they have on the dialogue.

Many students wrote extensively on the text and provided a good discussion of the social purpose, context and register. They successfully identified a number of stylistic and discourse features for analysis, although not always the most important ones (such as prosodics and conversational strategies). Many students recognised the different sections of the transcript and wrote on them accordingly.

However, students are reminded:
- to note carefully the **medium** of the text – some students mistakenly thought this was a radio broadcast
- not to simply repeat verbatim the information provided at the beginning of the text
- to try to address the different sections of the text rather than focus on just one section
- to establish which stylistic and discourse features are most relevant for analysis. A number of students spent far too long on syntax and cohesion/coherence when it would have been preferable to discuss prosodic features and conversational strategies. The **mode** of the text is a crucial factor in determining pertinent linguistic features
- to avoid paraphrasing the text. Instead, they need to closely analyse key linguistic features and link them to the social purpose, context and register
- to engage fully with the text by referring to the interlocutors by **name**, rather than referring to them as 'the speakers'. Similarly, when discussing prosodic features, students should analyse the effect of particular features in **specific** sections of the text, referring to line numbers. Some students made general or generic statements based on their capacity to read a transcription key, rather than looking at how prosody plays out in particular parts of the text. Constantly referring to 'the speakers' also does nothing to show engagement with the text – students need to show that they know **who** the interlocutors are and their **role** in the discourse.

The following is an example of a high-scoring analytical commentary. It is a well-structured response and refers to the different sections of the text, although the sections on Prince Harry and the Naval Cadet are perhaps not analysed in as much detail. The student comments on a number of different discourse features and uses metalanguage competently, referring to examples and line numbers from the text to support the analysis. The student recognises the mixture of formality and informality in the text and understands the context, the social purposes of the text and the roles of the

presenters. Turn-taking and topic management have not been considered, however, and this detracts slightly from the quality of the response.

The spoken text is a broadcast of the Royal Australian Navy Fleet Review Spectacular which is an event taking place in Sydney Australia. The social purpose of the telecast is to introduce the commemoration of the centenary arrival of the first Royal Australian Navy into Sydney Harbour, and entertain the audience before the events of the night commence. The overall register of the text can be classified as informal, however throughout the text, the situational context and participants of discourse changes, thus affecting the formality of the text.

The text type of the text can be seen through a variety of discourse features. At the beginning of the text, the discourse is formal, as it is a scripted introduction which introduces the presenters in statements such as 'Hello and welcome, I'm Stephanie Brantz / with me Lawrence Mooney' (12, 13). The use of full names indicates formality and professionalism which is suitable to the text type, as the telecast is being broadcasted on ABC TV and thus has the potential to have a whole nation watching. Through the use of deictic references in statements such as 'down here' (14), 'here' (4), 'off to our right' (20) and 'this far away' (69), it can be seen that the discourse is accompanied with a visual in order to be understood, which is again suitable to the text type. Additionally, adverbials such as 'tonight' (7) and 'later on during the show' (22) are used to make reference to events that will be occurring later on during the night, evidencing the introductory nature of the text. Use of future tense in examples such as 'images will be projected' (35) and 'there will be fireworks' (39) further indicates the role of the presenters to introduce the night's events. The situational context of the text can be seen through the use of proper nouns which indicate locations in Sydney, such as 'HMAS Gacoigne' (20), 'Bennelong Point' (33), 'the Sydney Opera House' (35) and 'the Harbour Bridge' (36). Furthermore, the domain of the text can be seen through the use of lexemes under the semantic field of 'ships', such as 'war ships' (10), 'armada' (11) and 'vessels' (19).

Due to the scripted nature of the introduction, the text achieves a professional tone thus inferring a more formal register. However, features of informality such as informal lexis 'gorgeous' (14), 'amazing' (19) and 'heaps' (23) in combination with Lawrence Mooney's (LM) use of the friendly vocative 'Steph' (52) enables the text to shift into a more informal tone, which aims to reduce the social distance between the audience and build rapport, thus assisting with its secondary function to entertain. However the scripted nature of the introduction performed by speaker Stephanie Brantz (SB) can be seen through the use of prosodic features such as slow paced utterances for statements such as 'Eighteen warships, sixteen tall ships' (1, 2) and 'the international fleet review spectacular' (9), which aim to draw attention to certain parts of the text the speaker wishes to emphasise, indexing that she is already familiar with the speech and is aware of where to use such prosodic features. Furthermore, intentional pauses for dramatic effect are also used in instances such as 'Hello (.) and welcome' (18) and 'Yes (.) there's heaps of ships' (23) which infers speakers are already aware of what they are going to say.

However, when the situational context changes and the scene changes to Campel Cove, LM uses informal lexis such as 'gonna' (61) and colloquial phrases such as 'got a thing for ties' (66) to decrease formality as a way of building rapport with the audience though and elicit a humorous effect, as the primary function of discourse has now shifted to entertainment. When the scene changes again and interlocutors change to LM and a naval cadet (NC), LM is interviewing; the discourse becomes more informal as it is relatively spontaneous and thus includes many non fluency features. This is evident through NC's use of pause fillers such as 'ah' (83) and discourse particles such as 'yeah' (84) and repetition in examples such as 'that's (.) that's' (84) and 'it's (.) it's' (95).

The following is another example of a high-scoring response. Once again, the student uses the metalanguage competently and accurately and manages to cover a range of discourse and stylistic features, linking them to context and social purpose in the process.

This spoken transcript is both informal and formal in register. It is an ABC TV broadcast which commemorates the centenary of the arrival of the first Royal Australian Navy fleet into Sydney Harbour. As this is a public event and is broadcasted on television where there will be a permanent copy, the possible audience is vast and unknown. However, it is aimed at most likely older people or people with an interest in war affairs. While the domain of this piece is the army, the Royal Australian Navy fleet is the field. The text serves to inform, commemorate and entertain whilst the wider social purpose is to instil a sense of national pride and enthusiasm in the Australian public.

As this is a spoken text, there are many phonological features present. The presenters often speak in a slow voice ('<L Eighteen warships… tall ships L>' (1, 2)) to ensure all important information is conveyed accurately and to also emphasise what they are saying. Further assisting this function is the presence of stress on particular words, which are usually on descriptive adjectives ('gorgeous' (14), 'remarkable' (15), 'heaps' (23)). There is also laughter to introduce a casual tone and to lighten the mood, as well as provide humour for viewers ('lot of @@@ a lot of paperwork' (42), 'were leaving @@@' (88)). Due to the informative and entertaining purpose, there is an abundance of descriptive adjectives in the text ('amazing' (19), 'spectacular' (15), 'gorgeous' (14)). These serve to highlight and attract viewers by creating imagery with positively connoted lexis. As this text also contains elements of informality, contractions are found ('they've' (27), 'didn't' (69), 'haven't' (78)). These detract from the formality and make it more relaxed to relate to viewers. Also present are personal ('you'll' (22), 'I'm' (58)) and possessive pronouns ('my' (79), 'your' (82)) which not only personalise the presentation but also reduce the social distance between the presenters and the audience.

Due to the fact that this is in spoken mode, many discourse strategies are employed. As the presenters alternate between speeches, there are adjacency pairs and turn taking involved. Usually to indicate the end of one person's speech, their pitch falls ('able to see them\' (22), 'standard practice\' (44)). Topic management is also used to change the subject and keep on track with the event. This is evident when LM says there will be 'so many amazing vessels' and proceeds to name them, which SM agrees but then changes the topic to the amount of people 'who've come down here' (25). As the first part of the text is mostly formal and planned due to minimal pauses and fluency of the utterances, there are no overlaps between the presenters. Whereas in lines 80 to 87, where there is a lot of improvisation, there are many non-fluency features, particularly from NC which involve pauses (83, 84, 86, 87) and pause fillers ('ah' (83, 86, 87)).

Coherence is mainly achieved in this text through the use of inference. Viewers need to know what the Royal Australian Navy fleet is and what it stands for, as well as who Prince Harry is and the meaning of 'Old Blighty' (54). Furthermore, there is an inferred joke in line 67 where LM said that the 'prince is certainly shaking more girls' hands than men's', which refers to the prince's boisterous and cheeky nature. Repetition predominantly contributes to the cohesion in the transcript. Examples include 'Sydney Harbour' (6, 14, 19) and the lexeme 'Sydney' in general (21, 31, 33, 64). This is to highlight the location of the event and name iconic locations ('Sydney Opera House' (33, 35)). Anaphoric referencing can also be found ('this' (41) to refer to the action of launching fireworks 'from the decks of warships' (39), 'he' (73), instead of 'Prince Harry' (64)). Also present are deictic expressions which occur since this is a spoken transcripts and there are most likely paralinguistics that go along with it. Examples are 'here' (25) to mean the location of the event being held and 'there' (80) to refer to LM's 'hand' (79).

All these linguistic features contribute to the overall success of the piece and its function to inform and entertain the Australian public.

Section C – Essay

Question chosen	8	9	10
%	71	12	16

Questions 8–10

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	Average
%	1	0	1	1	2	3	7	11	15	14	14	12	9	6	3	1	**9.2**

Successful students:
- kept to the topic and referred to some of the stimulus material
- wrote well-structured essays with an introduction, body paragraphs and a conclusion
- included contemporary examples from 2014 media
- used metalanguage accurately and referred to at least two subsystems
- managed their time effectively and wrote a complete essay.

Question 8
Relevant topics included:
- social and personal variation in language according to age, gender, occupation, interests, aspirations, education and culture
- the choice of Broad, General or Cultivated accent
- Australian English and national identity
- covert and overt prestige; face needs
- Aboriginal English and ethnolects
- jargon within workplaces or interest groups
- teenspeak and slang
- identity being fluid and dynamic rather than static
- conscious and subconscious choice of language to be accepted by particular groups.

Question 8 was by far the most popular essay choice. Many students successfully referred to the stimulus material provided and were familiar with the notion of gender differences in language and teenspeak. However, students need to be wary of making generalisations, particularly in the area of gender and language. It is prudent to refer to certain studies and linguists, but not to state categorically that all men speak a particular way, for example. Students also need to ensure that they cover at least two subsystems in their response (not merely lexis), and this topic lent itself easily to discussion of morphology, syntax, phonology and discourse.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response. Although there are some expression errors, the student makes excellent use of contemporary language examples, quoting from politics and the media, and supports the analysis with accurate metalanguage.

As language and identity are so inextricably intertwined, they continuously manipulate and influence one another. In this way, the language choices that we make are able to display and assert our individuality and distinctive identities, encompassing our values attitudes and beliefs. Similarly, the specific language features that we use, are able to display our alliances to particular social groups, including ones on a larger scale, such as nationality. However, language choices are not static and are continuously influenced by the context in which individuals find themselves, therefore allowing multiple individual identities to be created and maintained.

Due to the inevitable propensity for language to influence one's identity, it enables people to assert their individual distinctiveness through the particular values and attitudes they display. As a result, the particular lexis that individuals use is able to reflect intrinsic personal beliefs and assert these in a social context. This is exemplified by the Sydney professor, Barry Spur's recent comments in private emails, including dysphemistic and discriminatory language such as … in order to refer to individuals of differing ethnic backgrounds. These comments reflect Spur's inherent intolerant and racist attitudes towards people of ethnic variety and therefore enables aspects of his personal identity to be demonstrated. Similarly, Corey Bernadi's recent comments regarding the burqa, labelling it 'a shroud of oppression' and a 'flag of fundamentalism', reflect his personal beliefs and therefore his individual identity. In this way, Bernadi's lexis use with negative connotations of injustice aim to emphasise his individual attitudes towards the burqa and exhibit an element of his individuality.

Additionally, specific language choices such as exclusive and inclusive language and playful language are able to signal our alliances to a specific nation. This allows individuals to display aspects of their national identity, therefore strengthening their association with the large scale social group. This is demonstrated by the State Labour Opposition Leader's Daniel Andrew's recent use of the informal, shortened vocative 'Dan' to refer to himself in election advertisements. By using the informal vocative 'Dan', Andrews is able to demonstrate intrinsic Australian values of being laid-back and egalitarian, as it implies that he is relatable and analogous with the average Australian. In this way, the shortened vocative enables Andrews to demonstrate his national identity and unity with the Australian people, increasing the likelihood of Australian citizens voting for him. An Australian national identity can further be reflect by the playful language choices people make, specifically within formal contexts. This reflection of large-scale identity is demonstrated by Bill Shorten's recent use of the lexis 'Bowser Bandit' to label Tony Abbott in parliament. As the lexis possesses connotations of playfulness and humour, it reflected Australian values of being laid-back, specifically within a formal setting, and also reflects his affiliation with Australia. As a result, Shorten's lexis additionally reflects his affiliation with Australia. Furthermore, Tony Abbott's use of the contrasting noun phrases 'Team Australia' and 'murderous Islamic death cult' to label ISIS enables Abbott to consolidate social and national identity. By using lexis with positive connotations of unity and loyalty with 'Team', which juxtaposes with the negatively connoted 'murderous' and 'cult', Abbott is able to create an us-and-them dichotomy, which others the Islamic community. This enables Abbott to reaffirm Australia's identity as contrasting to ISIS as one of justice and unity, which reflects his affiliation and national identity. This can be likened to the process by which taggers and gangs use graffiti to express their identity and affiliations with specific social groups (Hintz and Phybus) as it creates connections and reflects in-group membership on a larger scale.

Although the language individuals use reflects our identity, language use is not static and changes according to context. This is exemplified by the contrasting identities that Tony Abbott presented on the morning television show 'Wake up' on channel Ten. Abbott employed lexis with sophisticated and authoritative connotations such as 'humanely' and 'discharge' when discussing asylum seekers but altered his language choices to more informal lexis such as the informal vocative 'Tarsh' to refer to the presenter, and the colloquialism 'get the hang of it' when the semantic field altered to surfing. In this way, it was the difference in context that altered Abbott's language and therefore the identity reflected, as Abbott presented a responsible and authoritative identity that changed to a more relatable persona. This supports Norton's suggestion that 'both identity nor language use are fixed notions', as both are dynamic depending on time and place.

Language and identity are so unavoidably connected that they are able to reflect both our individual identity and group affiliations on a larger scale. However, context alters these choices and enables us to present differing identities.

Question 9
Relevant topics included:
- prescriptivism and descriptivism
- social, environmental and technological change
- the importance of register, purpose and context in determining language choices
- neologisms from medicine, technology, environment, politics, social groups and media
- tweets, Facebook and texting
- transfer of netspeak into writing
- American influence on spelling and vocabulary.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response. It contains interesting contemporary examples, supported by a mostly accurate use of metalanguage. Expression is generally coherent and fluent, and the notions of prescriptivism and descriptivism are explored in detail.

In the 21ˢᵗ century language change in Australian English is indeed inevitable. However, it is greeted by a range of attitudes which are not always positive. Many perscriptivists do not embrace language change in Australian English as they see it as misuse of pivotal elements of syntax. However, descriptivists are in favour of language change as they do not believe it affects the intelligibility of the language and assists in asserting group identity and the linguistic creativity of today's society. This can be seen through lexis, syntax and morphology.

There are many negative attitudes surrounding language change, as perscriptivists classify these changes as deterioration and misuse of the language. This can be seen in a variety of public contexts where individuals have been scrutinised for 'misusing' syntax. This can be seen by the reactions evoked by Kacey Musgraves an artist who repeatedly used the phrase 'I can't even' during her Grammy acceptance speech in 2014 to express disbelief. The phrase 'I can't even' involves the ellipsis of the object in the sentence and is considered as misuse of the language by perscriptivists and it does not convey the complete meaning of a sentence. Emotions of outrage were observed in a blog post on 'the Thought Catalog' (2014) where the author mocked events of the 'I can't even' vernacular saying 'can't even what' Complete a sentence? Manage multi-syllable words? Command your native tongue?' In a similar way, sports commentators are being criticised for 'verbifying' nouns such as 'medal', 'podium' and 'car' to produce the verbs 'medalling', 'podiuming' and 'carred'. This has evoked sentiments of fury in some perscriptivists as they are of the opinion that commentators should 'try to correctly use the language we all agreed upon or leave the commentary to those who can' (Stimulus A). Thus it can be seen that due to attitudes of traditionalists, language change in the 21ˢᵗ century is not embraced by everyone.

On the contrary, many descriptivists who are 'just as concerned about the clarity, ambiguity and intelligibility [of language as perscriptivists]' (stimulus d) claim that language change should be embraced because it allows assertion of identity. As asserted by David Crystal 'identity requires linguistic desctinctiveness' and allows speakers to express their membership to a group. For example, the use of acronyms which were derived from netspeak have now been intergrated into the spoken mode of teenspeak and allow younger speakers to assert their group membership and build solidarity within their social group. This can be seen by character Ja'mie King on the ABC series 'Ja'mie the private school girl' (2013) as she frequently uses non-standard lexis such as 'ily', 'omg', 'lol' and 'yolo' whilst speaking with her friends at school to mark her membership in their friendship group. In a similar way, shortenings such as 'feels' (feelings), 'gaths' (gatherings), 'totes' (totally) and 'awks' (awkward) can be used in the spoken mode by adolescents as a way of asserting their age group. Furthermore, the new phenomena of the spoken hashtag, which consists of speakers using the lexeme 'hashtag' before a statement to express emotions which they would usually hashtag on twitter, allows individuals to assert a contemporary identity which involves a cognisant nature of modern technology and social media. This can be seen through Cate Blanchette's use of the spoken hashtag during her academy award acceptance speech in 2014, during which she said 'Julia, hashtag suck it' to her friend Julia Roberts in the audience as a way of expressing modern identity in a comical manner. Thus it can be seen that descriptivists are in favour of language evolution as it permits the expression of identity.

Additionally, language change is also welcomed by descriptivists because they believe that it is 'expressive development' (David Crystal) and allows for the expression of innovative spirit and creativity. This can be seen through the use of doge speak and lol speak which are non standard varieties of language which have been created online and are the result of elements of language change in modern society. Doge speak typically involves the deliberate use of adverbs which do not agree with the nouns which they proceed, and is frequently used in the spoken mode as a way of creating humour in a playful way. Thus instead of saying 'very cool, much respect' a doge speak user would say 'much cool, very respect'. This language change has occurred in order to give speakers the opportunity to modify syntax in a manner which is able to assert creativity and inventive spirit. In a similar way, lol cat enthusiasts will use lol speak to creatively express themselves online. This can be seen through the use of the inflectional suffix '-ed' which is added to already formed past participles to create new lexemes such as 'saided', 'haded', and 'maded'. Additionally, lol speak users may also assert innovative spirit through the substitution of the plural suffix '-s' with '-z' to produce lexemes such as 'waterz', 'shapez' and 'humanz'. These language changes to standard Australian English have resulted in the production of new varieties online which permit expression of creativity. As noted by David Crystal 'the internet is allowing us to once again explore language in the written mode in a creative way' and is therefore embraced by many descriptivists.

In conclusion it can be seen that language change in the 21ˢᵗ century has been received in both positive and negative ways. As whilst perscriptivists are unhappy about changing features of the language and classify it as misuse, descriptivists assert language change is allowing for better expression of identity and linguistic creativity. Thus it is evident 'that in the end we have to accept change, but it doesn't mean we have to like it.' (stimulus b)

Question 10

Relevant topics included:

- race, gender, sexuality, religion, disability and taboo language
- not everyone shares the same ideas about taboo
- context plays a role in determining taboo
- some taboos have changed and relaxed over time; for example, swearing
- new taboos include obesity, body shape and image
- how we deal with taboo: euphemism, PC language, codes of practice, legislation.

The following is an example of a mid- to high-range response. The expression lacks fluency in parts, but the ideas expressed are relevant, and the examples are generally contemporary and interesting. The student understands that context plays a part in determining taboo language.

Offensive or taboo language is definately seen for what it is according to current social situations. Through the analysis of Taboo, Euphemisms and Politically Correct & Non-Discriminatory language, it is quite evident that the language we use and what we find to be offensive is mostly reliant on current social situations. These topics can be analysed through the subsystems to provide this evidence.

Taboo language, most commonly through swearing, can have mixed reactions depending on social circumstances. There are many entertainers and comedians who use taboo language as a powerful way to make people laugh. As comedian Cal Wilson comments, 'Being off colour is part of the comedy tool kit'. Many comedians will use taboo lexemes such as ... in their punch lines and jokes, and these emotive words are perceived as humorous in the comedy world. However, taking this language to a more formal or public context many have mixed reactions. After a twitter post by Cal Wilson which contained taboo, she was attacked by a commenter saying that she should be more 'lady like'. This proves that reactions taboo language are dependant on the attitudes of people in various contexts, and that these attitudes can in fact change. Cal believes that 'I'd like to think that we had reached a point where we can say what we like and not have to worry about being 'lady like''', which presents the attitude that freedom of speech should also not be sex-related. As Kieth Alan and Kate Burridge comment, 'In contemporary western society, taboo and euphemisms are closely entwined with concepts of politeness and face' we can observe that linguists also believe that our language and taboo will change to meet various peoples face needs and various social circumstances.

Euphemistic language is used in an attempt to avoid social taboo topics and harsh realities. Common examples of these are using phrases such as 'passed away' to avoid the negative and harsh lexeme 'died'. During the 2013 Melbourne Cup, a commentator used the sentence 'Verema has tragically broken down.' The euphemism 'broken down' avoids the harsh alternative of 'death' in such a public context which he was speaking in. This however contrasts with the 2014 Melbourne Cup. After the cup favourite horse died soon after the race, Animal Welfare Groups quickly started using strong and harsh lexemes such as 'death' and 'tortured' as a way to purposely impose this taboo topic on the public and make a shocking impact. Societies views on the topic of death were swayed by the use of these words and it helped these groups to convey a message. This means that although a topic may seem taboo in certain domains, such as commentary, circumstances, such as the welfare if animals calls for the use of taboo language and it is generally viewed as shocking, yet acceptable, in this context.

Politically correct and non-discriminatory language is used to create social harmony and respect, especially towards topics such as gender, race, religion, disability and sexual orientation. Todays society views this as a way to avoid many social taboos and is becoming a widespread blanket attitude. Examples of this language syntactically can be observed through Dr Ian Lillico, lecturer on boys education, recent comment 'Boys with mental disabilities'. Lillico has used the prepositional phrase 'with mental disabilities' to post-modify the noun as to not to define these boys as mentally disabled, but rather treat them as a seperate entity. Lexically, the Military Special Needs Network has recently called for the complete disapproval of 'retard', instead opting for 'mentally disabled'. Morphologically, variations on words that avoid gender such as 'chairperson' instead of 'chairman' are also considered as politically correct in not discriminating on gender. Jill Stark notes that 'Chris Tanti said that while it is no longer acceptable to use the words 'retarded' or 'gay' as pejorative terms, it is still acceptable to accuse public figures of being 'nuts', 'bonkers' or 'crazy'. It is evident that societies attitudes have changed to view certain language choices as taboo in all circumstances.

Taboo language is quite varied in its nature and so is its views in society. Swearing is becoming increasingly more accepted along with views of freedom of speech. Euphemisms can be used to shield us from what we find taboo yet are sometimes not required when taboo topics should be used to shock an audience. Finally, politically correct and non-discriminatory language both aim to prevent from taboos that society views should not be used in any circumstances. Ultimately, the type of taboo language which ones uses is completely reliant on the context and attitudes of society.