LIVING LINGO

VCE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

units 3 and 4

Kate Burridge
Debbie de Laps

Cracked by JosephMealio

LIVING LINGO

VCE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

units 3 and 4

Kate Burridge
Debbie de Laps

© Kate Burridge and Debbie de Laps 2015
All rights reserved. Except as permitted under the Australian Copyright Act 1968 (that is, any fair dealing for the purposes of study, research, criticism or review), no part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, communicated or transmitted in any form or by any means without prior written permission. All enquiries should be made to the publisher.
admin@boobookeducation.com.au

Published by
Boobook Education
PO Box 544
Healesville
VIC 3777
Australia
www.boobookeducation.com.au

Cover design and layout by Ergo Basine.

Printed by Valiant Press
8 Elliot Place
Ringwood
VIC 3134
Australia
1300 769 985

ISBN 978-0-9925854-1-9
First edition 2009
Second edition 2011
Third edition 2015

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Kate Burridge is currently Professor of Linguistics at Monash University in Melbourne and a fellow of the Australian Academy of Humanities. She has authored/co-authored/edited around 22 books on different aspects of language, focusing on grammatical change in Germanic languages, the Pennsylvania German spoken by Anabaptist communities in North America, the notion of linguistic taboo and the structure and history of English. Kate is a regular presenter of language segments on radio and TV.

Debbie de Laps has been involved in VCE English Language since its inception. She began teaching the subject as part of the pilot program, beginning in 1997, and has remained an enthusiastic supporter ever since that time. Throughout her career as a teacher, and as Executive Officer of the Victorian Association for the Teaching of English for ten years, her passion for language and English teaching has not abated. Now, as a partner in BooBook Education, she uses her expertise, including as former Chair of the Exam Setting Panel and Chief Assessor for English Language, to promote and resource the teaching of English in Victoria.

Acknowledgements vi

UNIT 3 LANGUAGE VARIATION AND SOCIAL PURPOSE

Setting the scene 2
Nature of texts 2
Style and registers 4
Politeness and face 8
The tug of love between standard and nonstandard 10
Information flow 12
The importance of writing 22
Activities 24

AREA OF STUDY 1

Informal language 28
Features of informal language 32
Conversations 48
Conversational features 53
Cooperative speakers 60
E-Chat 73
Activities 76

AREA OF STUDY 2

Formal language 88
Drift away from formal 92
Stylistic features 99
Social harmony 119
Activities 129

UNIT 4 LANGUAGE VARIATION AND IDENTITY

Setting the scene ... 140
Language, dialects and accents ... 141
Historical backdrop ... 143
Regional variation ... 144
Social variation ... 145
Attitudes to variation ... 146
Activities ... 149

AREA OF STUDY 1

Introducing Australian English ... 152
Features of Australian English ... 153
Attitudes to Australian English ... 163
Regional variation in Australia ... 168
Social variation in Australia ... 173
Ethnic variation in Australia ... 177
National identity ... 181
Activities ... 188

AREA OF STUDY 2

Social identity and its many faces ... 198
Social and personal variation ... 199
Jargon and slang ... 204
Social expectations and community attitudes ... 211
So why doesn't everyone speak properly then? ... 222
Activities ... 226

APPENDIX

Subsystems of language — tools of the trade ... 238
Phonology ... 239
Morphology ... 246
Lexicology ... 249
Syntax ... 255
Semantics ... 265

Glossary ... 267
Select bibliography ... 282
Index ... 286
Tribute ... 290

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank many people who have helped bring this publication to fruition.

Our patient and supportive families: **Ross and Daniel Weber**, **Walter and Natalie de Laps**.

Our enthusiastic publishers at BooBook Education: **Janny McCurry and Greta Caruso.**

Wolfgang Olcewski at Valiant Press, who is so much more than a printer.

Our wonderful designer **Ergo Basine** for transforming our initial scribbles into a work of art.

David Astle, who launched the virtual book in September 2015 — and with such flair and generosity.

Editors **Tias Allard, Allie Severin, Janet Purkis, Nicole Biggelaar** and **Leigh Abercromby**, who collectively combed through the manuscript and made expert, vital corrections and important suggestions.

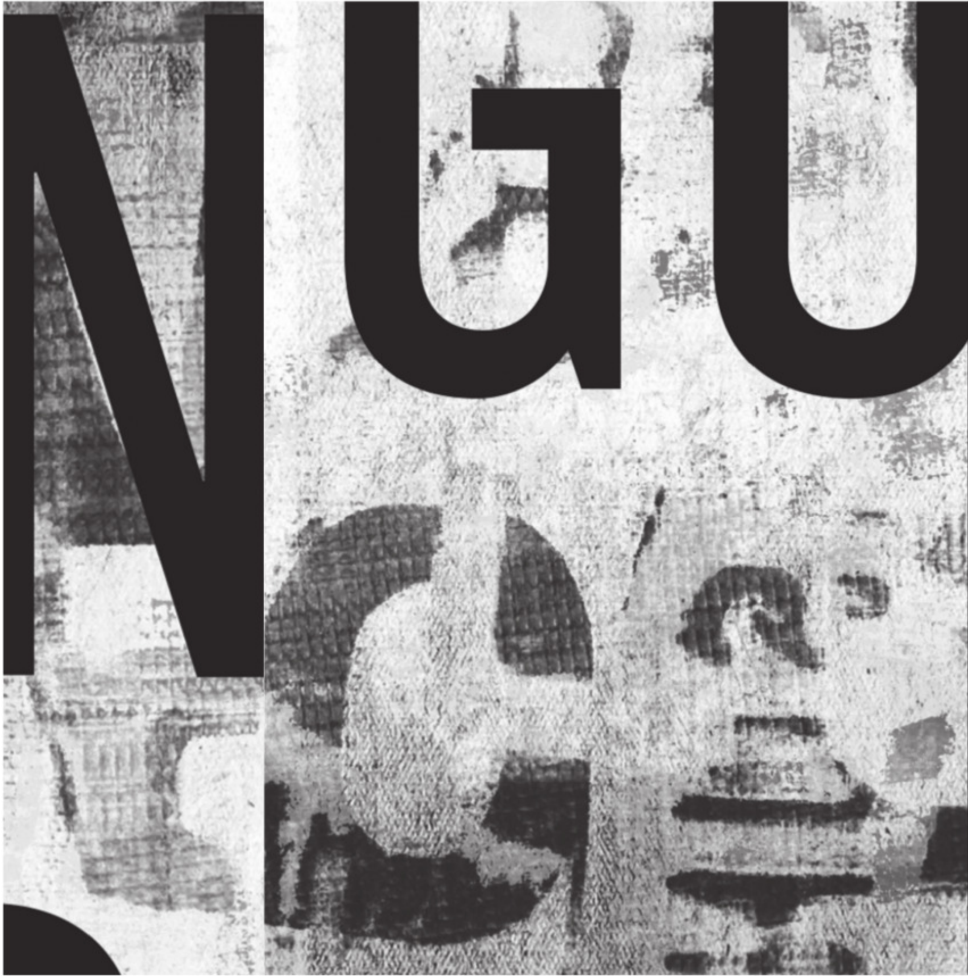
Suggestions and advice were provided by **Tim Rayner, Kirsten Fox, Lilian Shen, Sue Haynes, Kat Perdriau** and **Yarra Valley Grammar School Year 12 English Language class 2014**.

Thanks to the following individuals for permission to use their work.

Ron Tandberg cartoon page 9
Michael Leunig cartoon page 10
Michael Conole sketches pages 11, 134, 229 contact@hercyniasilva.com.au
Sean R Nicholson cartoon page 21 www.socmedsean.com
Drew Fairweather cartoon page 67 http://www.toothpastefordinner.com
Christina Greer page 76 Ozwords http://ozwords.org/?p=6068
Kate Holden article page 97
John Voce photo Page 189
Matt Golding cartoon page 131
John Ditchburn cartoon page 152 http://www.inkcinct.com.au/
Liam Byrne photographer; Indigenous Literacy Foundation — wwwindigenousliteracyfoundation.org.au, page 224
Cartoon page 239, 248 **www.xkcd.com**
Cartoon page 242 **http://specgram.com/CLXI.2/labiodentals.jpg**

All other images have been sourced from Creative Commons http://creativecommons.org and are reproduced without modification.

Every effort has been made to trace the original source of copyrighted material contained in this book. The publisher would be pleased to hear from copyright holders to rectify any errors or omissions.



UNIT 3

LANGUAGE VARIATION AND SOCIAL PURPOSE

1.0 SETTING THE SCENE

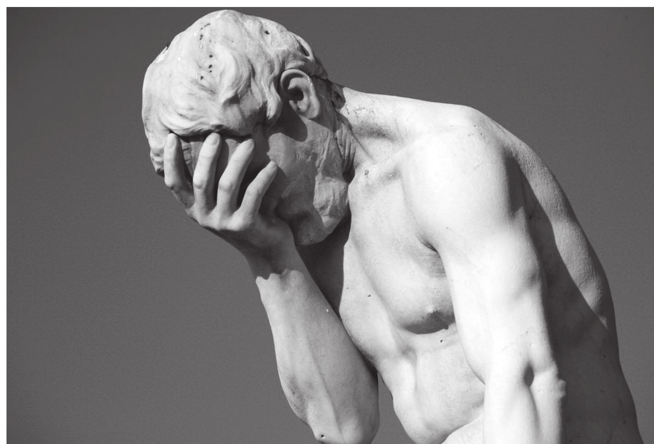
In this chapter, we introduce you to some of the major concepts of this Unit. We begin with the basic distinction between spoken and written language. Traditionally, textbooks have made much of this distinction, and the picture they painted was that speech and writing formed a straightforward dichotomy. However, it didn't take long for discerning students to realize how untrue this was. Many examples of spoken language, such as you might find in a well-planned speech for example, showed the organizational features of written language. On the other hand, many examples of writing, such as a scribbled note to a friend or a postcard, are much closer to speech. E-communication is blurring the distinction even more. Chatting online is like chatting on the telephone — here people write much like they speak. This type of language features **ellipsis** (omission of elements; e.g. 'Hungry? Wanna eat?' cf 'Are you hungry? Do you want something to eat?') and the sorts of highly topic-oriented structures characteristic of spoken language (ie, focus on particular elements; e.g. 'Jack! Can't stand him!!!' cf 'I can't stand Jack.'). When we look at language variation characterized by purpose or use, it is crucial to consider the degrees of (in)formality and also planning that are involved.

In this section we look at the English language along the continuum of (in)formality, explaining the stylistic features of language in both spoken and written modes of communication (including e-communication). It is all about linguistic choice — how speakers and writers select different linguistic features (of pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar) from within particular stylistic variants, and how this in turn establishes the degree of formality of a discourse. The focus is on language as a means of societal interaction, and the way language users communicate information, ideas, attitudes, prejudices and ideological stances. We look at the relationship between language and the situational and cultural context in which the language occurs; this includes the **function**, **field**, **mode**, **setting** and **audience** (including the relationships between participants). All these factors contribute to a person's language choices, as do the values, attitudes and beliefs held by participants and the wider community. The language selected and the way it is used can tell a lot about relationships, power structures and, as we'll see throughout this book, the processes of social inclusion and exclusion.

1.1 NATURE OF TEXTS

Grammar books of English typically explore the structure of individual sentences. They explain, for example, that in basic clauses subjects normally precede their verbs, unless there is a special grammatical reason for putting them somewhere else. In fact, sentences rarely occur in isolation

in this way and to get the full picture we really need to go beyond the sentence to something more natural. **Discourse** refers to continuous sequences of language that are larger than a sentence. The term can refer to either spoken or written forms (although occasionally you might find it being used specifically for naturally occurring spoken language, especially conversations). The analysis of discourse involves **texts**. These include speeches, letters, diary entries, knitting patterns, recipes, jury instructions, advertizements, novels — basically, any collection of spoken or written sentences that hold together (or show **cohesion**) in this way. Cohesion in a text potentially involves all linguistic levels; for example, syntax (e.g. word order, different types of constructions), morphology (e.g. specific marking on words), lexicon (e.g. expressions like *as for, well*), phonology (e.g. intonation, pausing), semantics and pragmatics (meaning connections between words, general knowledge of how the world functions). It also involves formatting and layout (e.g. punctuation, bullets, headings, graphs) and **paralinguistic cues** (elements of body language like gesture and eye contact).



Although we may not always be aware of it, we all have very different ways of speaking and writing depending on the circumstances in which we find ourselves. Think about how you talk to your friends at lunchtime at school. The topics and the language you use, and the way you interact with each other, are likely to be quite different from how you might interact with, say, a potential employer if you were in a job interview situation. The **social purpose** of the communication also has an influence on the way we communicate. Organizing a group of friends to go to the football is different from politely trying to convince an employer to hire you. So, social purpose, context and the participants in a communication all have an influence on the language we use.

We distinguish texts on the basis of something called **domain**; this is the general sphere of interest or activity where communication happens; for example, religion, friendship, work and so on. Even within the same domain, most speakers are able to use a number of different codes that are determined by a range of factors called **sociolinguistic variables**. These variables include:

Audience (or **interlocutors**)**:** Who you are and who(m) you are communicating with, as well as other features such as the relative age and status of the players (e.g. are you the teacher or the student in the exchange?)

Setting: Where you are and when the communication takes place (e.g. are you in church, or are you with mates watching the football Grand Final?)

Field (roughly **subject matter**)**:** What you are communicating about (e.g. are you talking about the existence of God (the field of religion) or who will win the Grand Final (the field of sport)

Mode: Whether the communication is spoken, written or electronic, such as email and online chat (e.g. are you chatting to a mate face to face or are you posting on Facebook?)

And of course also important is how you, as the speaker or writer, are feeling at the time (e.g. are you feeling friendly or grumpy?). Language users never behave linguistically the same way all the time, but they will alter their language constantly in response to these different factors. Change any one of them, and the language changes accordingly. Some people seem to think this is being phony, a bit like 'putting on a telephone voice'. But really it is no different from anything else in life — you choose the right tool for the job. You wouldn't drink your soup with a fork, mop up spills with your

best shirt, bang in a nail with the heel of a shoe (at least not if you had a hammer available) and you probably wouldn't choose to eat your peas with the blade of a knife. In the same way we select the appropriate language to suit the purpose and the context we find ourselves in; in other words, we have to be conscious of the fit, or absence of it, between the language we use and the occasion, the audience, the subject matter and the mode. At a formal dinner party you wouldn't publicly announce 'I'm off for a leak', rather you'd say something like 'Excuse me for a moment'. It is precisely this kind of stylistic discord that lies at the basis of the humour of Eliza Doolittle's celebrated social gaffe (from Act 3 of Shaw's *Pygmalion*).

Liza	[nodding to the others] Goodbye, all.
Freddy	[opening the door for her] Are you walking across the Park, Miss Doolittle? If so —
Liza	[perfectly elegant diction] Walk! Not bloody likely. I am going in a taxi. [She goes out]
	Pickering gasps and sits down.
Mrs Eynsford Hill	[suffering from shock] Well, I really can't get used to the new ways.

To appreciate the inappropriateness of Eliza's language, you should bear in mind that at the time Shaw wrote this play, *bloody* was such 'a horrid word' that it was usual to render it in print with asterisks (*b****y*). Indeed, Eliza Doolittle's scandalous outburst provoked such an outrage in the theatre that the press in 1914 could do no more than just hint at it. The word *bloody* became known as 'the Unprintable Swearword' or 'Shaw's Bold Bad Word'.

1.2 STYLE AND REGISTERS

The most successful communication requires that language users pay particular attention to the style of language they use, whether it be written or spoken. They select particular forms in response to the degree of (in)formality and familiarity appropriate to the context of the communication. There is a continuum from formal through to informal varieties. Here you find that formal varieties, even those involving very different groups of people, tend to be more similar to each other than informal varieties; this is because the **standard language** is involved (and we will have more to say on the standard later).

Some linguists have divided this continuum of formality into stages. One such person is Martin Joos. In his book *The Five Clocks* (1967), he describes five different levels of formality. Even though these go beyond what you need to know for this subject, you may find them useful in analysing the style of a text, either written or spoken. We illustrate these levels below, using simple address terms (ranging here from greater to less formality). You will notice that the boundaries between these different styles are by no means clear-cut. For example, both casual and intimate styles can be described as **colloquial**. They are both more usually spoken and they assume a fair amount of shared knowledge or common ground between the participants.

Frozen style	Madam Chair
Formal style	Madam
Consultative style	Mrs Jones
Casual style	Marg
Intimate style	sweetheart

Addressing or naming someone appropriately depends on the role of the person addressed or named relative to the speaker. This role may differ in different situations. For instance, Debbie and Kate might be on first name terms while having lunch together before a board meeting; but when conducting official business in the boardroom where Debbie is Chair of the Board, Kate will probably address Debbie as 'Madam Chair'. However, in an unofficial aside ('Can I get you a coffee, Debbie?'), Kate quite properly reverts to using Debbie – even in the boardroom. This makes it clear that it is not the physical situation that is relevant, but the respective roles of the people in that situation. (See Chapter 3 of Allan and Burridge 1991 for more on address terms).

Exceedingly elevated and formal language is often used to address people of importance in order to indicate their high status. In *Gulliver's Travels* Jonathan Swift mocked the splendiferous titles given to contemporary princes in the following address to the Emperor of Lilliput – a man slightly no bigger than Gulliver's middle finger:

> **GOLBASTO MOMAREN EVLAME GURDILLO SHEFIN MULLY ULLY GUE, most Mighty Emperor of *Lilliput*, Delight and Terror of the Universe, whose Dominions extend five Thousand Blustrugs, (about twelve Miles in Circumference) to the Extremities of the Globe: Monarch of all Monarchs: Taller than the Sons of Men; whose Feet press down to the Center, and whose Head strikes against the Sun: At whose Nod the Princes of the Earth shake their Knees; pleasant as the Spring, comfortable as the Summer, fruitful as Autumn, dreadful as Winter. His most sublime Majesty proposeth to the *Man-Mountain* [= Gulliver], lately arrived at our Celestial Dominions, the following Articles ... (Swift 1735/1958:24)**

This mode of addressing and naming exaggerates the importance of the Emperor by magnifying his perceived loftiness.

Any one person's language may reflect a wide range of varieties between the extremes of frozen and intimate, and each individual style responds to different arrangements of situational factors like those earlier described. To illustrate, let's take the domain of the law and the language used by lawyers (often dubbed Legalese). Like most **linguistic varieties**, this occurs in a range of styles — in fact, all of the five identified by Joos. 'Frozen' style occurs in written documents like wills, but can also be spoken in the case of a witness's pledge to *tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth*. Written 'formal' style is found in statutes and briefs and can be spoken in the courtroom in the arguments of counsel and the examination of witnesses (*In answer to my learned friend's erudite submission…*..). 'Consultative' style is usually dialogue such as between lawyer–client or in lay witness testimonies (*Would you please tell the court, where you were on the night of August 14th?*). 'Casual' style removes the social barriers and can usually only occur during in-group interaction, for example, in the conversations between lawyers; and rarely you might even find 'intimate' Legalese involving close friends (or perhaps family). These represent different varieties of the register of legal English. They all have in common some of the linguistic features of Legalese, but they differ in the relative

frequency and the special combination of these features. Style is always a matter of linguistic choice. It will involve all subsystems of language, but vocabulary will always show the most impressive stylistic range.

The following table (taken from Bolinger 1975: 362) gives some illustrations of Joos' categories of style. (1) Flesh this out with some examples of your own (one way is to look up the synonyms of a word, for example *cute*, in a thesaurus); you might even have a go at plugging some of the holes where Bolinger couldn't find a suitable word; (2) Note where you disagree with his characterizations (the meanings might well have changed since Bolinger's time, and he himself was a speaker of American English); moreover, other meanings can interfere; the differences may not boil down to purely style (e.g. *perceptive* has a feature of 'sensitivity' that *intelligent* lacks); (3) Create your own table for the following items: *drunk, pregnant, poor, dead* and *fat*.

Table 1

Intimate	Casual	Consultative	Formal	Frozen
cute	pretty	attractive	comely	
to guzzle	to swig	to drink	to imbibe	to quaff
nutty	crazy	insane	demented	mad
	scared	frightened	apprehensive	affrighted
on the ball	smart	intelligent	perceptive	astute
to play like	to act like	to pretend	to feign (death)	(he was dead)

Not only must the choice of style be appropriate for the setting of the communication, it must be consistent, so that the lexical items need to all form part of the same style, and the lexical, phonological and grammatical features of a communication should conform. We've already seen an amusing example of a mismatch in features produced by Eliza Doolittle; the play has many such examples because the Cockney flower girl Eliza is being trained to speak 'properly', but for some time she continues to choose examples of vocabulary and grammar that are very much at odds with her very refined **Received Pronunciation** (or **RP**). In the next exchange (also from Act 3), it is Mrs Higgins' 'at home' and she has visitors, including Eliza. Bear in mind that Eliza is enunciating everything here in a very toffy accent; she is also exquisitely dressed with an aura of 'remarkable distinction'. Also striking is the inappropriateness of her topic of conversation for such a gathering (rather than sticking with weather and health, which were her assigned topics, she moves onto murder and later to excessive drinking):

LIZA [*darkly*] May aunt died of influenza; so they said.
MRS. EYNSFORD HILL [*clicks her tongue sympathetically*]!!!
LIZA [*in the same tragic tone*] But it's my belief they done the old woman in.
MRS HIGGINS [*puzzled*] Done her in?
LIZA [piling up the indictment] What call would a woman with that strength in her have to die of influenza? What become of her new straw hat that should have

	come to me? Somebody pinched it; and what I say is, them as pinched it done her in.
MRS. EYNSFORD HILL	What does "doing her in" mean?

Varieties specifically tailored to certain situations are called **registers**. These involve language that is appropriate for a particular activity, occupation or subject matter; thus we can talk about registers of different legal, scientific, religious and formal English. They are not tied to particular speech communities in the way that (social or regional) **dialects** are, and yet they can be just as distinct from each other and, like dialects, are differentiated at all subsystems of language (phonetic, lexical, grammatical, and so on). You will find that registers are often characterized solely in terms of their lexicon; plenty of definitions of registers reference only their distinctive vocabularies. For example, sociolinguist Wardaugh describes them as 'sets of vocabulary items associated with discrete occupational or social groups. Surgeons, airline pilots, bank managers, sales clerks, jazz fans, and pimps use different vocabularies' (1986:48). The focus on lexicon is understandable — unfamiliar words and phrases are always much more obvious to people than grammatical or phonological novelties, and these new expressions also name the things that are the particular focus of the domain. However, registers involve more than simply lexical differences; they sometimes also differ from one another grammatically and sometimes phonologically. Registers are also sometimes called **jargons** and we will use this term from time to time. One difficulty with using the term *jargon*, however, is that in ordinary usage it is often pejorative; as sense 4 in the Macquarie Dictionary puts it, jargon is 'unintelligible or meaningless talk or writing; gibberish'.

The following is an example of a typical recipe. Identify lexical, syntactic and semantic features that are typical of this register. Also note any distinctive formatting and layout conventions.

HONEY-SOY CHICKEN WITH SESAME SEEDS

Ingredients

1/3 cup soy sauce
1/4 cup honey
3cm piece fresh ginger, peeled, finely grated
2 garlic cloves, crushed
1 teaspoon sesame seeds
4 (340g each) chicken maryland pieces
Baby Asian salad greens, to serve

Method

Step 1	Combine soy sauce, honey, ginger, garlic and sesame seeds in a glass or ceramic dish. Add chicken. Toss to coat. Cover. Refrigerate for 2 hours, if time permits.
Step 2	Preheat oven to 180°C/160°C fan-forced. Arrange chicken and marinade in large baking dish.
Step 3	Bake for 50 minutes to 1 hour or until chicken is golden and cooked through, turning halfway during cooking. Serve with salad greens.

1.3 POLITENESS AND FACE

Consider the following version of the classic 'does your dog bite' joke; we recommend the version on YouTube where British comedian Peter Sellers plays an authority on French medieval castles: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ui442IDw16o.

Sellers:	Does your dog bite?
Man:	No.
	(Sellers reaches down to pet the dog. The dog bites the man's hand.)
Sellers:	Ouch! Hey! You said your dog doesn't bite.
Man:	He doesn't. But that's not my dog.

Communication in whatever form can only successfully take place if participants mutually recognize that certain ground rules govern their own actions and use of language, and also their interpretations of the linguistic behaviour of others. For example, there is a presumption that all players will act as reasonable and cooperative participants during any kind of linguistic exchange, although they may on occasion choose not to do so. The disobliging man in this joke has clearly violated a number of these rules.

Speech exchanges of this sort are very different from our everyday conversations - well at least you'd hope so. Most of the time we try to get along with each other and our social interaction operates with the notion of harmony in mind. You're going to be diplomatic, modest and nice – whatever it takes to be polite (despite how you might be feeling deep down). A key player here is something called **face**. It is important to know what face effects are, and also how they relate to other politeness phenomena and conventions for language behaviour. Face is itself a familiar enough concept, but it starts to get a little tricky when we take into account the different types of face. We've based our discussion here on an account provided in Chapter 1 of Allan and Burridge (1991); their book is about euphemism and offensive language where matters of face are crucial.

The figures of speech 'to save face' and 'to lose face' are current in everyday parlance. The 'face' that is referred to in both these expressions is essentially 'one's public self-image', something people feel very strongly about. If, for example, the outcome of an exchange means that people's self-image is not sustained, if face has been lost or affronted, then they will generally feel bad, insecure, hurt, humiliated, and consequently become embarrassed, flustered and even hostile. On the other hand, if the outcome is a (public) self-image that surpasses the norm, i.e. if face has been enhanced by the encounter, people will feel good and perhaps confident and self-assured. But if the outcome is merely a self-image consistent with the usual, if face has been simply maintained, then people are unlikely to feel any strong emotions one way or another.

Every time we open our mouths or put pen to paper (or finger to keyboard), we have to consider whether what we say or write is likely to maintain, enhance, or damage our own face, as well as considering the effect of our language on others. We have to work to create the effect we intend to create; sociologist Erving Goffman refers to this as 'face-work'. Social interaction is generally oriented towards maintaining (= saving) face, and one of the ground rules in an encounter is a tacit agreement between the different parties that everyone should operate with exactly this in mind. Just as we look after our own face (that's self-respect), we are expected to be considerate of and look after the face-wants of others, turning a tactful blind eye, perhaps or telling a white lie. How many people end up buying a product simply to save the face of the salesperson — with a sneaking suspicion that the sales-pitch was engineered for precisely this outcome!

Depending on our own social attributes and on the situation itself, we have to adjust the line we take during an exchange and adopt different face-saving strategies accordingly. In our conversations we have to choose our language expressions, tone and quality of speaking, looks and gestures to produce just the desired face effects. Those who are skilled in face-work are described as having social *savoir faire*; they are said to be perceptive and tactful. But of course not everyone is the same. Different groups play by different rules, and conventions will vary considerably between individuals even within the same community. Cultures can have very different norms too, and consequently quite different repertoires of face-work strategies. Non-native speakers of English are often unaware of these differences and because of this they may on occasion cause offense. This becomes critical where representatives of whole nations are involved and it is not just one person's face that is at stake.

When Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott threatened to "shirtfront" Russian President Vladimir Putin in October 2014, there was concern that this was a threat to Australian-Russian relations. There was egg-on-face all round!

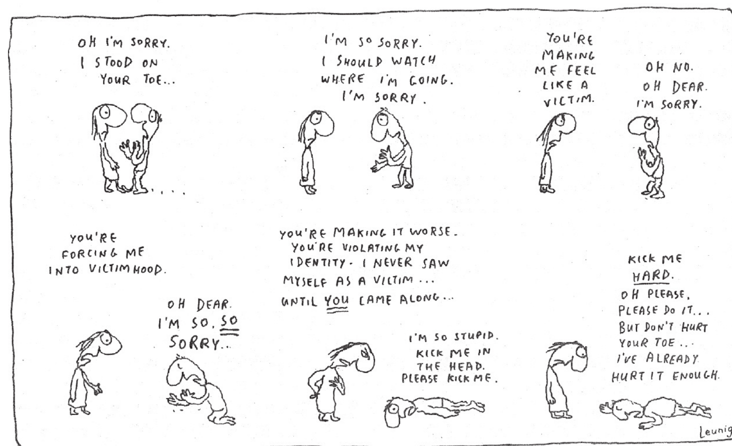
Politeness theory generally recognizes two aspects to face; these were developed by Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson (1987). The first is called **positive face**. Attending to positive face makes us feel good; it means our attributes, achievements, ideas, possessions, goals etc. are well regarded by others. It might involve showing a flattering interest in an idea we've had, or praising something we've produced. It could also mean simply 'watching one's language' (by accommodating dialect, accent or style, for instance).

The second aspect to face is called **negative face**. It involves our desire not to be imposed upon. Paying attention to someone's negative face includes not imposing on their time and not borrowing their possessions or requesting help; or impositions caused when someone is required to expend unreasonable effort in order to understand the message. When an utterance is either too loud or somehow inaudible, incoherent or perhaps not even relevant, it violates the politeness conditions that govern communication and therefore threatens negative face. In speech exchanges negative face also includes taking account of non-verbal aspects of the encounter, such as matters of eye contact (staring, or avoiding someone's gaze), physical distance (standing too close or too far away from someone) or gestures (touching, nudging, gripping, even striking).

These two aspects of face (positive and negative) can sometimes cause tension and conflict because satisfying one means infringing on the other. Oscar Wilde picked this out when he had Lord Henry Wotton remark with typical Wildean wit: 'There is only one thing in the world worse than being talked about, and that is not being talked about.' (*The Picture of Dorian Gray* 1926:2)

Mutual considerateness (being mindful of one another's face) can also create a conflict of wants. Protecting someone else's face can lead to loss of one's own, just as defending one's own face can

sometimes threaten the face of others. We don't want to be accused of being thick-skinned because we pay too little attention to our own face, but neither do we want to be seen as thin-skinned because we pay too much attention to it. But being over-gracious and over-solicitous of others' faces can be just as damaging; a person who does that will be condemned for being ingratiating and unctuous; in other words, someone who sucks up (a lickspittle, as they were once described). It is a difficult game to play, requiring just the right amount of attention and perceptiveness.



1.4 THE TUG-OF-LOVE BETWEEN STANDARD AND NONSTANDARD

> **Standard English** *noun* **1.** that form of written English characterised by the spelling, syntax, and morphology which educated writers of all English dialects adopt with only minor variation. **2.** (loosely) **a.** the pronunciation of educated speakers of the dialect of south-eastern England. **b.** the pronunciation of the educated speakers of other dialects of English which resemble it. **3.** those English words and phrases which in a dictionary do not have limiting labels as *Colloquial, Obsolete,* etc. [*The Macquarie Dictionary*]

Standard English is a variety that has an important role to play in establishing the style of texts. There are currently new forces at work that are reshaping the relationship between formal and informal language and therefore influencing the sort of language we use and when we use it. We are living in interesting linguistic times with many things now pointing to greater variety, less standardization and more informality (something that will immediately obvious to you if you compare this book 'Living Lingo' or 'Love the Lingo' with any book on the English language written even as recently as last century).

Here's an actual example from an English grammar book published in 1886 (but used well into the 1960s):

> The Syntax of the language has been set forth in the form of Rules. This was thought to be better for young learners who require firm and clear dogmatic statements of fact and duty. But the skillful teacher will slowly work up to these rules by the interesting process of induction, and will—when it is

possible—induce his pupil to draw the general conclusions from the data given, and thus to make rules for himself. Another convenience that will be found by both teacher and pupil in this form of *rules* will be that they can be compared with the rules of, or general statements about, a foreign language—such as Latin, French, or German.

Most of us have some idea what Standard English is, yet it is one of those linguistic terms that is notoriously difficult to define. Almost every publication dealing with English has some reference to the standard, but the meaning of the term seems to change every time it makes an appearance. You might have noticed that even how people write it varies — should that be Standard English or standard English? It depends on your point of view (a nice irony, given that the job of standardization is precisely to rule out this kind of variation).

One of the clearest discussions of Standard English has been written by Peter Trudgill, which you can find at this address: www.phon.ucl.ac.uk/home/dick/SEtrudgill2011.doc

On the basis of the many different definitions or interpretations that have appeared over the years, we can isolate five main features that set Standard English apart from its nonstandard relatives:

1. Standard English is considered by many to be a high sociolect. This means it is usually associated with elite groups, such as the wealthy, the highly educated and those living or working in places that exert much influence on the rest of the nation. That includes people in government, the judiciary or in wealthy suburbs of the capital cities. The social clout of this dialect is considerable.
2. Standard English is the variety that is recorded (or **codified**) in dictionaries, style guides and grammars. It is normative; in other words, people who subscribe to the idea that there is such a thing as 'correctness' in language also claim to know exactly what its norms are. They tend to use Standard English as a measure or benchmark.
3. It is a variety without a home; i.e. it is not regionally confined, though it may be based on a particular regional variety. Standard British English, and by extension Australian, New Zealand and South African English, are based on south-eastern English varieties in the UK.
4. It is more easily recognizable in writing. All over the world, people write in Standard English, and there's remarkable uniformity. People speak it too, but because of the nature of speech, there is always more variation.
5. It is a variety involving vocabulary and grammar but not pronunciation; in other words, it can be spoken with any accent. (There are more prestigious accents, though these should not be thought of as standard, and here we conflict with accounts in some dictionaries like the Macquarie.)

Standard English is a 'polycentric' dialect — English, American, Scottish, Irish, Australian, New Zealand and many other varieties all differ slightly from one another. Until quite recently Australia based its standard on the British Standard (i.e. the standard variety of England). Even today there are still many who defer to British norms, as opposed to Australian usage, although the appearance of style manuals like *The Cambridge Australian English Style Guide* and distinctly Australian dictionaries such as those published by Macquarie and Oxford University Press are helping to establish a distinctive standard for Australia.

The Standard English we know today has been constructed over many years, not by any English Language Academy (because there hasn't been one), but by a network of different groups, including early grammarians, writers of style guides and usage manuals, dictionary makers, editors, teachers, even newspaper columnists. However, it has always been something of a linguistic fantasy – a paragon of linguistic virtue that is sometimes called a 'superstandard' (think of it as an 'überstandard'). Milroy and Milroy (1998) put it clearly: they write about standardization as ideology and the 'standard language as an idea in the mind rather than a reality — a set of abstract norms to which actual usage may conform to a greater or lesser extent' (p. 23). You could think of it as a kind of linguistic 'best practice', an ideal we have for our language such that everyday usage will never quite come up to scratch. Even the performances of speakers and writers whose language comes closest to best practice frequently violate the rules of the standard — sometimes the rules become in a sense "too correct" (or too formal) and are no longer inappropriate. We're sure you'll agree that constructions such as *Whom did you see at the party* and *The data are misleading* are simply too high-falutin' for most speakers today, even for formal occasions.

There are currently all sorts of new pressures on our standard language. For a start, the forces of egalitarianism and social democracy all around the English-speaking world are seeing the solidarity function of language gaining over the status function. **Colloquialisation**, liberalization and the effects of e-communication now mean nonstandard and informal language is, as David Crystal describes, "achieving a new presence and respectability within society" (2006:408). Many people are now trying to speak and write more 'down-to-earth' and with a more obvious stamp of the local. Grammar that once would never have shown its face in **public language** is now making regular appearances in newspapers and political speeches, and the familiar tensions between standard and vernacular are relaxing. Moreover, as writing becomes less formal, so we see the norms of speech creeping further into written language.

Another issue is the increasing influence of newer varieties of English, as well as the diminishing authority of the so-called 'native' English speakers. As Börjars and Burridge (2010: 284) put it, standards are hard to keep up for a language that has established itself in almost every corner of the globe. Non-native speakers now outnumber native speakers three to one, and more linguistic changes are initiated by second-language, foreign-language and even creole / pidgin speakers than by native speakers. You can probably think of features of rap music that have slipped through controls and are now appearing in the language of many Standard English speakers. The expression *ima* or *imma*, the slang contraction of *I am going to / I'm gonna*, is a good example (eg. 'and imma let you finish' – Kanye West and 'So listen 'cause Imma break it down' from the lyrics of American rapper Eazy E). Clearly, what is deemed good and proper in Standard English, at either the national or international level, is heading towards something very different from traditional English use.

In short, globalization, our increasing "laid-backness" (if this is a word), and the electronic revolution all spell out de-standardization. These sweeping changes also mean that informal, nonstandard, unedited English is now appearing more and more outside its usual domains. What's more, the audiences are more friendly and receptive to these changes than they have ever been (at least, since the appearance of Standard English).

1.5 INFORMATION FLOW

We now move on to how speakers and writers go about 'packaging' their messages; in other words, how they provide the right sort of cues to help their audience interpret a text appropriately. You'll

find that spoken and written texts are much like any sort of story. Shifts in focus, changes of players, beginnings and endings of scenes, all need to be signalled. The lexicon can provide formulaic guideposts such as *as for, considering, with regard to*. There is also a range of special grammatical devices. For instance, English grammar has various constructions that seem to convey precisely the same information. Pairs of sentences such as *Mary admired Fred* and *Fred was admired by Mary* and *Mary gave Fred a note* and *Mary gave a note to Fred* do not contrast in basic meaning, but their stylistic effects are very different. Which construction writers or speakers choose depends on what part of the message they want to highlight, what they think is most important, or even what they assume the audience already knows. This sort of grammatical overkill is in the language for a reason.

There are three basic principles for organizing or packaging information in a sentence. We'll examine each of these in turn and also look at some of the strategies available for varying the information structure according to these principles. We emphasize here again that these basic principles hold for speech as much as writing. We've simply chosen here to see how they relate to written language. You probably don't need to be reminded that writing is an unnatural activity. Unlike speech (which is as fundamental to human beings as eating or walking upright), writing has to be learned and drilled. It would be useful for you to think about these strategies here and how you might use them in your own writing. To illustrate, all the following examples are taken from one of J.K. Rowling's books - *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* — a fine example of effective discourse structure.

GIVEN INFORMATION COMES BEFORE NEW

In writing (and in speaking), there are two basic kinds of information — **given** (or **old**) versus **new**. Given information is already familiar to the reader (or the hearer/listener). It can refer to something that has appeared earlier in the text, or it can be given in the sense that it is common knowledge, perhaps privately or culturally shared. New information is what drives the discourse forward. It's where we expect our audiences to pay special attention.

The usual organizing principle in languages is to put the given information first and the new information at the end. Since the new information is the more important, this basic organization means that we want important information at the end of the sentence. English word order isn't all that flexible, especially in writing (speakers can use word order much more expressively and freely than writers). So, how can writers make sure that old information precedes the new information, given that the subject always precedes the **predicate** (the verb and everything else) in a declarative sentence? English has many handy devices that allow us to reorganize elements within a sentence, precisely so that new information can appear at the end.

Let's have a look at how the desire to have old information precede new may decide what grammatical structure is used. Consider the following sentence:

> There was a large jar of Fleetwood's High-Finish Handle Polish, a pair of gleaming silver Tail-Twig Clippers, a tiny brass compass to clip onto your broom for long journeys, and a *Handbook of Do-it-Yourself Broomcare. (p. 15)*

J.K. Rowling has used something here called the **there-construction.** What this does is create an empty subject using the pronoun *there*. This appears in the position normally occupied by the subject noun phrase and this then allows the logical (or understood) subject (Hermione's generous birthday gift to Harry) with all its new and exciting information to appear later, giving it much greater prominence. *There* has no lexical meaning. Its purpose is purely grammatical — to hold

the place of the understood subject. As just mentioned, the beginning of a sentence is reserved for old and unsurprising material or given information; in other words, information that has a lower communicative value. Here we are told of the Broomstick Servicing Kit for the first time and mention of it belongs right at the end, the position reserved for things that are novel and unexpected. Here's another example:

> And then there were these Azkaban guards everyone kept talking about. They seemed to scare most people senseless. *(p. 55)*

This is not the first mention of the Azkaban guards, but they are highly newsworthy and they are certainly where we are expected to focus our attention. But see how J.K. Rowling refers to them in the second sentence here. She uses the pronoun *they*. (Remember the term **anaphoric**; here *they*, the anaphoric pronoun, replaces the lengthy noun phrase *these Azkaban guards*.) Information that is new, interesting or out of the ordinary is typically a lot longer than old, routine, or unremarkable information — it comes with a lot more detail. With given information, however, we simply don't need to include the same sort of detail that we do when we are identifying something for the first time. One way we can give it less than full mention is via pronouns, which occur in the place of longer phrases (or **constituents**).

Another way of giving old information less than full mention is by totally omitting it. Remember, this is something called **ellipsis**. It just means we leave out that part of a sentence that is totally reconstructable from previous utterances or that can simply be inferred from the context. We've seen already that ellipsis is a feature of speech. For example, if someone asked if you had read *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban,* you might reply 'No, I haven't' (or indeed, 'No I haven't read it). But you are unlikely to reply in full, 'No, I haven't read *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*' — this would sound unnatural. Like pronouns, ellipsis leads to economy of expression. It means we're being efficient. Conversational dialogues are full of it, but it's more restricted in writing. The following is an example of one of the few instances where we can routinely leave out material - the same subjects in linked clauses:

> Harry pushed his round glasses up his nose, moved his torch closer to the book and read. *(p. 7)*

As we saw in the previous section, certain written varieties (like the language used in personal ads and texting) have a high level of ellipsis. Of course, notes and letters do too. Here's an extract from Hagrid's birthday letter to Harry (the missing subjects and verb are supplied in square brackets):

> *[I]* Think you might find this useful for next year. *[I]* Won't say no more here. *[I'll]* Tell you when I see you. *(p. 16)*

Length and complexity of material are closely tied to informational aspects of sentence meaning. Long grammatically complicated or 'heavy' structures (those that are heavy with modifiers, for instance) typically appear late in a sentence. If they don't, the sentence becomes clumsy and is more difficult to process (as the previous sentence shows). This is sometimes known as the **principle of end-weight**. Constituents are usually 'heavy' when they contain more new information. So, this arrangement coincides with the tendency for *new* information to follow *given* information. Look at the amount of detail provided in the single constituent (here bolded) following the verb in the examples below. Notice how this arrangement delays mention of the subject (*the large, strangely lop-sided creature*) and thus builds up the suspense.

> Silhouetted against the golden moon, and growing larger every moment, was **a large, strangely lop-sided creature** [...]. (p. 11)

In the next sentence we find out what this creature really is:

> Through the window soared **three owls, two of them holding up the third, which appeared to be unconscious**. (p. 11)

Look what happens (below) when this 'heavy' subject noun phrase isn't moved to the end of the sentence. As we mentioned earlier, material with a higher communicative value is best kept for the end, or sentences lose their impact and trail off into insignificance. The altered version falls flat on its face – it is unwieldy (with the long subject and all its modifiers before the verb) and isn't nearly as effective.

> [Three owls, two of them holding up the third, which appeared to be unconscious, soared through the window]

COHESIVE TEXTS: TOPIC BEFORE COMMENT

Another useful distinction to draw here is between **topic** and **comment**. It interacts very closely with the given versus new distinction just discussed, but there are occasions when they part company. So we need to keep them distinct. (Technically, you don't need to know about this, but we think it's useful, especially because it sheds light on those concepts that you do need to know about)

The topic is the part of the sentence that indicates what is being written (or talked) about. It's the perspective from which a sentence may be viewed. Usually it is given. There are, however, occasions when the topic doesn't coincide with old information, for example, where the topic switches to a new one or where a topic is presented for the very first time (remember the Broomstick Servicing Kit in the first example). We'll soon see more of the special strategies that English has for coping with new topics.

The rest of the sentence makes some sort of statement about the topic and this is called the **comment**. In the natural order of things, the comment (providing the new information) follows on from its topic — if the topic is what we are writing (or talking) about, the comment is what we are writing (or saying) about it. Let's see just how this works. The following sentences are clearly built upon a topic–comment frame and the most important information (here in bold) is reserved for the final part of the clause.

> Harry **recognised the unconscious owl at once** — his name was **Errol** and he **belonged to the Weasley family.** (p. 11)

What was new information then becomes old and is taken up again at the beginning of the next sentence. The result is a kind of chaining effect of old followed by new and this pattern is what gives the passage its **coherence**.

Topic and comment are terms that refer to the informational aspects of sentence meaning. Subject and predicate refer to grammatical functions. More often than not subjects and topics coincide and so do predicates and comments. This was the case in the example above. But it isn't necessarily the case. For example, English has an array of expressions for specially highlighting a topic. These include phrases like *considering, as for, with regard to, speaking of* and so on which are used to announce the arrival of a topic. We can easily recast the last example using the phrase *as for* — it signals a resumed topic (in this case *the unconscious owl*).

> *As for* the unconscious owl, his name was Errol.

Shortly we look at other ways speakers play around with topic–comment structure for creative effect.

FRONT-FOCUS: INITIAL POSITION FOR EXTRA FOCUS

We've just seen that ends of sentences are important for communication, because they contain what is of special significance. But beginnings of sentences also can be positions of special focus.

As an aside, how to distinguish between information that has been put in a special position because it is new and important, and information that has been put in a special position because it has been focused on, is a notoriously hairy one. Maybe it is helpful to think of focused information as emphasized information, and the sentences that contain a structural focus position are quite different from the sentences in which we have a simple 'old precedes new' order.

By bringing forward material which would usually be placed last, the effect is to give it much greater prominence. It's another way of gaining the audience's attention. Normally, it's the subject that appears in initial position (ignoring conjunctions and short adverb phrases that often precede the subject). This is the basic (or neutral) word order for English. Arrangements that place something other than the subject in this position are therefore less usual and are more marked.

Here are some strategies that English has for moving something out of its usual place in the sentence to initial position. Again, we are introducing some concepts here that go beyond what you are required to know, but they are useful notions. It is always good to be made aware of special grammatical constructions that are available for use in your own writing.

PASSIVES: CREATING NEW SUBJECTS

The active sentence below shows the expected subject-verb-everything else pattern with an actor/agent subject and a patient object.

The most feared Dark Wizard for a hundred years, Lord Voldemort	*had murdered*	*them.*
Subject	Verb	Object
Agent		Patient

The **passive** version reverses this order so that the original patient becomes the grammatical subject and the original agent gets moved into a prepositional phrase headed by *by*. The following passive is the original version (p. 10) used by J.K. Rowling.

They	had been murdered	by the most feared Dark Wizard for a hundred years, Lord Voldemort.
Subject	Verb	Adverbial
Patient		Agent

The basic meaning remains more or less the same, but the emphasis has changed. Here, *they* refers to Harry's parents. It is the given topic and is therefore the less informative part of the sentence. Where we should be focusing our attention is on the appallingly evil *Lord Voldemort* — hence the passive construction allows this constituent to appear in the end position, appropriate to its new information status. Note also how long this phrase is compared to the subject. Whether the active or passive is used here is not a matter of 'grammar' but rather it depends on the discourse context and considerations like new versus old information, focus and emphasis.

The passive lets us place in initial position the patient or what normally would be a direct object. It also allows us to shift the agent or subject out of its usual position to the end. More often than not though the agent gets left out totally and the focus then shifts to the patient or recipient of the action. This can be because the agent is irrelevant information, because it is already obvious or even because it is undesirable to mention it (and in section 3.2.5 you'll see an advertisement for *Australian Fresh* orange juice that seeks to conceal the agent). In the following example, Harry has just performed serious magic on his Aunt Marge and he asks himself:

Would he be arrested, or would he simply be outlawed from the wizarding world? (p. 29)

Both these clauses are passives and both are without agent phrases. In each instance we can take for granted that it's some sort of authority in the wizarding world who would do the arresting and outlawing. It's not important to know the details. The passive enables J.K. Rowling to omit uninformative (highly topical) elements that would otherwise have to be stated in the active version.

THERE-CONSTRUCTION

Sometimes the subject is completely new information that we want to reserve for the end of the sentence. We've already seen that we can do this by creating a dummy subject using the pronoun *there,* which then appears in the position normally occupied by the subject noun phrase. This is the classic fairy-tale opening: 'Once upon a time there lived a wizard'. It's a way of putting the original and highly newsworthy subject later, giving it much greater prominence. Here's another example with the basic version in brackets.

There was a large package tied to its legs. (p. 11)
[A large package was tied to its legs]

Processes like those we've just seen not only shift things around but also change the grammatical functions of elements and build new structure. In the case of passives, special verb morphology is added and something new becomes the subject. These strategies are part and parcel of the unmarked organizational principle that ensures that given information appears early and new information at the end. There are also strategies that ensure that emphasized information appears in special focus positions. Some of these are rarely (if ever) encountered in formal language; they more commonly occur in casual speech (and we've seen examples of them already).

CLEFT CONSTRUCTIONS

Clefting has the effect of 'cleaving' (dividing) an original sentence into two clauses as a way to shift the focus of interest. Take the sample sentence: *Uncle Vernon had answered the call.* This shows the usual word order we expect of basic English clauses. But in this case J.K. Rowling wanted us to focus specially on *Uncle Vernon* (it was calamitous that Uncle Vernon had picked up the telephone on this occasion). An ***it*-cleft** has the effect of splitting off this constituent in order to give it prominence. Two clauses are formed, the first introduced by an empty subject *it* and a form of *to be,* followed by the focused constituent. The rest of the sentence is recast as a **relative clause** beginning with *that/who.*

Most unluckily, it had been ***Uncle Vernon*** *who had answered the call.* (p. 9)

The formula for forming an *it*-cleft is quite straightforward: *It is/was X that/who [.....].* As with

the *there*-construction, the emphasis is thrown onto whatever follows the dummy subject and its verb; i.e. 'X' in the formula. It's a way of getting our attention by delaying mention of what is of special significance. In fact, you will find that the relative clause is typically left out (or ellipted), if it contains old and therefore less informative material. Remember, we typically give old information minimal mention and one way of doing this is omitting it altogether. For example, if it had been well established that someone had answered the phone, Rowling might also have written:

*Most unluckily, it had been **Uncle Vernon**.*

We leave you with one more cleft example. As before, *it* anticipates the new information after *be* (bolded in this example).

*It was **Defence Against the Dark Arts** that Harry was keen to get to.* (p. 20)

FRONTING

Fronting moves constituents that are normally positioned late in the clause up to the front. *Star Wars* fans will immediately recognize this as Yoda's syntax:

Always two there are, no more.
Truly wonderful, the mind of a child is.
Much to learn, you still have.

As these examples illustrate, Yoda's usual method of forming sentences is to put phrases at the front in the clauses. This 'everything else+subject+verb' ordering has become the earmark of Yodish. But we all use fronting when we want to focus on a certain phrase. In the following examples from *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* **adverbials** appear in initial position (i.e. expressions of time, manner and place). This is the most usual type of fronting. It is far less usual for objects and **complements** to come before the subject — and when they do, they are very striking (as they are in Yoda-speak). Examples like Yoda's crop up in speech but are extremely rare in writing.

***Slowly and very carefully** he unscrewed the ink bottle.* (p. 7-8)
[He unscrewed the ink bottle slowly and very carefully.]

***At that moment** Harry Potter felt just like everyone else.* (p. 17)
[Harry Potter felt just like everyone else at that moment.]

***Silently** they tramped through the grounds.* (p. 278)
[They tramped through the grounds silently.]

Fronting can also trigger something called **inverted subject–verb order**. By moving the subject out of its natural environment, the emphasis shifts and represents another aspect to this focus device. In Old English this inverted order had considerable dramatic force and was typical of lively narrative sequences. It has still retained a kind of mock dramatic effect, which J.K. Rowling is quick to exploit. We've already seen examples of this (the examples with the owls given earlier). Here are some others.

And out fell — a book. (p. 15)

Then came Hermione. (p. 298)

Right in the middle of the picture was Ron, tall and gangling, with his pet rat Scabbers on his shoulder and his arm around his little sister, Ginny. (p. 12)

> Next came Professor Snape, drifting creepily along, his toes hitting each stair as they descended, held up by his own wand, which was being pointed at him by Sirius. (p. 277)

As these examples illustrate, the constructions here always involve fronted phrases (like directional and positional adverbials) and the verbs are **intransitive** (no object). Typically they are verbs of movement or location. In these examples the verbs *fell, came* and *was* have shifted to precede their subjects, which in the last two sentences are extremely long (recall the principle of end weight).

LEFT-DISLOCATION

In this next example of fronting (adapted from the original), you'll see the grammatical relations have not changed. 'Those Dementors' are still the subject, but it's become detached from the rest of the sentence, separated by a distinct pause (indicated here by the comma). So this is different from passives, which must change a constituent into a new subject in order to be able to front it.

> **Those Dementors**, they're horrible things. (p. 75)

This example illustrates another kind of focus strategy known as **left-dislocation** and we saw an example of it at the start of this chapter. In this focus construction, a phrase is moved to the extreme left of the sentence, leaving behind some sort of copy (here *they*) in the gap left by the fronted constituent. Typically an intonation break separates the fronted item from the rest of the sentence and this has the effect of making it stand out even more. In a sense, it is left 'hanging' outside the sentence structure, to the extent that some sort of copy is felt necessary in the original position. In speech, which is built much more along discourse lines, left-dislocation structures like these are common. But they are virtually absent from writing, especially formal writing (which is why we've had to adapt J.K. Rowling's original).

RIGHT-DISLOCATION

Another construction that is found much more frequently in speech than in writing is **right-dislocation**. Like left-dislocation, it involves the movement of material but in the other direction; in other words, rightwards to the end of the sentence rather than the beginning. If the constituent's usual position is early, then this has the effect of giving it extra focus by postponing its mention. Like clefting and *there*-insertion, right-dislocation introduces a pronoun that in a sense announces what is coming up in the discourse. Unlike those two constructions, however, here the pronoun is referential (and isn't just an empty place-holder). This can be an effective way of building up expectations, as the next example shows. J.K. Rowling's original of the last sentence had exactly this sort of structure. It is a piece of dialogue though — so as to imitate the expressive word order of speech:

> '*They're horrible things, those Dementors* …. (p. 75)

Notice how the right-dislocated element is separated off from the rest of the clause by a distinct pause, indicated here by a comma, just as it was in the example of left dislocation above.

COHESION AND COHERENCE

Any successful text has to be **cohesive**. Our focus here will be on writing (not always terribly formal language, but language that has been clearly planned and well thought through). Because speaking is generally a social activity, whereas writing is solitary, it follows that the cohesive ties

and connections are going to be a bigger deal in written texts than in spoken texts. Writing is also deprived of situational context so vagueness and ambiguity will present more of a problem (in speech any misunderstandings can be repaired as the players go along). It is quite okay for you as a speaker to refer to something in the situational context as *that over there* or some person as *them* but this won't do for a writer. Readers need more help than hearers/listeners.

English has many different types of cohesive ties that create connections between sentences. Sometimes the choice of vocabulary can be enough. We can link different parts of a text together simply by repeating the same word or by using **synonyms.** Here's an example of an advertisement for Sirena tuna. Look at how many times the words *taste* and *flavour* are repeated:

> Add Sirena and taste the flavour. For more than 40 years Australians have been enjoying the delicious taste and flavour of Sirena. We source the finest tuna, then pack the fillets into a delicate blend of ingredients to ensure superior taste and flavour in every can. Add Sirena for a delicious, spicy flavour — authentic Italian taste.

Connections can also be made by using terms that share common elements of meaning. Most food ads these days are pitched towards *healthfood*, *natural food* and *freshness*. Adjectives like *natural, pure, authentic, healthy*, *fresh* are all part of the rhetoric of purity, bringing to mind the idea of traditional clean living and unpolluted nature. Have a look at the following advertisements for pasta and for cheese sticks and identify the expressions that share common elements of meaning, such as 'health', 'naturalness' or 'flavour' (this includes possible **antonyms** such as the adjective *artificial*).

> Pasta Presto. A combination of mouth-watering Barilla and marinated beef makes this ideal for a balmy summer's night. Best of all, you'll be out of the kitchen in a flash! If you and your family love pasta, why limit yourselves to your favourite Italian dish once a week? Chose a high quality pasta such a Barilla - Italy's number one seller. Made from carefully selected 100% durum wheat for that authentic al dente texture. Health researchers tell us we should all be eating more pasta. High in complex carbohydrates, fibre, vitamins and minerals, low in fat and sodium, it's the ideal food even when you're counting kilojoules. Pasta can be a meal in itself, or served as a delicious accompaniment to a meat dish. And for al fresco dining in summer, it's the perfect choice. Barilla. Italy's No. 1 pasta.

> Fun snack in the dairy cabinet. Bega Stringers. For goodness' sake, look at the facts. 100% natural cheese, made from fresh milk. One Stringer delivers 25% of the recommended daily intake of calcium. Sugar free. No artificial ingredients. Excellent source of protein. 46% less fat than cheddar cheese. Awarded the foodweek better health innovation award.

There are a number of other referring devices that ensure cohesion exists within a text. One important group involves what are known as **deictic expressions** — words such as *this, here* and *that* that are used to 'point' out things and people. **Pronouns** such as *he, she, it* and *they* (and other pro-forms) also maintain **reference** to people and things throughout a text. The advertisements in the box tend to use full noun phrases rather than pronouns — clearly this is for emphasis. Yet there are still connections like: *pasta — it — itself*. Remember pronouns that refer back in this way are described as being **anaphoric.** Those that refer forward (to something that is coming up later)

are known as **cataphoric**. Here's an example from another ad (you can see here how the cataphoric pronoun *it* builds up expectations):

> *So sumptuous it curls around the spoon: chocolate sorbet and a meringue filled with licorice ice-cream.*

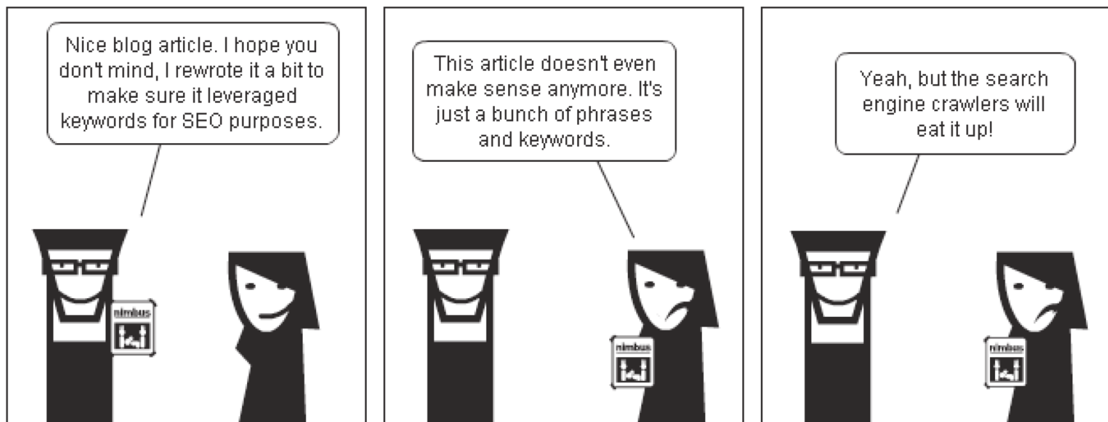
Space and time expressions (*by then, sometimes, nowadays*) and also connectors (*first, however* etc.) can also be used to indicate links between sentences. In this advertisement for pasta we've bolded some of the expressions that indicate connectedness of some sort; see if you can find some more:

> Where does the world's best pasta come from? When Italian migrants came to Australia in the 1930s they couldn't get the pasta they wanted, **so** they began to make their own. **At first** their efforts met with limited success, because the type of wheat grown here at the time was not particularly suited to the task. **So**, with the help of local farmers, they began to grow durum wheat, which is the main ingredient of dry pasta. It is this particular variety of wheat that gives dry pasta its distinctive yellow appearance in the pack and its firm chewy texture when cooked. Today due to our unique climatic conditions, the durum wheat grown in Australia is amongst the finest in the world. Here at San Remo we are proud of our heritage and the fact that more Australian's [sic] now choose our brand in preference to any other.

Coherence has to do with the kinds of links between sentences that provide a meaningful interpretation of a text (compared to cohesion, which deals with the more formal links). Such meaningful links can come about via our knowledge about how the world generally works. Readers can supply all kinds of additional information to fill in any gaps. This is **inference**. For example, if you know about Australia and about pasta, you will reasonably conclude from what is written in the above extract that Australia's warm climate is good for growing the sort of wheat that makes good pasta. But remember texts can show cohesion (i.e. show this sort of connection between words and sentences) without being coherent (i.e. they don't make a lot of sense). Here's an extract from a food blurb from an inflight magazine (the airline shall remain nameless!):

> [...] *the delicacies of food can truly be said to originate from the spoils and spices from the world over. The concept and design rationale for this cycle marinates the use of some of the various delights and spices within a recipe format, which is consistently reflected throughout our classes as represented on the back cover* [of the menu].

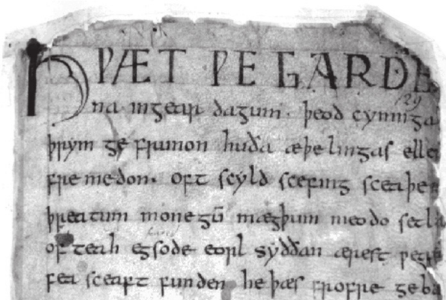
So how does a design rationale marinate anything, let alone the use of some various delights? (Many thanks to Janet Purkis for this incoherent gem.)



1.6 THE IMPORTANCE OF WRITING

It is important to note that the distinction between formal and informal language is not one equivalent to the distinction between spoken and written language. True, written discourse does tend to be more formal than oral discourse. This is because it is learned, closely tied to the standard and forms a kind of 'bookish overlay' that is grafted onto the language we learn as small children (to paraphrase Bolinger 1975: 359). However, its formality is not always a given. A letter can be formal (with an ending such as: 'Looking forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience, Yours faithfully') or informal (with an ending such as 'Please write soon. Hugs and kisses'). Think about the formality of a police report on the news ('the offender has been apprehended and taken to police headquarters where he is now assisting police with their inquiries') and you can see that spoken discourse can be very formal indeed. Bear in mind the majority of the world's languages are not written. These languages have slang, and they have have high style as well, but the formal varieties have to be passed down orally in these speech communities. In his second chapter dedicated to the decline of orality, McWhorter (2004) reminds us that high language is by no means confined to literate societies.

But English is a written language and it is important to consider for a moment the impact that a one thousand year writing tradition has had on the language and how the position of writing in our society has changed over the years. These days it is hard for us to imagine a time when the written language was nothing more than an optional extra. Writing would have started life as a simple memory jog for speakers (inventories, grave markers and so on). When people eventually did start writing more seriously, they wrote very much as they spoke. Speech was primary and writing was there to represent it visually.



A portion of the Beowulf manuscript

With the exception of a few inscriptions from the 5th and 6th centuries, our earliest written evidence of English dates from the 8th century. Most of the extant texts, however, are later, from the 10th and 11th centuries. The thrilling tale of Beowulf (made into many movies) is the earliest piece of English literature. The surviving manuscript dates around 1000 AD, but we assume the language is much older, from around 750 (people would have been reciting or singing Beowulf long before it was written down — besides the very first manuscripts may well not have survived).

Bear in mind that books during the Old English period were enormous, heavy and prodigiously expensive things (according to one estimate from this time, the cost of a book was roughly comparable to the cost of a ship). Needless to say the reading audience was small, largely confined to the religious educated elite — most people, even dignitaries and magnates, would have been illiterate in those early times. Of course, we will never know the exact relationship between Old English writing and its spoken equivalent. But we can safely assume that at this time the gap between writing and speech would not have been anywhere near as great as it is today. Written English would have been more like speech written down. The prohibitive costs involved in writing would also have ruled out any careful planning — the kind of rewritings, reworkings and corrections which are now possible. There was no concept of a written draft back then.

Another thing to consider is the low status of the English language at this time. When Beowulf was first written, people spoke in English but usually wrote in Latin (and later also in French). English

was the language of the street, not the language of scholarship and great literature. We have to wait until well into the 18th century before English truly ousted Latin, especially as the language of learned and technical writing. Isaac Newton, for example, wrote a number of his works in Latin: *Principia Mathematica* (1687) and *Arithmetica Universalis* (1707).

These days the importance of writing is very evident in the education system. At school we are trained in the art of written English and considerable emphasis is placed on good writing. Those who have been through the education system have huge exposure to written language and most end up in control of vast specialist vocabularies and the kind of grammatical constructions and discourse structures that occur rarely, if at all, in speech. The apex of this developing written tradition are those 'superliterate' varieties such as Legalese, Bureaucratese, Linguisticese, Sociologese, Officialese, Educationalese and so on — all of the so-called '-eses'.

For many language users, written English *is* English. The rules of this one variety are what they think of as the rules of English grammar and only those sentences that conform to these norms are the grammatically correct ones. Some people ask whether something they have heard, or even used themselves, is an actual word or not. Words do not seem real until they have seen them in a dictionary. Usage is not enough to make it real. Ours is an era where the written tail constantly wags the spoken dog (to borrow a lovely image from Dwight Bolinger 1980). Even though letters don't have sounds (they instead symbolize them), literate people attribute sounds to letters. They even talk, for example, about the silent letters in words such as *debt*. Yet the letter 'b' was never pronounced in this word; it was introduced only ever as a fancy spelling in the 1700s along with the 's' in *isle* and the less historically accurate 's' in *island*.

The privileged position of writing these days is understandable. Much of its prestige comes from its rich literary tradition, of course. It also has permanence and authority. On a more practical level, it's also only relatively recently that researchers have really been able to study speech. They had no choice but to concentrate their activities on the structures of the planned and highly standardized language more typically found in written texts. It's hardly surprising then that dictionaries and usage books have placed so much emphasis on the written word and that writing has been held up as the model for correct usage. The support of all this **prescriptive** literature places writing in a very strong position.

ACTIVITIES
SETTING THE SCENE

STYLES AND REGISTER

1. Collect samples of spoken and written texts that illustrate the styles identified by Joos (frozen, formal, consultative, casual, intimate). Arrange the texts as a presentation (poster or electronic format), annotating each one to indicate the features that illustrate the style.
2. Select a semantic field (or domain) that interests you. Collect texts in both spoken and written modes that cover the spectrum of formal to informal texts within the domain. For example, in the domain of sport you might choose: a text message to a friend about going to a footy match, a TV advertisement for running shoes, a ticket to a basketball game, the rules for playing ice-hockey. Annotate the texts, identifying the various features of grammar, lexicon and semantics that make the text relatively formal or informal.
3. Write a text message or social media post to a friend about an event you have recently attended, e.g., a concert, a sporting event, a movie.
   a. Write a letter or email to an older family member about the same event.
   b. Swap your two pieces of writing with a classmate. Compare your partner's 2 pieces of writing using the following table:

Feature	e-Communication	Letter/email
Greeting		
Closing		
Lexis		
Abbreviations		
Syntax		
Visuals		

   c. Write a 500 word analysis of how the language differs in each piece. Comment on the influence of the field, the mode and the relationship between the participants on the language choices made in each text.

POLITENESS AND FACE

4. Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

The reason that I have begun with 'please' and 'thank you' is that nothing could be simpler than to learn these words. That's what we say to ourselves every day. They are only words! They cost nothing! Also, they are in limitless supply and are miraculously immune to the dangers of over-use…..Please and thank you may not be so very hard to say, but they perform any number of sophisticated functions that are of no interest to a growing number of people……Blame the conditions of modern life in any combination you

prefer. I blame the parents, television, the internet, the mobile phone, the absence of war, the under-valuing of teachers, and I also blame the culture of blame……As I mentioned in the introduction, the only context in which you can expect to hear a please or thank you nowadays is in recorded messages - and hey, guess what, they are not extending courtesy at all, because they are not attempting to meet you half way. 'Please have your account number ready as this will help us do our job more efficiently. Thank you for waiting. I'm sorry you are having to wait.' In a world increasingly starved of courtesy words, it's no wonder that when we hear these messages, we want to put back our heads and scream. As Goffman points out so beautifully, traffic cops may ask you politely to get out of the car, but that doesn't mean you have a choice.

From *Talk to the Hand*, by Lynne Truss pages 55, 64-65

QUESTIONS

a. What is Truss's contention in this extract?
b. What are some of the courtesy words used in everyday Australian life?
c. What are the expectations of politeness in different contexts, on social media, in a shop or at a basketball game?
d. How is politeness expressed in some other cultures you've experienced?
e. How important is linguistic politeness in today's society? Write a brief (300 – 500 word) response to be published in a school newsletter.

STANDARD AND NON-STANDARD VARIETIES

5. Visit the World Atlas of Variation in English at http://ewave-atlas.org

a. How many varieties of English are identified on the map?
b. Go to the page called 'Examples' and enter a search in 'Variety' for 'Australian'. Read the examples (around 70) that are found to be features of non-standard English in this part of the world.
c. Select about 10 items and discover how common each one is in Australia, according to the categories provided – pervasive, obligatory, neither pervasive nor rare, arrested.
d. Explain what is non-standard about each of the 10 examples you have chosen.

INFORMATION FLOW

6. In this extract from *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens, identify examples of: front focus, anaphoric and cataphoric reference, passive construction, inference. Discuss how coherence is achieved by the author.

The coffee-room had no other occupant, that forenoon, than the gentleman
in brown. His breakfast-table was drawn before the fire, and as he sat,
with its light shining on him, waiting for the meal, he sat so still,
that he might have been sitting for his portrait.
Very orderly and methodical he looked, with a hand on each knee, and a
loud watch ticking a sonorous sermon under his flapped waist-coat,

as though it pitted its gravity and longevity against the levity and evanescence of the brisk fire. He had a good leg, and was a little vain of it, for his brown stockings fitted sleek and close, and were of a fine texture; his shoes and buckles, too, though plain, were trim. He wore an odd little sleek crisp flaxen wig, setting very close to his head: which wig, it is to be presumed, was made of hair, but which looked far more as though it were spun from filaments of silk or glass. His linen, though not of a fineness in accordance with his stockings, was as white as the tops of the waves that broke upon the neighbouring beach, or the specks of sail that glinted in the sunlight far at sea. A face habitually suppressed and quieted, was still lighted up under the quaint wig by a pair of moist bright eyes that it must have cost their owner, in years gone by, some pains to drill to the composed and reserved expression of Tellson's Bank. He had a healthy colour in his cheeks, and his face, though lined, bore few traces of anxiety. But, perhaps the confidential bachelor clerks in Tellson's Bank were principally occupied with the cares of other people; and perhaps second-hand cares, like second-hand clothes, come easily off and on.

http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/98/pg98.txt

IMPORTANCE OF WRITING

7. In an article published in 2015, Australian journalist Warwick McFadyen lamented the demise of personally written letters in recent times. He blamed the pervasiveness of online communication – email, social media and text messaging.

He concluded: "This isn't to say you can't write your heart out via email or text. It's just that you can't hold the intimation of the person close to you, or retrace their written words with your fingers. Signed, sealed, delivered, via letter, alas no more."

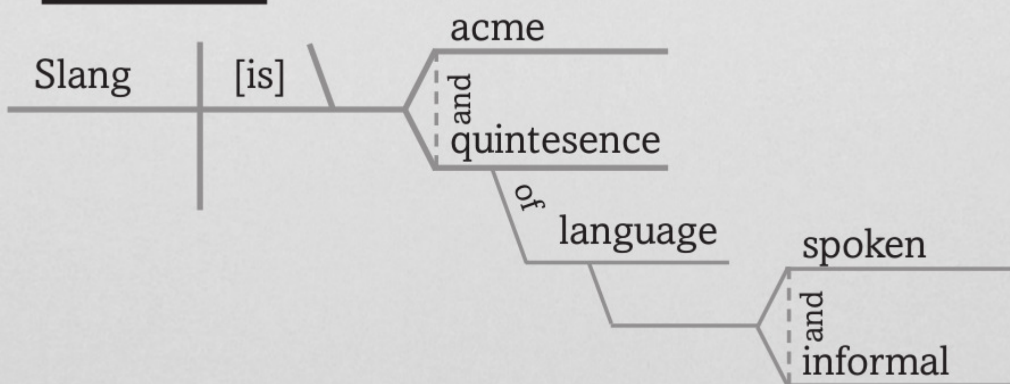
a. Has handwriting declined in importance?
b. What are the instances when you write something with pen or pencil?
c. What are the advantages and disadvantages of online writing and handwriting?
d. How is handwriting taught in schools these days?
e. Do you agree that writing online has superseded handwriting in importance?

Noun
Verb
Article
Conjunction
Noun
Preposition
Adjective
Conjunction
Noun

SLANG [IS] THE ACME AND QUINTESSENCE OF SPOKEN AND INFORMAL LANGUAGE

— Eric Partridge

SENTENCE DIAGRAM



2.0 INFORMAL LANGUAGE

> I wish my parents had died impressively. Like Harry Potter; that kid's got one hell of an orphan story.
>
> I have to live with my aunt. Total beo-tch. This is like Cinderella. Except no fairy godmother.
>
> My aunt is sending me to a crap boarding school. It's like the ones you see in the commercials for Save the Children on the History Channel.
>
> The education is legit. Like we read books, but kids are dying of illness. […]
>
> So apparently by not getting swine flu or TB I qualified for a teaching position?
>
> Just got offered a job as a governess for a caddy single dad who needs to change womanizing ways. This would make a great Hugh Grant flick. […]
>
> [from the 2009 retelling of Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* by A. Aciman and E. Rensin; in *Twitterature: the world's greatest books retold through twitter*]

The spread of informal language is evident in many domains, including the ever-evolving social media outlets. These days casual language has a growing array of different (though frequently overlapping) uses in our lives, even in the public arena. In the two tables below we have provided just a handful of some of the more notable functions involving both spoken and written language. In the second column, we give a sample of the range of interactional texts you might encounter. Many of these text types, you will notice, are multifunctional. For instance, the discussions revolving around major news stories and the reviews of the day's papers in a breakfast television program contain information and entertainment (in fact, there is a **blend**, or portmanteau word, *infotainment* that captures this). An important role that informal language plays generally concerns rapport building, so bonding will be included in a number of functions. Anthropologists and psychologists tell us that informal chatty conversations about personal rumours or facts is crucial behaviour for people if they are successfully to be part of a group; hence, gossip involves both rapport and information. So do our conversations; they both exchange information and build interpersonal relationships. The ceremonial expressions of politeness are also part of our verbal cuddling strategies and therefore involve rapport as well as ritual. There will be many more functions and text types you will be able to add to the table. Think for a moment just how many and varied are the different kinds of informal English that you encounter in your week.

As you are reading these tables, consider the continuum of (in)formality. Which texts here strike you as being the most informal? To answer this question you will have to supply the social purpose and contextual aspects (such as audience, setting and field); for example, eulogies (and also obituaries) are often rather formal pieces of speech or writing in praise of persons recently deceased. However, imagine the casual setting of a wake involving good mates and stories about the deceased. A eulogy then could be quite unceremonious and informal.

Table 1: Spoken Language

Function	Examples of text types
Rapport	small talk, gossip, weather /elevator chit-chat, friendly banter (eg ritual insults), greetings and leave-takings
Information	workshop, lesson, seminar, sports commentaries, podcast, weather service, rumour, entertainment news (eg morning TV), media interview
Instruction	life style program, recommendation, talk, TV cooking program, warning
Persuasion	TV advertisement, debate / quarrel, talkback, advice, sales pitch, spiel, pep talk
Entertainment	jokes, narrative, chat show, farce, ‘soft news’ / human interest story, dinner speech
Ceremony / Ritual	retirement speech, opening / closing address, celebrity roast, vote of thanks, toast, eulogy

Table 2: Written Language

Function	Text types
Rapport	everyday letter, email, postcard, text message, Instagram
Information	club newsletters, counsel (to a friend), gossip column, wiki entry, label, blog, journal
Instruction	how-to manual, recipe, pattern, questionnaire, stage directions,
Persuasion	advertising billboard, graffiti, opinion piece, advertorial, letter to the editor
Entertainment	comic, play, magazine, novel, ballad, blog, fan fiction
Ceremony / Ritual	obituary, written prayer (of informal worship)

Whenever we produce a piece of informal spoken language, we draw from inventories of stylistic features at all levels of the language — lexicon, phonology, syntax and discourse. Being informal, all of the varieties that appear in the above table will have some features in common; however, precisely because they are informal means they are more fluid and less easy to pin down and describe than more formal varieties. They are less closely bound to the standard. Colloquialisms abound, and as you will soon discover, users of informal language are often idiosyncratic and very creative in their linguistic choices.

To illustrate how linguistic features combine to create a variety, or register, focus on the grammatical aspects of the following different types of texts; here we've provided snapshots from a very tiny sample of the hundreds of informal varieties of English that we might have chosen.

Example 1
Chat room interchange between stock market traders

Trader 1: i'd prefer we join forces
Trader 2: perfick
lets do this...
lets double team them
Trader 1: YESssssssssssss

Example 2
Online Personal Ads Register

dreamlord
47-year-old Male
Seeking Women: 24 - 35
Hooksett, New Hampshire, United States
Last Activity: Online Now!
star sign: Leo

im a easy going guy once you get to know me i love to cudle in front of the fire place and kiss and hold hands all the time
SCAMMERS PLEASE DONT WASTE YOUR TIME OR MINE TO CONTACT ME! ALSO IF YOU DONT HAVE A PICTURE DONT CONTACT ME!

Example 3
Interview (Breakfast radio 3AW)

RS: What alerted you to *yeah-no?* I mean, wha- wha-
JB: She barracks for Richmond. [laughter all round]
KB: I do actually.
RS: Do you?
JB: Well, there you are.
RS: You don't, do you? Ooooh, you must have a lot of fun!
KB: Ah, but I'm a sandgroper, so you know, from way back. I used to barrack for Claremont when I was a kid.

JB: I was gonna say, the Claremont Tigers would've been your caper.
RS: Hey Professor, we thank you for that. Could we perhaps catch up on a monthly basis for the discourse markers?
KB: I would love that.
RS: Excellent. Thanks for your time.

Example 4
Cooking show (ABC radio 774)

When I'm grilling a steak a really good steak I love ... I don't want to do too much to it but I like sometimes at the end to just top it with a little disk of flavoured butter like a blue cheese butter, not much, just enough to sort of capture that sizzle and give it a bit of its ... of its own sauce as you eat it and that's an easy ... my favourite one is just beating let's say 100 gms of soft butter with a tablespoon of Roquefort or gorgonzola cheese, a nice blue cheese, good quality, and a teaspoon of mustard to give it a bit of bite as well.

Example 5
Basketball commentary; TV Channel 7: The Titans (Melbourne) versus The Hawks (Wollongong).

Hawks running four on two
Bruten to Saddle
Bruten goes alley-oop
Oh, risky play
Cook pulls it in
Drimik knocks it away
Ritter with the follow

Informal language is generally characterized by a lack of syntactic complexity. All of these examples have simple sentences and little in the way of **subordinate clause** structures. What complexity there is features the loosely connected structures that are so typical of unplanned speech (example 4 illustrates this).

The basketball commentary shows the outbursts of short, snappy, loosely connected clauses that are characteristic of sporting commentary generally. Grammatical words like pronouns, articles and auxiliaries (i.e. **function words**) are often omitted and sometimes even full verbs (i.e. **lexical words**). This omission is called **ellipsis**. The material is always recoverable from the context of situation, but the result is a kind of reduced language that in no way resembles the sort of full-blown grammatical English that is described in grammar books and used in more formal examples of speech or writing. Look at how many words are restored when the basketball commentary is turned into something that looks more like ordinary language (we've put the missing words in brackets):

> The Hawks [are] running [with] four [players] on two. Bruten [passes the ball] to Saddle. Bruten goes [for the alley-oop]. Oh, [this is] risky play. Cook pulls it in. Drimik knocks it away. Ritter [shoots the ball] with the follow.

In the good old days, when people advertised for partners in the newspapers, ellipsis made economic sense. People had to pay for every word in their ads; so needless to say, most function words, and even some lexical items, were dropped. Here's an example from the 1990s with the elided words in brackets:

> Badminton lady [of] slim build, [who enjoys] movies, dining out and the beach seeks SNAG, 45-50, VGSOH, [who is] financially secure, [and a] non-smoker. ARA.

With so much shared context between writer and reader, much can be taken for granted, and the meaning of these verbs is always recoverable. It's a little trickier for us trying to reconstruct this; here we have assumed the missing main verb is something along the lines of *love, like* or *enjoy*.

Such extensive ellipsis as you find here makes for a lexically dense style, and this is augmented by the additional short-cutting strategies such as compounding (*badminton lady*) and abbreviations (*SNAG*, 'Sensitive New Age guy'; *ARA*, 'all replies answered'; *(V)GSOH*, '(very) good sense of humour').

2.1 FEATURES OF INFORMAL LANGUAGE

We can now move on to examine more closely what goes to make language informal. We'll start at the very beginning – at the level of sounds.

> Language does what it has to for efficiency and gets away with what it can.
> [Joseph Desmond O'Connor *Phonetics* 1973]

Our spoken language is a (semi)unbroken stream of sounds and words, and this causes the shape of words to change, sometimes dramatically. Imagine you say to a close friend 'I'm going to miss you'. Now, if you were to articulate this sentence extremely carefully sound by sound and word by word, we would transcribe it the following way: [aɪ æm goʊɪŋ tu mɪs ju]. But when we speak, even with those we don't know too well, we don't carefully articulate the sounds of each word in this way; our interlocutors would soon lose patience if we did! We also don't pause at word boundaries, but speak in groups of words. In ordinary chit-chat sounds drop out, they become like other sounds in the vicinity or they merge entirely with these sounds. This creates a seamless transition from one sound to another and it's what makes our speech fluent and flowing. Our sentence 'I'm going to miss you' is probably more likely to sound like [aɪmgʌnəmɪʃə] in normal casual speech — and, as we've just discussed, the more casual, the more shortcuts and reductions there'll be.

In casual settings these sorts of phonetic cutbacks are more tolerated than if the setting were unfamiliar or more formal. Quite simply, a lot can be taken for granted when you're chatting with someone you know well in comfortable surroundings. Sociolinguist Peter Trudgill expresses it this way:

> Listeners who are operating in a familiar environment in interaction with speakers whose language or dialect they are familiar with, with whom they are well acquainted, with whom they interact frequently and with whom they share a large fund of common knowledge, can make do with less phonetic and semantic information than listeners who are less familiar with the situation, the topic and other interlocutors. (1995:144)

In other words, when you're in easy-going, informal and everyday situations, and especially if there's closeness, solidarity and shared common knowledge between you and your audience, you won't need to elaborate to the same extent; you can reduce the speech signal and be confident that your interlocutors will be following. If you're with people you don't know, this sort of economy of effort could well jeopardize the clarity of what you're saying. So, in the interests of comprehensibility, you're more likely to ensure the sounds are adequately separate (but of course they won't be totally separate or you'd sound most peculiar indeed).

Another contributing factor is familiarity of vocabulary. In casual settings, frequent or everyday words are likely to crop up and when you're in familiar territory you can afford to take shortcuts. Think of the pronunciation of *Wednesday,* more usually pronounced as *Wensday* or *Wensdi.* When articulation becomes automatic, this triggers a reduction in the timing and magnitude of the movements the speech organs make. The speed of execution automatically increases, the transition between sounds becomes more fluent — movements might even overlap. It's not just a linguistic thing — it's in everything we do. Think of other gestures like a salute or the sign of cross. If done frequently, they shorten.

Let's look more closely at some of the processes of connected speech that distinguish casual spoken language from more formal. We'll begin with the reductive processes — loss (**elision**) and modification of sounds (such as **assimilation**).

REDUCTION OF SOUNDS – ELISION

Elision is a characteristic of fast and furious speech; it refers to the slurring or omission of certain vowels and consonants. Unstressed vowels are particularly prone to (sometimes spectacular) disappearing acts. Words like *arithmetic, enough* and *escape* are much more likely to be pronounced as *'rithmetic, 'nough* and *'scape,* with the initial unstressed vowel omitted. Or think of examples such as *int(e)resting* [ɪntrɛstɪŋ]/ [ɪntrəstɪŋ], and *scen(e)ry* [sinri]. Consonants, even whole syllables can also disappear as in *February* [fɛbri] and *libr(ar)y* [laɪbri]. People often complain about these reductive processes, describing them as 'sloppiness' or 'laziness', but as we emphasized above these sorts of reductions are an inherent characteristic of ordinary casual (and usually fairly rapid) speech. Of course you don't want to overdo the reductions and you have to pick your audience and setting. With speakers it's always a delicate juggling act – on the one hand, you embrace the speech processes sufficiently to ensure natural flowing speech, but on the other hand, you can't give into these speech processes entirely or you run the risk of becoming unintelligible.

Language made incomprehensible through extreme elision is beautifully illustrated by Vicky Pollard in an episode called "Vicky Pollard in Assembly", a live stage performance based on the TV series *Little Britain*. Note how the transcript provided with the clip finds it impossible to recreate her utterances, resorting to nonsensical approximations of her speech.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6MatUG_xTMg

The function words of English (the **pronouns, auxiliary verbs, prepositions, conjunctions** and **determiners**) are especially likely to reduce. For instance, in speech (and now also in writing), forms of the verb *be* and also the negator *not* reduce and attach to the preceding word: *I'm, you're, s/*

he's, it's, we're, they're and *can't, don't, won't, isn't, aren't*. The labels strong form and weak form are used to describe the two distinct ways of pronouncing these more abstract everyday little words. As the following examples illustrate, in the weak forms consonants may be deleted and vowels reduced to [ə], or deleted altogether:

	Strong Form	Weak Form
were	[wɜ]	[wə]
can't	[kant]	[kã] (the squiggle indicates nasality)
to	[tu]	[tə]
and	[ænd]	[ən, n]
the	[ði]	[ðə]

The ubiquitous unstressed vowel [ə] here is known as **schwa**. This curious name is the English version of the German name for a Hebrew vowel of roughly the same quality. It sounds like a relaxed version of <uh>. Schwa is the most common vowel in our language and is represented by a great variety of different spellings — it appears with all the vowel letters, in fact. When we make this vowel sound, the centre of our tongue is slightly raised, the lips are in a neutral position (not spread, not rounded), there is no firm contact between rims and upper molars either — this is one extremely laid-back, stress-free vowel.

'MIND YER LANGUAGE'

In the *Green Guide* of Melbourne's *Age* newspaper, there appeared a letter from John Bryden of Docklands, a regular listener of ABC radio. In his letter he questions 'why the words *to, for, you* and *your* have disappeared from the lexis'. These words, he claims, have been replaced by *ter, fer* and *yer* and he fingers ABC presenter John Faine as a 'serial offender' here. Well, it's just as well he is, for John Faine would sound extremely odd if he didn't pronounce the words this way. In normal connected speech, all single syllable function (or grammatical) words appear as weak forms. These items include the ones John of Docklands lists in his letter and a whole host of others, some of which were listed earlier. The words only receive their full vowel if for some reason they are stressed, such as might happen if you read them out in a list. Or if you were to say 'He's **the** man for the job' (where *the* is pronounced 'thee' [ði]) rather than the less emphatic 'He's the man for the job' (where *the* is pronounced [ðə]). Or '**You** [ju] can do it' versus 'You [jə] can do it'. Obviously, there are important meaning differences here and it's essential we maintain the distinction between the strong and weak versions.

The shortenings that John Bryden of Docklands was complaining about in his letter to the *Green Guide* have been part of the **rhythm** (the heartbeat, as some linguists describe it) of the English language for centuries now (at least for native speakers; non-native speakers often illustrate very different rhythms). They are (they're) an inherent feature of natural speech — speech that is fluent, flowing and fast, the sort of speech we want to hear on radio. If presenter John Faine didn't reduce *for* to 'fer' [fə] and *you* to 'yer' [jə], then we'd really have something to complain about.

There are good reasons why function words usually reduce to weak forms in this way. For a start, they're not terribly informative, so we really don't want them to stick out. But also being grammatical makes them extremely frequent words and, as we've just discussed, frequent words are typically short. With time these words might get even shorter. In another few hundred years they may not even

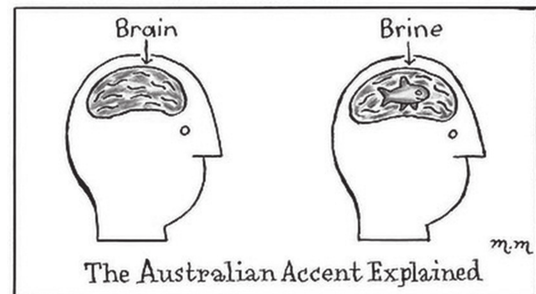
be words, for these are the **affixes** — the **prefixes** and the **suffixes** — of the future. Consider the *ed* ending of a verb like *jumped*. Once this was a verb in its own right (meaning something like 'do'), but it wore away to such an extent that it is now simply an ending.

Read the following blog post. What view about contractions is presented? Do you think this is justified, or would you side with editors and insist on the full forms in writing? Explain your answer.

> It has always seemed somewhat ridiculous to me that we aren't "supposed" to use contractions in formal writing. I can understand the need to avoid slang or sloppy sentence structure, but I don't understand the problem with contractions. Under practically no circumstances would you avoid contractions when speaking, so why should writing be any different? I really don't think it would be obvious or appalling if the president, for example, said "don't" or "it's" in a speech – but once it's on paper, for some reason it's unacceptable.
>
> Whenever I am writing in a formal or business setting, I spend way too much time double checking to make sure no contractions slipped in, and for what?
>
> https://motivatedgrammar.wordpress.com/2012/06/21/formal-language-isnt-the-ideal/#comment-10323 ?

REDUCTION OF SOUNDS – MODIFICATION

Sounds can be modified in various ways. The most important of all is something called assimilation. When sounds assimilate, they change to be more like the sounds nearby. For example, say the word *pancake* in a sentence and you most probably will have said something that sounded more like *pangcake* [pæŋkeɪk]. What happens here is that the nasal consonant [n] changes in anticipation of the following velar stop [k] and assimilates to it in place of articulation; in other words, it becomes velar, too. Like deletions, assimilations are frequent in normal connected casual speech. Unless we're being super careful or slow, most of us would pronounce *miss you* as [mɪʃə], *fit you* as [fitʃə] and *did you* as [dɪdʒə]. This is simply a matter of our efficient speech organs taking necessary shortcuts. In this context, the assimilations are just the pronunciations of casual speech and don't have any long-term effect. Mind you, it's exactly this process that has given rise to pronunciations of the sounds in the middle of words like *nation, mission*, *measure, soldier* and *righteous*. The consonants that you hear in the centre of these words are **palatals**, so-called because they involve the front of the tongue raised toward the hard palate. They have evolved via this same process of assimilation. No one these days would think of pronouncing these as they are spelt (without the assimilation), unless it were to sound theatrical.



How do you pronounce these words? What about your class-mates? Describe any stylistic differences you notice (e.g. between [tun], [tjun] or [tʃun] for tune).

tune	*issue*	*educate*	*capture*
presume	*assume*	*nauseous*	

There are a number of different ways sounds can assimilate. If you have a look at the consonant descriptions we give at the beginning of the toolkit in the appendix, you will see that they are described according to three parameters: state of the vocal cords (i.e. voiced or voiceless), place of articulation and manner of articulation. When consonants assimilate, they change to become more like other sounds according to one or more of these parameters. The examples given above (*nation, mission, measure, soldier* and *righteous*) involve the place and manner of articulation. Assimilation of voicing is also common. Think what happens to voiceless consonants between vowels in words like *latter* and *atom*. Often we pronounce the [t] as if it were a *d* — almost like *ladder* and *Adam*. In fact what we are pronouncing here is really a very fast [d]. This is something called a **flap**, because what we're actually doing is 'flapping' the tongue against the alveolar ridge (or teeth ridge). Now think about what is driving this process — your vocal folds are vibrating for the vowel sounds on either side of [t], and it's much easier not to shut off the voicing for the intervening consonant.

The following is an email we received from Isaac aged 5 years.

> I am learning to read and think there is something a bit funny about the English language. Can you tell me why words like "is" and "as" are spelt with an s and not a z - like they sound? Also, why the word "of" is spelt with an f and not the v that it sounds like.

The short answer for Isaac is assimilation. English spelling is old-fashioned. It belongs to an earlier time, and unfortunately for those learning to write, there are thousands of words with spellings that are closer to pronunciation at the time of the great medieval poet Geoffrey Chaucer (the 1300s). The problem is there have been massive shifts in pronunciation and the spelling didn't change to reflect them. Take Isaac's examples of function words: *is/as* (and you could also throw in *was, has, his*). These were all once pronounced with [s], as their spelling suggests. In the 1500s, things started to change. As part of the same weakening process described earlier, the [s] became voiced and was pronounced as [z]. And it's the same with *of*. Interestingly, *of* is the same word as *off* — *of* and *off* were just different pronunciations — the [f] pronunciation was the strong form of the word and occurred when the word was stressed. Hence you find this older pronunciation for the word *off* today (and note the fuller meaning of *off* compared to *of*, which is more abstract and grammatical) Interestingly, *if* and *us* also once used to have voiced variants.

ADDITION OF SOUNDS

As well as losing and reducing sounds, informal speech can also see sounds being added where they previously didn't exist. The reason we insert sounds into words is also ease of articulation, but the motivation here is different. For example, you might well have encountered nonstandard pronunciations like 'ath-e-lete' [æθəlit] for *athlete*, 'fillum' [fɪləm] for 'film' and 'umbarella' [ʌmbərɛlʌ] for *umbrella*. When vowels are involved like this, it usually means there are difficult combinations of consonants; often there is a liquid sound ([l] and [r]) involved. One way of making the clusters more pronouncable is by adding a vowel to break them up. Another solution for tricky clusters is to drop one of the consonants and that's the path English speakers took with [gn] and [kn] in words such as *gnaw* and *know* – instead of dropping the [g] and [k], we could have stuck a vowel in – and we sometimes do this for comic renditions such as 'genaw' for *gnaw* 'genash' for *gnash*.

Consonants can get added too. This is typically the result of some kind of mistiming. For example, the [m] in *family* is a nasal, which means the soft palate is lowered (so the air can escape through the nose). If you raise the soft palate too soon, you will automatically insert a little [b] (which is an oral consonant at the same place of articulation as the [m]), and the word comes out as *fambly*. Examples such as *fambly* and also *chimbly* we associate with children. Compare, however, the words *tremble* and *humble*. These are now perfectly standard, even though the [b] was added in precisely the same way (and you can see this when you compare *tremble* with *tremulous* or *humble* with *humility*). For the moment, forms like *fambly*, like *athalete*, are still considered nonstandard – but in some dictionaries *nucular* has an entry. As we're about to see with examples from the lexicon and grammar, the progress of language is such that the informal language of today (if it survives) is the formal language of tomorrow.

Our language is also full of extra sounds that get introduced between words or syllables to help them run together more smoothly. In the phrase *the idea of it*, for example, Australian speakers usually insert an [r] between *idea* and *of*, even though they may not be aware they do. Listen to the way people pronounce *going* and *seeing*. There's a little [w] in the middle of *going* and the sound in the middle of *seeing* is very much like the [j] at the beginning of a word like *yes*. These are linking sounds that help the smooth transition from one vowel to another in these words. They ensure a fluent-sounding speech style.

2.1.2 LEXICAL CHOICE AND SEMANTIC PATTERNING

We have already seen in the table earlier that vocabulary has the most impressive range when it comes to style and we all easily recognize different degrees of informality in expressions. Colloquialisms often manifest **word play** in which current language is employed in some special sense and denotation. They also involve **neologisms**, vocabulary that is novel or only recently coined. This is why there is usually such an outcry when these informal expressions are allowed into the dictionary. It's now an annual sport to condemn the 'new word lists' published online by dictionaries like the Macquarie and the Oxford. For example, in August 2014 the *Oxford Dictionaries Online* (http://oxforddictionaries.com/) included a stack of colloquial phrases such as *amazeballs, YOLO, side boob* and *doncha* 'don't you'. And it raised a lot of eyebrows: As one person wrote: "Is nothing sacred. These words shouldn't be in the dictionary when they don't even pass the red-line test when I type them in Word, surely?".

Watch for and discuss the new words lists in the regular updates of dictionaries such as the Macquarie https://www.macquariedictionary.com.au/resources/view/word/of/the/year/ and the Oxford http://andc.anu.edu.au/publications/ozwords

Many informal expressions are **idiomatic**, which means the meaning can't be predicted from the sum of the parts and the parts cannot be altered in any way. Take the idiom *bite the dust*. As soon as you reword this to produce, say, *the dust was bitten*, the literal meaning surfaces and the idiomatic meaning, 'to die' disappears. Idioms are special examples of **collocation**, the common co-

occurrence of certain words. British linguist J.R Firth once famously put it, ‘you shall know a word by the company it keeps’.

One mark of colloquial expressions is that they often date faster than ordinary vocabulary, the slang of schoolchildren having the fastest turnover of all. One study of student language at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, showed that over a fifteen-year period fewer than 10% of the colloquialisms had survived (McArthur 1992: 940). That which is ‘cool’ for one generation is either no longer in fashion for the next or becomes mainstream. True, *cool* might have made a comeback, but the language of the ‘beat’ culture of the 1950s and 60s is now mostly passé – *far out* has been replaced by *awesome* or *awes*, and who knows what new ‘epic’ words lurk in the wings. A recent one is *obama* (after the American President Barak Obama), as in “That’s so obama” (meaning ‘cool’). This is an example of **commonization**, the process whereby proper names extend from the specific case of the celebrated name-bearer and end up referring generally to the whole class of items.

When these terms do survive, they generally intrude into neutral style and become standard usage; in other words, part of the mainstream and no longer colloquial. Quite simply, time drains them of their vibrancy and energy. They become mundane. As with other parts of the language, informal expressions of today (if they survive) generally provide tomorrow’s formal language. Just look in some early dictionaries, particularly at the entries labeled unfit for general use. In Samuel Johnson’s dictionary of 1755, for example, we find *abominably* described as ‘a word of low language’, *nowadays* as ‘barbarous usage’, *clever* as ‘a low word used in burlesque or conversation’, *bamboozle* as ‘a cant [= jargon] word not used in pure or grave writings’. A lot of his entries were clearly slang of the time. It’s just that the term *slang* for Johnson was the special language of tramps and thieves. It didn’t get its modern meaning until the early 1800s.

LI'NGO. n. ſ. [Portugueſe.] Language; tongue; ſpeech. A low cant word.
I have thoughts to learn ſomewhat of your *lingo*, before I croſs the ſeas. *Congreve's Way of the World.*
LINGUA'CIOUS. *adj.* [*linguax*, Latin.] Full of tongue; loquacious: talkative.

Samuel Johnson’s entry for *lingo* — ‘a low cant word’

Examine the list of ‘epic’ words (which all meant at one time ‘excellent’). Investigate when they first appeared in the language. Are they still in use? Has the meaning changed?

grouse	*mad*	*super*	*tip-top*
cool	*wicked*	*sick/sic*	*prime*
fantabulous	*untold*	*rattling good*	*first-rate*
radical/rad	*unreal*	*ripping*	*rum*
far-out	*grand*	*ripper*	*A1*
groovy	*spiffing*	*bad*	*fab*
awesome		*phat*	*swell*
			hotsy-totsy

Certain **semantic fields** are distinguished by their relative (in)formality. For instance, you would probably have no trouble coming up with intimate or casual expressions for vomiting. On the continuum of (in)formality, this field is ‘bottom-heavy’. It draws overwhelming from the stock of native English words, and is characterized by a flourishing of low-level slang expressions. There are literally hundreds of expressions (many of them onomatopoeic) such as *retch, heave, spew, upchuck,*

barf, yarf, urp, hurl, ralph, puke, greet your guts and even *talk on the big white phone*. By comparison, *regurgitate / be nauseated* are among the very few elevated terms; these expressions are based on medieval Latin and entered English in the late 1500s.

Clearly, slang is a prominent player in informal language, so prominent in fact that we have given it its own section later.

2.1.3
MORPHOLOGICAL PATTERNING

There are all sorts of ways we play around with the structure of words to create informality. As an illustration, one earmark of the informal vocabulary of Australian English is shortenings like the following:

> *barbie* (barbecue); *bickie* (biscuit); *blowie* (blow fly); *Chrissie* (Christmas); *compo* (workers' compensation pay); *cozzie* (swimming costume); *demo* (demonstration); *garbo* (garbage or rubbish collector); *metho* (methylated spirits); *mozzie* (mosquito); *mushie* (mushroom); *muso* (musician); *pokies* (poker machines or coin operated gambling machines); *rego* (car registration); *rellie/rello* (relative); *sickie* (sick day or a day taken off work while pretending to be ill); *sunnies* (sunglasses); *Tassie* (Tasmania); *truckie* (truck driver); *wharfie* (dockworker)

Words are shortened to one syllable (with the exception of *anotherie* 'another one') and either *-ie* or *-o* is added. The endings have sometimes been described as diminutives; in other words, fondling endings to indicate a positive, warm or simply friendly attitude to something or someone. While such endings do appear on proper names and can be affectionate (as in *Robbo*, *Susy*), the vast majority are not — in no way can we see *journo* or *pollie* as terms of endearment for journalists and politicians.

In her ground-breaking work on these morphological features, Anna Wierzbicka (1992) described the abbreviated words as the linguistic enactment of Anglo-Australian values such as informality, mateship, good humour, egalitarianism and anti-intellectualism (p.387). Over the years, other functions have also been suggested by linguists like Jane Simpson (2004). None has as yet satisfactorily accounted for the difference between the *-ie* and *-o* suffixes. Many *-o* and *-ie* words appear in similar contexts (e.g. occupations). There are *wharfies* and *truckies* but not *wharfos* and *truckos*; *garbos* and *musos* but not *garbies* and *musies*. There are also notable gaps. Someone who builds a house is neither a *buildo* nor a *buildie* (but they are a *tradie*). Clearly, there is more to learn about this feature of vernacular Australian English.

Do you think that current-day shortenings with *-s* (such as *whatevs, probs, fabs, totes awks*) are replacing the quintessential Aussie *-o* and *–ie* diminutives? Can you identify any morphological patterns; for example, why don't words like *whatever* and *probably* take *-o* or *–ie*? And what link does this *–s* ending have with golden oldies such as *cuddles, toots* and pet names like *Susykins* and *Babs?*

There are many other ways we fiddle with morphology in informal language. One is something like **reduplication**. Admittedly it's a rather minor word formation process of English, but it does have a role to play in informal language; think of reduplicated forms like *cray cray, easy peasy, tick tack*

and *dibber dobber*. Though we don't encounter this particular pattern very often in Australian English, we do use plenty of other kinds of rhyming constructions and it's often found in the popular media to give the writing a lively, upbeat sound (e.g. Francis Wheen's book *How mumbo jumbo changed the world*), or expressions like *chicklit* or *chickflick*).

Another way we play morphologically is with **blending**, where two (or occasionally more) existing words are blended to create new ones. Dozens of new blended words are appearing all the time and some of them can be very clever; e.g. *babelicious* 'gorgeous', *himbo* 'attractive, but empty-headed male'; *affluenza* 'the disease of being too rich', *fottle* 'collapsible bottle', *shoefiti* 'the practice of decorating overhead wires with shoes, *nomophobia* 'a state of anxiety brought on by not having mobile phone contact'. Twitter has generated many blended *tweologisms,* too: *twitterholic, twaddiction* and *celebritweet*.

Affixation can create informality when it involves new(ish) prefixes and suffixes; for example,

> uber- 'super, mega' gives us colloquialisms like ubergeek, ubermodel, uberfan, uberdork, and Mc- has severed all ties from the fast-food giant McDonalds to give us sneering expressions like McBooks, McMansions, Mc-Jobs, McGarbage and a whole heap more.

Homer Simpson has encouraged the use of a rare slangy infix *-ma-* (probably on the inspiration of *whatchamacallit* and *thingamabob*); examples, like *edumacation, sophistimacated* and *saxomaphone* show the infix at work. Swearwords stuffed inside other words are also infixes with attitude. They include the heavy-duty obscenities (*absobloodylutely*) and the polite versions (*absobloominglutely* and *unbeflippinglievable* or perhaps *unflippingbelievable*).

2.1.4 SYNTACTIC PATTERNING

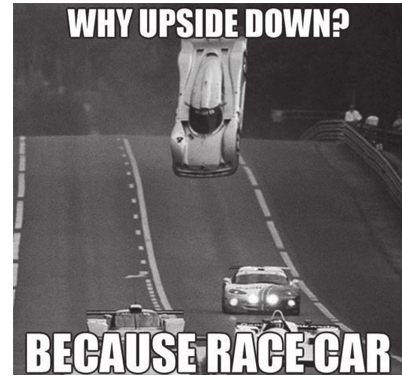
Informality of style can be created at the grammatical level; this involves syntactic patterns (i.e. the structure of sentences) and, once again, morphological patterns (i.e. the structure of words), but this time when it relates to grammar. Informal language often shows grammatical constructions that are rarely, if ever, encountered in the more formal examples of language — certainly they are not considered standard.

A good example is what's currently happening to *because*. In the standard language *because* is a conjunction. An example of this use might be: *I love grammar because it always comes up with surprises*. It's also part of a compound preposition, one that occurs in a sequence with another preposition, as in *because of grammar*. But something interesting is happening to *because*. On the internet there is now a flourishing of examples where it appears as a preposition without *of,* as in *I've been missing out on sleep because Game of Thrones*. It illustrates the kind of reduction we've come to expect of casual Netspeak, but in fact it's more interesting than this. *Because* not only appears before noun phrases (as a standard preposition would), it also precedes adjective phrases (*I've been missing out on sleep because addicted), verb phrases (I missed the ending because fell asleep)* and even *interjections (I was horrified because yikes!*).

Linguistic labels like 'noun', 'preposition' and 'adjective' are not nearly as regular and clear-cut as dictionaries and grammar books make out. Words shift all the time from one class to another, and

English is particularly good at this. The noun *fun* recently crossed the border into the territory of adjective. You'll be familiar with examples such as *We had the funnest time* or *It was so fun*. The word *fun* never used to be able carry endings like *-er* or *–est* and to the older generation *funner* and *funnest* sound ghastly.

Such examples as these would rarely appear in a piece of written language (yet); it's very much the province of informal language and most likely speech. Unfortunately, the legacy of this is that people have come to equate 'normal' language with the formal (usually written) forms. And when people complain about usage like *funner* and *funnest,* they are typically judging language through the spectacles of writing.



The transmission of linguistic forms is reminiscent of the spread of thought contagions (or memes) — fads that spread from person to person within a culture. Expressions are particularly infectious, and disseminate rapidly through speech communities, especially virtual ones. Admittedly constructions like *because grammar* are still rather faddish creations, but look out for them — it's these sorts of jokey constructions that start as language play but provide the basis for real change in the language.

These days informal grammar is a respectable and highly interesting phenomenon for linguistic study, and nonstandard features of syntax and morphology regularly come under the microscope. Indeed, some features have been found to be so widespread that that they have been dubbed 'vernacular universals'. Linguists at Freiburg University in Germany have designed the World Atlas of Variation in English (the WAVE project). This interactive online atlas eWAVE (http://ewave-atlas.org) shows nonstandard grammatical features in the Englishes around the globe. Here are just some of the vernacular features you can search for online:

Some common worldwide nonstandard grammatical features of English

1. Lack of inversion in main clause *yes/no* questions
   (*You get the point?*)
2. *Me* instead of *I* in coordinate subjects
   (*Me and my brother were late / My brother and me were late*)
3. *Never* as a past tense negator
   (*He never did it* [= he didn't do it])
4. Adverbs same form as adjectives
   (*Come quick*)
5. Lack of inversion / lack of auxiliaries in *wh*-questions
   (*What you doing?*)
6. Multiple negation
   (*He won't do no harm*)
7. Adverbs (or intensifiers) *without -ly*
   (*That's real good*)
8. Special forms of phrases for the second person plural pronoun
   (*youse, y'all, you 'uns, you guys, yufela* etc.)
9. Double comparatives and superlatives
   (*That's so much more easier to follow*)
10. Irregular use of articles
    (*I had nice garden; I had the toothache*)

Linguistic labels like 'standard' and 'nonstandard' seem to suggest that we're dealing with a clear-cut distinction here; yet, such labels obscure a reality of flux and variance. As discussed earlier, it's really only in the context of the written language that we can talk sensibly about a coherent standard, the spoken language being much less uniform. But even in writing, we'll never achieve total homogeneity. For one, our language is always changing, but it takes a while before a new usage is totally accepted, especially in formal contexts.

One nonstandard feature that appears regularly in the informal language of Standard English speakers is the invariant **tag** as in 'You've got your bloody test this morning, isn't it?'. Another version of this tag is *in(n)it?* Both these forms appear in second language varieties of English, but they are also taking the place of standard tags (like *weren't they, didn't she* and so on) in colloquial native varieties of native English all round the world — *innit* even made an appearance in the *Collins Official Scrabble Words Dictionary* in 2011. Yet neither variant *isn't it* or *in(n)it* are considered standard and it will probably be a while before they are.

2.1.5 A SPECIAL NOTE ON SLANGUAGE

Slanguage shows just how remarkably inventive and creative people can be in their verbal play, and because it's such an important part of informal language we feel it warrants some more attention. (The term *slanguage* is actually a very old blend, dating from the 1800s; Charles Dickens even used the word *slangular*, another clever blended expression, this time with the meaning 'pertaining to slang'.)

Slang is another of these linguistic notions that is notoriously difficult to define. We all use it, we all know it when we hear it, but just how to characterize it? If you check the definitions provided in dictionaries, you'll find they vary considerably. The following is the entries for 'slang' in three dictionaries:

Oxford English Dictionary:
Language of a highly colloquial type, considered as below the level of standard educated speech, and consisting either of new words or of current words employed in some special sense.

Macquarie Dictionary:
1. language differing from standard or written speech in vocabulary and construction, involving extensive metaphor, ellipsis, humorous usage, etc., less conservative and more informal than standard speech, and sometimes regarded as being in some way inferior. **2.** vulgar or abusive language. **3.** jargon of a particular class, profession, etc.

Merriam Webster Collegiate Dictionary
1: language peculiar to a particular group: as **a :** argot **b :** jargon 2 **2:** an informal nonstandard vocabulary composed typically of coinages, arbitrarily changed words, and extravagant, forced, or facetious figures of speech

We argue that slang is best defined by the following cluster of features:

- It is informal.
- It is usually spoken not written (though this is rapidly changing).
- It is largely a matter of vocabulary (involves lexical and semantic phenomena).

- It is playful.
- It is unstable (it typically doesn't last).
- It defines the gang (sharing the same slang is about unity and belonging).
- It stands out (slang wants to amuse and perhaps even to shock outsiders with novelty).

When creating slang, ordinary speakers take ordinary sounds and words and put them to extraordinary uses in the expressions they construct — and they do this thinking on their feet without the luxury of time to revisit and revise (as poets might) the images they create. Here are some of the most important linguistic features of slang:

PHONOLOGICAL PATTERNING

Shortening: A notable feature of slang is the number of expressions that have been shortened in some way. As discussed earlier, a lot can be taken for granted when you're chatting (face-to-face or online) with someone you know well in a relaxed environment. You can afford to drop consonants and vowels here and there. It's not surprising then that a lot of slang expressions are words that have been shortened (either by the phonological processes described earlier, or by more deliberate pruning): *totes* (from *totally* with the addition of the *-s* ending), *legit* (from *legitimate*), *sup* (from *what's up*), *awes* (from *awesome*), *rents* (from *parents*), *rad* (*radical*), *dis* (from *disrespect*), *kward* or *awks* (from *awkward*), *bro* (*brother*), *probs* (from *probably*) *Idk* (from *I don't know*), *Nm* (from *never mind* or *not much*), *yolo* (from *you only live once*) and *lol* (from *laugh out loud*).

There are many reasons for this kind of shortening. Frequent or everyday words will often crop up in casual settings where abbreviations are well tolerated, because there is a lot of common ground. To describe something as *awes* (< *awesome*) is more than saying this thing is good; it has connotations that the conventional language simply does not convey.

Informal expressions, particularly slangy ones, make use of many features of sound like **onomatopoeia**, **assonance** (or rhyme) and **alliteration** — this is the stuff of great literature and poetry, but it's also the stuff of our everyday slang. It's not for nothing that slang is often described as 'the people's poetry'.

Onomatopoeia: When you use words whose sounds somehow suggest their meaning, this is onomatopoeia (and take note of its impossible spelling). Think of the *snap, crackle, pop* when you pour milk on your cereal. Onomatopoeic words can also represent the noises people make to express some sort of emotion. Think of *oh, tut-tut* and *phew* and also the less dignified more slangy curiosities like *ugh*, *blah*, *eek, uh-oh* and *phwoar. Derp*, a recent addition, is exactly this kind of onomatopoeic expression — in this case the sound of someone's stupid behaviour. It's undoubtedly inspired by other imitative words also used to express speechlessness or incomprehension, as in *der* or *d'oh, duh.*

Alliteration: Many slang expressions involve alliteration, or the repetition of consonants, as in Hagrid's *Gallopin' Gorgons! Gulping gargoyles!* or Captain Haddock's *Billions of bilious blue blistering barnacles or Ten thousand thundering typhoons!* Expressions for vomiting make good use of this poetic device: *pash the porcelain princess, launch (one's) lunch, liquid laugh, hiccup from hell, tango with the toilet, vomit your victuals, greet your guts* and many more. (Expressions for other bodily functions don't do too badly either when it comes to exploiting literary devices.)

Sometimes whole bunches of words with similar meanings are linked by the same starting consonant. A drunken person might be *sloshed, soused, smashed, sozzled, soaked, stinking, stewed* and

even *steamed*. Notice the strong support of sound association: all of these slang expressions for 'drunk', begin with *s* (and this happens to be the consonant people have the most difficulty with when they're *sloshed, soused, smashed, sozzled, on the sauce* …..).

Holy Bargain Basements, Batman! Holy Haberdashery! Holy Homecoming! Holy Human Pressure Cookers! Holy Hamburger!

Assonance (or **rhyme**): Slang words often echo vowels for special effect. *Yolo* is precisely more memorable because of its rhyme. There are hundreds of slangy phrases that involve reduplicating rhymes. Sometimes they have meaningful words as in *drain the main* 'vomit', *tin grin, sprain(ed) brain, eager beaver, silly billy, over-shoulder-boulder-holders, easy-peasy lemon-squeezy*. But more often than not they're nonsensical like *namby-pamby* 'weak', *twiddle-diddles* 'testicles', *lovey-dovey* 'mushy', *higgledy-piggledy* 'confused', *hocus-pocus* 'deception' and *hooley dooley* (expressing surprise). A special rhyming pattern shows up in expressions like *fancy-shmancy* (a *fancy-shmancy restaurant*). We pinched this idea from Yiddish. When you shm- a word in this way, it means you're being flippant — *school-shmool* (in other words, "school — who cares?").

Rhyming slang was a secret language from the 1850s — *rubbity dub* "pub"; *aristotle* "bottle"; *jam tart* "sweetheart"; *apples and pears* "stairs" date from this time. An early Australian example is *Jimmy Grant* "immigrant", the inspiration of *Pom/Pommy* "British person" (short for *pomegranate/Pummy Grant,* rhyming slang for "immigrant").

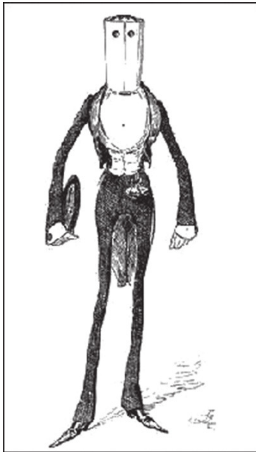
Notice that the last word always rhymes with the word the speaker has in mind. Most likely it was the slang invention of Cockney and Irish workers, but it quickly made its way into the criminal underworld — it was a useful disguise. And the disguise became even more effective when the rhyming word dropped off. Someone who *rabbits on* chatters excessively; this comes from *rabbit and pork* 'talk'. And the *raspberry* children blow came from the *raspberry tart* that was originally 'fart'. A surprising number of our everyday expressions are shorthand forms for what were originally very rude expressions.

LEXICAL AND SEMANTIC PATTERNING OF SLANG

You will find expressions make use of other poetic devices such as metaphor and irony

Metaphor: Scratch the surface of many slang expressions and you'll find metaphor. When you use metaphorical language you are describing one kind of thing in terms of another. If you describe another person as a *worm* or a *toad,* you're saying they behave or look a bit like the creatures (and by this you're suggesting they are pretty loathsome and contemptible).

Often the metaphor is long dead and buried. *Dag* originally referred to the matted clumps of dung and wool hanging from the backside of a Derbyshire sheep (still does in the sheep shearing industry). *Dude* probably comes from the slangy expression *duds* "clothes" (the original dudes in the 19th century were flashy dressers). People aren't animals, clumps of dung or clothing (so metaphors


The original 1880s dude with his fashionable high collar

are a kind of lie). But by using these expressions, you're making a connection between people (the figurative meaning) and things (the literal meaning) — and a lot of the colour and vibrancy of slanguage comes from such metaphors.

You can find this image of 'dudes' and other cartoon images on Michael Quinion's website — *World Wide Words*. He has a lovely account of the word with wonderful descriptions of these 19th century dudes.

Irony: When people use irony, they use language to express a meaning that is the opposite of their actual meaning (the literal meaning). Irony is at the basis of the inverted language of teenager slang. Someone who is particularly attractive might be described as *scum*. Words like *wicked*, *vicious*, *sick*, *rancid*, *filthy* and *putrid* describe things that are exceptionally good (though some might well be out of date by now).

A slangy bit of grammar with a nice dose of irony is also the teenage construction involving a stranded *not* at the end of the sentence: "What a totally amazing, excellent discovery... NOT!!". The stranded *not* first appeared in the 1990s, but it's alive and well today.

2.1.6
'FREQUENT COARSE LANGUAGE'

No discussion of informal language would be complete without some consideration of swearing – the strongly emotional use of **taboo expressions** in insults, epithets (or labels) and expletives (or exclamations). Though it clearly intersects with slang, swearing is a very different beast and deserves a section all by itself. The fact that we feel able to include this section (and to provide actual examples, what's more) is itself a nice illustration of what we were writing about earlier – those dual forces of colloquialization and liberalization. In a striking example of scholarly squeamishness, it has only been relatively recently that taboo and swearing have made an appearance in the mainstream linguistics literature. Anyone wanting to know about this sort of language would have been compelled to seek out what were assumed to be rather disreputable journals such as *Maledicta*. In the name of decency and decorum, many discussions of taboo and swearing never gave actual examples. Allen Read's (1934) paper 'An obscenity symbol' in *American Speech* is all about 'the colloquial verb and noun, universally known by speakers of English, designating the sex act' (p.267) — but not once does the F-word itself appear in any form anywhere in the essay. In contrast, here we provide actual examples; hence the linguistic health warning in the title of this section — 'frequent coarse language'.

Swearing appears regularly in the language of the Internet, creative writing, spontaneous public speech, and private conversation. Allan and Burridge (2009) identify at least four functions for swearing (these often overlap): the expletive function (letting off steam), abuse and insult, expression of social solidarity, and stylistic choice (the marking of attitude). Examples below come from collections within the Australian National Corpus of Language (https://www.ausnc.org.au): ACE (the Australian Corpus of English comprizing written texts from 1986), The Australian Radio Talkback Corpus (ART from Australia-wide ABC and commercial radio stations collected from 2004–06), informal speech from the ICE-AUS Corpus (collected 1991–5).

EXPLETIVES

Most cussing is an emotive reaction to frustration, something unexpected (and usually, but not necessarily, undesirable), or it is said in anger. This is the expletive function of swearing – the use of a swear word to let off steam. Expletives are kinds of exclamatory interjections, and, like other interjections, they have an expressive function; e.g. *Wow!, Ouch!, Oh dear!, Gosh!, Shit!*

1. I ran off because it's something like you know eeh eeh eeh eh eh eeh eeh eeh eh suddenly this string just went Boom I don't know bang and I just went **Fuck** and ran off the stage. [ICE-AUS S1A-019(A):143]

Speakers can choose between using a full-blown swearword or one of the many disguises. You may feel the inner urge to swear but at the same time not wish to appear overly coarse in your behaviour. Society recognizes your dilemma and provides an out – a conventionalized remodelling like *Shucks! Sugar!*.

2. Oh **shucks** Tony could've made a gourmet. [ICE-AUS S1A-090(B):190]
3. Oh **sugar**. We've burnt it. [ICE-AUS S1A-058(A):284]

In the print media the written equivalent of these disguises are punctuation marks. A string of non-alphabetic symbols such as ?#*! is an effective way of avoiding any full-blown orthographic obscenity, while still getting the message across.

"Puck you, Miss … I said puck you with a P. Don't you even know how to spell, Miss?" [Jonah Takalua, *Summer Heights High*]

ABUSE AND INSULT

The language of swearing can also have an abusive function. This includes curses, name-calling, any sort of derogatory comment directed towards others to insult or wound them. Speakers may also resort to swearwords to talk about the things that frustrate and annoy them, things that they disapprove of and wish to disparage, humiliate and degrade.

4. **Fuck** you ….. [ICE-AUS S1A-083(B):107]
5. I can't believe this **shit** They're promoting this **fucking** ideal [look] [ICE-AUS S1A-026(B):45]

Verbal insults can occur in all styles of language (though are typically colloquial) and don't have to contain swearwords; something like *you loser!* can be an expression of abuse, but it is not swearing (it could also be a term of affection, of course – context is all important!).

SOCIAL SOLIDARITY

Swearing can act as an in-group solidarity marker within a shared colloquial style – especially when directed against outsiders. In the following examples, context is all important for revealing the intentions of the speakers.

6. Yeah and I didn't even know I was and I feel like I feel like I did real **shit** work you know I feel like I let everyone down again. [ICE-AUS S1A-022(B):251)]
7. like Kim walked off to the loo or something and come back and put mousse all over my head and we ended up in this big fight with like all this powder and **shit** all over the house and we're running around the place n doing laps of the flat so everyone's sort of looking out at us … [ICE-AUS S1A-045(A):103]

Helen E. Ross documented one of the first serious accounts of swearing. She studied a group of five male and three female British zoologists in the Norwegian Arctic during continuous daylight. Although the research was conducted some 50 years ago, it corresponds very closely to what we believe goes on in swearing here in Australia. Ross writes:

> As the work entailed considerable interruption or loss of sleep, most members had good cause for becoming irritable and swearing. […] The amount of swearing increased noticeably when people were relaxed and happy, though it also increased under slight stress, it decreased when they were really annoyed or tired. In fact there seemed to be two types of swearing: "social" swearing and "annoyance" swearing. Social swearing was intended to be friendly and a sign of being "one of the gang"; it depended upon an audience for its effect, while annoyance swearing was a reaction to stress regardless of audience. Social swearing was by far the commoner. […] Under conditions of serious stress, there was silence. (Ross 1960: 480f)

Ross also confirms that social swearing typically diminishes if there are non-swearers present.

"Which one of you bastards called this bastard a bastard": Australian cricket captain Bill Woodfull's question during the Bodyline series of 1932-33 was in response to the English captain Douglas Jardine's complaint that one of the Australian players had called him a bastard.

Shared swearing patterns indicate a membership of the group. Like slang and the 'incorrect' language of nonstandard grammar, taboo words fall outside what is good and proper, and they therefore help to define the gang by signalling intimacy, solidarity and equality. Hence, this category also covers the expressions of mateship and endearment, such as *bastard*, and descriptions like 'silly bugger' in *Joe's a silly bugger, he should never have done that.* As in other native varieties of English, this usage is routine in Australian and New Zealand English, and speakers often report that the more affectionate they feel towards someone, the more abusive the language can be towards that person.

STYLISTIC CHOICE

One aspect of the stylistic function of swearing is to use bad language to spice up what is being said, to make it more vivid and memorable. An example is Paul Keating's supposed description of Australia as 'the arse end of the world' (alleged by Bob Hawke in 1990). Another not unrelated aspect is to display an attitude of emotional intensity towards what is being said or referred to in the utterance. Here are some examples of swearwords used to spice up what is said (and we apologize for the lengthy and rather bad taste joke in example 9).

8. Don't phone me yet as I am having both my ears transplanted to my nuts so I can listen to you talk through your **arse**. [ACE S05 873]

9. Did you hear about the new Irish Airways […] they were allowed to come into Australia for the first time. Anyway they were flying into Perth n the conning tower there was a lotta cloud over the **bloody** skies n everything. N the conning tower called up he said Irish Airways Irish Airways he said you can't land yet we'll have to get you to circle round the airport so he says can you give me your height n position please. So the little Irish **bloody** pilot gets up n he says I'm five foot two n I'm sitting up the **bloody** front. [ART COMne2:[C5]]

Lest you get the impression that swearing and slang are never found in mainstream literature, we leave you with one final example from *Catcher in the Rye*, by JD Salinger. This 1950s novel caused a huge stir when first published, partly because of the fruity language used, right from page one. In this extract from the start of the novel the narrator and central character, Holden Caulfield, introduces himself.

> If you really want to hear about it, the first thing you'll probably want to know is where I was born, and what my lousy childhood was like, and how my parents were occupied and all before they had me, and all that David Copperfield kind of crap, but I don't feel like going into it if you want to know the truth. In the first place, that stuff bores me, and in the second place, my parents would have about two hemorrhages apiece if I told anything pretty personal about them. They're quite touchy about anything like that, especially my father. They're *nice* and all – I'm not saying that – but they're also touchy as hell. Besides, I'm not going to tell you my whole goddam autobiography or anything. I'll just tell you about this madman stuff that happened to me around last Christmas just before I got pretty run-down and had to come out here and take it easy. I mean that's all I told D.B. about, and he's my *brother* and all. He's in Hollywood. That isn't too far from this crumby place, and he comes over and visits me practically every week end. He's going to drive me home when I go home next month maybe. He just got a Jaguar. One of those little English jobs that can do around two hundred miles an hour. It cost him damn near four thousand bucks. He's got a lot of dough now. He didn't *use* to. He used to be just a regular writer, when he was home. He wrote this terrific book of short stories, *The Secret Goldfish*, in case you never heard of him. The best one in it was 'The Secret Goldfish'. It was about this little kid that wouldn't let anybody look at his goldfish because he'd bought it with his own money. It killed me. Now he's out in Hollywood, D.B., being a prostitute. If there's one think I hate, it's the movies. Don't even mention them to me.

Perhaps to our eyes this swearing and slang is pretty tame, but the novel is still on the banned list in some states of America.

2.2 CONVERSATIONS

Chatting is one of the most pervasive of all human activities and our everyday conversations offer one of the best examples of informal language. Discussion of this form of language therefore requires a large section all by itself. As we'll see, chit-chat occurs in both writing and speech, and while some features are shared (such as a cooperation and turn-taking), the two modes are also characterized by quite different combinations of features, as you would expect, being separate modes. As we discuss each of the spoken conversational features in turn, think how many of these also apply to virtual conversations.

Our everyday conversations draw on a number of nonstandard features and this makes them very different from other more formal varieties. If you've ever had the experience of hearing a recording of yourself speaking, you might have cringed. There may have been nothing in the recording that

resembled a decent grammatical sentence — all those false starts, repairs, repetitions and hesitations. Take this example - an extract from a conversation where Christine is describing an encounter with one of the teachers at her daughter's school. (Many thanks to Julie Reid for letting us use this transcript.)

Christine: There's, there was a science, or maths teacher I spoke to, who,
I thought he was a bit funny.

Even in this short piece there are two repairs ('There's' > 'there was'; 'who' > 'I thought he was a bit funny'), but this is not surprising given the pace of ordinary talk. Consider for a moment just what's going on. Speakers like Christine have to monitor what they're saying to make sure it's coming out just as they intended and that their audience has understood it this way, too. At the same time, they also have to plan what to say next. Is it any wonder that some repairs and repetitions have to be made on the go and there are occasional hesitations and false starts? Speech is a biological wonder, although we don't tend to think of it this way because we take it so much for granted.

In **dialogues** people frequently speak over each other, at the same time, as shown by this next extract of Christine and Melanie chatting. When Melanie manages to squeeze a word into the discussion, she actually coincides with Christine — the square brackets indicate that their speech is overlapping. It is important to emphasize that this sort of simultaneous speech doesn't always mean an interruption. In this instance, neither speaker feels their rights have been violated. Christine and Melanie are good mates. Later you'll see more of their conversations, and when they interact it is more like a conversational duet — almost as if they were jointly constructing the text.

Christine: But that's been, well, actually, what's going to happen next
year, instead of six, home [groups],
Melanie: [Yes],
Christine: [they're doing] five.
Melanie: [they're gonna change it].

Speech even contains grammatical constructions that are rarely if ever encountered in the written language — certainly they are not considered standard. In the following extract Melanie is talking about people coming through to view her house before an auction.

Melanie: Oh, there's someone came through yesterday.

Here is an example of a complex sentence containing a **relative clause**. But it's an unusual one. If this were written language, you would expect the relative clause to have a **pronoun**: 'Oh, there's someone **who** came through yesterday'. But this is speech and, as we discussed earlier, you must never judge it through the spectacles of writing. Speech (especially unplanned and spontaneous) is a very different beast — it is not 'spoken writing' any more than writing is 'speech written down'.

2.2.1 RECORDING CHAT

Any analysis of speech relies of course on recordings. There are many different events that are suitable for recording, but what you want is normal conversation. Recording a conversation in a laboratory setting is not ideal. Natural settings are the best — telephone dialogues, interviews, TV panel shows, radio talkback, business meetings, dinner conversations and so on. One of the difficulties of doing this sort of work is something that has been dubbed (Labov's) **Observer's Paradox** — basically we are trying to observe the way people speak when they are not being observed!

So, what can be done? Unfortunately, hidden microphones (including secret recording with your phone) are ruled out on ethical grounds. The so-called 'forgotten tape-recorder effect' is generally what linguists aim for. Most people will feel self-conscious and speak abnormally in the presence of a microphone, but after some time they grow used to the sight of the recording equipment and forget that it's there. After a while you will get the natural language you are after; so, it is wise to disregard the first few minutes of your recording until the subjects are accustomed to being recorded. (Mind you, the forgotten recorder comes with its own set of ethical issues — is it really so very different from a hidden recorder?)

Here are a few things to think about when you are recording speakers:

- Bear in mind that you can legally record public talk. This includes the kind of broadcasting texts given earlier, and also talk shows, panel discussions, debates, political discussions and so on.
- Private conversations are not as straight forward. Don't forget to get permission from all of the people you are recording before you begin. This is important — even if you are recording your mates. In past years it was thought acceptable practice to surreptitiously record people and then seek their permission afterwards. But put yourself in their shoes. This is a quick way to lose trust and friendship.
- Make sure there isn't much in the way of background noise when you do your recording. Let us tell you the sad tale of one of our student's recording experiences. After taping hours of conversation in a hairdressing salon, he could barely make out a word over the deafening noise of hair-dryers and background chat. Make sure you test your surroundings.
- Taped discussions should remain confidential. While you do need to make note of details of the speakers (for example, information about age, sex, education, occupation etc), always use pseudonyms to maintain the privacy of speakers.

The next step after you've successfully completed your recording is the transcription. This is tough work — and time-consuming. Two party interactions are difficult enough, but with three or more speakers it is often impossible to tell who is talking, let alone what is being said. You need to be prepared to listen repeatedly to recordings. And don't be disheartened if even after hundreds of listenings you find that some of the language remains unclear. There are conventions for handling that.

2.2.2 TRANSCRIBING AND ANALYSING SPEECH

When you transcribe, it is quite acceptable to use nonstandard spellings to indicate the sorts of contractions and reductions that are typical of speech; for example, *gonna, gotta, 'em, sort've / sorda* and so on. There are also a number of different notational systems for transcribing. Here are some conventions, some of which you have already encountered in earlier examples. All of these examples are taken from authentic dialogues of Australian English conversations from collections in Reid (1997) and Burridge and Florey (2002).

INTONATION UNITS AND PAUSING

Each line represents a single intonation unit. A useful way of identifying these units is to listen for cues like a shift upwards in pitch and a drawing out of the final syllable at the end. Pauses can also provide useful cues.

Continuing intonation units are marked with a comma, and final intonation units are marked with a full-stop (falling or level intonation) or with a question mark (for rising intonation). You can show a pause by two or three dots in parentheses (depending on the length of the pause).

Christine:	So I showed mine,
	coz I thought you were in civvies?
Melanie:	Hm.
Christine:	Took it out of my (…) pay,
	which I was going to pay cash.
Melanie:	Uh huh.

You might notice that some transcripts also use slashes. These conventions are available when it is important to monitor the intonation more closely; for example / (rising pitch), \ (falling pitch) and — (level pitch).

OVERLAPPING SPEECH

In conversation, overlapping is very common, and simultaneous speech is indicated by two sets of square brackets vertically aligned.

Christine:	Because they're outta stock,
	he obviously can't,
Melanie:	They must been [spares],
Christine:	[charge].

LAUGHTER

Straightforward laughter is usually indicated by @. You can also show that the voice has a laughing quality by putting the symbol inside angled brackets <@ @>.

Linda:	What have I always wanted to talk to you about,
	and we've <@ never [had time@>].
Christine:	[@@@@@].

TRUNCATED OR LENGTHENED WORDS

A hyphen will indicate that a part of a word has been cut off.

Peter:	Coz Katie's out,
	Well she's usual- usually out Monday night with her small group.
James:	Hm.

An equals sign indicates that a word has been lengthened.

Pam:	I lo=ve them.

UNCERTAINTY IN THE TRANSCRIPTION

If you are not sure what exactly was said, then use a couple of question marks inside angled brackets. Where the language is totally unclear, show this with crosses (i.e. XXX). The number of crosses you use should indicate roughly the length of the indecipherable talk.

Melanie: They must been [spares],
Christine: [charge].
Melanie: that,
Christine: above and be-,
Christine: they musta <?counted them wrong?>.
Christine: XXX.

VOICE QUALITY

If you also want to indicate features to do with voice quality, then musical notation inside angled brackets is handy for this. Speech that is loud is marked <F…F> or <FF…FF> if it's very loud. Speech that is soft is marked <P…P> or <PP…PP> if it's very soft. Tempo can be marked <A…A> for fast speech and <L…L> for slow speech.

John: Isn't he diplomatic?
@@@@@@
Robin: No I mean it (...)
John: @@@@
Robin: <F No no no no I seriously mean it F> cos,
we only got three guys at the moment.

NON-VERBAL NOISES

Speakers make a whole range of noisy responses to express some sort of emotion. If you wish, you can mark these by representing the noise in ordinary brackets and with capital letters. You can even include written representations of automatic noises (genteel or otherwise) such as *burp* and *hiccough*. For example, (COUGH), (BURP), (YAWN), (SNIFF) and so on.

Margaret: Would you object to that?
Kate: Yeah nuh. (SHRIEK OF HORROR)

Some commonly used transcription symbols

.	Final falling/level intonation unit
,	Continuing intonation unit
?	Final rising intonation unit

Slashes	/ (rising pitch); \ (falling pitch); — (level pitch) (used if it is necessary to monitor intonation more closely)
(.) / (..)	Brief pause
(…)	Longer pause
-	Truncated word
=	Lengthened word
@	Laughter
<@ @>	Laughing quality to the voice
<? ?>	Uncertain transcription
XX	Unclear / indecipherable
<P…P>	Soft
<PP…PP>	Very soft
<F…F>	Loud
<FF…FF>	Very loud
<A…A>	Fast speech
<L…L>	Slow speech
[ ]	Overlapping speech

When you have completed the hard slog of transcribing, don't forget to number the lines, as we've done in the long piece coming up. Line numbers make it much easier for you to refer to the features in the text when it comes to the analysis. There are all sorts of things you can investigate. You could look generally at the characteristics that distinguish the spoken text from ordinary writing. In that case you will be looking at the sorts of structural features we'll be examining in detail in a moment. Then again you might want to focus on a particular feature, say, overlapping speech, pauses, false starts, intonation. In your analysis you might also be investigating general issues to do with how participants accomplish conversational interaction (this is something we examine later).

2.3 CONVERSATIONAL FEATURES

Now we're ready to examine a piece of real spoken language. It should be clear that the sort of linguistic features we find in texts will be influenced by how many participants are involved in the exchange. So far we've seen examples of monologues and dialogues involving two speakers. But dialogues can have more than two participants. The recorded conversation below has three females — Sandra, Linda and Pam.

Kelpies

1.	S	My dad's dog (..) he he had two dogs,
2.		and they [died],
3.	L	[Mmm]?
4.	S	in the last year and a [half].
5.	L	[Oh really].
6.	S	Oh so he's just beside himself,
7.		so I'll [have to],
8.	L	[Oh is he],
9.	S	[get him a dog].
10.	L	[gonna get another one]?
11.	S	Yeah,
12.		we're gonna buy him [one],
13.	L	[Oh really]?
14.	S	after Christmas.
15.	P	What kind (..) a kelpie or something?
16.	L	No=.
17.	S	What is it we're gonna go to the=,
18.	P	Pound?
19.	S	Yeah,
20.		so I mean,
21.	L	Don't get a kelpie.
22.		Don't,
23.	S	Touch wood,
24.		no I mean it'll have to be fairly,
25.	P	Why do they need to be on a farm?
26.	L	They need too much,
27.	S	They need a lot of space.
28.	L	They need a lot of exercise and space.
29.	S	No no,
30.		just something that's um,
31.		he had cocker,
32.	L	Companion?
33.	S	spaniels but they were both bonkers.
34.	L	Goes with the territory,
35.	S	But um=,
36.	L	(…) It's genetic?
37.	S	Yeah,
38.		they're bonkers?
39.	L	They're so stupid those dogs.
40.	S	Oh yeah,
41.		and one was an epileptic so=,
42.	P	Oh God?
43.	S	and one was obese,
44.		so it was just,
45.	P	@@@@@@
46.	S	They were sisters,

47. so I think there was a lot of in-
48. you know inbr-
49. L Yeah.
50. S I don't kno=w um but,
51. L No that sounds pretty par really?
52. S <@ yeah @>,
53. so we'll go after Christmas.
54. L So if you go to the pound,
55. you can get one that's a bit older.
56. S I want one,
57. L that's already tr– (..) house-trained [and],
58. S [Cos] I've been onto the website
59. and there's ones that have been given up by,
60. L [elderly]
61. S [other elderly] people,
62. so that'd be really nice.
63. I really love um (..) oh (..) greyhounds.
64. P I lo=ve them.
65. S Adopt a greyhound program?
66. I was down at the oval,
67. and they had them there,
68. and they were just lovely?
69. But I said,
70. don't they need a lot of running,
71. <?you know a lot of walking?>?
72. And he said,
73. no= (..) they just (..) they love company.
74. L Mmm.
75. What about just a little (..) like a little fluffy thing.
76. S Oooh.
77. L No?
78. S I don't like them.
79. But he might.
80. L They're just easy,
81. easy to look after.
82. P Are they?
83. L Well,
84. except you've [gotta],
85. P [They're cute],
86. they grow on you,
87. L You gotta brush them.
88. P But I wouldn't want one.
89. S Well,
90. S what would you get,
91. do you know dogs,
92. do you know dogs?
93. P O=h I like kelpies.
94. L But what you'll find that's relinquished,

95.		will be lots and lots of kelpies and cross-bred kelpies,
96.		because they are so= much work.
97.	S	Yeah.
98.	L	Because they run around all the time.
99.	S	No listen,
100.		I'll go there with dad and talk.
101.	L	Just be careful not to get <P something that's a kelpie,
102.		because you'll be really sorry P>.
103.	S	Yeah.
104.	L	There's a good reason why they're relinquished.

1. In groups of three read the transcript aloud, and note how difficult it is to recreate this spontaneous conversation.
2. Rewrite lines 1-27 into Standard English and note where you've had to make changes, especially to grammar and spelling.
3. What are the key differences in the spoken and the written versions of the text?

These activities illustrate just what different forms of communication speech and writing are. As in the case of those previous utterances spoken by Melanie and Christine, there is much here that does not correspond to the well-formed sentences we expect in English grammar books or style guides. This conversation has very typical features of speech and we examine each of them in turn below. We will concentrate on structural differences here and ignore the very obvious differences in form; for example, the fact that speech is produced orally and received by the ear and uses non-verbal features like gesture and facial expression to aid communication. Clearly though these features are the trigger for many of the structural features we'll be discussing.

2.3.1 CONTRACTIONS AND REDUCTIONS

We've already seen that when we speak we make all sorts of shortcuts. Sounds are often deleted or they run into each other, often changing to become more like each other. It's these shortcuts that contribute to a fluent and smooth-sounding speech style. For example in the transcript above, *gonna* in line 10, *cos* in line 58 and *gotta* in line 87 show how in everyday speech it's usual to omit the unstressed vowels and syllables. This transcript is also full of contractions we described earlier (e.g. *don't, we're, he's* and so on).

2.3.2 NON-FLUENCY FEATURES

When you first encounter speech events like this one, it's tempting to ask — where are the sentence boundaries? In place of the well-defined structures we're used to seeing, there are false starts,

interruptions, self-corrections, repetitions, hesitations and what appear to be empty fillers like *um* and *oh*. Consider the following examples:

1.	S	My dad's dog (..) he he had two dogs,
63.	S	I really love um (..) oh (..) greyhounds.
75.	L	What about just a little (..) like a little fluffy thing.

Generally these are lumped together under the rather pejorative label 'non-fluency features'. But, as we emphasized earlier, don't judge speech through the spectacles of writing. It's true, these look glaring on paper, but the speakers seem unaware of them — there is nothing particularly tongue-tied about any of the speakers in this impromptu conversation.

Breathing of course accounts for some of the pauses when we speak and typically you find these at grammatical boundaries. Combined with different speech tunes, they function much like punctuation marks in writing. Most of the pauses, however, are not for the purpose of breathing. When we speak we take air in very quickly, but we actually let it out very slowly — this is how we can speak for long periods without passing out. Most of the pauses here involve hesitations — drawn out words (e.g. *a- asked*) or else pauses filled with noises (e.g. *um* and *er*).

2.3.3 DISCOURSE PARTICLES

Conversations like the one above are dotted with discourse particles (sometimes called discourse markers). These are often the warm 'fuzzy' features of talk and they include expressions like *I mean* (line 29), *I think* (47), *you know* (line 48), *well* (line 83) and so on. Frequently, they are mistaken for non-fluency features, but these are not meaningless little expressions that the speakers have used to fill in time while they plan what they're going to say next.

There are situations where people use certain expletives and taboo epithets so frequently that that they become more like discourse particles (though not necessarily the warm fuzzy ones). Lashings of obscenities have become an earmark of celebrity chef and restaurateur Gordon Ramsay, so much so that one of his television cooking series was called 'The F-Word'. Ramsay uses obscenities with the frequency that others might use *like, well, I mean* and *you know*. Under such circumstances, the expressive value of these phrases is reduced, and either alternative expressions will be invented or some other form of catharsis will be sought in order to let off steam. Indeed, there is plenty of evidence that swearing typically diminishes under very stressful circumstances; in the quote given in section 2.1.6, Helen Ross mentioned that her study showed that 'under conditions of serious stress, there was silence'. This is not to suggest that bleached swearwords are ever empty. Like discourse particles generally, these expressions convey subtle nuances of meaning and can have complex effects on utterances. Wierzbicka (2002), for example, describes the varied meanings of *bloody* in Australian English and shows how they provide important clues to attitudes and values.

Gordon Ramsay in the kitchen.

In the conversation between Sandra, Linda and Pam, *well* appears before surprising information and in answer to a question (lines 83 and 89). Other particles have important conversational functions to do with turn-taking. When speakers start their turn in a conversation they often do this by acknowledging the turn of the previous speaker. *Well* can have this function, too. Other particles play a significant role in expressing social relationships, personal attitudes and opinions, conveying sometimes quite subtle nuances of meaning. Look at how phrases like *I mean, you know* and *I think* work throughout the conversation above — take them all out and it would no longer seem such a friendly chat.

2.3.4 ELLIPSIS

Conversational dialogues like Kelpies are typically full of examples of missing elements (or ellipsis). In the following example, we've added the missing word in brackets (in this case, it's the subject of the sentence).

34. L (It) Goes with the territory,

Speakers naturally leave out those parts of a sentence that are totally reconstructable from previous utterances or that can simply be understood (or inferred) from the context. In this three-way conversation, elements that are obvious to Linda, Sandra and Pam can easily be left out. Ellipsis leads to economy of expression — it means we're being efficient.

Even though sentences like these are incomplete from a strictly grammatical point of view, this is not the case from a discourse point of view. Oral communication of this kind is face-to-face and can exploit the context of the interaction much more than writing can. Speakers supply extra-linguistic cues like gestures, facial expressions and of course nuances of intonation, loudness, tempo and rhythm. There would have been important visuals accompanying this conversation about kelpies, which is why linguists now often use video recorders to get the whole picture.

2.3.5 SYNTACTIC COMPLEXITY: COORDINATION AND SUBORDINATION

The vast repertoire of expressive devices (like intonation, stress, pitch, speed, silence, laughter and voice quality) can be used to signal logical relations between clauses. The presentation of information involves quite different skills in this medium (compared to writing). In the dialogue above we can more or less separate off the clauses. Identifying sentences, however, is more of a problem. Even if we remove the false starts and repetitions, some of the structures are still very different from what is described in a grammar book. In fact, there is a lot to suggest that the concept of 'sentence' is not really appropriate for speech; hence, linguists are more likely to use 'clause' or even 'utterance'.

Long loosely connected structures appear the norm, and there is very little in the way of complexity in the sentence structure; in other words, there's not much in the way of **subordination**, where clauses are embedded inside clauses (think of Russian dolls). In the extract above, you can see that the clauses are not nested like Russian dolls, but are strung together (more like a string of beads). This

is **coordination**, and it's what characterizes speech, especially spontaneous conversation. Notice in the transcript above how clauses appear together, sometimes joined by some sort of coordinating element (typically *and* or *but*), but often without any linking item at all. These linking words have a clear grammatical function to link pieces of information together, but they also share a discourse function. Here they give speakers the opportunity to pause, but at the same time they indicate to their audience that there is more to come.

As an illustration, notice the use of *cos* by Sandra. This is very different from Standard English *because*.

56.	S	I want one,
57.	L	that's already tr– (..) house-trained [and],
58.	S	[**cos**] I've been onto the website

Rather than introduce a clause of reason, *cos* here is used to present a new piece of information, loosely connecting it with what has come previously in the discourse. In this example, there is only a vague causal link here — you could actually substitute *cos* with *and*. *Cos* is sometimes rather like a linguistic trumpet blast or fanfare to announce the arrival of something significant and relevant to what was said before; it's also a good way of regaining the floor. Compare it to Linda's use of *because* in the same conversation. Here *because* has a much stronger causal meaning.

101.	L	Just be careful not to get <P something that's a kelpie,
102.		**because** you'll be really sorry P>.

2.3.6 PRESENTATION OF INFORMATION

When we speak, we can manipulate word order to a much greater extent than writers. We can move words around depending on what part of our message we want to highlight, what we think is most important, or even what we assume our audience already knows. As we described in Section 1.5, speech has expressive word order. Here's an example of right-dislocation:

39.	L	They're so stupid those dogs.

Here Linda has moved the subject, *those dogs*, to the end of the sentence. If the usual position of an item is early in the sentence, then this has the effect of giving it extra **focus** by postponing its mention. The pronoun *they* signals to us that something significant is coming up. Delaying full mention of the subject can be a particularly effective way of building up expectations, and we explore more focus strategies later in this chapter.

Another strategy is to move a phrase to the extreme left of the sentence, also leaving in its place some sort of pronoun copy. An intonation break usually separates the fronted item from the rest of the sentence, and this has the effect of making it stand out even more. Left-dislocation gives subjects special emphasis in this way. Linda could equally have focused our attention on *those dogs* using this strategy:

L	Those dogs,
	They're so stupid.

This more interactive *cos* sometimes appears at difficult moments in conversations — perhaps the hearer hasn't responded (or responded as expected), or perhaps (as in the case of this example) the speaker finds the subject matter awkward. Here high-school student FS is asked about where he would like to go to university; the interviewer is a Monash student RM, and the uncomfortable nature of the conversation is indicated by the hesitations, pauses and hedging expressions including *cos*.

1	RM:	So where would you like to go?
2	FS:	Um (..) I d'know Monash,
		I've seen Monash and that looks good and um Latrobe (...)
3	RM:	<@ Well of course yes - you've got to say that, haven't you @>
4	FS:	Um (...) with Monash and Latrobe (...)
		Monash seems to be close I mean with me (...) so,
5	RM:	Monash is what?
6	FS:	Monash is ok
		cos Latrobe is you know (...) I mea-
7		I like the way Latro - Monash looks.
8	RM:	Right.
9	FS:	Like cos (...) I d'know,
		Latrobe is (...) sortalike (...) I dunno (...)

2.4 COOPERATIVE SPEAKERS

Our conversations are governed by many conventions that determine how close we stand to one another; how we should begin and end phone conversations; how we should show interest in what someone is saying; how we should make requests politely or sharply; how we should say hello or goodbye, offer thanks and so on. If a speaker appears to be violating any of these ground rules, we usually do our best to interpret the violation as somehow meaningful. Here is a scenario you might imagine. You have just asked a friend how the family party went earlier in the week. Your friend replies: 'Oh, you know, it was a family party'. Not a particularly informative comment! However, you expect that your interlocutor is being cooperative and communicating something here. The response suggests that it was a typical family party — there's not much more to say.

As mentioned earlier, successful communication involves attending to matters of face, both positive and negative. The default situation for non-hostile interaction is a mutual expectation that the participants will try to avoid any potential face affront to others. Where affront cannot be prevented, it needs to be ameliorated in one way or another; and there are all sorts of conventions for doing this. A critical comment can be softened with some sort of hedging phrase to reduce the potential face threat to the hearer. An effective strategy is for speakers (or writers) to underplay their own ideas or intelligence; e.g. *I've probably completely missed the point; however* ...; *It's probably me, but* ...; *Did I misunderstand when you said* .... In making a request, we can minimize an imposition by giving, or at least appearing to give, the option of refusal by hinting or asking that the person being addressed

do something, rather than ordering that they do it; compare *Shut the door!* with *Will / Can / Could / Would you shut the door?* or *Would you mind shutting the door?*, or even more obliquely *My goodness, It's cold in here!* In response to an invitation, an expression of regretted inability is generally preferable to downright refusal.

Compare some of the possible responses to the offer *Do you want to come out for a meal tonight?*

(1) *No, I don't.*
(2) *I'm sorry, I don't.*
(3) *I'm sorry, (I'd love to but) I can't.*

Refusals and denials of any sort are potentially hazardous to face and either of the first two responses can be used to hurt or offend the offerer, although (2) is slightly better than (1). The third response, expressing inability is more polite and therefore more considerate of face. It saves the situation by indicating that the relationship is still where it was.

It is often conventional to appear to be polite, whatever one's true feelings. Greetings, apologies, congratulations, etc. may not be quite so welcome when uttered cursorily and as a matter of 'form' as they would be if uttered with deeply felt sincerity; but it would often be downright rude to keep silent. Generally speaking, the greater the on-coming face affront, the more excessive the politeness shown.

Over the years people have proposed a number of metaphors to describe how conversations work. Some have described them in terms of a dance, a game of chess, traffic crossing in a busy intersection, even the workings of the market economy. Here is George Yule's account:

> In this market, there is a scarce commodity called the **floor** which can be defined as the right to speak. Having control of this scarce commodity at any time is called a **turn**. In any situation where control is not fixed in advance, anyone can attempt to get control. This is called **turn-taking**. [1996: 72]

As Yule's description suggests, one of the delicate things about having a chat with someone is figuring out when to start talking and when to stop talking. We have to monitor our conversational partners and try to work out when a change of speaker is possible. And if there's a breakdown, we have to handle the problem and somehow repair it. All this can be difficult. So, there are often gaps and often more than one person can be heard speaking at a time. The peak-hour traffic analogy is also really quite appropriate. How different it all is from the scripted dialogues we are so used to reading in books. The following excerpt from Patrick White's novel *The Aunt's Story* is a conversation between Aunt Theo and Lou, yet it is well orchestrated with seamless transitions between turns. Notice there are no gaps and no overlaps.

> 'Will you really go away, Aunt Theo?' asked Lou
> 'Yes,' said Theodora. 'I shall go away.'
> 'Then there will soon be a lot of other stories to tell.'
> 'I expect not,' Theodora said.
> 'Why?' asked Lou.
> 'Because there are the people who do not have many stories to tell.'

There were the people as empty as a filigree ball, though even these would fill at times with a sudden fire.
'Now, you must sit up, Lou,' she said. 'You are too heavy.'
'I wish…' said Lou.
'What do you wish?'
'I wish I was you, Aunt Theo.'
And now Theodora asked why.
'Because you know things,' said Lou.
'Such as?'
'Oh,' she said, 'things.'
Her eyes were fixed, inwardly, on what she could not yet express.
'Either there is very little to learn, or else we learn very little,' said Theodora. 'You will discover that in time.'
But perhaps if I live to be very old, said Lou. 'Like a tortoise, for instance.'
So that Theodora was forced to agree.

There is a world of difference between the organization of the conversation here and a real-life chat in a cafe. In a scripted dialogue like this one, the writer decides in advance who is going to speak, when they'll speak and for how long. In natural conversations we have to figure all this out for ourselves as we go along.

On TV and in plays and films we are used to hearing conversations that are more like beautifully choreographed ballroom dances. Everything goes very smoothly — no one speaks out of turn. When this doesn't happen it can be quite shocking. In the controversial ABC drama series *Wildside* the dialogue was much closer to real life. Much of it must have been unscripted and spontaneous because there was overlapping and occasionally conversational chaos (at least it appeared this way). Many viewers, in fact, reported the series hard to watch for this reason. They weren't quite ready for this level of conversational naturalness on their television screens.

Members of a social group generally share the same conventions for turn-taking. And when this is the case, conversations proceed smoothly without any hitches — most of the time. One problem, of course, is that attitudes or conventions can also vary considerably between dialect groups and even between individual members of the same community. Given there is such complexity and variety of opinions and attitudes, speech exchanges may not always run quite so smoothly. For example, clues for a change of turn might be falling intonation, the drawing out of a word's final syllable or it could even be non-verbal — the speaker turning away, leaning back, assuming an activity or changing the direction of their gaze. But a different social group might operate with another kind of system in mind; in other words, they might have a different style of conversational management with quite different turn-taking cues.

2.4.1 CONVERSATIONAL STRATEGIES

Let us turn now to some of the strategies that help to ensure our interaction runs freely and without obstacles or snags. For talk to be successful, turns have to be connected in some way; in other words, what speakers say must somehow fit in with what has been said previously. In the following, you will see how speakers achieve effective conversation by building upon each other's contributions,

developing topics cooperatively and maintaining them over a series of turns. You will also see how they switch topics or how they might go off topic and then later return. This is called **topic management**. It includes the initiation of the topic, topic development and topic change, as well as hierarchy of interlocutors — not everyone will have the power to make these manoeuvres. It depends on, among other things, gender, age, status, expertise (knowledge about a topic) and personality. Imagine a meeting in a workplace situation — who raises the topics, and how are these received and organized throughout the course of interaction? Clearly, the more powerful people in any speech situation may employ the techniques that suppress their less powerful interlocutors; topics can be raised but they're not always pursued.

CONVERSATIONAL ROUTINES

A lot of talk involves sequences called **adjacency pairs**. These are adjoining turns that have a close relationship with each other. They help with the general ebb and flow of a conversation, by signaling openings and closings, for example, or marking moves within a conversation. Take the automatic patterns people use to greet each other or say goodbye. It's actually quite hard to initiate or close a conversation without this sort of routine — this is why you find talkback callers on radio always ask presenters how they are before they make their comment.

Radio host Ross: G'day Professor!
Guest Kate: Good morning, how are you?
Radio host Ross: Oh, very well.

As in this greeting exchange, these sequences usually come in pairs with one utterance triggering a response; for example, question and answer; compliment and acknowledgment; thank you and response; apology and acceptance; complaint and excuse. Here are some more typical sequences:

Christine: Oh so who's at the school now?
Melanie: Julia?
Christine: Ooooh,
actually maybe you did tell me that.
Melanie: Hm.

Kate: You look really lovely.
Helen: Yeah no, I thought I should drag this old thing out of mothballs.
Kate: Well, it looks great.

Michael: Thank you very much.
Kate: Oh, you're very welcome

James: Sorry I whimped out.
Kylie: Yeah-no, that's fine.

It's these sort of linguistic routines that 'grease the wheels' of conversation and help them run more smoothly. Of course when someone fails to reply with the second part of the sequence, or just delays the response, this can have special meaning, perhaps a misunderstanding, a disagreement or perhaps the person just hasn't heard.

LISTENING NOISES

Conversations are collaborative efforts, even conversations involving very extended turns, such as the one involving Linda, Sandra and Pam in the Kelpies transcript in Section 2.3. As participants alternate between the roles of speaker and hearer they work in partnership. Hearers collaborate in extending the turn by not taking over the floor. They also contribute to the story by indicating they are listening and by egging on the speaker with facial expressions, nods and smiles, laughter and encouraging noises like *hmm, yeah, right, ooh* and so on. These supportive co-operative noises are sometimes called **minimal responses** (or **back-channelling**).

In the following conversation, Christine and Melanie are trying to figure out when they can get away for the weekend (Christine has just pulled out her diary). Pay attention to the (occasionally overlapping) responses made by Melanie.

Christine: Here's Christmas.
Melanie: Yeah.
Christine: The eighteenth February,
you're right [till] Christmas.
Melanie: [yeah].
Christine: No, have to be January.
Melanie: Hmm.
Christine: Alright.
Well we come back,
we go Boxing Day for three weeks.

Here Melanie is giving feedback to Christine, encouraging her to carry on and indicating, if not agreement, at least no objection to what she is saying. Her noises appear to offer conversational support. But be careful how you interpret these responses. As with so many linguistic features, interpretation depends a lot on context. Problems arise, too, because people can have quite a different understanding of these responses. Women use them more than men, but do they always indicate support? Repeated use of minimal responses like *hmm* can also indicate impatience and a desire to take the floor. The lack of a response, or perhaps a delayed response, might indicate a lack of interest in the topic. It might even indicate disagreement – but it might also be that the person may simply have nothing to say.

INTERROGATIVE TAGS

Interrogative tags are little reduced questions. Speakers tack these onto their utterances in order to express their belief that an answer is likely to be correct, or at least they are seeking to confirm that the answer might be correct. It's another way of ensuring listener involvement. Here's an example where Christine is not totally confident about the facts and is seeking confirmation from Melanie (they're still trying to firm up their holiday plans):

Christine: They **might** get busy **mightn't they** [at] the time.
Melanie: [Hmm].

To form a tag question in Standard English is quite complex. (If you're interested, have a look at the toolkit in the appendix in the section on question formation.) Basically, what you do is repeat the auxiliary (or add the appropriate form of the auxiliary *do* if there isn't an auxiliary) and then insert a pronoun version of the subject (if it isn't already a pronoun):

The hotels might get busy, **mightn't they**?
She liked the restaurant, **didn't she**?

This is the most common type of interrogative tag; if the sentence is positive, the tag is negative and vice versa (e.g. *she didn't like the restaurant, did she?* compared with *she liked the restaurant, didn't she*). Not reversing the tag question can lead to some sinister sounding questions like, *you want to go outside, do you?*

While the general purpose of tags is to seek confirmation, like so many of these discourse features they show a wide range of functions to do with regulating conversational interaction and politeness. They might signal sensitivity towards a listener, actively inviting participation and emphasizing common ground between the speaker and listener. In the following, Christine and Melanie have finally settled on their holiday plans and have now moved into difficult conversational terrain. Here they are discussing a mutual friend who has just been diagnosed with cancer:

Christine: It's awful isn't it?
Melanie: Hmm.
Christine: Hmm.
Melanie: 'Tis, isn't it.

Tags might also be there to check that the other person has understood, to ask for their reaction to what has been said or to seek empathy from the listener. The advantage of tags is that speakers can do all these things without giving up the floor.

Not all tags are warm and intimate little discourse markers, however. Some can be very hostile with considerable overtones of sarcasm. Jenny Cheshire (1991:66) gives the following example from her taped interviews. She describes aggressive tags like these as a feature of urban working class dialects.

Jacky: We're going to Southsea on the 17th of next month.
And on Sunday they (...)
Cathy: Yeah and I can't bloody go.
Jenny: Why not?
Cathy: Cos I'm going on fucking holiday in I?

Cathy is not using *in I* ('aren't I') as a solidarity marker here, to maintain conversational engagement with Jenny. She expects no answer. The whole purpose of this tag is to highlight the stupidity (in Cathy's mind) of Jenny's question.

COHESION

Any successful text has to be **cohesive** and this includes our conversations. There are various ways this can be achieved. We've already seen that discourse markers can have a linking or orientation role in the discourse. The most usual function for *yes-no/yeah-no*, for example, is to pick up an earlier topic. It acknowledges what has preceded (with *yeah/yes*); yet at the same time picks up components of the conversation from earlier in the discourse, therefore providing coherence. For example, Kylie asks 'Have you ever met Jenny Cheshire?' and Sally replies 'I know her work. Yes-no, I've never met her.'

Another way of linking turns is via vocabulary. We can link the different parts of a text either by repeating a word or by using a **synonym**. We might even use expressions that share an element of meaning. Remember back to the Kelpie dialogue earlier. 'Canine quadrapeds' provide the semantic

field here and the cohesion of the dialogue is created by words such as *dog, kelpie, pound, cocker spaniel, house-trained, greyhounds, cross-bred* and so on. Christine and Melanie constantly build upon each other's turns in this way too.

Christine:	Katherine said the food was,
	it was alright.
Melanie:	Hayley enjoyed it,
	[the] food.
Christine:	[Yeah].

We can also make connections between sentences by using **antonyms**. In the dialogue above, for example, Christine might have continued the conversation with 'Katherine said I hated the pickled tripe'.

English has a number of referring devices that also ensure cohesion in discourse. These involve expressions that point to items elsewhere in the text and therefore create a unifying effect. For example personal pronouns (like *he, she, it* and *they*) can be used to refer to things already mentioned in a conversation; they form a link with the previous turn(s).

Melanie:	Ya know,
	you don't want it,
	just after your holidays

Here the pronoun *it* is referring back to the trip that the two women have been planning — Melanie doesn't want to keep repeating the word *trip*. These sorts of pronouns are described as **anaphoric**, which means they refer back to earlier words in the exchange. When pronouns refer forward to something that is coming up later, they are known as **cataphoric**. In the earlier exchange between Christine and Melanie about food, Christine highlights *food* by echoing it with a pronoun copy (anaphoric *it*), and in the next turn, Melanie has used a cataphoric *it*. It also has the effect of giving 'the food' focus, but this time by postponing its mention.

Because conversations are usually face-to-face, they are often full of words that refer directly to the actual situation of speaking. These are known as **deictic expressions** (the term deictic here simply means 'pointing') and they include phrases like *here, right now, that one* and also pronouns like *you, me, she, it* and *we*. The following extract has a number of these pointing expressions, which can only be interpreted from the immediate context; for example, *you* refers to the person being addressed and *we* to the speaker (and others); *here* indicates somewhere close to the speaker.

Christine:	I've got my diary here. I'll let you know XX.
	Cos most things we've got in here (…)
	all our bookings ready for different things that's on with the kids.

COHERENCE

Another feature of a **cohesive conversation** (one that fits together linguistically) is that they have to **cohere** (fit together semantically). The words have to mesh logically and this can be a challenge. Conversational participants are usually cooperative and dialogues are full of implied meanings.

[doorbell rings]

Jim:	That's the door.
Mary:	I'm in the shower.
Jim:	OK.

Here Jim understands Mary's response to mean 'I can't get to the door; you'll need to answer it'.

Coherence goes beyond words and structures. There's nothing linguistic here that makes the sentences in this exchange connect and yet both players understand exactly what is going on. Mary implies (makes it understood without expressing directly) that she cannot answer the door. Jim simply infers (makes a reasonable guess) from this that he needs to answer the door. **Inference** and **implicature** are two sides of the same coin — speakers typically imply more than they assert, and hearers typically infer more than is asserted. This sort of thing is going on all the time in verbal exchanges, especially in casual conversations where so much is assumed, so much is taken for granted, and in the case of close friends there is so much common ground.

FLOOR-HOLDING STRATEGIES

The ground rules of a conversation mean that participants wanting to take the floor (i.e. speak) have to wait for the appropriate moment before they can do this. Anything else would be a violation of the rules; in other words, an interruption. We've seen examples of long-winded speakers who can keep hold of the floor by making utterances run on with the help of connectors like *and, but, so, cos*. There are a few other clever strategies that wordy gasbags such as commentators, politicians and professors make use of in order to avoid relinquishing control of the floor.

One effective strategy is to place pauses where the message is still obviously incomplete; in other words, within some sort of grammatical unit not at the end. Better still if these are filled pauses with *umm* and *err*, for example, 'I was ... umm … describing how we might .., umm … use these kinds of ... err … strategies … umm ... to keep the floor'. Another way is to start saying something that indicates you want an extended turn. Often these openers are fixed expressions like 'Hey, listen to this', 'Guess what happened?' or 'Did you hear about the meeting?'. Joke-tellers of course have a stock of openings — 'Did you hear the one about ....'. Another way is to make it clear at the outset that you have a certain number of points to cover. If you begin your turn 'There are three points I need to make about floor-holding strategies', your listener will know to hold back until you have covered these points.

Relevant here is a prosodic feature of English known as Australian Questioning Intonation, H(igh) R(ise) T(erminal) or Uptalk. These labels refer to high rising contour on statements (especially common in narratives and descriptions). It's similar to the rising pitch found in yes-no questions like *Do you collect bears?*, but appears at the end of statements like *Arctophiles are people who like teddy bears*. Out of context such sentences might sound as if speakers don't feel terribly committed to what they're saying. But research has shown that HRT has a variety of important functions to do with regulating the conversational interaction. Importantly, it can indicate that speakers want to continue talking. And at the same time, it is a way of checking that listeners have understood (by seeming to ask for their reaction). It's an important floor-holding strategy.

DISCOURSE PARTICLES

Discourse particles (like *you know, yeah-no, I mean, I think, well, anyway, sort of* and a whole heap of others) are the highly idiosyncratic features of our language and convey fine nuances of meaning that can be excruciatingly difficult to pin down. Those of you who are learning another language will know that finding equivalents in discourse marking across languages is virtually impossible — they are close to untranslatable. Many people sneer at these features of talk, lumping them with hesitation fillers, and imagining them as the sorts of things we plonk down when we have nothing better to say. But they play some crucial roles in our speech. Indeed, it's these little expressions we often resort to when we are aware we might be appearing uncooperative.

For example, our conversations are dotted with expressions that indicate what we are saying may not be the whole truth. Perhaps we're going on rumour or conjecture; in other words, expressing an opinion without sufficient evidence or proof. Phrases like *I mean, I guess* and *I think* for example can express imprecision or uncertainty.

Christine: I'm cross.
Because I meant to ring Heather back.
She said it was really good,
I think they only went for a night.

When this marker appears in talk, it has a more abstract meaning, expressing something about the degree of commitment by speakers to what is being spoken about. Christine knows Heather's family was away and is not asserting her belief here. (Compare *I think* when it's an assertion of fact in something like *Some people think the earth is round, but I think that it's flat*.)

I think floats about freely in a sentence. Here it is at the end of Christine's turn:

Christine: They get, they get,
they're top students in that school.
The majority of them are **I think**.
Melanie: Hmm.

Discourse particles like this one are also known as **hedges**. This description comes from the verb *to hedge* 'to avoid giving a direct answer'. So what these expressions do is reduce or weaken the force of what we are saying.

Contrast the two instances of *I mean* in the extracts below. The first indicates a more concrete sense of the verb *mean* ('to have an intention to do something'), but the second is clearly some kind of hedge. What do you think it is doing here?

Extract 1

Christine: I must ring though I forget.
I mean to do these things.
But that'll be nice.

Extract 2

Christine: Wonder if they were going to come to the concert,
if they,

Melanie: Hmm.
Christine: (..) if they,
they'd know about it I s'pose.
I mean you sort've,
you don't know whether they want to come back and visit,
like,
or whether they're deliberately staying away.

These hedging markers often work in combination with other hedging features, for example, **modal auxiliary verbs**, such as *could, would, should* and *might* (see the toolkit in the appendix for more information):

Christine: I think he **might** go and have a talk to <@William@>.

Another hedging device involves the interrogative tags we looked at earlier. As in the next example, tags frequently work in tandem with modal auxiliaries.

Melanie: Actually that'd be nice **wouldn't it**.

These modals and tags also combine with discourse particles. Negotiations can be linguistic minefields (even between good friends); and not surprisingly the following exchange between Christine and Melanie is heavily hedged. Notice also the rising intonation (or HRT) on the statement:

Christine: We must ring them up.
And get more particulars? /
If we wanna go? /
I mean I don't,
can you manage it before Christmas or is it-
Melanie: Well, I said to Jim,
we'll probably be looking after [Christmas] now?
Christine [After Christmas].
Melanie: [I just]
Christine: [Cos we could] manage it before,
I think.
Melanie: Yeah.
Christine: If not,
we can go in Febru-,
um (…)
be February,
wouldn't it.
We're away on,
January.
Most of January.
Melanie: Hmm.
Christine: (…) Be February,
I s'pose.
Melanie: Yeah.

Christine: But I mean,
I wouldn't mind.
It's not that far away,
is it.
Melanie: No.
Christine: It's nearly Christmas.
Melanie: No.
Well whatever.

Other discourse expressions are used when speakers are trying to establish that what they are saying is somehow relevant to the discussion. For example, expressions like *well* and *anyway* (or *well, anyway*) can indicate that the conversation is changing direction. In the Kelpie conversation, we discussed how *well* often appears before surprising information, answers to questions and self-repairs. But it can also appear when speakers have drifted off the main topic onto some irrelevant piece of information and they want to get back on track. Melanie in the conversation immediately above uses *well* whenever she is changing tack slightly. The following is a little later in the same exchange when Melanie brings the topic back to setting the date for the weekend. Christine also starts her turn with an 'Oh well'.

Melanie: I dunno,
Ya know.
Well just,
tell us the date,
and then I'll check with Jim.
Christine: Oh well I've got,
I've got my diary here.

Yeah-no, he had an absolute ball!

The meanings of these little discourse particles can be mind-bogglingly complex. To give you some idea of the complexity, we've taken time here to focus on one such particle *yeah-no*. This discussion comes from a study carried out by Florey and Burridge in 2002 ('Yeah-no he's a good kid': a discourse analysis of yeah-no in Australian English). As these researchers discovered, yeah-no is a remarkably complex little marker that carries a heavy conversational workload. Here is a brief account of its duties.

Straightforward agreement / disagreement: Why appear to agree when in fact you're about to disagree? Well, you don't want to be seen to contradict; so you minimize the threat by making a positive evaluation first (acknowledging the other speaker), then following it with a negative one. For example, 'Yeah-no, I'd rather take the fromage frais' (Kate's response to a shop assistant's suggestion that she buy ricotta cheese instead). Kate wanted fromage frais and her rejection of ricotta cheese was attenuated by an initial *yeah-no.* To simply say *no* would be too blunt.

Enthusiastic agreement: Another related function of *yeah-no* is as a strengthened *yes.* You hear this expressive *yeah-no* where the agreement is emphatic. Here's another actual example. John says to Fred 'He had a good time up there, didn't he?' and Fred replies 'Yeah-nah, he had an absolute ball'. Curiously, *no* following a *yes* can reinforce that *yes*. Its effect is to knock on the head any possibility of contradiction — any imaginary remark or thought that might raise doubts. This is lively agreement.

Cohesion: *Yeah-no* also has a linking or orientation role. This seems to be its most usual task. Two speakers, Kitty and Kim, have been talking about an excellent concert that was on television. The conversation then goes off on quite a tangent with talk of taping the concert. Then Kitty says: 'Yeah-nah, it was very good'. Here Kitty is acknowledging what Kim has just said (about taping the concert) but returns to the earlier topic of just how good the concert was. Like so many of these markers, *yeah-no* strengthens rapport with the hearer; it indicates interest or support. You often hear it after a long pause — there has been a lull in the conversation and the speaker suddenly resumes the earlier topic, beginning the new turn with a *yeah-no.*

Hedge: There is also a use of *yeah-no* that relates more to the speaker and is more personal; it's a kind of hedging expression and, like the other hedges, it reduces the strength of an utterance. This often occurs in television sports interviews in which a competitor is being interviewed following a win: Interviewer: 'This was some of the best tennis we've ever seen'; Player: 'Yeah nah, I was pretty lucky'. Here the *yeah* acknowledges the compliment (to not do so would seem ungrateful), and the following *no* effectively softens its impact. In Anglo-Australian culture it is considered unacceptable to brag or stand out and there is considerable social obligation to down-play the impact of a compliment. A person who has been complimented experiences pressure to accept the compliment graciously, but at the same time to appear to be modest. Given the formulaic nature of compliments generally, *yeah-no* has become a conventional hedging responses, a face-saving strategy, in this sort of compliment routine.

We have barely touched on the complex functions of yeah-no here. And we don't even mention the many other shapes it comes in — yeah well no, yeah but no, yep nuh, yes no no — even no-yeah (among others).

Discourse particles have no place in writing or even formal speech, it is true; but they do belong in informal conversations. There they are among the most helpful devices when it comes to expressing a speaker's feelings and attitudes and also managing the information flow of a conversation. They can signal an array of different organizational features to do with the initiation and collaborative management of a conversational topic.

2.4.2
WHO'S INTERRUPTING WHO(M)

One difficulty with research into speech exchanges is the problem of describing the general attributes of conversation. For example, one basic conversational rule that sometimes appears in textbooks is 'no gap, no overlap'. In other words, there should never be a time when no one is speaking, and talk must be well orchestrated, where no one is competing for the floor and turn-taking proceeds in an orderly fashion. This might work for plays and TV dramas, but it doesn't work in real life. It certainly doesn't hold across cultures. In some communities conversational partners can sit, sometimes for hours, without saying a word. In the Amish communities of North America a successful visit with someone might consist almost entirely of silence. In many Mediterranean groups, for instance, conversations can involve a number of speakers at one time, with lots of overlapping.

But, even in Anglo-Australian culture, gaps and overlaps can be interpreted quite differently. Not all silences indicate conversational breakdowns. Not all silences are cold — they can be comfortable,

they can even be companionable. And not all overlapping speech is conversational bullying, either. You've seen enough examples of successful conversations here to realize this. Not only are there false starts, hesitations, repairs, repetitions, but often more than one participant is speaking at the same time. To an outsider it is conversational chaos. (It's certainly a nightmare for the transcriber.) But the speakers are clearly having a fine time of it. Nobody feels as if their rights have been abused, which would suggest a true interruption.

In other words, interruptions aren't automatically violations of the rules of conversations. Many factors influence whether or not somebody's speaking rights have been impinged upon, and it can be difficult for people researching in this area. You have to know a lot about the relationship between the speakers and the situation. What are they talking about? How long has each person been talking? How do you interpret the interruption? Does it signal conversational dominance? Not everyone can interrupt — kids aren't supposed to, for example. Interruptions can also take away a speaker's turn, and may even lead to a shift in the topic. But how do the speakers actually feel about being cut off, and what is the content of the interruption? Does it contradict? Does it change the topic or does it perhaps support and reinforce it? In other words, when is an interruption an interruption?

Much of our casual conversation is, as linguist George Yule has described it, 'two voices collaborating as one'. In many of the extracts given earlier, the participants overlapped, often closely mirroring each other's speech. Here are Christine and Melanie again:

Melanie: I- I thought it'd be the Baptist church.
Christine: Well I said to Robert first of all [I said the Baptist].
Melanie: [Well I'm not sure].
Yeah.
Christine: But I said,
but she [could be getting married] at chapel.
Melanie: [could be MLC chapel].
Actually that'd be nice,
[wouldn't it].
Christine: [Ye=ah].

Christine and Melanie are very good friends — their interaction is more like a conversational duet where both players contribute to jointly construct the text. The overlaps aren't take-over bids, but are there to develop or continue (not to change) a topic. Along with this overlapping, their speech is full of the kinds of hedging expressions that signal closeness, solidarity and shared background knowledge.

So, what do we conclude from all this? One thing is clear. Conversations are hard work. Talk must be opened and closed effectively; it must be sequenced with connections between the things that are said, and implied meanings need to picked up on (at least the ones that are intended). Even though there is a deep-seated cooperativeness in human interaction, people can go about this in quite different ways. As you might imagine, this can have some serious consequences for the way they relate to one another. The most successful conversation is going to be when speakers have the same habits and attitudes about simultaneous talk. But of course no group will be homogenous. Even individuals within the one community can have vastly different interactional styles. Some speakers are noisy and show enthusiastic involvement by way of questions and overlapping comments. Other speakers seem to almost wait for the floor to be empty before they take their turn; they would never

dream of imposing upon another speaker. And it can be difficult when you get two such different speakers together. An interruption suggests you don't care, you're probably not listening, perhaps you're not even interested. But this isn't always the case. The problem is, speakers who aren't into overlapping may well see any speaking out of turn as a disruptive interruption and be inhibited by it. On the other hand, enthusiastic overlappers may feel hurt by a lack of participation because it suggests to them a lack of support. Is an interruption an act of verbal cuddling or an act of verbal aggression? Face-work is never straightforward, but that is what makes it so interesting.

2.5 E-CHAT

The traditional distinction between speech and writing has been blurred even further by e-communication. Online chat is written of course, but it shares many of the features not just of spoken language but of actual conversation. In real-time online communication people exchange messages in much the same way as they would chatting face-to-face.

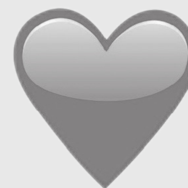
For a start, the spontaneity and speed of this sort of communication mean that we simply don't go in for the same careful organization and planning as we would with normal writing. Very little editing goes on. We end up writing very much as we speak and this means a much looser construction, repetition, false starts, digressions, comment clauses and asides. Electronic communication of this kind also has the expressive opportunities in word order that we typically associate with spoken language, and there is slang and grammatical informality as well (*I get called a lot of oder names coz my name is kinda hard to pronounce so yeah I dont mind wat ever*) — all things normally frowned upon in writing. There are even comment clauses and asides (*oh by the way just so you know*), interjections (*so wats happening with u huh*), filled pauses (*Umm about me*), and even repetition, false starts, digressions. There is also reduction. This kind of writing is full of the omissions, the contractions and the non-standard spellings that we normally associate with the short cuts and assimilations of ordinary rapid speech (*cuzn* 'cousin', *pic* 'picture', *dno* 'don't know').

In many ways, the language of e-communication resembles the sort of language you find in the manuscripts of early English texts, written before there was ever any concept of a standard language. In the works of Old and Middle English, for example, there is regional and social variation, even personal variation (where writers used punctuation, spellings and abbreviations to reflect personality). None of this raised any eyebrows then (because there was no concept of how to write); and the language raises no eyebrows now, as long as it doesn't escape the safe confines of the internet or the mobile phone.

Of course e-communication does differ from spoken language in one very obvious respect — it lacks the vast repertoire of expressive devices that are available to speakers. But it is developing its own. To some extent unusual punctuation and even spellings go some way to capturing these features. The use of 'scare quotes', for example, or capital letters, can show that a word has a special sense, or can express the intonation and emphasis of spoken language. Strings of non-alphabetic symbols such as ?#*! Boy, have I got news for you!!!!!! is an effective way of avoiding full-blown orthographic obscenity, but still getting the message across. Special graphic devices such as emoticons and emoji also add a semantic dimension to this written medium that places it closer to speech.

The word of the year for 2014 is not actually a word: it's the heart-shaped emoji

Sydney Morning Herald, December 30, 2014



Step aside, words with letters, because for the first time an emoji is the word of the year.

The heart-shaped emoji is the top word in Global Language Monitor's annual survey of English words, phrases and names. The Texas-based media company develops the lists by analyzing the frequency and usage of English words across the Internet, including sources such as Twitter, as well as the top 250,000 print and electronic new media sources.

The emoji's topping the list marks the first time a graphic symbol has held highest ranking on GLM's annual survey. In 2013, "404" was the top word, and "Apocalypse" and "Armageddon" were the top words in 2012 (but would you expect anything else in 2012?).

Some will surely lament an emoji being the top word as one more sign that the English language is crumbling. But why not accept this news as a sign of human ingenuity, that necessity breeds invention and we are becoming increasingly efficient at communicating with one another?

Read more: http://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/books/the-word-of-the-year-for-2014-is-not-actually-a-word-its-the-heartshaped-emoji-20141230-12fbq3.html#ixzz3PWznbh7C

We've already seen other examples of economy register (such as sporting commentary) but e-varieties are quite different. They have added a number of new brevity conventions that go well beyond the usual forms of abbreviation and ellipsis, some of them quite ingenious. In the case of texting, the small screen and keyboard of the mobile phone have obviously necessitated innovation. Some shortenings are straightforward **acronyms** and **abbreviations**. Even though they are well-established word formation processes in English, and ones that have been expanding the lexicon for years, when the expressions are created on the internet, many speakers are bothered by them.

How are the 3AW breakfast show hosts getting away with the expression, "WTF?"? Don't let them tell you it stands for "Why The Face?". They do and say whatever they want and get away with it. It's not acceptable. Usually prudish, they need to decide which side of the fence they are on.

Letter to the Green Guide

Consonants are always more informative than vowels; vowels are typically sacrificed in these shortened forms: 'because' becomes *cuz, bcuz, bcz,* or *bcos* and 'be right back' becomes *brb*. Single letters and numerals often replace syllables or even full words 'are' becomes *r* and 'ate' becomes *8*. This last convention is actually quite old and examples such as those are known as 'rebuses' (where letters, or pictures stand for whole words). It can become complicated when these conventions are combined: 'Andrew' becomes *&ru* and 'see you later' becomes *CUl8r*. This isn't even limited to English. Some German speakers abbreviate *Klavier* (*piano*) to *Kla4*. But how much are people still using these brevity conventions now that they have AutoCorrect to help with their typing? It's been suggested to us that these sorts of shortcuts and misspellings are on the way out precisely because

AutoCorrect actually makes it harder to produce them (so they don't really save time any more). Of course with Twitter, you only have 140 characters, so this kind of micro-messaging might hang onto these economy practices, even though they disappear elsewhere. What's your view on this?

In this chapter we have seen the different ways in which people cooperate in their day-to-day interactions. The internet challenges these established conventions and offers many examples where the ground rules for normal interaction are violated. Consider (mis)behaviours such as the following (each with their Urban Dictionary definitions): trolling ('being a prick on the internet because you can'); spamming ('posting useless crap on forums over and over'); lurking ('spying on people online, while you remain invisible'). There are regularly examples of individuals who use the anonymity of social media to denigrate others. There are also those who post their thoughts and opinions, some would say rashly, with little attention to the usual rules of face. Pop stars, TV celebrities, sporting personalities and politicians are regularly caught out and forced, through public pressure, to apologize and recant.

ACTIVITIES
AREA OF STUDY 1

FEATURES OF INFORMAL LANGUAGE

1. Read the piece below and answer the questions that follow.

We learn pretty quickly how to adapt our behaviour and language to different situations on the job. We talk to our co-workers in one way, our manager in another, and there are many ways in which we can address customers, depending on such things as their sex and age, the formality of the venue, and whether they are in a group or alone. Our intention is to be polite and to avoid giving offence. Wait staff are constantly, though not necessarily consciously, adjusting their language in the work place to suit the customer.

But wait staff don't always get it right. One who didn't was a twenty-year-old woman who served my mother in a restaurant. The young woman repeatedly addressed her as darl throughout their exchange, which my mother felt was inappropriate and patronising, given their age difference.

Darl (sometimes darls) is term of endearment, chiefly Australian, dating from the 1930s: " 'Oh, darl, don't you bother', he begged. 'I hate you to get all het-up.' " (K.S. Prichard, Haxby's Circus, 1930) It is a colloquial abbreviation of darling, and is used to address someone you know very well, such as a spouse, an intimate, or a family member. It is also sometimes used as a more general term of address to strangers, in much the same way as love or dear are used. For instance, you may sometimes hear an older person in a shop or a bar address a customer this way: What can I get for you, love/dear/darl? However, the young woman who addressed my mother as darl had misread her customer, and what was probably intended as a friendly way to put a customer at ease had the opposite effect. My professional advice to inexperienced wait staff is to stick to more formal terms of address in such situations. Just to be safe.

Extract from: Christina Greer April 2014 http://ozwords.org/?p=6068

a. Summarise the discourse issues described in this extract, including register, politeness and face.
b. What is your view about the use of 'darl' in retail or other contexts?
c. Write a 300 word opinion piece in response to this article.

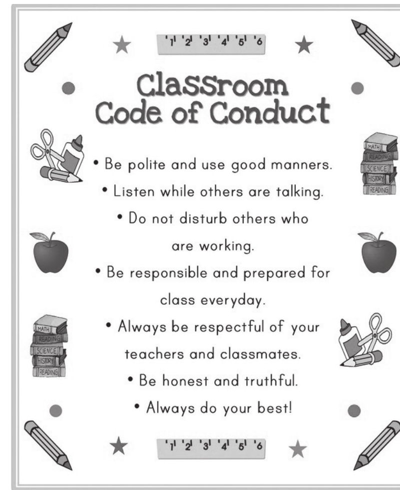
2. In March 2015 a Geelong-based clothing company issued a 'unique' Code of Conduct that exhorted staff to observe the company's "fun, entrepreneurial, keeping it real, family, ethical and engaged" values. Staff in breach of this code of conduct were warned they would be "counselled, issued warnings, or instantly dismissed".

Not only was the company criticised for its "human resources gibberish", commentators observed that the slang used in the directive was inappropriate and vague, leaving employees in a state of confusion about what was expected of them.

As reported in Fairfax Media, failure to be "fun" related to being not respectful, unpleasant or not acting in good faith or spirit. A spokesperson for the company was quoted as saying "Obviously all situations are based on context and individual circumstances".

a. What is a Code of Conduct?
b. How is 'fun' defined by this company? Compare that definition with a dictionary definition.

c. What is the influence of context on language choices for employees in this situation?
d. From a linguistic perspective, what are the considerations regarding register, face and politeness in relation to the Code of Conduct?
e. What are the potential tensions for an employee between being 'fun' and 'keeping it real'?



3. In the passage below label the features of non-standard grammar (see pages 40–41).

Me and Bruce were heading off to the Anzac service but we never got there because he didn't have no petrol in the car. It would've been so much more simpler if he'd checked it proper the day before. His missus reckoned Bruce was awful cross with her and the son – they was supposed to have gone to the petrol station to fill up for him. "What youse done all day?" he said to them. He was real cheesed off, you hear what I'm sayin'?

4. Discuss the likely impact of the context, social purpose and the relationships between participants on the language used in the interactions in the following situations. Complete the table as you discuss each one.

a. A TV chat show interview between a female host and a male sports star.
b. A text message between friends organizing to go shopping later in the day.
c. A brief conversation in the office between a lawyer and her secretary in which the secretary is asked to complete some letters by the 3pm mail collection time.
d. An online forum for car enthusiasts, in which one contributor posts a question about his vehicle and it is immediately answered by another enthusiast who has had a similar issue in the past.
e. A talk back radio discussion between the presenter and a caller on the topic of water restrictions, in which the caller expresses the view that the restrictions are unfair for gardeners.
f. An online dialogue between a telephone company support service and a customer seeking assistance with an issue with his mobile phone plan.

Scenario	Contextual factors	Social purpose	Relationships	Language implications
a.				
b.				
c.				
d.				
e.				
f.				

5. Read this extract from *The man who loved children*, by Christina Stead, and answer the questions that follow.

In this extract from Stead's novel, the father of the family, Sam Pollit, is trying to cajole his 12 year old daughter Louisa to get up and make the breakfast for the family on Sunday morning. Sam has his own special language that he uses with the children. The younger daughter, Evelyn (Evie), also appears in this conversation.

'Is Looloo up yet?'
'No Taddy.' … She is asleep, Taddy: let her sleep. She needs it.'
Sam took no notice but went on in an insinuating, teasing voice, 'Loobyloo! Loo-oobyloo! Loozy! Tea!'
Although Louisa did not answer she was at that moment crawling soundlessly out of bed. She heard him urging Evie, 'Go on, Womey, call her Loozy.'
'No, Taddy, she doesn't like it.'
'Go on, when I tahzoo [tells you].'
'Loo-hoozy! Loozy! Tea-heehee!'
Out of the tail of her eye Evelyn saw Louisa flash across the landing to the stairs. 'She went,' she chanted soothingly, 'she went'.

a. Analyse the register of this conversation, noting the influence of field, mode and the relationship between the participants on the language used.
b. Which style does this exemplify?
c. Note the creative word formations – list examples of reduplication, rhyme, substitution and assimilation.
d. Do you think the author has captured 'authentic' voices in her writing?

6. Collocations occur generally in combinations of word classes. Match the bolded collocation with the form it illustrates.

Combinations of word classes: adjective+noun noun+noun verb+noun adverb+adjective verb+prepositional phrase verb+adverb

She's been working so hard that she's off on a **well-deserved break**.
I'm furious; I'm going to give him **a piece of my mind**.
Your next task is **to give a presentation** on phonology.
Are you **completely mad**?
On Sunday we're **going over to** Tyson's.
Chris didn't want anyone to know he was there so he **tiptoed softly** to the door.

7. Research this list of commonizations (eponyms) and discover where they originated from.

Nicotine	Diesel	Aston Martin
Braille	Serendipity	Melbourne
Gardenia	Adidas	Alfa Romeo
	Gerrymander	Granny Smith
		Valentine's Day

8. a. Match the examples below with the appropriate word formation process (blending, shortening, compounding, reduplication, affixation, abbreviation).

b. Provide a definition for each one and give an example of it in a sentence.
c. Add four more of your own.

example	**word formation process**	**definition**	**example of use**
in the feels			
clickbait			
dox			
bae			
selfie			
bingewatch			
phtotobomb			
smartphone			
like like			

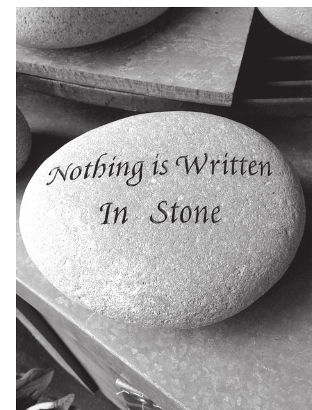
9. Reduplication

In a study conducted by Ghomeshi, Jackendoff, Rosen and Russell in 2004 entitled "Contrastive focus reduplication in English (the Salad-Salad paper) ", contemporary examples of reduplication were described and analysed. Here are some examples:

Are you friends-friends or Facebook-friends?
I'm hungry but not HUNGRY-hungry.
The car isn't MINE-mine; it's my parents.
It's not a DATE-date, just a, you know, lunch date.
He's not my boyfriend-boyfriend; just a boy friend.
He's passive aggressive; actually he's aggressive-aggressive.

a. What is the function of the repetition of words in these examples?
b. For further information, investigate this language phenomenon online.

10. Irony is the expression of one's meaning by using language that normally signifies the opposite, or a situation or event that seems deliberately contrary to what one expects. Irony creates emphasis, and the result is often humorous. Explain why each of these examples is ironic.



A psychic's lecture is cancelled due to 'unforseen circumstances'.
Maintenance workshop sign: 'Please knock loudly – the bell doesn't work.'
Headline: 'Federal Police raid gun shop, find weapons.'
Billboard outside a school: 'We are committed to excellense.'
In The Simpsons, Barney gives up alcohol only to become addicted to coffee.

11. Observe some instances of swearing in day-to-day life, eg, in public places, online, on TV, at work or at school. Note whether the function is social cohesion or an expression of annoyance, as described in this chapter.

12. Refer back to the extract from *Catcher in the Rye* on page 48.

a. Identify the slang expressions, the colloquial language and the informal syntactic features in the text.
b. Discuss how these features contribute to the register of the monologue.
c. Research the reactions that the author attracted when this novel was published (and subsequently).
d. Write a letter to the editor of a modern day newspaper outlining your response to these criticisms.

CONVERSATIONS

13. Select any one of the scenarios in question 4 and role-play it (unscripted) with a classmate.

a. Record the role-play and transcribe it.
b. Analyse the transcript, or reflect on the role-play, in particular noting:

register (especially lexis, syntax)
how cooperation is/is not achieved
prosodic features of the conversation

c. Choose another scenario and write a script for it. Compare the features of the written script with the transcript of your role-play.
d. Summarise your observations in an oral or written report.

14. Examine each conversational exchange and identify the inference and/or implicature in each one. The first has been done for you.

A. Did you talk to him? B. I was busy yesterday.

B implies that he did not talk to the other person (because he was doing something else yesterday); A infers that B did not have time yesterday but might still speak to him, nevertheless.

A: I hope you brought the bread and the cheese. B: Ah, I brought the bread.

A: Coffee? B: It would keep me awake all night.

A: Are you going to Mark's barbecue? B: Well, Mark's got those dogs now.

A: Do you like my new hat? B: It's pink.

A: What happened to the cheesecake? B: I had two slices.

15. Here are four samples of relatively informal language, in both spoken and written modes.

a. Examine each one and identify the features of informal language as discussed in this chapter. These features include: simple and compound sentences, ellipsis, colloquialisms, discourse particles, slang, shortenings, phonological reduction, assimilation and affixation.
b. Prepare a report of your analysis – this could be written, oral, digital or multimodal.

i) Celebrity gossip column

There's been plenty of buzz about what will and what won't go down tomorrow night at MTV's star studded Movie Awards—tho, mostly folks wonder if Robert Pattinson and Kristen Stewart will nab another Best Kiss Award and finally smooch onstage—but we do know one thing for sure: Reese Witherspoon will walk home with the Generation Award for her work in a bunch of pretty good movies—including her most recent flick *Water for Elephants*—and lots of good PR over the years. So we gotta wonder: Is R.W. going to make any mention about the reported abuse of her costar? And no, we're not talking about R.Pattz...

ii) Pop magazine questionnaire

1. What is Your Favourite Hobby?
2. How Old were you when you left School?
3. What was your first Pet?
4. If you were a Fruit ,what kind would you be?
5. If you were a Drink,what kind would you be?
6. Have you ever Won a Prize?
7. What is your Favourite Food?
8. If you Ruled the World,what would be your First Words?
9. What is your Favourite Film?
10. If you could have dinner with one Influential Person, who would it be?

iii) Conversation between two young men

1. S: Are you going to invest in a little business or you [gonna]
2. K: [I'm gonna] [buy a..]
3. S: [Buy a house?]
4. K: I'm gonna buy a house yeah.
5. S: Because business nowadays you know,
   um I don't know,
   it depends which one take,
   like for example,
   I noticed that ah .. at .. ah
6. K: Some are thriving some aren't.
7. S: Westgardens you know what you know,
   what's really thriving in there,
   little business-wise,
   that newsagent.
8. K: Oh yeah.
9. S: There's only one newsagent in the entire complex,
10. K: Yeah.

11. S: And he's been there,
the same people since they started,
12. K: That's very busy that newsagent/
13. S: And that one's got queues always,
about ten fifteen metres long for (.)
14. K: Really?
15. S: scratch tickets and [lotto],
16. K: [Lotto]
17. S: and all things (.)
He must be making an absolute killing/
18. K: Mint,
or making a mint.

iv) Talk back radio conversation between the host (H) and a male caller (C)

1. H: I mean
you're planning to give the Greens your vote,
which is a hugely valuable thing,
a hugely valuable thing.
2. C: That's right/
3. H: And you're gonna give them your vote/
4. C: Yes.
5. H: Shouldn't you be across their ideas?
What about higher taxes,
wouldn't worry you too much?
6. C: Maybe.
Well like I've had,
I've had my neighbour,
my neighbour was admitted five times,
through like- by a ambulance,
and and released the next day.
Two weeks later he died/
7. H: Yeah.
8. C: This is our medical system.
9. H: Okay well, well okay-
10. C: I'd rather have my neighbour alive and well and happy.
11. H: Okay and do you believe if the Greens had power in the Senate,
that your neighbour would be alive?
12. C: Yes I do.
13. H: You really do\
14. C: Yes I do.
14. H: Well you're stupid.
15. C: Well I don't think I am,
I think that he would be alive.
16. H: You are stupid you are stupid,
I'm sorry you are stupid.
You are talking about voting for the Greens,
you have no idea what they stand for\

17. C: I do.
18. H: Do you enjoy a good steak every now and again?
19. C: I do.
20. H: Yeah okay well,
    the Greens would prefer that you were a vegetarian.
21. C: I don't think so @@@@

E-CHAT

16. In the following extract from an online chat room session you will find examples of many of the features of e-language described in this chapter.

a. Identify examples of: emoji, shortened forms, non-standard spelling, punctuation, asides, slang, grammatical informality and acronyms, and discuss their effects.
b. Identify the discourse strategies used by the participants in the chat room.
   Consider greetings, politeness and face, irony/sarcasm, inference.
c. Write an opening paragraph for an analytical commentary that conveys your understanding of:
   - the contextual factors surrounding the text
   - the social purpose and register of the text

Time of post	ID	Comment
4-13 08:04:50	Guest_A	hii everyone
4-13 08:04:22	Guest_A	i just watched 'The Air I breathe"..anyone seen/heard of it?
4-13 07:04:40	filmbuff	Hi, everyone
4-14 07:04:15	dropin	yo, whadup. i wanna talk to someone. about movies/n/shit
4-15 07:04:21	Guest_B	Has anyone seen Fast and Furious 7 yet. Wicked film
4-16 03:04:40	freebie	watch Furious 7 (2015)
4-16 08:04:29	Guest_C	wasnt crazy about fast 7
4-17 09:04:42	Guest_D	it's sorta old now but has anyone seen "let the right one in".?..my fav movie at the moment.
4-19 02:04:47	Guest_E	Anyone here?
4-19 05:04:22	brogan	Guys Avengers age of ultron gets released on 23rd of April in some countries but on May 1st in other countries when do you expect it to appear as a torrent?
4-19 05:04:33	brogan	asd
4-20 06:04:54	yo me123	anyone know where I can watch Unfriended online for free?
4-20 12:04:31	Guest_F	Anyone here like Tom Hanks?
4-23 10:04:22	Guest_D	Yeah, 'Let The Right One In' was a fantastic movie with a great atmosphere. Not sure what the American remake was like, but can't have been better than the original.
4-23 10:04:36	Guest_G	Also, seeing as the trailers for 'Batman v Superman: DOJ' and 'Star Wars: TFA' were released a few of days ago, anyone got an opinion on those?
4-25 07:04:02	Guest_H	Batman vs Superman looks to be a great film but i worry about ben affleck's capabilities

4-25 12:04:20	rebel	Hello ? anyone can help here ?
4-26 10:04:22	Nup	Hello movie pals!
4-26 10:04:09	Nup	Ha everyone worries about Ben Affleck's capabilities.... Ben worries about his capabilities... he had a lost look the whole time in Gone Girl (ha lost and the films called Gone Girl) like he was thinking to himself "I have no idea what I am doing"
4-26 10:04:40	Nup	So this was great, have a lovely day everyone! 😁😁😁
4-27 06:04:53	Guest_G	I don't blame you, I think we all worry about Affleck's acting capabilities, especially considering his last foray into the superhero genre which went so fantastically well (although , it has to be said, still far better than Colin Farrell's character in the same movie... honestly, not sure what they were on when they cam up with that thing).
4-27 06:04:38	Guest_G	Still, I actually worry more about Snyder's abilities as a director, tbh. Don't know which camp you're in, H, but 'Man of Steel' really didn't do it for me at all. That being said, I'm a little more optimistic about things this time around after the trailer. Remains to be seen!
4-27 06:04:50	Guest_3175	Also, finally got around to watching 'Lone Survivor' (I'm that far behind on my movie watching schedule) and holy hell, that was tense! No wonder it got so much attention when it was released.
4-27 08:04:45	MrRabbit	Hello
4-27 08:04:26	MrRabbit	Sorry to join your conversation but I agree with Guest_G, Snyder would not have been my first choice for a story of such caliber.
4-30 03:04:16	Guest_G	The more the merrier, MrRabbit. You probably noticed there's not exactly an overabundance of people on here, we're mostly just talking to ourselves here or having the world's slowest conversation over a matter of months.
4-30 03:04:08	Guest_G	Staying on the superhero subject for a bit here, have we all seen the new "Joker" from 'Suicide Squad'? Now I'm not exactly a comic book fan, so I'm definitely no expert, but is he supposed to look like that? Has there ever been an incarnation of The Joker that looks so ridiculous? I dunno guys, I'm certainly not feeling that design at all.

OUTCOME TASKS

1. **Folio of annotated texts**
   a. Annotate the following texts, one written and one a transcript of a conversation. Identify the features that distinguish each one.

      i. This is a comment posted in an online discussion forum. The writer expresses his disappointment about a concert he attended. The performance was by singer Bob Dylan.

D for Disappointing

After waiting pretty much my whole life to see **Bob Dylan** live, along with about 30,000 other

people last night, the excitement at Bluesfest as we jammed into the Mojo tent was palpable.

It'd been a long, long few days, but I ignored my aching legs and dehydration because I was about to experience Dylan. Bob Dylan. In the flesh.

Despite being only 15-odd metres from the stage, I couldn't see nothin'.

No matter though, I'll just be able to watch him on the two massive screens either side of the stage that'd been on for every single other act over the past 5 days.

Wrong.

Apparently Bob don't like people seeing him, or taking photos of him, so they were turned off for his set.

Um, is that the most ridiculous thing anyone else has ever heard?

Dear Bob,
You're Bob Dylan.
People know what you look like.
You're kind of a big deal. Now a lot of people think you're kind of a tool.
Get over yourself.
Kind regards,
All the people at Bluesfest who weren't in the front row.

On top of that, he didn't say one word to the crowd, except to introduce his band. Not even a 'thanks for coming' at the end.

Extract from *The Drum – the buzz*

ii. This transcript is a conversation between a young man and a young woman who are acquaintances but not close friends. They have met by chance on the train. The young man, M, is seated when the young woman, G, enters the carriage and stands nearby in the aisle and they notice each other almost immediately. A conversation ensues.

Transcription symbols

Symbol	Meaning
.	final falling/level intonation unit
,	continuing intonation unit
?	final rising intonation unit
!	excited voice
/	rising pitch
\	falling pitch
(.)	brief pause
(…)	short silence

Symbol	Meaning
-	truncated word
=	lengthened word
@	laughter
<A…A>	fast speech
<F…F>	loud speech
<P…P>	soft speech
[word]	overlapping speech

Meeting on the train

1. M <P I'm going to give up my seat. P>
2. G <F What? F>
3. M <F I said I'm gonna give up my seat. F>

4. G Are you though?
Why? (…)
Don’t do it.

5. M <L I’ve been sitting down all day. L>

6. G <F Huh? F>

7. M <F I’ve been sitting down all day. F>

8. G So’ve I.
[It’s a challenge]

9. M [Got a desk here] *(patting his laptop bag)*

10. G a challenge. (…)

11. M I don’t know if you know this,
I have a car.

12. G Oh I have a desk.
@@@ (…)
It’s a business.
You’d better sit there,
and have a good hard think about it (.)

13. M Scuse me/ (*Standing up and moving out of his seat into the aisle next to G)*
I just feel bad,
sitting there while you’re standing,
so you can either have the seat or=

14. G Yeah look I’ll go sit there.
You’re such a gent,
Thanks very much.

15. M It’s only because I feel sorry for you. (…)

16. G Do you want to feel how heavy my bag is?

17. M Not really.

18. G No do it,
I’ve been lifting weights all day.

19. M Have you then?

20. G I’ve been carrying that all= day/ (…)
I’m gonna check my bank balance,
because I have to pay my-

21. M You don’t have to pay me.

22. G <F No it’s not that! F>
I just want to see if I ‘ve got enough money,
to pay my phone bill,
and then if I have enough money,
to buy lunch at work/

23. M Oh right yeah.

24. G So I might as well do it,
while I’m seated on the train. *(holds up her phone)*

25. M I’m gonna take noodles tomorrow.

26. G Noodles?

27. M Two packs of noodles (…)
or maybe mum will make me a sandwich.

28. G <F Mum! Mum! Mum! @@@ F>

Preposition Determiner Numeral

Noun Noun

Verb Noun

Article Noun

Preposition Conjunction

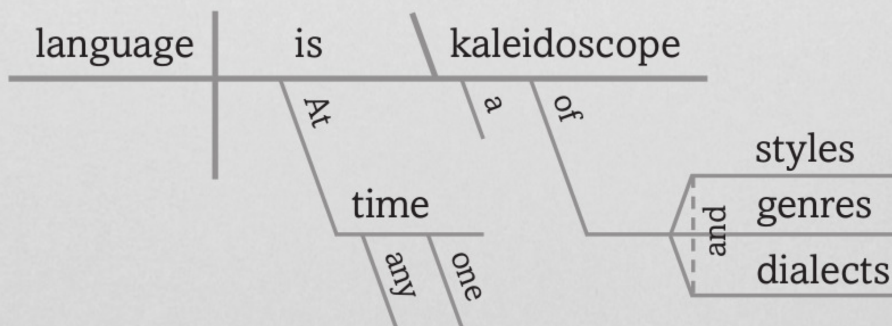
Noun

Noun

AT ANY ONE TIME LANGUAGE IS A KALEIDOSCOPE OF STYLES, GENRES AND DIALECTS

— David Crystal

SENTENCE DIAGRAM



3.0 FORMAL LANGUAGE

In the first chapter we identified Joos' five levels of formality: frozen > formal > consultative > casual > intimate. 'Intimate' style is less formal that 'casual', 'casual' less formal than 'consultative', and so forth. These categories are useful for illustrating that we are dealing with a continuum here (hence the arrows between the levels). There are no fixed boundaries between each of the different styles and any one person's language will reflect a wide range between these extremes of frozen and intimate style. Style will vary according to who we are and who(m) we are communicating with; whether we are speaking or writing (mode); where we are and when the utterance takes place (setting); what we are talking about (field); and how we feel about the whole situation (tenor). Change any one of these factors, and the style may well change accordingly.

Here is a taste of one of the 12 episodes from the sitcom *Fawlty Towers*. Much of the humour of the character Mr Hutchinson in this episode derives from the fact that he speaks in an extremely elevated and florid fashion. He sounds like a book and it is all bizarrely out of place in his everyday interaction with Basil Fawlty, the owner of the hotel Fawlty Towers where Mr Henderson is a guest. The formality of the language also clashes amusingly with his accent (not Received Pronunciation, as might be expected).

Mr Hutchinson:	There is a documentary on BBC2 this evening about "Squawking Bird", the leader of the Blackfoot Indians in the late 1860s. Now this starts at 8.45 and goes on for approximately three-quarters of an hour.
Basil Fawlty:	I'm sorry, are you talking to me?
Mr Hutchinson:	Indeed I am. Yes, now, is it possible for me to reserve the BBC2 channel for the duration of this televisual feast?
Basil Fawlty:	Why don't you talk properly?

[From *Fawlty Towers* Series One, 'The Hotel Inspectors']

How speakers create relative formality or informality varies across speech communities. In some places, it is achieved by switching to another language. Consider, for example, the Amish and Mennonite groups of North America. These people are bilingual Pennsylvania German and English speakers and their choice of language depends on a range of social and situational factors, including intimacy and formality. Pennsylvania German is usually only spoken (ie, not written) and is the language of home and community. English is read and written and is only spoken when dealing with non-Pennsylvania German speaking outsiders. In monolingual English speaking communities, however, people choose from a vast repertoire of different linguistic forms and their stylistic choices are tuned to create just the impression they to wish create. As we saw in the previous chapter, for

any given utterance (spoken or written), there exists a variety of stylistic choices: not only lexical choices, although these are the most obvious, but also grammar, pronunciation, punctuation and **paralinguistic** features like gesture and facial expression.

We've already seen what contributes to informality of expression; now let's move to the other end of the spectrum and consider aspects of formal language. To set the scene, we give you a taste of both ends of the (in)formality spectrum. Below are two versions of the same text, in this case a poem *Upon Westminster Bridge*. The first is Wordsworth's 1802 original and the second is a text message version by poet Peter Finch.

Composed Upon Westminster Bridge (William Wordsworth)

Earth has not anything to show more fair:
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty:
This City now doth, like a garment, wear
The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendour, valley, rock, or hill;
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
The river glideth at his own sweet will:
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still!

N Wst Brdg (Peter Finch)

erth nt a thng so brill
hes dul v soul pssng by
sght of mjstic tch
cty now wrs grmnts of mrng bty :-) slnt bare
Shps twrs dms thtrs + chrchs
opn t flds + sky - ^v^v^
brite glttrng in nosmke air
nvr sun so butfl steep
n hs Ist splndr vlly rck or hll
nvr saw nvr flt clm so deep!!!
rvr flws at hs sweet wll (own):
Deer DG! vry hses seem slp I I
+ all that BIG HRT lyng still!

(1) What features contribute to the formality of the original sonnet?

(2) What features characterize the text message version and make its style so different (in addition to typographical eccentricities).

We don't have the space to provide a full stylistic analysis of either poem, but clearly there are a number of special effects that set Wordsworth's sonnet apart from ordinary usage and create its overall formality. For a start, the poem is full of word play and imagery, such as the **metaphors** ('the morning as clothing'), the exaggerated language ('the mighty heart') and the **personification** (the attribution of human qualities to the city, the sun and the river). All this adds to the otherworldliness of the poem's style. But how does the imagery differ from the poetic inventiveness, say, of slang? In short, it is the elevated language that Wordsworth uses to create his images. This is very different from what we find in everyday language. This poem has **archaic** features of morphology such as *doth, glideth* (with obsolete grammatical suffixes) and also syntax (e.g. the fronting of the *never* and the delay of the verb *steep* in the line 'Never did sun more beautifully steep'). This is 'abnormal' grammar by everyday standards and helps to create the impression of something formal and very remote from the ordinary.

By contrast, everything about the text message version smacks of the vernacular. Many of its typographical conventions (punctuation and capitalization) mimic those of casual spoken language; the expressive devices go way beyond the usual suspects like full stops, question marks and bolding or underlining (for emphasis). Combined with special graphic devices such as emoticons (that add a semantic dimension to this written medium), these conventions place this version nearer to casual speech. The use of these written facial expressions can be quite subtle, as in spoken language. What is the smiley emoticon :-) alerting us to in the fourth line, do you think? As we saw earlier 'txtng' also surpasses the usual cost-cutting measures of other economy registers. In addition to the regular brevity conventions (such as abbreviation and ellipsis), reminiscent of the contractions of spoken language, single letters and numerals often replace syllables or even full words (the **rebus**). Because of the in-built redundancy of our spelling system, vowels can often be sacrificed in the interest of brevity. The result is a very colloquial-looking version of *Upon Westminster Bridge* indeed (despite some rather formal vocabulary).

In the interests of exploring what distinguishes formality from informality, here is one more rendering of Wordsworth's *Composed upon Westminster Bridge*; this one is Ian MacMillan's creation 'Return to Westminster Bridge' (both this and the text message version were composed in 2002 to celebrate the 200th anniversary of this famous sonnet).

Return to Westminster Bridge

Earth has not any thing to show more fair
(Well, to be honest, actually it does)
than this view of floating litter through the city air
I can't hear myself think above the buzz
Of motorcycle couriers shouting loud
Obscenities to the shuffling crowd
Who move across this bridge as slow as sludge
Who point and gawp and spit and swear and trudge
Never did sun more grudgingly shine
On the torn up timetables of cancelled trains
Which drop like confetti on empty bottles of wine
Smashed by those smashed out of their brains
Last night as Big Ben's chimes rang forth
And I'm glad that I live in the civilised North!

Of course the humour in both the recent adaptations of the poem come from the informality of the casual language on the one hand and the formality of the oratorical sonnet form on the other. In this version, you also have the mismatch of the modern grungy images MacMillan is invoking and the colloquial idioms (e.g. 'smashed out of their brains') couched in sound symbolic sequences ('slow as sludge'; 'swear and trudge') and stately syntax ('Never did sun more grudgingly shine') that echo the poetry of Wordsworth's original. We will be returning to these three poems later to further illustrate some conventions of **rhetoric** (techniques for effective or persuasive speaking and writing).

There are many different functions of formal language in both modes (spoken and written), and these text types are multifunctional. A formal speech might well be both informative and instructive, a political brochure both persuasive and informative. While you are reading through these tables, remember again the up-down scale of (in)formality. There will be texts here that have the potential for being considerably more formal than others, depending on contextual aspects (e.g. audience, setting and field). Earlier, we gave the example of an informal eulogy in praise of a friend recently deceased. Imagine now a eulogy at, say, a state funeral. It would be a much more dignified and formal affair, and with highly stylized speech.

Table 1 Functions of Spoken Language

Function	Examples of text types
Information	speech, news article, media interview, announcement, report, proclamation (public statement), radio podcast
Instruction	briefing, verdict, injunction, seminar
Persuasion	political speech, homily, commercial, debate, appeal, disputation
Entertainment	play, address, infotainment, docudrama, narrative, Tedtalk
Ceremony / Ritual	retirement speech, opening / closing address, euology, vote of thanks, wedding toast, rights (given by police)

Table 2 Functions of Written Language

Function	Text types
Information	professional letter, official email, road sign, insurance policy, catalogue, encyclopaedia, dissertation, broadsheet news report, government website
Instruction	questionnaire, memo, warrant, writ, judgement, online manual
Persuasion	editorial, poster, political flyer, debate, advertorial
Entertainment	novel, poem, short story, feature article, editorial
Ceremony / Ritual	obituary, written prayer, memorial plaque, formulaic sections of a legal contract, inscription

(1) Add more functions to this table and provide examples of electronic text types.

(2) Identify those contexts where you yourself might use or encounter formal English in your life.

You can see that most examples of formal language derive overwhelmingly from literature and the public domain. Speakers employ formal language in official speeches, lectures, oaths, liturgies, performances and monologues. Even dramatic dialogue that supposedly represents everyday conversational speech lacks all the non-fluency features, vague expression and fragmented syntax that characterize authentic speech. Formal spoken language shares many of the organizational and stylistic features of writing, but at the same time draws on paralinguistic features such as gesture and eye contact and prosodic cues such as pitch, stress and intonation. Formal written texts comprise, among others, literary texts, legal documents, bureaucratic policy and procedures, official documents and informational literature. Formal language entails much more in the way of preparation. Formal spoken texts require planning and rehearsal. Formal written texts are also planned and typically go through many drafting processes and (potentially) layers of editorial involvement as well.

3.1 THE DRIFT AWAY FROM FORMAL

It turned out to be a fairly tricky exercise to come up with a wide range of formal text types in the table above. The dual forces of liberalization and colloquialization that we talked about in the last chapter mean that these days we are seeing informal language appearing increasingly in the provinces that were once reserved for formal language. To see a simple illustration, consider the following advertisement that appeared in the (Melbourne) *Gazette* (28th August, 1839). It was placed by two gentlemen in search of wives. In the ad, they expressed the hope that

> 'no prudish fears will withhold the ladies from answering this appeal to Cupid, but will joyously come forth in all their pristine purity, to meet half-way those who will be but too happy to link their fates together in the happy bonds of holy matrimony. Letters address A.B., care *Gazette* office, will meet with the greatest secrecy and attention.'

In another advertisement a few years later (July, 1841), the gentleman was a little more particular about his ideal partner:

> 'She must be tall, and well-proportioned in every respect; but above all must have small feet and well-turned ankles, an expressive black or languishing blue eye, good teeth, and pouting lips.

Margaret Weidenhoffer's 1967 book *Garryowen's Melbourne* has many more marvellous examples of advertising English from this time in a chapter called 'A bundle of old advertisements'. Compare the style of these early advertisements with two more recent examples:

> CARING, romantic, European male, 40 y.o. non-smoker, no ties, financially secure, good sense of humour, enjoys dining out, sports, cars and good conversation over coffee. Seeks sincere, affectionate lady 30–37 for relationship leading to marriage. No kids, but wants children.

> HELLO, 51 y.o., single, sincere, sporty, sensual, reliable, no baggage, DTE, energetic, Aussie male looking to meet a well groomed, romantic woman with a pleasant, easygoing nature.

Quite a few decades separate these personal advertisements, and much has changed in this time. The short of it is written language and public speaking are becoming progressively more casual and everyday. We see this even in changes to the terminology that we use: *lectures* are now more likely to be called *talks* and terms like *oratory* (the art of public speaking), *rhetoric* (the art and study

of persuasive writing and speaking), *elocution* (the art of public speaking where qualities of voice production, gesture and delivery are emphasized) and *recitation* (the act of reciting memorized materials in public) are simply no longer part of most people's active vocabulary. *Living Lingo* is itself a good example of this informalization of expression. The language we are using here is far more laid back and much more personal than anything you will find in earlier textbooks (at least up until the 1960s when the changes began). Take, for instance, the rather chatty way we constantly refer to you, the readers. If reference was ever made to reader(s) in the past, it was typically done in what now comes across as rather stilted English, using what's called the **third person**; for example, 'the astute reader [that's you!] will doubtless have noticed the familiar style adopted in this present book'. It was usual for authors, too, to appear in the third person. Here's a paragraph from Gordon R. Pittaway's little handbook Efficiency in *Speaking and Writing* (written in the 1930s).

> It is hoped, therefore, that this little book, at a price to suit all, will be of ready assistance to young and old in securing the admirable and necessary assets of correct speech and writing. The writer has endeavoured to make the work as wide as possible in scope, but to mark its treatment throughout with simplicity and utility. Thanks are due to the late Mr. G. H. Freeman, M.A., LL.B., and Mr. W.T. Hill, M.A., for their esteemed advice in compiling the matter herein.' [Gordon R. Pittaway 1936: 11]

We have mentioned Samuel Johnson in connection with his dictionary of 1755. This work marks the beginning of the Modern English period and, because of standardization (and the linguistic straitjacketing that this process entails), we are still able read and understand the English of this time – little has changed to the structural hub of the language, at least the standard language. (We might point out that those in Johnson's era could not read with the same ease the literature of the 1400s – the changes were just too great.) Below are two famous paragraphs from the preface to the dictionary. As you see, it well might fall under the label 'Modern English', but it is still strikingly different from anything that is produced today.

> I have (…) attempted a dictionary of the *English* language, which, while it was employed in the cultivation of every species of literature, has itself been hitherto neglected, suffered to spread, under the direction of chance, into wild exuberance, resigned to the tyranny of time and fashion, and exposed to the corruptions of ignorance, and caprices of innovation.
>
> When I took the first survey of my undertaking, I found our speech copious without order, and energetick without rules: wherever I turned my view, there was perplexity to be disentangled, and confusion to be regulated; choice was to be made out of boundless variety, without any established principle of selection; adulterations were to be detected, without a settled test of purity; and modes of expression to be rejected or received, without the suffrages of any writers of classical reputation or acknowledged authority. [Samuel Johnson, *Preface to the Dictionary* 1755]

(1) Why was Johnson motivated to write a dictionary?

(2) Highlight the lexical items that are unusual by today's standard.

(3) Identify any unusual spelling and punctuation.

(4) What do you notice about sentence structure?

What distinguishes the writing here is its style; it is exceedingly elevated by today's standards. The formality is immediately obvious in the lexical choice; Johnson's language is abundantly

classical in style – big words made bigger with Greek and Latin derived morphology (e.g. *exuberance* and *adulterations*). And there is an irony here. Johnson had a real loathing for French **borrowings**; in particular, he railed against the fashionable use of French among the cultivated upper classes who peppered their conversations with French words and phrases. In his dictionary he branded the borrowed words *finesse* and *ruse* as 'neither elegant nor necessary' and *trait* as 'scarce English'. In his *Preface,* he warned that more such borrowings would 'reduce us to babble a dialect of France'. And yet his own language was abundantly Romance (Latin-based) in style, and the majority of lexical words in these two paragraphs are either French or Latin in origin.

The comedy *Black Adder The Third* (Episode 2 – 'Ink and Incapability') beautifully parodies Samuel Johnson. Here is an extract of the exchange between Edmund Blackadder, Dr Johnson and Prince 'Thick as a Whale Omlette' George (this the episode where Dr Johnson's manuscript is burned).

Edmund Blackadder: Dr. Johnson, Your Highness.
Prince George: Ah, Dr. Johnson! Damn cold day!
Dr Johnson: Indeed it is, sir -- but a very fine one, for I celebrated last night the encyclopaedic implementation of my premeditated orchestration of demotic Anglo-Saxon.
Prince George: (nods, grinning, then speaks) Nope -- didn't catch any of that.
Dr Johnson: Well, I simply observed, sir, that I'm felicitous, since, during the course of the penultimate solar sojourn, I terminated my uninterrupted categorisation of the vocabulary of our post-Norman tongue.
Prince George: Well, I don't know what you're talking about, but it sounds damn saucy, you lucky thing! I know some fairly liberal-minded girls, but I've never penultimated any of them in a solar sojourn, or, for that matter, been given any Norman tongue!
Edmund Blackadder: I believe, Sir, that the Doctor is trying to tell you that he is happy because he has finished his book. It has, apparently, taken him ten years.

As we see later, it is still the case that Romance and classically inspired vocabulary is part of the elevated style of modern-day formal expression. Complex syntax also contributes (as seen by the length and density of Johnson's sentences in his Preface, and in the Blackadder spoof). Few of us write in mile-long sentences any more. And here we draw your attention to the full title of Johnson's dictionary: *A Dictionary of the English Language: in which the words are deduced from their originals, and illustrated by examples from the best writers. To which are prefixed, a history of the language, and an English grammar*. A long way from the short catchy titles we're used to today!

The drift away from this sort of formality of expression must be set against a backdrop of wide-ranging social change. The 1970s saw the start of social and political movements pushing for clear and simple language. The Plain English movement was a piece of social engineering that attempted to redress inequalities in our societies — the intended audience was the 'average' person struggling with the complexities of law, government, banks and insurance. And **political correctness**, as it became known, also aimed to ensure a fair go for all by getting English speakers to focus on the rights of different (usually marginalized) groups. It prescribed and proscribed public language for ethnicity, race, gender, sexual orientation, appearance, religion, (dis)ability and so on. It is not the relative

success of either of these campaigns that is at issue here, but the fact that they are evidence of new linguistic thinking. As we discussed in the previous chapter, with growing egalitarianism and social democracy, the solidarity / intimacy functions of language are gaining over the status / distance functions. Certainly in Australia, we see a new regard for the vernacular, and Australianness is now viewed with relative pride compared to former times.

3.1.1 JOURNALESE AND BROADCASTING ENGLISH

Modern journalism is another example of the triumph of casual, everyday language. Here's an extract from an old news report from *The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser* (Thursday 18th June 1835; http://newspapers.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/2198686). The piece describes the events surrounding the arrest of Charles Adam Corbyn (he ended up one of 280 convicts transported to Australia on 26th October 1835).

SYDNEY GAZETTE
AND NEW SOUTH WALES ADVERTISER.
ESTABLISHED THIRTY-THREE YEARS.

VOLUME XXXIII. THURSDAY, JUNE 18, 1835. NUMBER 2579.

MAITLAND RACES.

COALS.

T. ROBINSON,

Postponement of Sale.

Ironmongery, &c.

SAMUEL ONIONS,

Seal Engraving.

ROBBERY AND ATTEMPTED SUICIDE. —

On Tuesday, *Charles Adam Corbyn*, with several *aliases,* a fine youth about eighteen years of age, the son of a captain in the navy, for whose apprehension (for stealing several gold watches, and other valuable property, belong to Sir Charles Forbes Bart., No. 9, Fitzroy-square) a reward of £25 has been offered, was brought up in custody of John Champreys, S, 173, who deposed that, about 10 o'clock that morning, he was on duty in the Hampstead-road, when he saw the prisoner pass, who turned and looked at him very hard. Witness then carefully surveyed him, and thinking, from the description given that he was the person who had dined with Sir Charles on the day of the robbery, and the one suspected to be the thief, he determined on watching him; he accordingly followed him a few yards, when the prisoner turned into an old ironmonger's shop, where having stayed some minutes, he came out again. Witness then entered the shop to ask what he had purchased, and was informed that he had agreed for two foils and a midshipman's dirk. Knowing that the person suspected had been a midshipman, he made sure he was on the right sent. He followed and over-took him, accosting him with "Do you know Sir Charles Forbes?" to which the prisoner replied in the affirmative. Witness then asked him if he would have any objection to accompany him to Sir Charles's, and he having said, "No," they proceeded on their way thither. Nothing more passed till they arrived at the door, when the prisoner said, "I am the person you are looking; what does Sir Charles intend to do?".

(1) Identify the stylistic features that make the writing (above) seem so formal. (2) Convert this into a more modern news report. (3) Identify the changes that you have made to lexicon (including semantics), syntax and layout (including punctuation).

This piece has none of the colloquialisms or clipped syntax that we associate with modern-day journalese. As with Johnson's writing, the grammar is the biggest challenge: the length of the sentences, the lack of paragraphs, the structure of the sentences (e.g. simple versus complex), and the complexity of the clauses (**subordination** rather than **coordination**). There is constant interruption of information — as many as 47 words separate the subject of the first sentence 'Charles Adam Corbyn' from its verb 'was brought up'.

These days, we have different daily newspapers that cater for all sorts of people of varying educational and literacy levels and the level of formality can differ markedly. Articles may be in a formal and intellectually demanding style, but the most popular daily papers offer an informal, reader-friendly style, and this is increasingly the case for all newspapers. It was the emergence of tabloid journalism early last century that started the trend. This was an attempt to produce a smaller and more popular newspaper in competition with the larger and more established broadsheet. Traditionally, tabloids used more vernacular terms; they went in for heightened (or exaggerated language), alliteration and word play (such as **puns**); the sentences were bite-sized and the language more colloquial, often even chatty. Crystal and Davy characterized it as 'shredded English' and 'an echo of the rhythms of colloquial speech' (1969: 185). By comparison, broadsheets were more conservative, showing less of the slang and overstatement typical of the tabloid press; more formal constructions; greater complexity in sentences (more punctuation in the way of commas and semi-colons); use of rhetorical questions; few contractions. However, broadsheet newspapers are disappearing, and their language is becoming increasingly less formal. But in fact, the trend now is moving right away from print media to TV, radio, online newspapers and social media. Indeed, with the digital growth of news reporting, many are now speculating that printed news will soon be a thing of the past.

A typical radio broadcaster in the 1950s.

The shift towards everyday spoken language is also evident in the informalization of television and radio. Perhaps you've heard examples of early broadcasting – even the style of sporting commentary comes across as exceedingly formal in matters of accent, vocabulary and grammar. In the case of pronunciation, the move is well away from the Received Pronunciation (or BBC-accented English), which was the usual and more prestigious form up until fairly recently. Raymond Kent describes the Australian newsreaders of the 1930s as often being Englishmen 'with wondrously rounded Home Counties vowels, who presented a news report as though they were reading the Ten Commandments with divine permission' (1983:129). Indeed, up until quite recently it was even usual for radio presenters to dress in very formal clothing – a bow tie and dinner suit no less.

Shifting styles in Australian Broadcasting

> If "standardization" in broadcast speech required adherence to stylistic formality and "correct" pronunciation, "de-standardization" involves moving towards the vernacular. The emerging Australian identity […] resulted in significant cultural change, and it was not long before broadcasters began to modify the news style that had been adopted as part of the BBC model. A crucial component of this style was its RP-like vowel quality, but this was eventually abandoned in favour of a sound that was more authentically "Australian", in that it more accurately reflected the speech of the majority of the population. General Australian has thus now replaced Cultivated as the standard in broadcasting, to the point where Cultivated is now considered inappropriate and undesirable by news directors and audiences alike. [Price 2006: 15]

Jenny Price's study highlights the complexity of the different factors that have been contributing to the increasing informality of language now heard on the airways. Ever changing technology (e.g. the introduction of the portable transistor radio in the late 1950s, and the introduction of smaller and better microphones) has contributed to a more personal broadcasting style. Most important is the rise of commercial media interests. As Price describes it, all around the English-speaking world 'a style-shift has occurred whereby the once informative nature of public affairs language has moved in the direction of entertainment'; this is particularly noticeable in the very competitive, youth-oriented FM radio market where the features of conversational or colloquial speech are dominant.

3.1.2
RITUALS ARE RELAXING

A good example of move towards casual is the annual broadcast of the Queen of England's Christmas message (an example of a spoken **monologue**). It involves written English that is read aloud, so it will automatically be a more elevated style. Yet compare the opening and closing words of the Queen's first Christmas speech (1952) with the one delivered in 2013.

Queen Elizabeth's first Christmas speech (1952)

Each Christmas, at this time, my beloved father broadcast a message to his people in all parts of the world. To-day I am doing this to you, who are now my people.
As he used to do, I am speaking to you from my own home, where I am spending Christmas with my family; and let me say at once how I hope that your children are enjoying themselves as much as mine are on a day which is especially the children's festival, kept in honour of the Child born at Bethlehem nearly two thousand years ago.
Most of you to whom I am speaking will be in your own homes, but I have a special thought for those who are serving their country in distant lands far from their families. Wherever you are, either at home or away, in snow or in sunshine, I give you my affectionate greetings, with every good wish for Christmas and the New Year.
At Christmas our thoughts are always full of our homes and our families. This is the day when members of the same family try to come together, or if separated by distance or events meet in spirit and affection by exchanging greetings. […]
May God bless and guide you all through the coming year.

Queen Elizabeth's Christmas speech (2013)

I once knew someone who spent a year in a plaster cast recovering from an operation on his back.
He read a lot, and thought a lot, and felt miserable.
Later, he realised this time of forced retreat from the world had helped him to understand the world more clearly.
We all need to get the balance right between action and reflection. With so many distractions, it is easy to forget to pause and take stock. […]
Reflection can take many forms. When families and friends come together at Christmas, it's often a time for happy memories and reminiscing. Our thoughts are with those we have loved who are no longer with us. We also remember those who through doing their duty cannot be at home for Christmas, such as workers in essential or emergency services.
And especially at this time of year we think of the men and women serving overseas in our armed forces. We are forever grateful to all those who put themselves at risk to keep us safe. […]
I wish you all a very happy Christmas.

The articulation of these speeches is also very different (and you can hear these broadcasts on the Internet). Australian researcher Jonathan Harrington and colleagues have been studying several decades of the Queen's pronunciation and their findings show that the royal vowels have changed remarkably. Though clearly she still sounds upper class, their analysis reveals that her pronunciation of a number of vowels has been drifting away from RP towards the standard southern British accent of the 1980s (an accent more typically associated with speakers who are younger and lower down in the social hierarchy). As early as 2000, Harrington is quoted in *The Guardian* newspaper (Thursday, December 21) as saying: 'We conclude that the Queen no longer speaks the Queen's English of the 1950s'.

We will not comment here on whether this overwhelming move towards the casual is a good or a bad thing. Is the writing of Samuel Johnson more efficient, more precise and more nuanced than anything we can produce today — or is it stuffy, autocratic and artificial? There are many who do believe that this shift represents a diminishing of the language – and they are certainly not all grumpy old men and women. John McWhorter is a young American linguist who believes that it is an exceptional occurrence in modern history to see the demise of formal expression in so many domains. In his book, *Doing Our Own Thing: The degradation of language and music and why we should, like, care*, he describes what he views as the negative impact of this new casual 'spoken' language on American people's ability to think and communicate. It's a wonderfully written book, all the more so because of the accessibility and vibrancy of its colloquial style (a nice irony that is not lost on McWhorter).

Conduct a debate on the topic: 'The shift to casual language means the death of good English'.

3.2 STYLISTIC FEATURES

We now examine more closely what it is that endows expression with formality. The standard language is all-important — quite simply, the more formal the situational and cultural context of the exchange, the greater the dependence on standard features. Because the standard variety has been codified (in other words, recorded in grammar books, dictionaries and style guides), people feel that it is the variety they should use, especially when the situation is a formal one. In some communities speakers go beyond style and actually switch dialects — between the standard (say, at work or with outsiders) and their local dialect (say, at home or in the pub).

In the last chapter, we mentioned that it is easier to apply the concept of a standard language to writing. The label 'standard' entails not only 'best practice' but also 'uniform practice' and this is more practical in the context of written language, especially formal written language. The writing process (and the conscious self-censorship that accompanies it) safeguards the language from 'the chaos of a living speech', to use the words of Johnson (though e-communication might now be re-releasing this chaos). People do speak Standard English, of course, but the nature of speech means that there is more variation and instability. In short, the standard features that accompany formality are more readily achievable in writing. However, never equate formality with written English. As you have already seen, formality can be found in both modes.

Formal language tends to be less ambiguous, unless the speaker or writer is being deliberately unclear. It is more expansive and cohesive, and more usually makes explicit those aspects of the context that in everyday speech and writing are so often left unstated. In constructing formal texts, language users are more likely to bear in mind how their audience might interpret their messages, and they are more conscious about the impact and the effectiveness of their language; in other words, they package it appropriately with attention to rhetorical techniques and information flow.

To illustrate how linguistic features might combine to create a formal variety, focus on the lexical and syntactic aspects of the following six examples of different registers (an assortment of written and spoken). These short excerpts give us a glimpse of the range of different formal varieties of Modern English that are still being produced – and though all are formal, you will notice the examples vary considerably in style.

Example (1) Legal English (written)
Section 2 (b) from clause 28 of the Melbourne Metropolitan Planning Scheme.

Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph (a) hereof the responsible authority may grant permission for a reduction in the number of car spaces to be provided or required to be provided upon any land for the accommodation of stationary vehicles if to its satisfaction and subject to such conditions as it may impose provision is made upon other land in the vicinity for the accommodation of such vehicles and the number of car spaces so provided is not less than that by which the number provided or required to be provided is to be reduced. For the purpose of this paragraph 'reduction' includes the wavering of the requirement and 'reduced' has a corresponding meaning.

Example (2) Winespeak (written)
Reviewer Patrick Sloane describes an outstanding Australian pinot noir

Purple/red. An alluring nose with coffee and chocolate combined with wild berries and forest floor aromas. Fresh and clean with fleshy fruit, ripe summer berries and cacao bean flavours. Silky smooth and sensuous, this is a wine for seduction, as a symphony of taste sensations saturate the palate. Seamless and integrated, there is a continuity of flavour that lasts from first sip until last drop. Wine so sexy they should attach a birth control warning to the back of the bottle!

Examples (3) E-speak (written)
Global email sent out to Monash University professors (the 'revocation of Statute 3.4.1' means that professors are no longer required to retire at 65 years)

Revocation of Statute 3.4.1 - The Professors

[…] The revocation will formally take effect when the decision of the Council is ratified by the Governor in Council; this should occur prior to the end of this year. The statute was established in 1964, however for many years terms and conditions of employment for Professors at Monash have been primarily set out in the relevant Monash University Enterprise Agreement and individual contracts of employment. Your employment contract and the enterprise agreement continue to operate and the revocation of the Professors statute does not reduce any substantive terms and conditions of employment. The changes also do not alter the nature of any fixed term employment contracts, including performance based contracts.

The primary impact of the revocation of the Professors Statute is the removal of the reference to Professors in the University ceasing to hold the office of Professor at the end of the year in which they reached age 65. Given the decision of Council, the University will henceforth proceed on the basis that the Statute has ceased to be operative. This means that the Professors Statue will no longer operate either in its own right or by virtue of any reference in a contract of employment.

Example (4) Polliespeak (spoken / written)
Extract from Barack Obama's US Election victory speech

If there is anyone out there who still doubts that America is a place where all things are possible, who still wonders if the dream of our founders is alive in our time, who still questions the power of our democracy, tonight is your answer.

It's the answer told by lines that stretched around schools and churches in numbers this nation has never seen, by people who waited three hours and four hours, many for the first time in their lives, because they believed that this time must be different, that their voices could be that difference.

It's the answer spoken by young and old, rich and poor, Democrat and Republican, black, white, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, gay, straight, disabled and not disabled. Americans who sent a message to the world that we have never been just a collection of individuals or a collection of red states and blue states.

We are, and always will be, the United States of America.

It's the answer that led those who've been told for so long by so many to be cynical and fearful and doubtful about what we can achieve to put their hands on the arc of history and bend it once more toward the hope of a better day.

It's been a long time coming, but tonight, because of what we did on this date in this election at this defining moment change has come to America.

Example (5) Legal English (spoken — unannotated transcript)
Magistrate David Heilpern delivers a judgement

This is a classic example of conduct which offends against the standards of good taste or good manners which is a breach of the rules of courtesy and runs contrary to accepted social rules – to use the words of Justice Kerr. It was ill-advised, rude, and improper conduct. Some people may be offended by such words, but I am not satisfied beyond a reasonable doubt that it is offensive within the meaning of the section. There is doubt in my mind that a reasonably tolerant and understanding and contemporary person in his or her reactions would be wounded or angered or outraged. Such a person would be more likely to view it as a regrettable but not uncommon part of living near people who drink to excess. I have no doubt that people would have been disturbed as a result of being awoken or distracted by the yelling and carry on, whatever the language used. I ask myself this question – what difference would it make to the reasonably tolerant person if swear words were used or not. I answer that there would be little difference indeed. In short, my view is that community standards have changed and that I am not satisfied beyond a reasonable doubt that the language used was offensive within the meaning of the Act in the factual circumstances of this case. I concur with the comments of Justices Meagher, Yeldham, Herron, Chambers, Higgins, Mullighan and Ducker.

Example (6) Foodspeak (spoken — unannotated script)
Simon Marchmont explains a number of the steps in his recipe for 'Leftover Supper'

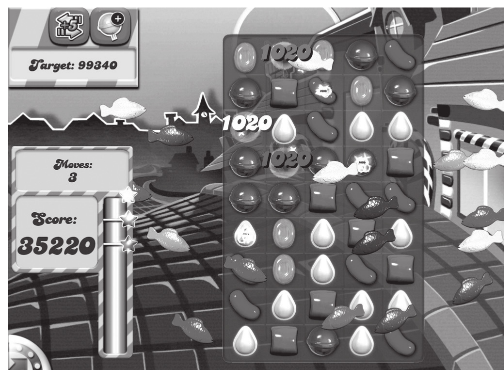
Now for the chicken. Brando one-third of the butter in the chicken's world of interior. Then mollify its complexion with the remaining two-thirds. Massage rhythmically and gently. Your aim is to make the dead bird happy. If a chicken feels bitter, it tastes bitter. Aga-sweat at 200, for about 58 minutes, butter-basting often. When your chicken is noblesse oblige, embarrass a leg and some decolletage and twirl some flaked flesh in the pan-sweat. Leave by a south-facing window for an hour, giving the chicken ample time to de-traumatise and un-heat.

Place your parsnips in an auction-bought dish. Arrange them centrifugally like the spokes of a wheel in a Brueghel painting. (Brueghel the Elder, of course.) Twirl a smattering of leaves from still-beating lettuce hearts. Shower the epicentre with French still mineral watercress. Let almonds fall where'er they may, at five centimetre interludes.

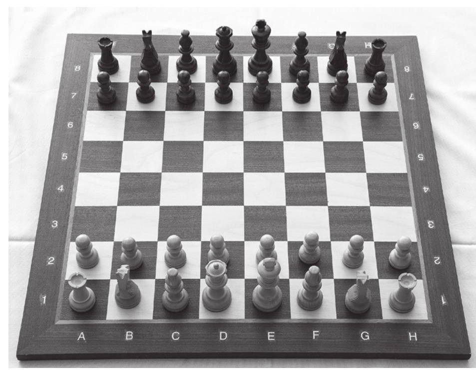
We are not going to provide full stylistic analyses of these texts, but rather focus on a handful of the more striking lexical and grammatical features of just some of the extracts in order to make more general points. These varieties have idiosyncratic vocabularies that are peculiar to their register. In (1) we have an example of Legalese. It abounds in terms that are both high in style and unfamiliar to those of us outside the law (e.g. 'hereof'; 'the accommodation of stationary vehicles'). Food and wine registers have their own distinctive vocabularies, too, as shown in the extracts (2) and (6). The language here is also characterized by elaborately stylized expressions and flamboyant imagery ('Silky smooth and sensuous, this is a wine for seduction'). These days, even basic food and wine writing draws heavily from sexual metaphors for inspiration, and both these extracts ooze erotic possibility. It all makes great fodder for comedies like *Posh Nosh* (illustrated in 6), a rather brutal send up of TV cooking programs. The imagery of Simon Marchmont's culinary terminology is a wonderful

parody of some of the pretentious jargon that the food industry generates (well, pretentious from an outsiders' perspective — it's always easy to tilt at the jargon of others). As the *Posh Nosh* website informs us, in this cooking show you can learn to 'relax an avocado, bamboozle a parsnip and shave a fennel, all on a duvet of rice paper'. Metaphor is often a matter of taking ordinary vocabulary but putting it to extraordinary uses.

These excerpts also show differences in grammatical structure. Legal documents are characterized by long and extremely complex sentences, and this particular feature renders the extract in (1) almost incomprehensible to a general reader. Sub-clause 2 (b) consists of two long sentences; the first is 91 words. In addition to their length, these sentences are complex in structure. There is a great deal of subordination; in other words, clauses linked by means of subordinating markers. Compare this complexity to the grammar in the extract of Winespeak in (2), and you might as well be comparing strategies in chess to those in Candy Crush. In the wine description the sentences are all short and sharp, often simply fragments with missing verbs (reminiscent of so much journalistic writing today).



Candy crush



Chess board

Another earmark of legal or bureaucratic English is the general stacking of negatives and we see plenty of examples of this in the Melbourne Metropolitan Planning Scheme: 'the number of car spaces so provided is not less than'; 'provided any existing accommodation for stationary vehicles is not diminished and the purpose ... does not differ'; 'Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraphs (a) and (b) hereof'. The difficulty stems from not only openly negative markers like *not*, *never* and *un-*, but also semantically negative words like *default*, *diminish* and negative connectors like *notwithstanding, unless*, *except*, *provided that* and *however*.

It is important to point out that formality doesn't have to involve grammatical complexity. Compare the following two sentences:

> 'The invalid is experiencing a potentially fatal haemorrhage situation'
> 'The sick person is probably bleeding to death'.

Both are made up of a single clause. It is the unfamiliar and elevated vocabulary in the first sentence that provides the formal furnishings. This point is illustrated well in Obama's language (4) and Judge Heilpern's language (5). Both these extracts have complex sentences but the language is readily comprehensible. In the following two examples, the clauses have been separated by brackets:

> [[If there is anyone out there [who still doubts [that America is a place [where all things are possible]]], [who still wonders [if the dream of our founders is alive in our time]], [who still questions the power of our democracy]], tonight is your answer].

[I answer [that there would be little difference indeed]]. [In short, my view is [that community standards have changed] and [that I am not satisfied beyond a reasonable doubt [that the language used was offensive within the meaning of the Act in the factual circumstances of this case]]].

It is often the case that stylistic features start life having a clear function, but over time they take on more of a stylistic role. In Legalese (and its off-spring Bureaucratese), anaphoric pronouns have traditionally been avoided to ensure clear unambiguous identification. A lawyer might argue that the repetition of 'Statute' in (3) is to remove any doubt as to what is being referred to. Nonetheless, there are many occasions in here where identification is perfectly clear and the use of the pronoun *it* would be quite unambiguous. Over time a feature like lexical repetition can become a matter of stylistic choice. It's a good example of something that was once functional becoming ornamental.

3.2.1 PHONOLOGICAL PATTERNING

There is a theory that speech production varies along a continuum that ranges from distinct or clear speech to less distinct or less clear speech. According to this theory, speakers will make just as much effort to speak clearly as is required by their audience in order to understand what is being said (Lindblom 1990). In the last chapter, we saw that, when you're chatting with good friends, the production doesn't have to be clear because there is so much common ground — in this case, your conversational partner has a good chance of predicting the information and so you can afford to be economical with your articulation. However, in more formal situations, especially where speakers are not known to each other, not as much can be taken for granted, and speech is much more likely to be produced with a view to clarity. In other words, speakers will hold back on the natural reductive speech production processes (such as vowel reduction and assimilation) to ensure that the sounds are sufficiently distinct.

In the next unit, we learn about the three overall varieties of accent in Australian English — Broad, General and Cultivated. These labels are not meant to be judgemental; they simply represent a convenient three-way division along a continuum of broadness. The use of one variety over another is governed by different factors, but principally education, gender identification, location (urban versus rural) and to some extent also stylistic requirements (formal versus informal situations, for example). Broad accents use more of these reduction processes and the posh and more formal accents suppress them. You will find that these varieties often have characteristic grammatical features too. For example, the closer they are to the Broad end of the accent spectrum, the more nonstandard features they show.

Formality can also be captured by individual words that have socially marked pronunciations. Here the variation can involve different phonemes. The French borrowings offer a good example. How do you say the word *garage*? Many people pronounce it [gəˈraʒ]. This is the pronunciation closest to French, with stress on the second syllable and a final [ʒ] sound (a recent phoneme for English which retains a hint of the exotic). Some prefer [gəˈradʒ] (which has the more English 'dg' sound at the end); others prefer [ˈgæradʒ] (the most English of all because it has the stress on the first syllable, and 'dg' at the end) or even [ˈgærədʒ] (with the second syllable losing any emphasis). There is a certain amount of snobbery attached to the way we pronounce French words. For extra panache, we often pop in that all-purpose nasal vowel that English speakers specially reserve for French borrowings. Think of words like *lingerie, restaurant, entrée* — for some people, it doesn't matter what the original French vowel is, it is pronounced with the same vowel.

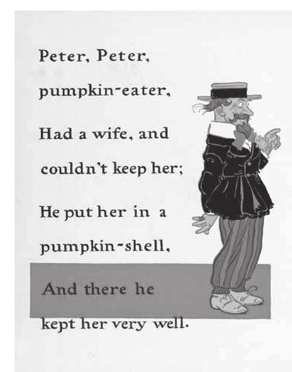
Next we look at some of the prosodic features and phonetic properties of English consonants and vowels that speakers and writers can exploit for special effect. You have seen how these features work at the informal end of the continuum — now we're looking at the stuff of great literature, poetry and public language.

Alliteration is a frequent rhetorical strategy that involves the repetition of initial consonants'. In poetry we find examples like: 'In a **s**ummer **s**eason when **s**oft was the **s**un' (a modernized version from the prologue of William Langland's *The Vision Concerning Piers Ploughman*); 'Never did **s**un more beautifully **s**teep in his first **s**plendour' (Wordsworth *Upon Westminster Bridge*); '**sl**ow as **sl**udge' (MacMillan's *Return to Westminster Bridge*), and in persuasive speaking and writing examples like: '**p**artisanship and **p**ettiness, **p**oisoned our **p**olitics' (Obama's victory speech); **S**ilky **s**mooth and **s**ensuous, this is a wine for **s**eduction, as a **s**ymphony of taste **s**ensations **s**aturate the palate ('winespeak').

Assonance is another special effect involving the repetition of the same or similar vowel sounds. It is a kind of inner rhyme; for example, 'Sn**i**p-snap and sn**i**ck-a-sn**i**ck, Clash the Barber's shears' (Walter de la Mare's *The Barber's*); 'Dull would h**e** b**e** of soul who could pass by'; 'the very houses s**ee**m asl**ee**p' (Wordsworth's *Upon Westminster Bridge*). It is also a powerful device in marketing, as evident in advertising slogans like: 'It b**ea**ts as it sw**ee**ps as it cl**ea**ns'.

The term ***rhyme*** as it's used in poetry involves the recurrent use of syllables of similar sounds at the ends of poetic lines; for example: 'Soft is the strain when Zephyr gently **blows**, And the smooth stream in smoother numbers **flows**' (Alexander Pope's *An Essay on Criticism*). The rhyme scheme of Wordsworth's *Upon Westminster Bridge* is straightforward: ABBAABBA CDCDCD (with one pair of rhyming lines more a visual than an actual rhyme: 'by' and 'majesty' in lines 2 and 3 look like they should rhyme.

Onomatopoeia involves words with pronunciations that echo natural sounds of the world. In the sentence 'But when loud surges lash the sounding shore, the hoarse rough verse should like the torrent roar' (Alexander Pope's *Essay on Criticism*) the hissing *s*-sounds imitate the sea smashing on the shore. The *-udge* words (*sludge, trudge*) in MacMillan's *Return to Westminster Bridge* conjure up something solid, heavy and lumpy. Sound symbolism probably also inspires his use of 'grudgingly' in line 8. In English there is a strong connection between the [gr] cluster of consonants (seen in *grudgingly*) and muckiness (think of collections of words like *grimy, grotty, grit, grubby, greasy, gross*; we've even remodeled *gunge* to *grunge,* so that it's more like the other grotty 'gr' words); messy filthy images are obviously what the poet is seeking.



Peter Peter pumpkin-eater – nineteenth century nursery rhyme

Rhythm is the regular recurrence of stresses (or prominent units) in speech. For example in the following four lines the repetition of stressed syllables (in bold) followed by unstressed syllables creates a lively rhythm that is typical of this kind of falling rhythm: '**Out** of **child**hood **in**to **man**hood, **Now** had **grown** my **Hia**was**tha**, **Skilled** in **all** the **craft** of **hunt**ers, **Learned** in **all** the **lore** of **old** men' (Henry Longfellow, *The Song of Hiawatha*). Wordsworth's poem is written in a loose iambic pentametre, the common metrical form for English poetry; it consists of five (that's the *penta* bit) pairs of alternating unstressed and stressed beats. (If you want to remember the rhythm of iambic metre think of the pulse of 'i**am**bic **feet** are **firm** and **flat**'.)

Consonance is a kind of harmony produced by the recurrent use of sounds in a sequence of words for pleasant effect (but not confined to beginnings of words like alliteration); for example, consider the soft gentle tone conveyed by the repetition of the *s*-type sounds (sibilants) in the two lines from Alexander Pope earlier. The poetry of Gerald Manley Hopkins shows striking examples of consonance. In the following lines from his *The Wreck of the Deutschland* there is so much consonance we don't know where to begin the bolding: 'How a lush-kept plush-capped sloe Will, mouthed to flesh-burst, Gush! — flush the man …. And frightful a nightfall folded rueful a day …'. MacMillan's *Return to Westminster Bridge* has some lovely examples of consonance: 'floating l**i**tter through the c**i**ty air'; 'the **t**orn up **t**imetables of cancelled **t**rains which drop like confe**tt**i on emp**t**y bo**tt**les of wine'.

Words are symbolic and their individual sounds (e.g. [e], [p], [n]) are not supposed to have meaning. But this is not how people behave when they talk about speech sounds as being 'beautiful' or 'ugly-sounding'. Some sounds just seem particularly appropriate to certain meanings, and this is used to great effect — and not just by poets. Advertisers know that just the right assemblage of consonants and vowels can create a certain impression or atmosphere and send out a subtle signal to buyers looking for the product that suits their image. As Bob Cohen from the firm Lexicon asks: *Clorox* versus *Chanel* — which is going to be the hard-working laundry detergent and which the new fragrance?

You only have to look at the names of breakfast cereals to see evidence of sound symbolism — all those *Pops*, *Smacks*, and *Puffs* somehow always manage to sound crisp and crunchy. Companies often work with linguists, especially when they are searching for appealing names for new products. Researching the reactions of people to certain sounds has become big business. Try answering the following five questions (taken from Cohen 2001: 193) and you'll soon get the idea. Here you are asked to choose between two fictitious brand names for three products: a headache tablet, a performance sedan and a laptop computer.

Pick a Brand Name

Which headache tablet sounds faster?
Pavil Bavil

Which computer sounds more compact?
Gortan Kortan

Which car sounds faster?
Sarrant Tarrant

Which car sounds faster?
Faldon Valdon

Which car sounds more dependable?
Bazia Vazia

If your answers were *Pavil, Kortan, Sarrant, Valdon and Bazia*, then you were in good company — most of the 144 students who participated in Cohen's pilot study agreed with you. Voiceless stops ([p], [t], [k]) seem to carry greater connotations of speed than do their voiced counterparts ([b], [d], [g]); so *Pavil* suggests faster working pain relief. However, fricatives (like ([f], [v], [s], [z]) connote greater speed than stops ([p], [b], [t], [d]); *Sarrant* would be a more effective car name if speed was your message. And voiced fricatives (like [v], [z]) are more effective than voiceless ones (like [f], [s]); so *Valdon* wins on speed (and *Zarrant* sounds faster than *Sarrant*). Voiceless stops ([p], [t], [k]) connote smallness more effectively than their voiced counterparts ([b], [d], [g]); so *Kortan* sounds like a more compact laptop. Stops generally are better than fricatives at conveying dependability; so you're more likely to go for the more reliable sounding *Bazia*. Try to figure out why the Apple name *PowerBook* is such an effective one for a laptop computer (this name was created by Lexicon, the company that carried out this pilot study).

3.2.2 LEXICAL PATTERNING

In Section 1.2, we noted that English vocabulary shows an interesting hierarchical patterning with respect to style (remember Bolinger's table illustrating the various stylistic levels). What we didn't mention at the time was that the levels are a fall-out of the waves of contact that English has had with other languages. A carpet analogy might be useful here (but like most analogies only up to a point and shouldn't be pushed too far). Our native English vocabulary (the words of Germanic origin), provides the basic underlay; in other words, our fundamental everyday vocabulary. Typically these words are shorter, more concrete and stylistically more neutral. They also include grammatical words like *a* and *the* (and as an aside the most basic offensive language, too — the so-called four letter words are mostly native English in origin). In his book, *Words in Time,* Geoffrey Hughes (1988: 17) gives an example of a sentence that is made up purely of English words: 'Warm, rich, and full of golden-goodness, Fido dog food will give your furry friend health, strength and get-up-and-go'. This beautifully captures the basic, everyday nature of our inherited Anglo-Saxon vocabulary.

To continue the carpet metaphor, this Germanic underlay or foundation supports a quality carpet on top — a kind lexical superstructure comprising those vocabulary items of refinement and nuance that come to us from French. Dotted on top of this quality carpet are the classy scatter rugs. These are the words with connotations of learning, science and abstraction and they come to us from classical languages like Latin and Greek. They are of a considerably higher style. Compare *a black eye* with *a circumorbital haematoma*, and everyday *knee jerk* with *patellar tendon reflex* and you quickly get the picture. Another simple example involves the words for medical practitioners. We have native English expressions like *quack* and *leech* — neither terribly flattering. (*Leech* comes from an Old English verb meaning 'to heal'; the meaning 'aquatic blood-sucking worm' was a later development.) The French language gives us *doctor* and Latin gives us *physician*.

Below are some examples of the levels of vocabulary that now exist in English (and there are hundreds of such examples). Focus here on the stylistic nature of these words. Meaning differences aside, the English forms are always more colloquial (perhaps even slang); the French more formal and the Latin more elevated still.

kingly (English)	*royal* (French)	*regal* (Latin)
rest (English)	*repose, respite* (French)	*imperturbation* (Latin)
guts, pluck (English)	*courage* (French)	*intrepidity* (Latin) (or how about *intestinal fortitude* — a combination of French and Latin)

It's worth emphasizing here again that certain semantic fields will be characterized by their relative (in)formality. Earlier we looked at the many low level slang expressions for vomiting, and in the up-down scale of (in)formality, these terms draw largely from the stock of native English words and are clearly 'bottom-heavy'. Other fields are characteristically 'top-heavy' and draw from higher style expressions of usually Romance (largely French) and Classical origins. The language of poverty, for example, is full of posh terms like *indigent, impecunious, destitute,* and *impoverished.* One of the reasons

for this is that it's an area of social taboo, and this makes it an inevitable target for **euphemism** — in the case of 'poverty' we have a long chain of obscure vocabulary to avoid saying that dirty word *poor*. Recent times have seen a rise in obfuscating circumlocutions like *economically marginalized, negatively privileged, economically non-affluent, culturally deprived* or even *differently advantaged* — all Romance or Classically inspired. (We recommend you visit Chapter 1 of Geoffrey Hughes' book *Words in Time* for a wonderful account of semantic fields that are 'bottom-' or 'top-heavy'.)

"I used to be poor. Then I bought a thesaurus, and now I'm impecunious."

A famous literary example of poverty — Oliver Twist in the workhouse

3.2.3 MORPHOLOGICAL PATTERNING

Both written and spoken texts, are characterized by lexical features such as collocations (words that routinely co-occur), and idioms (fixed expressions that convey their meanings as a whole). Also important are the structural aspects of words and expressions — the morphological features. Here, we need to briefly go over some of the terms-of-art that make up technical language surrounding morphology. Many of these we've already been using, so you probably already have a good idea what they involve. First, we need to recognize that words can be broken up into smaller meaningful parts or **morphemes**. The morpheme is best described as the smallest unit of meaning in the structure of any language. By this we mean that we cannot divide the unit any more without severely altering the meaning. For example, *cardigan* is a word and also a morpheme. As one complete unit by itself, it has meaning, and while we can apparently divide it into smaller units like *car, dig* and *an*, these have meanings that are not associated with the word *cardigan*. On the other hand, a word like *cardigans* has a meaning as a whole, but we can also divide it into two smaller meaningful units *cardigan* and the plural ending *–s*, even breaking down cardigan further historically, as it was named after a person.

Here are some examples of **creative word formation** using three different morphological processes, focusing specifically on how they apply to formal language.

Affixation is the most important word formation process in English. It involves the addition of **bound** morphemes (or **affixes**) to the word **root** (the core of the word) or the **stem** (root plus one or more affixes). English has over 60 prefixes and more than 80 suffixes. These are known as **derivational affixes** because they are used to derive new words. They include native English items like *un-, mis-, -ish* and *-ness* and borrowings like *-ize* and *-ese,* and they vary a lot in vitality. Some have died out completely and survive only in relic form; for example, *and-* 'against' is fossilized in a word like *answer*. Others may no longer be productive but survive intact in common usage words; for example, *-th* once used to form abstract nouns such as *stealth, filth, wealth* and *truth*. Others appear to move in and out of fashion; for example, the old suffix *-dom* was brought back from the dead during last century with forms like *PCdom* ('political correctness'), *parentdom, stuffed-shirt-dom, yuppydom, lawnmowerdom*. Although some of these words may be one-off creations, it would still seem unwise to declare this particular suffix dead.

In formal language, the morphology is typically Classical in origin, drawing especially on high-bred affixes from languages like Latin and Greek. Our love affair with these affixes began as early as the 16th century. At this time English wasn't seen as terribly respectable; so large numbers of rather pedantic coinages based on Latin replaced what was regarded as vulgar native English vocabulary. Among them were some completely over-the-top scholarly **neologisms** (new or invented expression): *eruncinate* (in place of common-or-garden 'pruning'), *carbunculate* instead of 'burn', *diffibulate* 'unbutton'; *dentiloquist* 'one who speaks through his or her teeth'; *dentiloquent* 'speaking through the teeth'; *doctiloquent* "speaking learnedly". And instead of 'baking', you might *pistate* a cake, and if you ended up burning it, it would then be *carbunculated*.

A good example of the lengths to which people went in creating this high fallutin' vocabulary is provided by the quacks of the 18th century. Many of them were fanatics, many were total frauds – and many clearly the entrepreneurs of the time. But they, all of them, certainly knew the power of language to sell a product. Here's an extract from the extraordinary spiel of one 18th century quack in London peddling his so-called 'friendly pills' – like most of the quack 'remedies', these promised to cure everything from gouty toes to lost youth.

> Gentlemen, I present to you with my 'Universal Solutive', which corrects all the Cacochymick and Cachexical disease of the Intestines, Hydrocephalous, Epilptick Fits, Flowing of the Gall and many other distempers not hitherto distinguished by name ... 'My Friendly Pills' call'd the Never Failing Helogenes which work by dilating and expanding the Gelastick Muscles, first of all discovered by myself. They clear the Officina Intelligentiæ, correct the Exorbitancy of the Spleen, mundify the Hypogastrium, comfort the Sphincter and are an excellent remedy again Proposop Chlorisis or Green sickness. They operate seven several different ways, viz Hypnotically, Hydrotically, Cathartically, Proppysinatically, Hydragoicially, Pulmatically, and last Synecdochically, by corroborating the whole Oeconomia Animalis". (from C.J.S Thompson's wonderful read *Quacks of Old London* 2003: 142)

Even though with time people grew very critical of scholarly vocabulary, quite a few terms lived on: *impede, dismiss, dexterity, absurdity*, to name just a few. Their survival helped to reinforce the stylistic hierarchy that we were talking about earlier – compare the style of the English equivalents of these four words: *hold up, send away, handiness, silliness*. Clearly, considerable sophistication still attaches to the morphology drawn from the Classical languages. Why else do you think the modern-day hamburger industry would come up with the neologism *autocondimentation* (as opposed to *precondimentation*)? True, this is an economical way of distinguishing a client's right to salt his/her own hamburger, but it is certainly not necessary to use these terms to get this meaning across. So why use them? The answer is, of course, that they confer on the hamburger industry a certain dignity. The dignity comes from the Greek or Latin parts of the words used (the Graeco-Latinate morphology, to use a bit of linguistic jargon), because they are reminiscent of such prestigious registers as Legalese and Medicalese.

Compounding is another way of building words by combining two (or more) free-standing morphemes; for example, *dark room* or *dog collar*. In Germanic languages this closeness is easy to spot because compounds are written as one word. In English, however, they may still be written as

two words (with or without a hyphen), but you can hear the difference as the main stress falls on the first element only. It is easier to illustrate this with an example that can occur both as a compound and as an ordinary string of two free morphemes. Taking the two words *dark* and *room*, we can combine them and put the stress on the first element only (we use underlining to indicate stress here) as in *dark room*. In this case it has the quite specific meaning of a room that is used for developing and printing photographic film. On the other hand, if we put stress on both parts as in *dark room*, then it refers to any old room that just happens to be dark. This example also illustrates a second property of compounds; the meaning is often more specific than just the sum of the two parts and it may often also become figurative. A *dog collar*, for instance is not just the kind of collar that a dog would wear, it can also refer to the white collar worn by some ordained clergy. Typically you'll find that newer compounds like *dog collar* will appear as separate words or hyphenated, whereas well-aged compounds, like *breakfast* and *cupboard,* will lose their hyphens and appear as a single word. Many now write *darkroom* as a single word.

One characteristic of certain types of formal written English, in particular many of those ending in –*ese* (e.g. Legalese, Bureacratese, Educationalese, Linguisticese, and so on), is compounding. For example, in Educationalese the telescoped noun string *teacher behaviour* replaces 'behaviour of teachers'; *teacher satisfaction* replaces 'satisfaction among teachers'; and *teacher effectiveness* 'effectiveness of teachers' and so on. Consider the following extract from the *Journal of Educational Research* 61, 8, 1968: 'Darley and Hagenah point to prestige drives among youth as an important source of OCCUPATIONAL CHOICE-VOCATIONAL INTEREST CONGRUENCY.' What is it about 'occupational choice-vocational interest congruency' (ie, match) that makes the writer prefer it to the more comprehensible *source of congruency between occupational choice and vocational interest*? One could perhaps argue that compounds like these serve the interests of economy, but certainly not intelligibility. Clumps of words such a *backlog reduction object*; *prototype crisis shelter development plans* and *young driver risk-taking research* distinguish these superliterate registers from ordinary discourse; they are notoriously difficult to process, and, as we'll see below, they introduce even more density and more abstractness into a piece of writing that is already lexically dense and abstract.

Acronyms are words formed from the initials of other words. For example, *laser* comes from 'light amplification by stimulated emission of radiation', *scuba* from 'self-contained underwater breathing apparatus'. The actual word 'acronym' is interesting in itself. It came into being in the 1940s and is based on the Greek words *acro* meaning 'tip, or point' and *onym* 'name'. Technically for something to be an acronym the resulting word has to be pronounceable as an ordinary word in the language. So examples that are pronounced as strings of letter names, such as COD 'cash on delivery' or ICYMI 'in case you've missed it', are not acronyms but are simply **initialisms**. Some words manage to fit into both categories. The now international word *OK* is both an initialism and an acronym, because the letter names also make a pronounceable English word *okay*.

We seem to be swimming in a sea of acronyms and abbreviations these days; yet the majority remain peripheral to the language. They serve either as proper names like Qantas (Queensland and Northern Territory Aerial Services) and ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations), or they are specific to the specialist registers of certain occupations. For example, SOC (Staff Observation Checks) and PIMS (Planned Inspection and Maintenance Systems) form part of the lexicon of McSpeak, the language of McDonald's restaurants. These words are never likely to become a part of our general lexicon.

> *From:* The Vice-Chancellor
> *To:* Deans of all Faculties
> *Subject:* INDUSTRY YEAR SHADOW SCHEME
>
> As you are no doubt aware, 1987 has been designated Industry year by the Government. The DES, through the UGC, have urged the CVCP to ensure that universities throughout the UK —
> "He does love acronyms, doesn't he," Philip murmurs.
>
> This extract comes from David Lodge's comic novel *Nice Work*; it shows the use of abbreviations in the managerial jargon now found in universities (note, however, that Phillip is wrong in describing these abbreviations as acronyms).

3.2.4
SEMANTIC PATTERNING

There are many different stylistic features that revolve around meaning. Before we examine these, we need to highlight an important distinction between two different types of meaning — denotation and connotation. **Denotation** is the referential meaning that is constantly associated with a word (the dictionary meaning). **Connotation** is the affective meaning a word takes on by associations that might arise out of speakers' beliefs and experiences. (Earlier we saw how marketers make good use of the connotations that certain sounds create in the minds of speakers.) You might describe a person as *frugal* or as *cheap*; as *careful* (with money) or as *stingy*; as *strong-minded* or as *pigheaded*; as a *freedom fighter* or as a *terrorist* — these pairs of words might have the same denotation, but the second one has many more unpleasant connotations that the first. Because connotations are related to real-world experience, they will always vary (unlike denotative meanings) from individual to individual, and from community to community.

An important aspect of the stylistic features involving semantics is **figurative language**. By this we mean the expressive use of language that employs words and phrases in a non-literal way to gain in clarity and vividness. Below are some of the most important types of figurative language. A couple of these we touched upon in our discussion of the poetry of slang; here we will use illustrations from the Wordsworth poem *Upon Westminster Bridge,* which began this chapter, together with other examples from literature.

Metaphor (from Greek *metaphorā* 'transference') always involves the comparison of two items where there exists some sort of relationship — people refer to one domain by using language expressions that are normally associated with another domain. A straightforward example might be to describe someone as a *worm*. This sort of comparison takes obvious characteristics from folk concepts about the appearance and the behaviour of the creature and these are then attributed to that person. *A worm* is 'someone sleazy, slimy, someone who crawls'. We might want to convey a picture of a person who is totally loathsome in manner and character. Of course, taken literally, the statement is false. This person is not actually 'a worm', nor do they even specifically share any literal common traits with a worm. But we are claiming that there is an association between this person (the figurative meaning) and a worm (the literal meaning) — all the expressive force of this insult derives from this association.

Wordsworth's poem is full of marvellous metaphors; e.g. clothing is used as a metaphor to capture the way in which the appearance of the city and its surrounds changes depending on how the light 'dresses' them. But we emphasize that metaphors, even the marvellous ones, don't only appear in great literature. Look at simple wine terminology that draws on figures like *big, full, deep, even, thick, flat* and *small*. This is the sort of bold imagery we associate with poetry and fiction.

Metaphors pervade our language. We are constantly adapting familiar structures from our experiences to new purposes in our language. Whether we are inventing names for new concepts, adding to the names of old concepts, insulting someone, even creating new grammar, metaphor is very often behind it all. Consider the metaphor behind the future verb *going to* (*gonna*) — here we see a movement verb used to depict the future (movement in space ⟶ movement in time). Even prepositions can involve metaphor. English *to* has the meaning 'towards' (*I'm going to town*) but also marks indirect objects (as in *They gave it to Fred* it is as if Fred were a place not a person). Much of what we talk or write about is in terms of something else. As soon as we open our mouths (or put pen to paper) we produce metaphors. But most of them are conventionalized — they are automatic.

Simile is a special type of figurative expression where the comparison of two items is made explicit; in other words, two images are brought together in a much more obvious way. In similes the statements of comparison involve the use of words such as *like* or *as*; for example, *cold like charity* and *black as ink*. The poem *Upon Westminster Bridge* likens the morning beauty to a 'garment': 'This City now doth, like a garment, wear the beauty of the morning'. Another famous Wordsworth poem actually has a simile in its title: *I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud.*

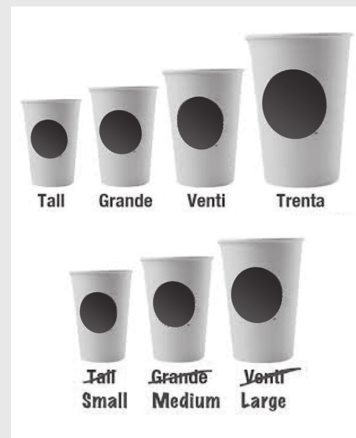
Personification involves a figurative use of language where human qualities are attributed to non-human things. A famous example is when the poet Shelley in his *Ode to the West Wind* addresses the West Wind directly as if it were a person ('O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being'). In *Upon Westminster Bridge,* the city, sun, river, and houses are all personified, Wordsworth treating them as living beings with a soul. The personification of London is captured by the simile 'like a garment' and also the verb 'wear'; the city is wearing the morning like some sort of overcoat. Similar is **animation** where things are represented as if they were alive; these days this rhetorical term is much more frequently used in techniques of film-making.

Hyperbole involves exaggerated or ornate language, usually for the purpose of emphasis. This figure of speech is a useful one to know because humans are natural-born exaggerators and hyperbole features large in our language (if you want a simple example, check the history of words like *awesome* and *awful*). In his poem, Wordsworth is making the extravagant claim that there is no sight that is

more beautiful than the view from Westminster Bridge. The spoof *Return to Westminster* mirrors the hyperbolic claim (though it is then shattered in the colloquial aside — "Well, to be honest, actually it does").

Dressing up the goods (advertising)

Hyperbole flourishes in the advertising industry. Advertisers will always want to use the sweetest sounding words (words with positive connotations) to highlight the qualities of a product (or to conceal its faults) and dressing up the goods with verbal glitz is an important part of the 'large Promise' (as Samuel Johnson once described it) of modern advertising. *Crafted* sounds so much finer than *made* or *manufactured.* It gives the impression that something has been produced meticulously and probably by hand. Certain adjectives are avoided at all costs — such as *small*. You might have noticed the decrease in the size of your favourite chocolate bar over the years. The disguise is to retain the same price and develop a *new fun size* or *handy size* (which really mean *smaller than before*). In fact *small* is even avoided for those products that come in more than one size (like coffee) — these always seem to start at *regular* or even *large/tall* and then move to *extra large, king-size* or *jumbo*.

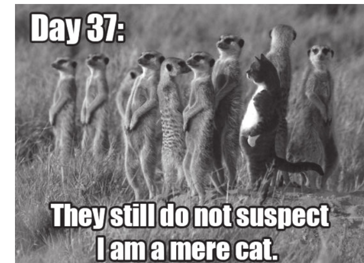


Irony is another type of creative language. When people use verbal irony, they take words that express a meaning that is the opposite of their literal meaning; so there is an incongruity between what might be expected and what actually occurs (usually for humorous or emphatic effect). Ironic statements typically involve the expression of a positive attitude or evaluation, when the situation actually requires a different, indeed opposite, attitude or evaluation; for example, "Fabulous day for a picnic", said when looking out the window at a thunderous sky. You could view the whole of Ian MacMillan's parody *Return to Westminster Bridge* as an ironic imitation of Wordsworth's original.

Oxymoron is a figure of speech that combines incongruous or contradictory words; for example, it might be that the adjective contradicts the noun as in *deafening silence, organized chaos* or *living death*. The line 'A sight so touching in its majesty' is the closest thing Wordsworth comes to for an oxymoron in this poem with the juxtaposition of 'touching' and 'majesty'. This kind of compressed paradox is often the fall-out of shifted meanings, such as you find in *plastic glasses, invisible light, paid volunteer* and even *pretty ugly* and *awfully good*. (Types of figurative language often overlap — depending on context and point of view, something like *bureaucratic efficiency* could be an oxymoron, irony or even an ironic oxymoron.)

Lexical ambiguity involves expressions that are ambiguous; in other words, they can be understood or interpreted in more than one way. If the ambiguity depends only on alternative meanings of lexical items then it is lexical ambiguity; for example, *he was waiting by the bank* ('financial institution' or 'riverside'). Often headlines involve this kind of deliberate play on words; for example, *Clinton Wins On Budget, But More Lies Ahead* (the ambiguity here is also structural because it involves two different

grammatical analyses, depending on whether you interpret *lies* as a noun or verb). Lines 2 and 3 of Wordsworth's poem ('Dull would he be of soul who could pass by a sight so touching in its majesty') play on the ambiguity of *dull*; they might well be describing a person who has been worn down (like a blunt knife) by life; or it might be someone who is lifeless and uninteresting.



Puns are a special kind of verbal play that uses ambiguity. Languages like English, which do not have a consistent phonemic spelling system, provide a lot of opportunities to play with words or phrases that have more than one possible meaning. Lewis Carroll employs the use of puns throughout his novel *Alice in Wonderland.* When Alice meets The Mock Turtle, she asks him why he called his teacher "Tortoise", to which he replies "We called him Tortoise, because he taught us". Probably the most famous of all involves the mouse and his tale/tail. The mouse says, "Mine is a long and sad tale". Alice remarks that his "tail" is in fact long, but she asks him why he thinks it is sad.

And how many hours a day did you do lessons?" said Alice, in a hurry to change the subject.
"Ten hours the first day," said the Mock Turtle, "nine the next, and so on."
"What a curious plan!" exclaimed Alice.
"That's the reason they're called lessons," the Gryphon remarked: "because they lessen from day to day."

CRASH BLOSSOMS

In their effort to achieve conciseness (also at times as a deliberate attention seeking device), journalists leave out the grammatical words from their headlines and the result can be ambiguity. Decide whether the ambiguity in the following headlines is structural, lexical (i.e. based on an ambiguous word) or both and then rewrite showing the two different interpretations.

1) Truck Leads Police To Molest Suspect.
2) Giant Waves Down Queen Mary's Funnel
3) MacArthur Flies Back to Front
4) City Ducks Vote on Transportation Fee.
5) Eighth Army Push Bottles Up Germans
6) Prostitutes Appeal To Pope
7) Squad Helps Dog Bite Victim
8) Red Tape Holds Up New Bridge
9) Stolen Painting Found By Tree.
10) Kids Make Nutritious Snacks.
11) McDonald's Fries the Holy Grail for Potato Farmers.
12) Croc Attacks Puzzle Experts

These ambiguous headlines are sometimes called "crash blossoms". The name is based on the headline: *Violinist linked to JAL crash blossoms*. And for a treasure trove of crash blossoms, see various posts on 'Language Log'; http://languagelog.ldc.upenn.edu/nll/ where you will also discover the history of this linguistic label.

3.2.5
SYNTACTIC PATTERNING

Syntax is the part of grammar that refers to the way words combine to form sentences, and many formal texts have a distinctive style that relates to this aspect of their structure. We'll examine some of the main features here, giving examples largely from formal language. These are complicated notions and if you're at all confused, or if you're interested in learning more about them, have a look at the toolkit in the appendix that gives a fuller account of these concepts.

Coordination and **subordination** describe ways combining of clauses. While there are **simple sentences** (consisting only of a single clause), there are also more complicated structures where sentences are made up of a number of clauses. Coordination, where clauses are equal in status, is signalled by coordinators (or coordinating conjunctions) like *but, and, or.* In the following examples, the two main clauses are italicized and illustrate **compound sentences.**

[We can listen to iTunes] and [I'll dream up a few songs].
[It's very nice to get married] but [I don't want to make a habit of it].

Coordination is a relatively straightforward concept. Subordination is far trickier. It implies the combination of clauses that are syntactically non-equivalent. The subordinate clause forms part of the main clause. For example:

I'll do it [when I have the time].
I swear [(that) I didn't dream it].

The verbs these sentence are built around are *do* and *swear.* These main clause verbs both take a subject *I,* and in the first example an object *it* and an adverbial expression (a clause) *when I have the time* and in the second example an object (a clause) *that I didn't dream it.* The main clauses are then the whole sentences, **not** just *I do* and *I swear.* These sentences differ from the first pair above in that one of the clauses forms part of the other clause — they are not independent the way they were above. In both examples there is something explicitly marking the beginning of the subordinate clause, namely *when* and *that.* These are known as subordinators (or subordinating conjunctions) and these sentences are called **complex**.

Compound-complex sentences are composed of two or more coordinated clauses and one or more subordinate clauses:

[Take heed] and [always remember [that you should leave early on a fire emergency day]].

Here the clause *that you should leave early on a fire emergency day* functions as the object in the clause *always remember that you should leave early on a fire emergency day* which is coordinated by *and* with the clause *take heed.*

As an example of just how complex things can get, consider another passage from clause 28 of the Melbourne Metropolitan Planning Scheme. As you read this, you might like to imagine you are about to convert an inner city warehouse into 5 flats and you need to figure out how many car parks you will have to provide for these flats. (Many thanks to Pia Herbert for providing this example.)

(2) (a) (i) Provision for accommodation of stationary vehicles (not being brought or kept on the land for sale, hire, repair, service or refuelling) shall be made upon any land used or developed or intended to be used or developed for any purpose specified in Column 1 of Table 1 of this

> Clause not less than in the ratio or of the percentage of site area specified in Column 2 and quantified in Column 3 of such Table, but so that the number of car spaces to be provided shall be not less than the nearest whole number to the number arrived at when the ratio or percentage is applied, and the use or occupation of the development of any such land for the purpose specified in the said Column shall not be commenced until the requisite accommodation for stationary vehicles has been provided.

Sub-clause 2 (a) (1) consists entirely of one (extremely complex) sentence, comprising 141 words. (Bear in mind that the average legal sentence contains fifty-five words, which is twice the number for 'scientific English' and eight times the number found in dramatic texts) In addition to their extreme length, these sentences are complex in structure. There is a great deal of subordination here; in other words, clauses linked by means of subordinating markers. Examine the passage above and identify all the subordinate clauses. As you do, note the scarcity of punctuation that is characteristic of this style of writing.

What makes language like this befuddling is not only the complexity but also the consistent violation of what has been called Behagel's First Law; namely, 'that which belongs together cognitively is arranged close together' (our translation). For example, notice the large gap between the head noun of the subject and its verb (here bolded) at the beginning of sub-clause 2 (a) (1): ***Provision*** *for accommodation of stationary vehicles (not being brought or kept on the land for sale, hire, repair, service or refuelling)* ***shall be made*** *[...].* The interruption of the significant proposition in the main clause makes it difficult for readers to extract the information.

An additional layer of complexity is provided by the number of **passives**, especially the so-called agentless passive (no *by*-phrase). Identify all the passives you can find in sub-clause 2 (a) (i).

Passives in Advertising Jargon

As consumers it is not just persuasive words and expressions we have to guard against. Grammatical structures, too, have the power to lead us 'by the nose', to compel us in one direction or the other. Here we're dealing with the 'deep grooves of language', as Edward Sapir once described them, and a level of persuasion that is far less obvious and very much more wily. Trawling through food magazines will uncover numerous examples like the following advertisement for *Australian Fresh* orange juice:

> Grown in the lush Murrumbidgee, only the best oranges are selected and squeezed just hours after picking. Nothing added, the juice is then filled into packaging ready to be transported to the supermarket, arriving just as fresh and great tasting as the oranges it's made from.

Every clause here has an agentless passive. (Try to identify them by underlining the passive verb forms.) There is no mention of who is doing the growing, selecting, squeezing, picking, adding, filling or transporting. 'Natural' is the flavour of the month in food advertising (pun!) and *Australian Fresh* orange juice, it seems, comes to us straight from nature and completely untouched by human hands.

Nominalization is the process that turns verbs into nouns — or even whole clauses into noun-like structures. For example, ***That the chefs use powdered eggs*** *is unexpected* becomes ***The chefs' use of powdered eggs*** *is unexpected.* Now throw in a few nouns like *utilization* (note

the classical morphology) and some compounds and you can conjure up an impressive piece of formal prose: *The utilization of pulverulent ova-containing products is contrary to expectation.*

What is immediately striking about some official registers is the excessive 'nouniness'. Much of this comes from the long and complex strings of nouns, and also the abstract nominalizations like the one we've just created. Or compare the complex nominalization in (a) with its verby counterpart in (b).

a) in the event of default in the payment
b) if you don't pay what you owe

As the (a) version illustrates, a nominal style gives speakers the opportunity to be non-committal as to who is doing what to whom — a sly device, you might be thinking, and one eminently suited to the language of government offices, where it might be desirable to conceal precisely this sort of information. Turning verbs into nouns allows us to do away with grammatical relations (like subjects and objects). For example, we could turn the verb *decide* into the noun *decision*. Verbs need subjects and sometimes also objects — "X decides Y". By using a noun like *decision* we can omit "X" and "Y". So a speaker can remove not only reference to themselves, but also to an unpopular action (say, closing down the school) — *a decision has been made* (note the passive here, too). Throw a few impressive Graeco-Latinate bits and pieces into the mix, and the style becomes even more authoritative. The school is now *scheduled for discontinuance*.

Here's an actual example of sneaky syntax: some years ago the governor of California, when asked why he had allowed a man to die in the gas chamber (a highly unpopular act as you might expect) replied: 'There was insufficient evidence on which to base a change of decision.' He could have said *I couldn't find enough evidence to make me change my mind and decide to spare the man's life*. As linguist Joe Williams points out, the nominalizations of the verbs *change* and *decide* enabled the governor to avoid reference to both the dead man and himself, thereby concealing his own responsibility in the matter (1981:162).

A style that is heavy with nouns also adds to the general density of the language and introduces more abstractness. In short, it's harder to follow. Turning a whole clause into a noun might be economical (and actually less complex in terms of the syntax), but there's plenty of psycholinguistic evidence that nominalizations can present significant processing difficulties for readers. It's one more bewildering aspect of these superliterate registers (the '–eses') – the pinnacle of a one thousand year writing tradition.

Recall that paying attention to someone's **negative face** includes, among other things, straightforward impositions caused when someone is required to expend unreasonable effort in order to understand the message because it is unclear and confused. Exasperation with jargon like Bureaucratese and Legalese has given rise to many social and political movements pushing for clear and simple English (like the Plain English Movement), particularly in laws, legal documents (like contracts) and government documents of all kinds. Similar movements have sprung up throughout Europe. They have had considerable success in elucidating the language in insurance and other legal documents foisted onto members of the public. Nonetheless, problems still arise. Something like the laws of the imaginary country Brobdingnag, visited by Lemuel Gulliver, would be ideal:

> No Law of that Country must exceed in Words the Number of Letters in their Alphabet; which consists only of two and twenty. But indeed, few of them extend even to that Length. They are expressed in the most plain and simple Terms, wherein those people are not Mercurial enough to discover above one Interpretation. And to write a Comment upon any Law, is a capital Crime.
> (Swift *Gulliver's Travels* 1958[1735]: 104)

"The depersonalization of language can be affected to an even greater extent by the combination of passivization and nominalization, bringing an absence of animate agency, thereby providing a heightening of the seeming objectivity of the representation of conduct of an investigation by deletion of the role of the source of the investigation."

In the above, Joe Williams (1981: 160) is obviously having a dig at formal registers. Compare the following examples (also his) and you can see just how nominalizations cut down on the number of clauses involved. We've put square brackets around each of the clauses and bolded the verbs. The (a) versions are the nominalizations and the (b) versions the more informal verbal style. By comparing the number of clauses in each, you quickly see that syntactic complexity does not necessarily mean something will be difficult to interpret.

1a. **[**The government's investigation into the shipment of the wheat by the exporter **was met** by his refusal in regard to an examination of his method of payments for its domestic transportation**]**.
1b. **[**The government **investigated] [**how the wheat **was shipped** by the exporter,**] [**but he **refused] [to let** the government **][examine] [**how he **paid] [to have** the wheat**] [transported** domestically**]**.
2a. **[**The government's attempt at an investigation into the corporation's handling of the contract **was met** by its refusal to allow an examination of its assignment of costs**]**
2b. **[**The government attempted **to investigate] [**how the corporation **handled** the contract**]**, **[**but it **refused] [to allow** the government**] [to examine** the way**] [**it **assigned** costs**]**

Try your hand at writing some Bureaucratese of your own. Change the following verbal sentences into a nominal style. Where you think that a more dishonest sentence would result from a deleted subject or object, delete it — and why not throw in a passive while you're about it. Here's an example:

verbal: 'We need to continue to pollute the water because we do not have sufficient funds'
nominal: 'A fund insufficiency has created a need for the continuation of water pollution'

i. We determined why crime increased.
ii. Students who are unable to write good English should be failed by their teachers. Then the University should not register them.
iii. I am uncertain about whether we can rely on the devices that should prevent this atomic energy plant from dispersing radioactive particles if someone fails to realize that the core is getting too hot, but I estimate that we can risk it.

PARALLELISM, ANTITHESIS AND LISTING

HIGGINS. Then how did you know she [=Eliza Dootlittle] was here?
DOOLITTLE ['most musical, most melancholy'] I'll tell you, Governor, if you'll only let me get a word in. I'm willing to tell you. I'm wanting to tell you. I'm waiting to tell you.
HIGGINS. Pickering, this chap has a certain natural gift of rhetoric. Observe the rhythm of his native woodnotes wild. "I'm willing to tell you: I'm wanting to tell you: I'm waiting to tell you." Sentimental rhetoric! That's the Welsh strain in him. It also accounts for his mendacity and dishonesty.

[from the transcript of the screenplay for *My Fair Lady,* based on Shaw's play *Pygmalion*]

In this extract, Professor Higgins is impressed by the natural **rhetoric** in the speech of Eliza's father Alfred P. Dootlittle, a dustman, and he gives the example of his **parallelism**: "I'm willing to tell you: I'm wanting to tell you: I'm waiting to tell you". As the name implies, parallelism refers to the repetition of some sort of linguistic item (like sounds, words and phrases); syntactic parallelism involves matching constructions.

Antithesis is a special kind of parallelism that involves difference. Writers or speakers use paired phrases and clauses that are similarly structured to draw the reader's or listener's attention more effectively to a contrast of ideas. Shakespeare was a master at it: 'Not that I loved Caesar less, but that I loved Rome more' (*Julius Caesar* III, ii). Another famous example is Neil Armstrong's 'That's one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind' (the 'a' is meant to be there, but it's controversial as to whether Armstrong actually did say it). It is also a rhetorical device you commonly find in proverbs and catch phrases; for example, 'To err is human; to forgive divine'; 'Many are called, but few are chosen'; 'Man proposes, God disposes'. Both parallelism and antithesis are valuable rhetorical devices, creating connections between ideas and adding clarity and balance to texts.

Listing is simply the repetition of items, as in a list; it is as straightforward as it sounds. Often listing and parallelism work hand in hand as attention grabbing devices. In the following example from advertising, note the repetition of *cooked* (four times) and *hand* (three times), and also the appearance in the first line of the parallel verb phrases *cooked by hand* and *eaten by the handful*:

> Kibble hand cooked potato chips cooked by hand eaten by the handful. Only authentic Kibble Chips are cooked by hand for maximum crunch, using fresh 100% Australian potatoes. And because they are cooked in pure sunflower oil, they have absolutely no cholesterol. Grab a pack. They're irresistable.

Listing is another earmark of bureaucratic writing. This strategy has grown out of the infamous doublets and triplets of Legalese where two or three (near) synonyms are strung together; for example, *act and deed; cease and desist; rest, residue and remainder, will and testament.* Such structures contribute to the lexical density of the language. Here's an extreme example from a set of park regulations (cited in the BFMA *Plain English Manual*). They warn us that:

> No person shall prune, cut, carry away, pull up, dig, fell, bore, chop, saw, chip, pick, move, sever, climb, molest, take, break, deface, destroy, set fire to, burn, scorch, carve, paint, mark, or in any manner interfere with, tamper, mutilate, misuse, disturb or damage any tree, shrub, plant, grass, flower, or part thereof, nor shall any person permit any chemical, whether solid, fluid, or gaseous, to seep, drip, drain or be emptied, sprayed, dusted or injected upon, about or into any tree, shrub, plant, grass, flower, or part thereof, except when specifically authorized by competent authority; nor shall any person build fires, or station or use any tar kettle, heater, road roller or other engine within an area covered by this part in such a manner that the vapor, fumes or heat therefrom may injure any tree or other vegetation.

Charles Dickens' (1859) historical novel *A Tale of Two Cities* provides a fine example of antithesis. The opening lines of Chapter 1 are the most famous examples:

> It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way – in short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only.

3.3 SOCIAL HARMONY

In this section we see how speakers and writers use language to create and maintain social harmony. We examine how they negotiate social taboos through the employment of euphemisms, non-discriminatory language, and political correctness. Of course, we shouldn't give you the impression that social taboos have nothing to do with informal varieties; it is more the case that they are more strongly observed in the public arena. This is language as good manners — discourse wiping down its feet before it enters the public domain and leaving before it breaks wind!

3.3.1 TABOO, EUPHEMISM AND DYSPHEMISM

Taboo is forbidden behaviour in actions or in language. When the word *taboo* first entered English in the 18th century from Tonga (via Captain Cook), it referred to conduct believed to be dangerous to certain individuals or to the society as a whole. In this context, violations of taboos were expected to have dire consequences. Taboo Polynesian-style was said to be absolute — a 24-hour a day, round the clock affair. However, the reality is that no taboo holds for all people, times and contexts (Allan and Burridge 2006:Ch.1).

You will all experience selective taboos on bad manners in your everyday lives; in other words, social sanctions placed on behaviour that is regarded as distasteful or at least impolite within a given social context. The taboos of social convention in the Western world rest on traditions of etiquette and are therefore set by social parameters such as age, sex, education, social status and the like. In matters of social harmony, **euphemism** (sweet-sounding or at least inoffensive language) and **dysphemism** (nasty or offensive language) are key players: euphemism is the polite thing to do and dysphemism involves the breaking of a social convention.

Expressions are classified as euphemistic or dysphemistic depending on the context in which they are used. Words aren't intrinsically sweet or nasty, and given there is such complexity and variety of opinions and attitudes, not all people (of even similar social backgrounds) will classify them the same. Between good mates, normally abusive address forms (such as *fuckwit*) can be used without animosity and reciprocated without hostility — they create bonds of friendship.

There will always be significant differences between individual societies and individuals within those societies with respect to the degree of tolerance shown towards any sort of taboo-defying behaviour — much will depend on the values and belief systems at the time. Polite society in the

19th century targeted profanity and sexual explicitness and this triggered the progressive sanitizing of a range of works, even the Bible. *Damned* became *undone*; *whoremaster* became *misleader*; even *belly* was transformed via euphemistic magic to *stomach*, *viscera* and *embryo* (the publisher of Trollope's *Barchester Towers* changed *fat stomach* to *deep chest*).

These activities seem excessive according to today's sensitivities, and yet, from a modern perspective, works of this period also appear remarkably uninhibited. The Sydney police-court reports of Charles Adam Corbyn from the 1850s, for example, abound in descriptions of local residents that make a modern reader's toes curl: Mr Ninivian Stewart is portrayed as 'a long-nosed, lank-jawed, hypocritical-looking shoemaker'; Robert Tindal 'a hen-pecked old man'; Leah Harris 'a handsome Jewess'; Miss Mary Anne Walsh 'a middling aged spinster'; Mrs Elizabeth Hilton 'a tall, powerful woman, whose face outvies in colours those of a round of spiced beef'; Donald M'Kenzie (or Darkey Ken) 'an ogre-like Negro, of the dirtiest black colour imaginable'. Since the 1980s, gender, sexuality, disability and race have become so highly charged that English speakers often shun anything that may be interpreted as discriminatory or pejorative. These new taboos make sexist, racist, ageist, religionist, etc. language offensive — and even against the law. These '-ist' taboos have surpassed in significance irreligious profanity, blasphemy and sexual obscenity, against which laws have now been relaxed.

Changes in swearing patterns

"It's all about pots and kettles" (ABC presenter July 2 2014)

As a simple illustration of evolving sensitivities, take the various permutations of the expression *pot calling kettle black* (the saying used to claim that someone is guilty of that which they accuse another). The original expression was *pot calling kettle black arse*, but societal queasiness in the 19th century saw *arse* dropped from the end of the phrase. In more recent times, we have seen further euphemistic omission with the occasional dumping of *black*. For many people, the expression is now *pot calling kettle* or even *it's all about pots and kettles*; indeed, the internet has much discussion on the racist nature of the idiom (see for example the piece by Jonah Goldberg 'Racist Pot Calls Kettle a Bigot' in the *National Review Online* http://www.nationalreview.com).

There is a sense in which all euphemism is dishonest. No euphemism says it how it is — in a given context, something tabooed can be acceptably spoken of using a euphemism but not using a direct term. However, the euphemistic vocabulary of language varieties, such as military, political and medical jargons, adds additional dimensions of deviousness and secrecy to the disguise. Euphemism is used not so much to conceal offense but to deliberately disguise a topic and to deceive. This is the sort of **doublespeak** that turns *death* into *a substantive negative patient care outcome, a diagnostic misadventure of the highest magnitude* or *a terminal episode; dying* into *terminal living* and *killing* into *the unlawful* [or] *arbitrary deprivation of life.*

Work out the meaning of these examples of Newspeak from George Orwell's *Ninteen Eighty-Four*

doubleplusspeak; duckspeak; ungood; unperson; thoughtcrime; doublethink.

Examples such as these have led to deterioration of the term 'euphemism' itself. For many, it has become a negative label attached to language believed to be value-laden and deliberately obscuring; in other words, jargon that is intended to befuddle and to disguise ordinary and inconvenient facts, or as George Orwell once famously described, expressions 'designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind' (*Politics and the English Language,* 1946). It is very much an Orwellian-inspired view of euphemism that has come to dominate public discourse. Impatient with the pretence that sweeter words might produce a sweeter world, many also grow concerned at what appear to be attempts to manipulate their thoughts and opinions. And though public opinion is not as easily manipulated as Orwell's fictional Newspeak suggests, studies by researchers such as Elizabeth Loftus show that loaded language can indeed work to influence memory and perception. Face-protecting expressions such as *soft skin target, surgical strikes*, *collateral damage* and *friendly fire* also help to minimize feelings and perceptions of responsibility. They play down the slaughter of human beings and create psychological distance between the perpetrators and their actions — making it easier for people to commit their dirty deeds.

But remember the underlying motives of euphemism are not always malign. There will always be times when people simply don't want up-front language. To help us all cope with the messy, the frightening, the disagreeable facts of life, euphemisms provide us with an 'out' — no one's fooled, but we all feel a lot better.

So what would life be like without euphemism — if we all said exactly what was on our minds, in the plainest and most explicit of terms? Hell upon earth. There might be something attractive about a no-frills, say-it-as-it-is language, but no language ever "dittos" reality — it always gets in the way. By their very nature, words and constructions will always hint, suggest, insinuate. We all can embellish information just by the words and constructions we choose. So, be wary of language (especially those underhand euphemisms that try to lead you by the nose); but remember most euphemisms make life easier for us. And they are central to what makes us tick.

The uplifting euphemism — to talk up and to inflate

Many euphemisms are simply alternatives for expressions speakers prefer not to use on a given occasion. In Clause 28 of the Melbourne Metropolitan Planning Scheme, you will find several references to the *accommodation of stationary vehicles*. The author presumably believed that this phrase has more favourable connotations than either *parking places* or *car spaces*; in fact these are probably dispreferred simply because they do not have the Latinate ring of bureaucratese]. Such examples are comparable to the promotion of *potholes* to *pavement deficiencies*, *bottlenecks* to *localized capacity deficiencies* and a recipe involving canned cream of chicken soup with cubed spam (a canned pork meat product) and evaporated milk that is transformed via euphemistic magic into *Chicken-Ham à la Princesse*.

3.3.2 NON-DISCRIMINATORY LANGUAGE AND POLITICAL CORRECTNESS

Prejudice means literally 'pre+judge'. It occurs when people form opinions without really knowing much about the case — they simply decide they like or dislike something or someone without any actual experience. It might involve unfavourable judgments toward a person or a group of people

simply because of their gender, their sexuality, their social class, their age, their religion, their nationality, or even their language.

This section focuses on prejudice and how language is used as the main vehicle by which people are encouraged to hate. Prejudices are passed on by erecting stereotypical boundaries between groups, so a restructuring of the world and of human experience is forced upon people. This might involve something as under-the-radar as food. People connect what they eat and drink with what, who and where they are – and so even eating habits and dietary regimens not only bind us, but also strongly divide us. Food is a potent indicator of class and lifestyle: they eat meat, we don't; they grill food, we fry; they drink beer, we drink wine; and so forth. And when this bias leads to others being treated unfairly, prejudice turns to discrimination.

Prejudices may be **overtly** or **covertly** expressed. If a discourse is overtly racist or sexist, it is possible to see or hear immediately its racist or sexist intention. If it is covertly racist or sexist, it will, on the whole, read or sound similarly to other discourse, and you have to consider it carefully to interpret it. Overt sexism or racism thus usually assumes an audience that shares the views of the author or the speaker; for example, shock jocks (radio broadcasters) who preach to like-minded listeners. In covert racism or sexism, the discrimination is more subtle. It is intended that the opinion of the audience is manipulated through language or images; for example, the T-shirt design (pictured here to the right) featuring an image of the Australian flag with the words "If you don't love it, leave".

Today we accept there are certain views that are not expected to be aired in public; there are laws that protect vulnerable or marginalized groups from behaviour and language that is discriminatory, insulting or offensive. All schools have anti-bullying policies in place, for example; and there are rules that prohibit the use of sexist language when recruiting prospective employees. But it's only a few decades ago that social attitudes to discrimination were quite different. In the 1950s women were usually expected to give up their jobs once they married, and in the 1970s it was not uncommon to hear views such as: 'a woman's place is in the home' or 'that's man's work', stated with conviction. These days such comments are more likely to be said in jest or with irony. As people's attitudes about acceptable language changed, laws were introduced to reflect new expectations about issues such as race, gender, religion and sexual orientation.

Racist discourse creates 'two worlds' by the use of two sets of words, one each for the in-group and the out-group — an *us* and a *them*. In this way, people are portrayed only in terms of their group affiliation, and are thus deprived of their individuality, separated and, in the case of the out-group, excluded. It allows others to lump everyone together.

Racist language marginalizes people. It focuses on a particular characteristic or set of characteristics and generalizes from those – in other words, it stereotypes groups according to [mainly] external features. Prejudice such as this is often borne of fear as well as ignorance; the danger in allowing racist language to be used in public is that it perpetuates those stereotypes and provides a forum for hateful, divisive discourse that threatens social harmony.

There are regular incidents that illustrate our point. In 2012 tourists singing French songs on a Melbourne bus were abused and intimidated by other passengers and told to 'speak English or die'. The media reported the case in generally outraged terms and the offenders were subsequently prosecuted. In 2014 conservative newspaper columnist Andrew Bolt was sued by a group of 'white-

skinned Aborigines' (his term) after he accused them of using their heritage to gain a range of benefits that, in his view, should only be given to dark-skinned Aboriginal Australians. Implied in this was the idea that race should be determined by skin colour alone. When Bolt lost the case, the Attorney General of the day, George Brandis, famously stated: 'People do have a right to be bigots, you know. In a free country, people do have rights to say things that other people find offensive, insulting or bigoted.'

Commentators and community leaders at the time reflected on the impact of these events on the public psyche and the escalation of racial stereotyping and vitriol in the public sphere. Professor Simon Rice, director of Law Reform and Social Justice at the Australian National University, observed: 'This would be the closest we've come to unconstrained racist speech in 20 years - since before the current law was enacted'. The issue of freedom of speech, a complex and often divisive one, was debated, with Australian Race Discrimination Commissioner Tim Soutphommosanne stating: 'Racism can have the effect of silencing its targets. This is one reason why we can't assume that good speech can overcome bad speech.'

Go back to where you came from

In 2011 SBS TV aired a three-part series called *Go back to where you came from.* A second series was screened in 2012 and a third series in 2015.

The premise of the show was to put six Australians from a variety of backgrounds, and with a range of views on the issue of asylum seekers, into situations similar to those experienced by refugees fleeing their home countries. 'Deprived of their wallets, phones and passports, they board a leaky refugee boat (from which they are rescued mid-ocean), experience immigration raids in Malaysia, live in a Kenyan refugee camp, visit slums in Jordan, before ultimately making it to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Iraq protected by UN Peacekeepers and the US Military. In the final episode, the participants are debriefed for their response to the experiences.' (SBS media release.)

The experience challenged the prejudices of the participants, illustrated how stereotypes are not representative of whole groups and explored how language perpetuates racially biased myths of this type. Despite some inevitable criticisms of the program (e.g. that it was 'sensationalized and shallow'), it makes an interesting study for students of English Language, particularly in the area of racist discourse, cultural stereotyping and customs.

Sexist discourse focuses on two issues: How men and women use language, and how language represents women (and, to a lesser extent, men). In this section, we focus on the latter. You will find that sexist language is generally less overt than racist language. However, it is still pervasive in our society and not just where English is spoken.

In the late 1960s the feminist movement began to make itself heard objecting to a community attitude that downgraded women in comparison with men. People in the movement perceived this belittling attitude to be reflected in language and sought to change at least public language so that it should become less dysphemistic to women. They held, and continue to hold, the view that revising habits of language use would change community attitudes; whether or not this belief is credible is not of concern here (and you can debate amongst yourselves whether changing language will actually change society). What is relevant here is that since the 1970s there has been issued a large number

of guidelines for nonsexist language usage in private and public institutions, government offices, etc. (e.g. *Language, Gender, and Professional Writing: Theoretical Approaches and Guidelines for Nonsexist Usage*). These publications identify offensive expressions and offer what are claimed to be neutral alternatives. Speakers and writers are advised to choose the neutral alternative from such lists as the following:

Dysphemistic expression	**Neutral expression**
man(kind)	human beings, humanity, people
chairman	chairperson, chair
fireman	firefighter
policeman	police officer
mailman	mail carrier
foreman	supervisor
salesman	salesperson
actress	actor
(air) stewardess	flight attendant

Obviously, the *-man* expressions are not offensive when used of males, and the neutral expression is primarily intended to name the job itself so as to acknowledge that women may hold such an office. It might be thought that terms suffixed *-ess*, and others such as *lady / woman doctor*, should be acceptable to females; but it is widely perceived that women referred to using such terms are less highly valued than their male counterparts, therefore the terms are dysphemistic and the neutral alternatives are preferred when they refer to a female. From this, it follows that many speakers prefer to use the neutral term all the time, even when denoting males; only then does the neutral term become truly gender neutral.

Though these debates raged in the 1970s and 80s, the issues are clearly not dead. Kate Galloway lectures in land law at James Cook University and writes the blog *Curl* in which she thinks and speaks about, amongst other things, issues affecting women. (Many thanks to Janny McCurry for the following summary.)

The entry for March 29, 2014 criticizes the Crime and Misconduct and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014, introduced by the Queensland Attorney General on March 19 and the implications of the proposal to rename the head of the Crime and Misconduct Commission from Chairperson to Chairman. While there would legally be no barrier to the appointment of a women to this role, since Chair 'man' includes woman (Section 32B of the *Acts Interpretation Act 1954*), Galloway argues that the change is 'retrograde and indefensible'. She notes the wide acceptance for decades of Plain English drafting standards recommending that authors avoid gendered language and is concerned that 'the changes in the Bill set a precedent for further erosion of drafting principles that would serve to entrench women's disadvantage …in ways affecting many women's lives directly.' In her conclusion she notes that 'The proposed change reinforces masculine norms that form an implicit barrier to women in achieving leadership roles within the law, and a precedent for wider use of masculine language as a means of excluding and potentially discriminating against women through the law'. In a response to one of the many comments accompanying this entry, Galloway says that the 10,000+ hits that the entry received seems evidence that it 'hit a nerve'.

There are other areas where "-ist" language is apparent. In recent years in Australia, there have been a number of incidents involving **homophobic discourse**. Here is one example from 2014 (22nd June, SBS news online). Note here how the public and community leaders have reacted.

> A soprano has been dumped by Opera Australia after she was accused of labelling homosexuals "sewage" and "fecal masses" on her Facebook page. The company confirmed on Monday that Georgian singer Tamar Iveri, set to star in its production of Verdi's *Otello*, had been released immediately from her contract. A post on Iveri's Facebook page against a gay pride march in her Georgian home city had brought widespread condemnation, with patrons sharing their outrage on social media and Opera Australia sponsor Qantas expressing its concern. In a statement on its Facebook page, Opera Australia said the opinions posted were "unconscionable", and it acknowledged Iveri had apologised at the weekend.

A number of linguistic studies have looked at the use of sexist, racist and homophobic pejoratives used by high-school students. Make a list of any "-ist" expressions you have heard that could be described as having a disparaging, derogatory, or belittling effect. Identify those you considered to be the most taboo. These could be ones you've overheard at school, at work or any public place (public transport, restaurants, from 10 year olds on Xbox live voice chat).

Some studies have also noted that boys report more pejorative expressions than girls; moreover they appear to rate them more seriously. Pool your resources and see if you notice this difference in reporting.

Political correctness (or its abbreviation PC) was part of a set of wide-ranging social changes that began in the 1980s. Like the Plain English crusade that began around the same time, it was a movement that attempted to redress inequalities in our societies and ensure a fair go for all by alerting English speakers to the claims of different groups. It was remarkably effective in getting people to change their linguistic habits, far more effective than other kinds of linguistic prescriptions and proscriptions (people normally don't like being told to change their language behaviour).

PC language changes have always aimed to remove the stigma of negative social stereotypes by compelling people to go beyond the simple content of the message and challenge prejudices embodied in language. It prescribes and proscribes public language for ethnicity, race, gender, sexual preference, appearance, religion, (dis)ability and so on. Clearly there is much more to political correctness than language use; but linguistic behaviour is the most conspicuous expression of the political correctness ethos, and language issues have always been key players in the PC arena.

Politically correct language can itself be a form of public action. For example, Standard English has no gender-neutral singular pronoun set aside for both sexes, though masculine *he* has been promoted to this role by prescriptive grammars. However, the pronoun *he* is not gender-neutral and to make this point some people use *she* instead: 'God is good; she cares for all people'. Now, pronouns are little grammatical words that are supposed to take a back seat in discourse and not stand out. Writers who use *she* in this way are deliberately pushing the pronoun out of its backseat position, in order to make a point. 'Generic' *she* is intended to jar — by drawing attention to form, it forces us to sit up and take notice.

Politically correct terms often deliberately highlight certain aspects of a group's identity. When members of the black community originally campaigned to be called *African Americans*, it was to emphasize not genetics or colour, but the historical roots of a group that forms part of the USA, thus bringing the name into line with other ethnic minorities, such as Japanese Americans and Italian Americans. But often political correctness is a simple matter of calling groups by the names they prefer. There are numerous examples. In some places, the terms *married* and *de facto spouse* still only include those relationships sanctioned by law; a term such as *partner* sidesteps that issue,

and is therefore representative of relationships other than heterosexual. The term *queer*, and more recently the umbrella abbreviation *LGBTIQ*, are preferred by some non-heterosexuals because they include groups which the terms gay and lesbian do not (though terminology is controversial, as the discussion here shows: http://abcnews.go.com/Health/gay-man-millennial-term-queer-word/story?id=20855582).

So, how do we explain the success of political correctness in getting people to change their language? Squeamishness around bawdy body parts saw our 19th century forbears use *dark meat* and *white meat* in place of *leg* and *breast* when speaking of a cooked chook; similarly, some modern-day speakers prefer *coffee with* (or *without*) *milk* in place of *white* (or *black*) *coffee*. In the case of a failure to follow a PC regime there is a lot at stake. Just look at the now shocking nature of those flippant references to *niggers* and *chinks* that were once second nature to early writers like Rudyard Kipling. The manufacturers of Darkie Toothpaste had this in mind when they changed the English trade name of their product to Darlie Toothpaste.

Darkie Toothpaste becomes Darlie Toothpaste

There are risks in using non-PC terms today, especially in public. However, online communities offer another, and rather disturbing, perspective on politeness phenomena and conventions for language behaviour. Monash student, Amanda Young, examined the topic of racism for her honours thesis, in particular racism towards immigrants and asylum seekers in Australia. Her study followed various Facebook groups over a 12-week period and analysed the language according to politeness markers, euphemisms and dysphemisms and the nature of any inflammatory language. What she found was that away from face-to-face contact and within the safe confines of their internet personas, people are much more likely to dispense with politeness paraphernalia and express their racist views outright, in the most inflammatory language. Her thesis captured the consequences of a virtual community where people can ‘say’ whatever they want and whenever they want. As she concludes:

> The shield of anonymity that being online offers people is a way of bringing to the surface all those gritty things that polite society would prefer stay hidden. There is also the chance that some of these profiles were created specifically so a person could voice their own opinion without anybody from their real life knowing about it. Facebook offers an interesting experience in that it is both private and public.

So, what is this thing called ‘political correctness?

The labels ‘politically correct’ and ‘political correctness’ are hopelessly inexact; they carry so much baggage that their meaning seems to change every time they make an appearance. So, we offer a potted history of the terms in the hopes that it might clear up some of the confusion. Here are some rough dates with approximate descriptions of the general meanings around at that time:

1790s to refer to the correct political theory (earliest recorded use in the legal context)
1960s to refer to a self-righteous ideological bigot (often ironic, as a kind of in-house joke)
1980s to refer to affirmative action, speech codes, guidelines for non-discriminatory language
1990s to refer to an assault on free speech and common sense

The growing resentment to political correctness is not surprising. The average person, not directly involved in any political subculture, encountered the term in the popular press. And for the press, which

thrives on steady supplies of sensations and crises, a 'PC scare' was most welcome. The hostility was fuelled by endless reporting and re-reporting of stories of over-the-top speech codes and book banning. It is hard to believe that speakers of English really cared about what they called the openings in sewers, but there they were in the news again — *manholes, femholes, person holes, maintenance hatches, utility holes* and *personnel access structures.*

The shift from stamp of approval to slogan of contempt was probably inevitable given that the term *politically correct* would always have had a double edge. Certainly, there would have been some who used it as a straightforward statement of correctness or ideological commitment, without any sense of irony. However, bearing in mind most people's dislike of extremes and the usual cynicism that stiff orthodoxy arouses, it is understandable that the term would have eventually evolved in this way. You might compare the shift in meaning of the word *orthodoxy*, which is often used as a sneer term for the beliefs of others. The effect of this double edge became a dynamic double-whammy, with political correctness managing to offend not just members of the political right and left, but the average punter as well.

And now, in ordinary usage, the meaning has shifted even further from its original sense. We recall seeing the phrase *politically correct* in a letter to an etiquette columnist. Here the writer was seeking advice on how to hang a roll of toilet paper — is it politically correct to hang loose sheets on the outside or on the inside? It seems that political correctness is now a matter of "doing the polite thing" — incorrect behaviour is little more than a social gaffe.

3.3.3 WORDS THAT WOUND

Face concerns are supremely important in human social interaction. The default situation is always for non-hostile social interaction and there is an expectation that people will try to avoid any potential face affront to others. All societies have strategies for avoiding encounters that are potentially face-threatening.

In the interests of social harmony, there have been many attempts over the years to erase obscene terms and slurs from the language. But placing bans on any expression is never a straightforward matter. Language is not a monolith with a fixed set of approved meanings and values. As earlier described, whether expressions are offensive or not is established by evaluating them within the context in which they are uttered. There is no one size fits all.

In the linguistic minefield of the political correctness arena, expressions can be both polite and offensive, all the more because of their overtly political nature. *Deaf* is preferable to hearing-impaired for those who identify with Deaf Pride, but avoided by many others. *Gay* is an in-group label, but is avoided by some who don't wish to politicize their sexuality and others refuse to use it of people with whom they cannot identify. Some women feel affronted and wrongfully excluded by compounds like *chairman*; others are quite happy to remain *Madam Chair* or *Madam Chairman* because they understand these to be idioms denoting the office of chairperson. For some time now, the term *wog* has had positive in-group uses. As one student once said: 'It's cool to be wog'. Used among African-Americans, *nigger* too can also be a badge of identity and solidarity. Privileged use of the term may even be extended to outsiders under certain circumstances. (There is a famous case of a white university basketball coach whose mostly black team gave him dispensation to use *nigger* as they did; both administrators and students at his university protested, however, and he lost his job for violating their taboos.)

These are examples of racist expressions adopted as markers of group identity and badges of pride by people without malign motives. But not all, even within the in-group, are happy to use such labels — for some they are too strident or just too offensive. For many a word like *nigger* was derived out of hate and anger and is now so negative as to offend in every context.

But banning the word entirely will be difficult. It is virtually impossible to legislate against 'words that wound'. Language isn't a perfect, logical, consistent and transparent linguistic system. It is full of vagueness, indeterminacy, variability and ambiguity and this fuzziness will always make prescriptive speech codes difficult, if not impossible, to enforce.

The simple fact is that humans need euphemism and even dysphemism, and we would have to change beyond recognition for this need to disappear.

Many societies have public acts of ceremonial misbehaviour that function rather like a social safety valve. These days humour and joke telling is the one area where people can routinely violate taboos, without fear of social retaliation. As Philip Adams and Patrice Newell write in the preface to their book *The Penguin Book of Australian Jokes:*

> **Jokes . . . are appalling. Almost without exception they deal in bigotry, sexism, racism, ageism and all the other politically incorrect isms. They clearly help people deal with their deep distaste for their own sexuality, their excremental functions, their foreign neighbours, their political masters and an infinite variety of things that go bump in the night. (1994: 12)**

ACTIVITIES
AREA OF STUDY 2

DRIFT FROM FORMAL LANGUAGE

1. a. Make a list of 8 quotes or sayings you're familiar with and rewrite them in rebus (or text message language). Here are four examples from the movie world:

Frst rule fight club: STFU. *Fight Club*
One sec, BRB *Terminator II: Judgment Day*
Luke, im yur father. Lol <3 Darth *Star Wars*
Srsly, my dear, WTF? *Gone With the Wind*

b. David Crystal (2008) stated that in order to use and understand text messaging successfully language users need to have an understanding of the standard variety. Do you agree with this view? Provide reasons and give examples from your 8 translated quotes.

2. Working with a partner, select a domain in which formal texts are commonly found, such as the law, government, business. In the domain of law, documents might include the transcript of a court decision, a police statement, FAQs from a Legal Service website.

a. Collect 6 texts from the domain that illustrate degrees of formal register and style and annotate each one.
b. Summarise your observations in a table using the names of the subsystems as column headings.

3. Contemporary dictionaries have a different view of their role from Samuel Johnson. Far from demanding "the suffrages of any writers of classical reputation or acknowledge authority", lexicographers these days actively seek the contributions and participation of ordinary people in updating their databases.

Investigate one or more of the following online dictionaries and prepare a report that includes:

a. The purpose of the dictionary as explained by the editor/s;
b. The processes for making decisions about what to include in the dictionary;
c. The contributors to the dictionary;
d. The processes for making a contribution to the dictionary;
e. The ways in which the dictionary editors engage language users in their work (eg, Word of the Year competitions);
f. What your investigation has revealed about attitudes to language formality and the 'caprices of innovation' deplored by Samuel Johnson.

Urban Dictionary: www.urbandictionary.com.au
Wiktionary: www.wiktionary.com
Wordnik: www.wordnik.com
Macquarie Dictionary: www.macquariedictionary.com.au
Oxford English Dictionary: http://www.oed.com
Merriam-Webster Dictionary: http://www.webster-dictionary.org

4. Collect two examples of written reports or opinion pieces from the print media and two from digital media sources.

a. Analyse the language choices in each, noting any features of conversational and colloquial language.
b. Compare the sentence structures, lexicon, headlines and use of graphics and images.
c. Summarize your observations and conclusions about modern-day journalism in 5oo words.

5. Refer back to the two extracts from the Queen's speeches in this chapter.

a. Annotate each one, identifying the features of syntax and lexicon.
b. Which has the more formal style? Explain your response using the examples you have identified.
c. Listen to these speeches on Youtube and annotate the prosodic features.

STYLISTIC FEATURES

6. Using the six examples in Section 3.2 as a model, find 3 or 4 formal language extracts, in spoken and written (including electronic) modes.

a. Annotate each one, focusing on syntax, lexicon and morphology as well as stylistic features, such as metaphor, use of pronouns, jargon and so on.
b. Rate the extracts along the continuum of formality-informality.

7. In a 2014 study of 'restaurantese" (the language used in restaurant reviews and restaurant menus), researchers found that by analysing thousands of US menus and reviews online they could predict prices just from the words. Their findings included:

- Multisyllabic words were used in top-end restaurants with high prices, eg, 'sumptuous', 'commensurate' and 'unobtrusively'.
- Words with sexual connotations were used in positive reviews, eg, 'voluptous', 'orgasmic', 'very naughty'.
- Liberal use of foreign words on the menu was more likely to be found in expensive restaurants, eg, 'persillade', 'oyako' and 'tonarelli'.
- Adjectives were used sparingly in expensive restaurant menus compared to middle-range restaurants. The latter tended to 'overcompensate' for the perception that their dishes may be less tasty than their more expensive competitors by sprinkling descriptions through the menu, eg, 'fresh', 'crisp' and 'golden brown'.

From *The Language of Food: a linguist reads the menu,* Dan Jurafsky, 2014

Conduct your own research into Australian restaurants online and compare your results. Do your findings concur with those of this study?

PHONOLOGICAL PATTERNING

8. Burma-Shave was an American company famous for its roadside advertising from the 1920s to the 1960s. Originally designed to promote shaving cream, its ads became popular for

their quirky rhymes that were more like homilies. In these examples, identify examples of: alliteration, assonance, rhyme, onomatopoeia, rhythm, consonance.

Burma Shave roadside signs

A shave that's real, no cuts to heal, a soothing, velvet after-feel: Burma-Shave
Better try, less speed per mile, that car, may have to, last a while: Burma-Shave
Big mistake, many make, rely on horn, instead of brake: Burma-Shave
Hinky dinky, Parley voo, cheer up the face, the war is thru: Burma-Shave
Thirty days, hath September, April, June and the, speed offender: Burma-Shave

Burma-shave.org/jingles

9. Take photos of signs that rely on phonological playfulness for impact, such as this one. Create a display of your pictures.

Photo: John Voce

10. This extract from the Common Book of Prayer illustrates some of the formality of style discussed in this chapter. This book was written by Thomas Cranmer in 1549 for the purpose of making prayers more accessible to ordinary folk.
Check the etymology of the bolded words. How many are borrowed from Romance or Classical languages, and are there any of Anglo Saxon origin?

In the **midst** of life, we are in **death**. . . . Thou knowest, Lord, the **secrets** of our hearts; shut not thy **merciful** ears to our prayer; but **spare** us, Lord most **holy**. . . . Earth to earth, **ashes** to ashes, dust to **dust**; in sure and certain hope of the Resurrection to **eternal** life, through our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our **vile** body, that it may be like unto his **glorious** body.

11. The following extract from a current day insurance policy explains how the company will approach a claim from the insured person. It has the hallmarks of highly formal register. Annotate the passage, identifying formal lexical and syntactic features.

The proposed insurance is issued on a 'claims made' basis. This means that the policy responds to 'claims circumstances' notified pursuant to Section 40 (3) of the Insurance Contracts Act which states: 'where the insured gave notice in writing to the insurer of facts that might give rise to a claim against the insured as soon as was reasonably practicable after the insured became aware of those facts but before the insurance cover provided by the contract expired, the insurer is not relieved of liability under the contract in respect of the claim, when made, by reason only that it was made after the expiration of the period of insurance cover provided by the contract'.

MORPHOLOGICAL PATTERNING

12. Which of the following is an acronym, which is an initialism? Write out in full what each one stands for.

ALP AIDS CHOGM ASEAN ACTU ACCC ASIC GAT UN WHO EU NAPLAN CSIRO NAB

13. Complete the table of prefixes: explain their meanings and provide 2 examples of each one. The first one has been done.

Prefix	Meaning	2 examples
Anti-	Opposing, against	Antibiotic, anti-discrimination
Cyber-		
Dys-		
E-		
Hyper-		
Pre-		
Sub-		
Trans-		
Uber-		
Ultra-		

14. Here are some examples of new words or spellings in advertisements.

a. Identify the process used to form each one.
b. Collect a folio of examples of your own and create a display highlighting the features of creative word formation.

Fabuttractive (Mercedes)
Be cointreauversial (Cointreau)
Longergevity, Gaslean (Toyota)
No Cholesterror (Nando's)
MAXalicious gloss collection (Max Factor cosmetics)

SEMANTIC PATTERNING

15. The following headlines are typical of the sort of economy of language we are familiar with in modern newspapers. They include compressed noun phrases, with strings of 2, 3 or 4 nouns

side by side that manage to convey a good deal of information about the story to follow, crisp verbs, colourful metaphors, alliteration, assonance, pun, hyperbole, rhyme and other features that attract interest and add drama to the writing.
Identify any of these features in the examples provided.

Building salaries surge
Petrol rates double whammy
Bullying probe targets police
Rail network meltdown
Australia's ticking fat bomb
Swans slaughter Roos
Science Friction
Palin and Pauline – two Ps in a pod

16. Here are a few synonyms for the adjective *clever*.

Able, astute, brainy, brilliant, canny, competent, deft, educable, expert, gifted, good, ingenious, intelligent, keen-witted, not born yesterday, perceptive, virtuoso, proficient, shrewd, smart, talented, tricky, wily, wise

a. Check that you know the subtle differences in meaning of each one.
b. Look up the words in an etymological dictionary to find the origin of each one.
c. Draw up a continuum and arrange the words along it, starting with most formal terms at one end, and least formal words at the other end. Add some extras of your own if you can.
d. Is there any pattern evident, eg, what do the words of Latin origin have in common?

17. What is it that makes the following noun phrases oxymorons? Make a note next to each one.

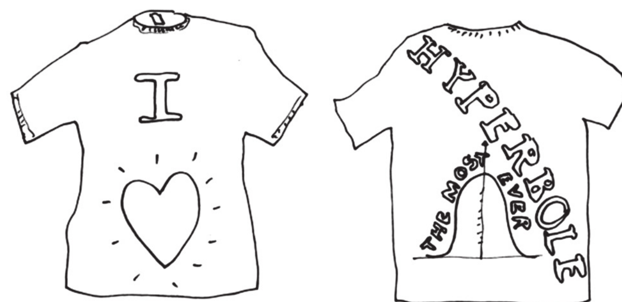
Oxymoron	Reason
Big minority	
Business ethics	
Calculated risk	
Final version	
True lies	
Unbelievably real	
Unbiased opinion	
Unexpected surprise	
Uninvited guest	
Unscented deodorant	
Very unique	
Virtual reality	
Volunteer job	

18. Collect a series of headlines from newspapers that contain ambiguous meanings, such as these:

Enraged cow injures farmer with axe.
Court to try shooting defendant.
Stolen painting found by tree.
Two ships collide, one dies.
Squad helps dog bite victim.
Footballer suspended over racist poem.
Toyota to cut 100 workers.

a. Identify whether they are lexically or structurally ambiguous.
b. Explain the ambiguity of each one. Rewrite the headlines in full sentences that are unambiguous.

19. In 2014, the supermarket company Coles was found to have made "false, misleading and deceptive representations by advertising bread as fresh when it had been made and partially baked and then frozen, sometimes months earlier overseas". Explain the issue in terms of connotative and denotative meanings.



SYNTACTIC PATTERNING

20. Revisit Obama's victory speech (example 4 at the beginning of this chapter).

a. Identify examples of parallelism, antithesis and listing.
b. How do these stylistic features support the purpose of the speech?

21. This extract from a regional newspaper article contains many examples of the passive construction. Answer the questions that follow.

Food Facts

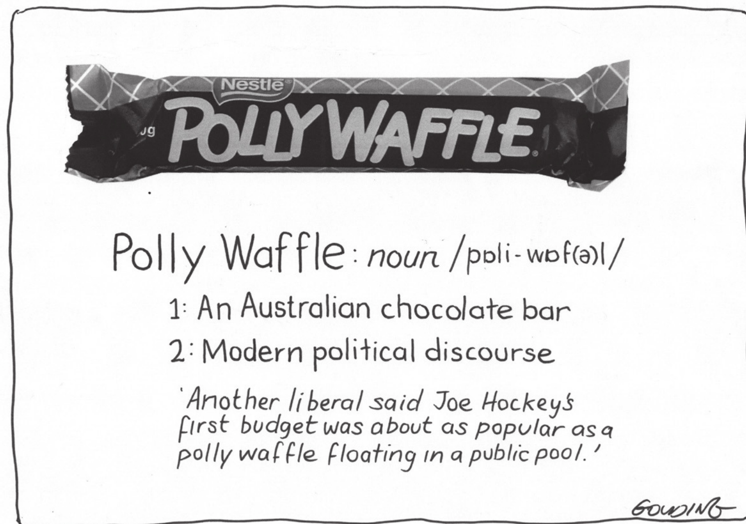
Food additives are substances added to foods that are not usually eaten as a food. They are used to improve a food's appearance, enhance the taste, add nutrients such as antioxidants, lengthen the shelf life, or allow a food to keep without refrigeration. They are identified by a numerical code and are included on the ingredient list of a product, usually positioned towards the end of the list. Of the approximate 16,000 food items in a modern supermarket, almost 90% of them have had food additives added during manufacture. This is a result of changing food chains and home processes, with foods being imported and exported all around the world, foods being grown and eaten out of season, and people spending less time cooking fresh food than ever before. In the last 50 years alone some 3,500 new chemicals have been added to our food!

a. Underline all the passives in the passage.
b. What effect is created by the use of the passive?

c. Change the sentences to active voice.
d. How does the register differ when the passage is written in active voice?

SOCIAL HARMONY

22. Analyse this cartoon. Which subsystems of language does it refer to or use for humour?



23. There are laws across Australia that criminalise the use of offensive, obscene, indecent or abusive language in a public place, or within hearing distance of others in a public place. In 2014 NSW introduced $500 on-the-spot fines for offensive language, and in Victoria and Queensland offenders can receive a prison sentence of up to six months.
Discuss the following questions:

a. What constitutes taboo language in Australia?
b. To what extent does it depend on the context, the relationship between the interlocutors, the mode?
c. What are some recent incidents involving taboo language or swearing that attracted media attention (eg, the use of sexist language on a sporting panel show; the use of words such as "Nazi" to insult or for humour; swearing by politicians in Parliament; or the use of swear words on clothing)?
d. Identify the underlying issues and attitudes to the language and the user that caused the controversy.

24. Watch these clips from the Australian comedy show, *Legally Brown*. (Warning – there is some swearing and taboo language.)

"How to advertise to Australians" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=72q7lnHu43o (3.10 mins)
"Token white employee" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_cUWT6c0lcc (3.25 Mins)

a. Discuss how racist language and attitudes are used for humour.
b. Make a list of lexical, semantic and discourse examples in these episodes.

25. During a media interview in August 2014, Prime Minister Tony Abbott first raised the notion of “Team Australia”, declaring that “everyone has to be prepared to be part of the Team”. This announcement attracted a great deal of controversy; some commentators applauded the PM’s position, as shown in the comment below:

Team Australia is a great analogy. I love my sports and I look forward to supporting Australian success in the sporting, scientific, economic, humanitarian and all other positive endeavours. My parents came to Australia from Europe, post WWII, and immediately assimilated into Team Australia. Why do immigrants, including illegal boat people, want to retain the cultures that they so detested and sought to escape? The PM is right. Time to respect Team Australia or leave and go play on another team or your former team. Simple logic really.

Others poured scorn on what they said was a “simplistic idea” using a concept that was “indefinable”.

It’s not “Team Australia” - it’s “Tony’s Team” and the sooner the rest of us start to call it Tony’s Team and refuse to use the words “team” and “Australia” in juxtaposition, the better.

It is clumsy, insincere, childish and quite plainly a cynical confection. Jingoistic claptrap.

a. Investigate the issue and compile a series of statements in favour of, and opposed to, the idea of Team Australia.
b. Analyse these statements and identify examples of overt and covert racist language.

26. In an article published in April 2015, “Why we shouldn’t succumb to work jargon”, Neha Kale presents a feminist analysis of workplace jargon, examining how metaphors of warfare are used to ingrain a masculine approach to conducting business.

Kale argues that masculine metaphors, particularly those of power and conquest, reveal underlying assumptions about behaviour and measures of success that have “insidious consequences for women at work”. She illustrates with language such as: “crush the competition”, “headhunt potential talent”, “clients as moving targets” and industries as “battlegrounds”.

a. Brainstorm jargon terms from your own workplace (or another familiar environment).
b. Is there a pattern of metaphors?
c. What assumptions about gender, age, talent, success underlie this language?

27. Social media have created a forum for individuals (frequently sports stars, celebrities, politicians, academics and others in the public arena) to express views publicly in ways that can have extremely negative consequences for them–public ridicule, loss of job, even prosecution. This is particularly true in relation to issues of sexual orientation, gender and ethnicity.

a. Conduct an investigation into a controversy that has arisen in recent times.
b. In a 500 word report, summarise the issue and provide a sample of the various responses and attitudes expressed. Include an analysis of the language used, considering the influence of covert and overt norms and the role of electronic communication.

OUTCOME TASKS

1. **Short answer questions**

Nicholas Dattner tables: crafted not made

Established nearly a quarter of a century ago in Melbourne, Dattners pioneered the use of native Australian hardwoods, regarded now as the finest in the world. In 1989 they showed the world for the first time the fiery beauty of Redgum, the majestic eucalypt found typically on the banks of mighty rivers or the vast pastures of central Victoria. Only taken when they were old dead trees, this magnificent Australian hardwood has gone into some of the finest hand crafted wooden tables ever to be seen. Snapped up by eager buyers all over the world, these stunning Redgum tables have become highly collectable.

If you are in the market for a dining table, then before you make your choice, come and see what a solid wood table looks like compared to any other choice. Environmentally it is the only choice.

QUESTIONS

a. Make a list of the adjectives describing the wood used and the tables made by the company. (4 marks)

b. Replace some of the words identified in (a) with synonyms. In what ways does this alter the register of the text? (5 marks)

c Identify a superlative in the text and explain its function. (2 marks)

d. What effect is created by the repetition of *choice*? (2 marks)

e. Identify the pronouns used and discuss the ways in which they support the purpose of the text. (3 marks)

f. Explain the effect of the organisation of the information in this sentence: *Snapped up by eager buyers all over the world, these stunning Redgum tables have become highly collectable.* (3 marks)

g. Identify two examples of the use of passive voice. Why is this used in the text? (3 marks)

h. Explain the semantic difference if the tables were to be described as 'manufactured' rather than 'hand crafted'? (2 marks)

i. Comment on the register, context and social purposes of this text, using examples to support your analysis. (6 marks)

2. **Analytical commentary**

Write an analytical commentary on the language features of the text "The Light on the Hill". In your response you should comment on the:

- contextual factors surrounding the text
- social purpose and register of the text
- stylistic and discourse features of the text.

The "Light on the Hill" speech by Labour Prime Minister Ben Chifley in 1949 contains many of the features of semantic and syntactic patterning described in this chapter. (Interestingly, Chifley spoke with a Broad accent which did not detract from the solemnity or formality of his address.)

The Light on the Hill

"I have had the privilege of leading the Labor Party for nearly four years. They have not been easy times and it has not been an easy job. It is a man-killing job and would be impossible if it were not for the help of my colleagues and members of the movement. No Labor Minister or leader ever has an easy job. The urgency that rests behind the Labour movement, pushing it on to do things, to create new conditions, to reorganise the economy of the country, always means that the people who work within the Labour movement, people who lead, can never have an easy job. The job of the evangelist is never easy. Because of the turn of fortune's wheel your Premier (Mr McGirr) and I have gained some prominence in the Labour movement. But the strength of the movement cannot come from us. We may make plans and pass legislation to help and direct the economy of the country. But the job of getting the things the people of the country want comes from the roots of the Labour movement – the people who support it.

When I sat at a Labor meeting in the country with only ten or fifteen men there, I found a man sitting beside me who had been working in the Labour movement for fifty-four years. I have no doubt that many of you have been doing the same, not hoping for any advantage from the movement, not hoping for any personal gain, but because you believe in a movement that has been built up to bring better conditions to the people. Therefore, the success of the Labour Party at the next elections depends entirely, as it always has done, on the people who work.

I try to think of the Labour movement, not as putting an extra sixpence into somebody's pocket, or making somebody Prime Minister or Premier, but as a movement bringing something better to the people, better standards of living, greater happiness to the mass of the people. We have a great objective – the light on the hill – which we aim to reach by working the betterment of mankind not only here but anywhere we may give a helping hand. If it were not for that, the Labour movement would not be worth fighting for.

If the movement can make someone more comfortable, give to some father or mother a greater feeling of security for their children, a feeling that if a depression comes there will be work, that the government is striving its hardest to do its best, then the Labour movement will be completely justified.

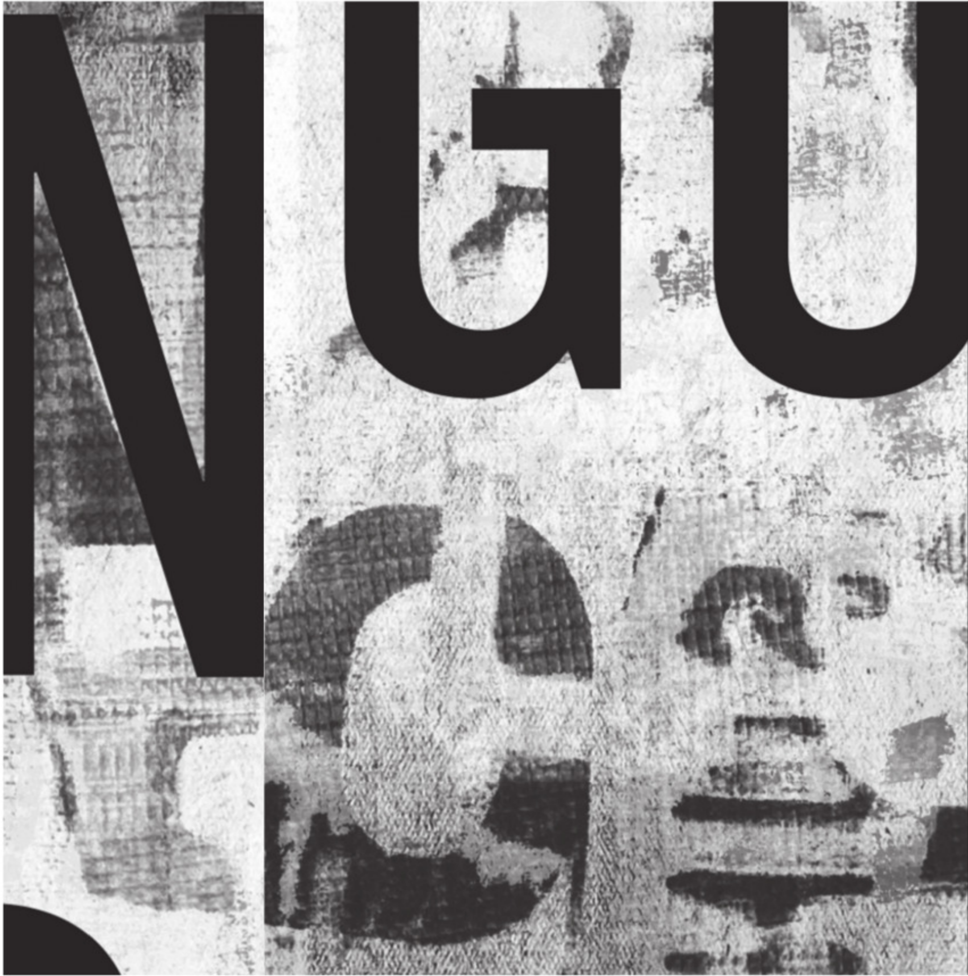
It does not matter about persons like me who have our limitations. I only hope that the generosity, kindliness and friendliness shown to me by thousands of my colleagues in the Labour movement will continue to be given to the movement and add zest to its work."

JB. Chifley in speech to the NSW Labor Party Conference, 12 June 1949.

3. Essay

Write an essay on one of the following topics, referring to at least two subsystems and providing linguistic examples to illustrate your response.

i. Freedom of speech is a double-edged sword
OR
ii. Hate speech is the price we pay for freedom of speech
OR
iii. Good speech cannot always overcome bad speech



UNIT 4

LANGUAGE VARIATION AND IDENTITY

4.0 SETTING THE SCENE

> 'Who are you? How old are you? Where are you from? What do you do? What you doing now?...'
> We would only have to speak, to provide our interrogator with innumerable clues about our personal history and social identity. The linguistic signals we unwittingly transmit about ourselves every moment of our waking day are highly distinctive and discriminating. More than anything else, language shows we 'belong', providing the most natural badge, or symbol, or public and private identity. [Crystal 1997: 17]

We tend to use labels like Australian English as if it were a single immutable language, but this is not the reality. People talk and write differently in different contexts — an informal conversation, an interview, a speech and so on. The reality is also that speakers from different regions, from different social classes, of different ages, of different occupations, of different gender identification, of different sexual orientation, will all talk differently. Labels like Australian English are convenient cover terms for what are really clusters of mutually understandable speech varieties.

Standard Australian English is the variety that happens to have the greatest clout in contemporary Australian society, and it has an important role in establishing the legitimacy of Australian English in comparison to other national varieties of English. However, nonstandard varieties also have an important role to play in constructing the social and cultural identities of language users. In these chapters, we will be focusing on variation that is associated with speakers; this includes regional variation (the geographical background of speakers), social variation (the age, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic class, education of speakers), and even personal variation (the linguistic details of individual speakers, including social and geographical features, but also personality and physical condition).

We will start by looking at variation between regions within Australia, a range of migrant varieties, and Aboriginal Englishes; we will also consider how the language features associated with stereotypes may be either adopted subconsciously or deliberately employed to invoke or challenge identities. Later, we will move on to the ways in which speakers use language to construct different identities. Our sense of who we are is by no means fixed or rigid but is constantly evolving and responding to our audience and also to the situation where the interaction takes place. This relates to a personal identity (a sense of self) and also to the different faces of this identity when we adopt different social roles. The way we speak establishes how we are unique as individuals and also signals our membership of particular groups. You will see how language can be used as a marker of solidarity (to include) and to indicate social distance (to exclude); in other words, to communicate with 'us' but to put up barriers to keep 'them' out. To begin with, though, we consider dimensions of variation in Standard English generally.

4.1 LANGUAGES, DIALECTS AND ACCENTS

Before we start to talk seriously about linguistic variation we need to sort out a few problems of terminology. Throughout this book we've been using the terms **language**, **dialect** and **accent**, and now it's time to explain exactly what we mean by these labels. Of course, people use these words generally in ordinary conversation to talk about linguistic matters, but unfortunately the everyday definitions are rather too vague and imprecise for proper linguistic description. For a start, the distinction between language and dialect is not at all clear-cut, and people make subjective judgements about what makes something a dialect and what makes it a language. For example, for many people a dialect brings to mind something rather quaint and rustic. For others, the term is quite pejorative. Dialects are varieties that don't quite come up to scratch — they're haphazard, vulgar and provincial aberrations of the real language.

Most people are very aware of pronunciation differences. For example, many younger speakers in Melbourne pronounce the 'e' in *Melbourne* as [æ]; so for these speakers *shell* and *shall* are pronounced the same (ie, they are homophones). This is sometimes commented on by older Melburnians and also by many visitors. These differences are matters of accent not dialect. Accent refers to the pronunciation a speaker uses, whereas dialect refers to a speaker's or writer's vocabulary and grammar.

accent = pronunciation **dialect = vocabulary and grammar**

People are generally fascinated by vocabulary differences. What speakers call a glass of beer, a pair of running shoes or a bleeding nose will vary depending upon which part of Australia they live in, or at least grew up in. Undoubtedly variation of this kind is significant for speakers. We wear lexical items rather like emblems on a T-shirt; whether we say *swimmers* or *togs* will identify us regionally. Yet, as interesting as this variation is, it is not terribly significant when it comes to linguistic diversity. Differences in vocabulary alone do not make for different dialects.

What we need are distinct grammatical differences. This can involve features like differences in verb forms *(I done all the cooking* compared to *I've done all the cooking);* negative constructions *(I'm not gonna eat it no more* compared to *I'm not gonna eat it any more)* and pronouns *(Are youse eating?* compared to *Are you eating?).*

English dialects are all the regionally, socially and also temporally defined varieties that fall under the all-purpose label of "the English language". Technically, pronunciation differences alone do not make a variety a distinct dialect. In reality, though, if speakers have a different accent, then they will as likely as not show differences elsewhere in their speech. Although some linguists insist on a sharp demarcation between accent and dialect, you'll find that most varieties that differ in pronunciation are also distinctive in other respects.

Remember everyone who speaks English is a dialect speaker. As we've already discussed, the most important dialect (in terms of the way society operates) is Standard English. It might surprise you to call this a dialect, because people tend to talk about the "standard language", but this is a misleading label. Standard English is simply one of many different dialects of English — it just happens to be a dialect with an army and navy (to adapt a description attributed to Max Weinreich

and now used to describe the arsenal of prescriptive texts like dictionaries and grammars that gives standard languages so much of their power and prestige). Standard English is what is promoted in schools; it's what is taught to foreign learners; students are expected to use it in essays; broadcasters are expected to use it on radio (although this requirement is often relaxed now); dictionaries and grammar books foster it. How it got to this elevated position is a geographical and historical coincidence. Standard English was originally a local dialect of the London-Central Midland region and it just happened to be in the right place at the right time. If a city other than London had had the same non-linguistic advantages (let's say Liverpool or Manchester), the dialect of that region would have been subject to the same spread. This is typically how standard "languages" arise. It has nothing to do with a variety being perfect, but it has everything to do with economic, political and social context.

English has a navy and an army for protection.

> Standard English is a dialect with social clout

4.1.1 WHEN DIALECTS BECOME LANGUAGES

The difference between related languages and dialects of the one language is fuzzy — is Scottish English a separate language or a dialect? Certainly linguists often disagree about where to draw the line. A rule of thumb might be: if the differences between dialects become great enough (or more particularly, when speakers stop understanding one another), then we can say we have separate languages.

But actually there's a lot more to this question, and some of it is not just a matter of linguistics; there are also political, social and even historical concerns. For instance, language differences are an important part of what distinguishes one nation from another, and over time it is possible for national frontiers to become linguistic frontiers. This means that some varieties will be thought of as separate languages simply because they come to be spoken in different countries. For example, we think of Norwegian speakers and Swedish speakers as using separate languages; yet they can actually understand each other. Conversely, we think of Mandarin and Cantonese as the one language, Chinese, because they're spoken in the same country and use the same writing system; yet they're not mutually intelligible.

Mutual intelligibility isn't always a linguistic concern either. For example, the small North Frisian dialect area in western Germany divides into a number of individual village varieties that are by reputation mutually incomprehensible. However, in the face of language death there arose a pro-Frisian language movement — and suddenly the language barriers were down and Frisian speakers from all these different villages who used to speak 'non-mutually understandable' dialects were understanding one another! It seems psychological factors like motivation and solidarity can encourage comprehension.

Investigate other places in the world where controversies rage about dialects and languages — for example Belgium and the former Yugoslavia – and document some of the cultural implications of these disputes.

How can we draw a distinction between dialects and languages? Mutual intelligibility is not a foolproof measurement. However, it's still probably the best way to determine this.

When dialects speakers stop being able to talk to one another, their dialects turn into separate languages. So, over time the dialects of Latin continued to diverge and eventually transformed themselves into the modern-day Romance languages such French, Spanish and Italian. The same thing happened to the parent of English (English, German, Dutch, Frisian were all once dialects, and shared a parent — Proto Germanic). However, always keep in mind that these individual labels like German, Dutch and English give the impression of easily identifiable and neatly compartmentalised entities, but such tidy classifications obscure the reality of variation that is an inherent part of any language system. Neat linguistic labels like "English" are always convenient fictions.

4.2 HISTORICAL BACKDROP

Towards the end of the eighteenth century the population of the British Isles was small (estimations are around 15 million). At this time as many as one third of the inhabitants spoke their own Celtic languages with little or no English. It was a period when regional dialects flourished and dialect differences could be striking (not surprisingly, considering horses and sailing vessels were the most efficient means of travel and communication).

This is roughly the state of the language when exploration southwards established the first English-speaking settlers in the Antipodes. For Australia, the date coincides with the establishment in 1788 of the first British penal colony in Sydney, after which isolated coastal settlements sprang up in Tasmania, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia. The first arrivals were largely prisoners, prison officers and their families; numbers for non-convicts weren't significant until the middle of the following century.

The speech of both the convicts and free immigrants alike would have reflected the regional diversity at this time, and when the many dialects came together in those early years, a blending of features produced a new compromise dialect with the characteristics of transported south-eastern British English figuring the most prominently. The uniformity was the fall-out of this original dialect mixing and leveling, and also aided by the transience of settlers at the time. The mobility of the population was surprisingly high given the remoteness and distance of the settlements. With New South Wales as the point of departure, travel was largely by sea, and the swift spread of people kept the language uniform. Moreover, the rapid pastoral expansion and gold rushes all around the continent meant that any emerging regional distinctiveness was soon diluted by floods of new arrivals.

Early settlers in Australia

The relative uniformity of Australian English is a characteristic of the dialect that has been commented upon and written about since the 1800s. Some of the most telling descriptions are by Samuel McBurney (usually signing himself as S.M.B) in the *Argus* (Melbourne, Victoria):

> One of the most remarkable alterations came upon me quite unexpectedly when examining a class of boys and girls whom a Hobart teacher kindly picked out for me. It was thoroughly representative, embracing children of English, Irish, Scotch, German and Tasmanian parentage to three generations. All spoke very much in the same way. […] [Samuel McBurney, 'Colonial Pronunciation 11', *Argus* 24th April 1886, p. 4]

McBurney's accounts, strengthened by reports from all around the country, tell of the leveling out of regional features that was happening around this time — in his words, "a new dialect is growing up".

4.3 REGIONAL VARIATION

Linguistic variation that is associated with geographical location is probably more obvious to people than other types of variation. A person in York in the UK will have different linguistic patterns from someone living in say New York in the US, or Wellington in New Zealand, or Brisbane in Australia. What we have here are different **regional** or **geographical dialects**. These geographical dialects can include both standard and nonstandard forms.

Linguists generally make the distinction between geographical dialects which are in a sense national varieties like Australian English, New Zealand English and Canadian English. Within these national varieties there can also be distinct regional geographical dialects; for example, Melbourne English in Australia, Southland English in New Zealand and Waterloo County English in Canada.

Speakers of distinctive regional dialects will always have a distinctive regional accent as well, but the opposite is not necessarily true. It is possible for speakers to have a regional accent, but to speak or write a dialect of English such as Standard English that conveys no information at all about what part of the country they come from. Standard English is used and understood by people all over the world and its grammar provides little or no information about geographical background. This is largely true with respect to vocabulary too, although there can be some lexical items which are regional. There's nothing strikingly Australian about the grammar used in this book, for example. Only the nature of the vocabulary might give the game away and perhaps occasionally the colloquial style or the spelling.

In order to see just how uniform Standard English is globally, the English linguist David Crystal (2003) collected samples from 40 English broadsheet newspapers from countries all over the world. They were collected on the same day, 6 July 1993, and covered the same range of topics. He claims that on purely linguistic grounds, it was impossible to tell which paper belonged to which country. There was next to nothing in the way of an obviously regional use of grammar. The only occasional clue was in the form of a distinctive lexical item or spelling. Clearly, we're already well on our way to attaining a worldwide Standard English, at least for writing.

Being codified (i.e. recorded in grammar books, dictionaries and style guides) means that standard varieties of English used in different countries are more like each other than nonstandard varieties are. If we think of Australian and British English, for example, their distinctive character is to be found largely in differences of accent and also some vocabulary, but the two are not strikingly different from other standard varieties at the level of grammar. Speakers of nonstandard varieties from these two countries, however, show not only differences of accent and vocabulary, but also significant grammatical differences, especially in colloquial or informal usage.

Here are some nonstandard grammatical sentences from traditional dialects; see if you can find out which varieties they belong to (hint: all of them were input dialects to Australian English):

He'll might could do it.
I am after thinking about yourself just now
I do be drawing goods from Maitland all kinds of Stores.
Give it to he, not they — her don't need it

There are accents that are homeless too. For example, the accent close to the Queen's accent is **Received Pronunciation** (or **RP**), and it can be found all over the UK. The accent conveys information about a person's social and educational background, but nothing about where that person might be from (except that they probably come from Britain). Originally spoken by the upper classes and people of the court in the south of England, RP became the British accent most associated with wealth, power and prestige, and was adopted by anyone anxious for social advancement. The fate of RP is now unclear, however. Certainly it's no longer exclusively the domain of the social elite, but has become more an educated accent. More significantly, though, many people are now trying to speak more 'down to earth' — and with solidarity and 'down-to-earthness' now winning out over status, people want to avoid the elitist connotations attached to cultivated accents such as pure RP. Variations on RP are springing up, too; in other words, accents with an RP base, but with clear regional characteristics.

Even more telling is the rapid spread in the 1990s of something called 'Estuary English'. This is essentially London speech with distinct Cockney elements. It has now extended well beyond the Thames estuary, and is on the way to taking over from RP as the regionally neutral accent. As we'll see in a moment, something similar is happening in Australia with the move to General Australian as the preferred accent. There are many YouTube videos on how to speak Estuary English — check them out, and also notice how close some of the features are to Australian English.

4.4 SOCIAL VARIATION

As we mentioned at the start of this chapter, social parameters to do with age, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic class, education and occupational status of speakers will typically correlate with the way sounds, vocabulary, grammar and discourse patterns vary. For example, people who share the same socioeconomic characteristics and the same linguistic repertoire also

share a social dialect or **sociolect**. This association is always coincidental not causal — there is nothing about the way of life in these various groups that produces these differences (although of course, individual members may deliberately seek to speak differently from other groups).

In Australia, social variation is most obvious in accent differences. We generally classify Australian English into three overall varieties — Broad, General and Cultivated. The use of one variety over another is governed by a complex mix of different factors, but principally education, gender identification, ethnicity and location (urban versus rural). Some of these accent varieties are characterized by distinctive grammar as well. For example, those falling closer to the Broad end strongly correlate with nonstandard grammatical features.

The American linguist William Labov was the first to show that the relationship between society and linguistic variation could be studied in a systematic way. People had always realized that different social classes had different linguistic behaviour, but it was Labov's 1966 study of New York English that showed for the first time that these differences could be quantified. He started out by identifying a number of linguistic features that were used variably within the New York speech community. These were called sociolinguistic **variables** and included features such as the pronunciation of *r* in words like *beer* and *pork*, the pronunciation of *-ing* in words like *cooking* and *eating* and the pronunciation of *th* in words like *thirty* and *this*.

Labov interviewed a random sample of the population in New York, trying to elicit a range of different speaking styles — from informal conversation, through a more formal interview, to reading styles - the most formal of all. By this he was able to show a clear interaction between speakers' social backgrounds and the formality of their speaking style. All the linguistic features he looked at varied significantly according to the social group of the speaker. For example, particular accents (like the pronunciation of *r* in words like *beer* and *park)* were especially associated with speakers higher up on the social scale, and all speakers adjusted their usage towards these more prestige accents when aiming for a formal style. When people felt the situation becoming more formal, they pronounced the words in ways they perceived to be more 'correct'.

Wherever you find similarities of social structure within the English-speaking world, you can expect to find similar patterns of distribution for linguistic variables. Within all this regional and social variation, we also find sub-varieties defined by variables like ethnicity, gender, age and profession. So if we really want to be accurate in our descriptions of an Australian English speaker, we should have fine-grained labels like 'Greek Australian Working-Class Heterosexual Female Adult Journalist English'.

4.5 ATTITUDES TO VARIATION

Are there dialects that can be described as linguistically superior? Well, our culture tells us that the standard is the best form of English. Yet examples are easy to find where nonstandard dialects actually appear to do things better. The pronoun system of Aboriginal English, for example, makes much finer distinctions than Standard English pronouns are capable of. It distinguishes dual number (two persons) from plural (more than two persons); it also indicates inclusive and exclusive for first person (in other words, whether 'we' includes the person addressed or not). Even if Standard English eventually adopts plural *youse* (or one of the many other forms of plural second person pronoun such as *you-all, you-guys, you-uns*), it still will come nowhere near the complexity of the Aboriginal English system.

Does this mean speakers of the standard are linguistically deprived as a result? There is no doubt that plural *you* is useful (and in fact Standard English is the only European language without such a pronoun), but generally such evaluations get us nowhere. All varieties have the same potential for complexity and richness of expression and there are no linguistic grounds for saying one is better than another. Nonstandard dialects are as valid a communication system as the standard. All dialects have rules; they just do things differently. Sentences like *I done all the cookin' meself* or *I don't want nothin' to eat* are never errors of English, but errors of Standard English. Labels like 'sloppy' and 'careless' are not only offensive but scientifically wrong-headed. Certainly, standard varieties have amassed considerable linguistic resources — yet any nonstandard variety subject to the same historical development would be capable of developing these.

From a social point of view, however, things work quite differently. Nonstandard dialects are often disparaged and devalued simply because they don't have the same prestige or status as the standard dialect. Despite the current era of so-called 'equal opportunity' and equality for all, language continues to function as a social disadvantage for many people and those in different language communities are still discriminated against both consciously and unconsciously for using nonstandard dialects and low-status accents.

These same features do of course have a prestige within the group, but not one that's generally acknowledged outside the group. Here we can introduce you to the useful distinction between **overt** and **covert prestige**. The linguistic features that have overt prestige are those that are recognized by whichever is the culturally dominant group; in English speaking societies these are the standard features. The education system stigmatises certain other features as undesirable. However, these very same features might well have covert prestige; in other words, they signal membership within a certain sub-group. Covert prestige is a bit like a "coolness factor" (or "street cred"). Using these features earns the speakers acceptance and respect.

Attitudes towards varieties are often quite confused. For instance, speakers of the standard dialect can be quite tolerant of regional nonstandard dialects, especially if they happen to be spoken in picturesque rural areas. These varieties are often described in nostalgic (and rather condescending) terms as attractively charmingly bucolic forms of the language. In sharp contrast, where social dialects are concerned, there is often strong hostility. Nonstandard is typically equated with substandard and the speakers of these varieties are condemned for their accent, their use of slang and of course their grammar (or lack of grammar, as is often claimed).

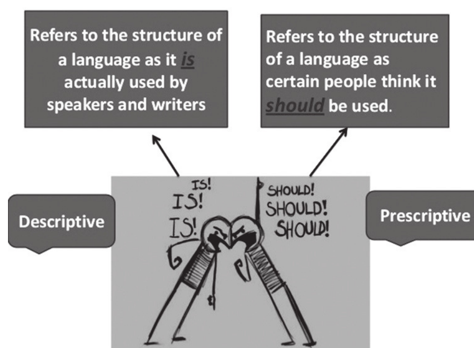
These sorts of value judgements typically arise from personal associations and prejudices. Those who approve of a rural life style, for example, or who are attracted to what they see as beautiful unspoiled rural regions, will probably also be attracted to the varieties of English spoken in these places. Varieties spoken in heavily industrialized urban centres, however, are often judged harshly as 'bad' or 'ugly-sounding'. But of course, it's how you view these places – some people are delighted by the vowels of northern (and formerly industrial) Manchester and Birmingham. In the same way, if you approve or disapprove of someone's social background, then as likely as not you'll approve or disapprove of this person's way of speaking. We might think we're judging an accent on the basis of pure aesthetics, but typically these sorts of judgements have a much deeper social basis. Language is so closely bound up with the life and culture of its speakers that it's very difficult to separate them. Social judgements of this kind appear deeply ingrained in the human psyche.

At this point, we introduce the important distinction between a **prescriptive** and **descriptive** approach to language. The prescriptive approach is one that tells you how you ought to speak, and prescriptive grammars and handbooks comprise a collection of *dos* and *don'ts* about sentence

structure, word meaning and word usage. In the way that etiquette books outline rules of polite behaviour, prescriptive rules like the following outline the "best" sort of language.

- Do not use *impact* as a verb.
- Do not use *fun* as an adjective (ie. with comparative / superlative forms *funner* / *funnest*)
- Do not use *youse* or *yeah-no*.
- Do not use *penultimate* to mean 'greatest'.
- Do not use *alternate* to mean 'other'.
- Do not end a sentence with *but*.
- Do not use more than one negative in a sentence.
- Do not use *verse* as a verb (as in Collingwood is versing the Tigers).

On the other hand, the descriptive approach describes how we actually speak. Introductory linguistics books always emphasize the need for linguists to retain this sort of objectively descriptive stance. After all, linguists study language, in the same way that botanists study plants, zoologists research the physiology, anatomy and behaviour of animals and sociologists research the nature and laws of human society. Any linguist who condemns a native speaker for saying *youse* not *you* is a bit like a botanist who condemns a plant for being a pest. You can't have biologists denigrating certain species in the plant world simply because everyone else views them as weeds. You can't have zoologists describing the structure of certain animals as defective. And you certainly can't have sociologists ignoring some aspects of human society simply because others consider them deviant.



Linguistic science must found its theories on observed behaviour. To construct a theory about Modern English grammar based only on sentences like *It is I* and *The data are misleading* would be about as sensible as constructing a theory of gravity based on the premise that only apples fall downwards. In English it's also acceptable to use *It's me* and *The data is misleading* depending on the contexts. What we are interested in here is which factors motivate one construction above the other. Hence we replace absolute labels of prescriptive grammar like 'right' and 'wrong', 'mistake' and 'error' with relative labels like 'appropriate' and 'suitable'. Language is not an absolute matter of putting a tick or a star beside a sentence. It's always much more interesting than that.

When linguists put forward the idea of nonstandard dialects as legitimate varieties of English, they are often given a hard time. People misunderstand and think they are trying to promote these varieties as standard. The linguistic position is seen as one where 'anything goes'. In fact, what linguists are arguing is far from 'anything goes'. What they try to promote is a more responsible and responsive attitude to language — the consequences of choosing certain language features over others.

The language police

The idea that there is a right and wrong in language is entrenched, and self-appointed arbiters of linguistic goodness routinely condemn taboo words and constructions they see as falling outside the boundaries of the standard language. In letters to the editor, blog posts, emails to linguists and talkback calls on the radio, people air their complaints about the language; these include observations on what is viewed as bad grammar, sloppy pronunciation, new-fangled words, vulgar colloquialisms, unwanted jargon and foreign items. As is so often the case when aspects of human behaviour are proscribed, it is what other people do that ends up on the blacklist. As sociolinguist Deborah Cameron once noted: 'Linguistic bigotry is among the last publicly expressible prejudices left' (2012: 12).

ACTIVITIES
SETTING THE SCENE

LANGUAGES, DIALECTS AND ACCENTS

1. Australia is well-known for its rhyming slang. Some examples are shown in the table. Identify the pattern that helps form the rhyming slang phrase (e.g., the placement of the rhyme, the **connotations** that link the slang phrase with the original word - in some cases).

Slang	Translation	Usage
Johnny Horner	corner	He's just gone round the Johnny Horner.
Dead horse	tomato sauce	What this pie needs is a bit of dead horse.
Bag of fruit	suit	All dressed up in your best bag of fruit.
Blood blister	sister	How's your little blood blister?
Captain Cook	look	Well, take a Captain Cook.
Dog and bone	phone	Can you get that dog and bone?
Frog and toad	road	Goodbye, must hit the frog and toad.
Joe Blake	snake	Watch out for the Joe Blakes.
Pat Malone	alone	I'm all on my Pat Malone.
Tit for tat (titfer)	hat	I think you should wear your titfer.
Billy lids	kids	How many billy lids you got?
Septic tank	yank	That Bill Clinton, he's a septic tank.
Trouble and strife	wife	How's the trouble and strife these days?
Butcher's hook	look	Take a butcher's!
Oxford scholar	dollar	It's just an Oxford scholar
China plate	mate	How's me old china?
Rubbidy dub	Pub	I'm meeting them down at the rubbidy.

REGIONAL VARIATION

2. Explore the site below to find some examples of Australian slang and idioms. www.koalanet.com.au/australian-slang.html

   a. Choose one example and design a picture to represent the idiom, eg, 'this side of the black stump' (a long way away), 'ankle biter' (child), 'budgie smugglers' (men's bathers/speedos), 'glad rags' (best clothes).

b. Create a display of all the pictures and invite your friends and teachers to view them. Provide a viewing guide or questionnaire sheet and see how many of the idioms the audience can guess.

3. Go to the Tools icon on your word processor on your computer and click on Language.

a. How many varieties of English are available? Which variety of English is your computer's default language?
b. Select a document from your files. Experiment with different settings by changing from English (Australia) to some of the others. Print out the different texts and annotate them to highlight differences between them.

SOCIAL VARIATION

4. Which variety of Australian English (Broad, General or Cultivated) is shown in these examples transcribed in IPA?

Beetle	[bəˈitəl]	[bəitəl]	[bitəl]
Basin	[bʌˈisən]	[bʌisən]	[beisən]
Bison	[bɒisən]	[baisən]	[baisən]

5. Choose a media personality, a writer, performer or someone of interest to you and analyse the person's way of speaking or writing (or both). Journalists, authors, sports and media personalities and public identities may provide a good source of material. Write a description, using linguistic metalanguage, in which you explain how that person's identity is reflected in their use of language. Be sure to include examples from all of the subsystems of language.

ATTITUDES

6. Write a comment, to be posted online, in which you express your views on this opinion piece from the newspaper.

'But what about all those gems from the Aussie lexicon of yore? The days when, if you missed work because of illness, you were "off crook" – and if you got worse you could eventually "cark it". When a bloke, fancying a sheila, would try to "crack on to her" – and if he failed miserably he "wouldn't come within coo-ee". When, if you tried your hardest regardless of success, you "gave it a burl". Or when a dog dug a hole in the vegie patch and his master threatened to "introduce him to the Julius Marlow". The sass, the wit, the irreverence. That was the Aussie trademark. Is it all vanishing into the global melting pot?'
Excerpt from Lawrence Money, The Age 2.2.15

7. a. Brainstorm a list of the words, phrases and idioms commonly used to refer to the ways people speak, e.g. 'down to earth', 'plum in the mouth', 'plummy', 'posh'.
b. Discuss the connotations of each one.
c. What conclusions do you draw about the prejudices and stereotypes attributed to individual speakers' accents in Australian society?

Pronoun

OUR

Verb

Noun

LANGUAGE IS

Adjective

ONE GREAT

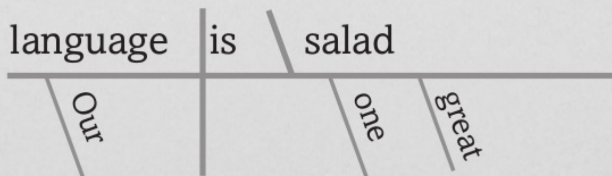
Numeral

SALAD

Noun

— Proverb

SENTENCE DIAGRAM



AREA OF STUDY 1

LANGUAGE VARIATION IN AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY

5.0 INTRODUCING AUSTRALIAN ENGLISH

English has more national varieties than any other language, and Australian English is just one of many of these varieties used around the world. A language that functions as a national language in several countries is known as a **pluricentric language**. In addition to English, there are many pluricentric languages in the world — Arabic, Chinese, Dutch, French, German, Hungarian, Korean, Spanish, Swahili, Tamil and Portuguese all have a number of national varieties, each with their own linguistic norms and features.

Pluricentric languages are both "unifiers and dividers of peoples" (Clyne 1992: 1). As English speakers, Australians communicate and identify with other English speakers throughout the world – we are "unified" with other English speakers. But there are quite distinctive ways in which Australians use English and thus express their unique identity. Even a small number of distinctive features of our national variety are enough to make it possible to "divide" us from other English speakers.

We've already looked in detail at what characterizes Standard English; so no need to go into more detail here. What we will emphasize though is the importance that is placed on the need for citizens to possess a common language, to enable them to communicate effectively with each other. A common language is seen as central to building a nation and to fostering a sense of national identity. Standard languages are usually developed as part of this nation-building (and in response to the need for wider communication). They are based on a set of norms indicating the usage expected from members of the educated and privileged classes and which are (usually erroneously) believed to be free of regional influence.

The issue of language testing for new immigrants to Australia has always been controversial. In the 1950s, in the period of the White Australia Policy, the test was sometimes administered in a language other than English. As recently as 2008 the language test was really a test of Australian cultural knowledge and values rather than about language; it included questions about cricket, the national flora and fauna, and the status of rugby in Sydney culture.

Collins and Peters (2004) compare Australian English grammar with that of New Zealand English and the two powerful northern hemisphere standards, British and American English, and examine the extent to which Australian English is “consolidating its own norms as an independent national standard” (2004: 608). They identify “small but significant developments” in Australian English grammar that reinforce the notion of an Australian Standard — these developments are supported by a distinctive lexicon (*bogan, uggs*) and lexical morphology (*selfie, arvo*).

5.1 FEATURES OF AUSTRALIAN ENGLISH

In the next few sections, we will focus on the form and status of Australian English today, and how it relates to other national varieties. If we also include colloquial usage in our discussion, we will see that Australian English differs quite strikingly from other native varieties of English in a number of ways that can be grouped under the usual headings: lexical; grammatical; morphological; phonological; graphemic; prosodic. Some of the features we’ll be looking at here will be standard features, some of them nonstandard and some, as you’ll see, will hover somewhere in between – probably used by speakers of Standard English but not yet ‘proper’ enough to make it into any of the style guides and grammar books.

5.1.1 LEXICAL FEATURES

Many words associated with Australian English no longer form part of people’s active vocabulary though they are still considered among the quintessential expressions of English ‘downunder’. Many of them have their roots in 18th and 19th century British regionalisms that disappeared from English but thrived in the colony: *billy* ‘makeshift container for boiling water’ (< Scotland); *fossick* ‘to rummage’ (< Cornwall); *fair dinkum* ‘authentic, genuine’ (< Derbyshire — and not, as popular belief has it, from a Cantonese expression meaning ‘real gold’); *stone the crows* ‘expression of surprise’ (< London Cockney); *cobber* ‘mate’ (< Suffolk). The language of the original convicts (so-called ‘flash language’) provides the source of many Australianisms: *swag* ‘stolen apparel’ later ‘collection of legitimate belongings (usually rolled in a blanket)’; *lurk* ‘dodge, racket’ later ‘job, occupation’. The expression *bloody* (the so-called ‘great Australian adjective’) is described in Grose (1783) as ‘a favourite word used by thieves in swearing’ and remains a favourite today (though we impress upon you that it is not actually an adjective). Some expressions derive from early contact with American English: *squatter* ‘one who settles upon land without legal title’ later ‘respectable pastoralist’; *bush* ‘woods, forest’ > ‘the country as distinct from the town’; *bushranger* ‘woodsman’ later ‘criminal who hides in the bush’. The influx of Americans to the goldfields from the 1850s provided additional colloquialisms (like *bonza*). In the following table are some more examples of distinctively Australian lexical items and alongside them are their equivalents in some other national English varieties. As you can see, there are some words that do not exist in other varieties and are therefore sometimes not understood by native speakers of English from other parts of the world.

Australian	Meaning/ explanation	Equivalent in another variety
cultural cringe	The feeling that other countries are better than we are. This 1950s term is sometimes employed in criticisms of Australian policies and ethos.	no equivalent
barrack for	support (a sports team), cheer	barrack (without 'for') means jeer (Brit.); root for (US)
lamington	type of cake (named after Lord Lamington, Governor of Queensland, 1895-1901).	no equivalent
parka	warm windproof jacket	anorak (Brit.)
gum boots	rubber boots	Wellington boots (Brit.)
creek	small stream	brook (Brit., US)
cattle or sheep station	large rural establishment	farm (Brit.); ranch (US)

Some lexical items offer insights into the values that Australians typically identify as being central to the Australian culture – values of egalitarianism, fairness and community spirit. In the following table, try to flesh out the 'cultural values' column by identifying what value/s are embodied in the given expressions.

Lexical item	Meaning	Cultural values
battler	persistent struggler against heavy odds	egalitarianism
fair-go	fair or reasonable behaviour or course of action	
tall poppy	excelling in some way, generating envy and derision	
wet blanket	person dampening the ardour of others	
dob (on)	report a misdemeanour	
dob in	nominate someone for an unpleasant task; inform against	

Some distinctively Australian lexical items are used only colloquially. Unlike the instances above, the following would not be used in writing (except perhaps in emails or text messages) or in formal settings: *bludger* (a person who evades responsibilities and thereby imposes on others), *chook* (hen, chicken), *crook* (sick), *dinkum/dinky-di* (genuine), *drongo* (fool), and *sheila* (girl/girlfriend). Much of this lingo probably now comes across to you as a bit passé. Certainly, the days of *cobbers* and *larrikins* and *beaut blokes* and *bonza sheilas* would seem to have passed.

American and British English are more widely recognised overseas than Australian, Canadian, New Zealand or South African English. Australian travellers to Europe are often mistaken for Americans or English nationals, and are greeted with surprise when they identify themselves as having come from 'downunder'. There are whole websites dedicated to the fascinating idiosyncrasies of Australian English.

The Australian lexicon has incorporated little from Indigenous Australian languages, a story often repeated in places where English has taken root (such as English in the USA). Borrowed expressions have been largely driven by need and include cultural terms and flora and fauna. Some of the names of animals, plants and cultural artefacts are so deeply embedded in the language that people are unaware of their Indigenous origins; e.g. *yakka* (*hard yakka* meaning 'hard work') and *bung* ('broken'). Other words are commonplace; e.g. *kangaroo*, *koala*, *wallaby*, *wombat*, *dingo*, *barramundi*, *galah*, *waratah*, *coolibah*, *mulga*, *billabong*, *corroboree*, *boomerang*. Some of these words are now productive in Australian English; that is, they are used to form other words or **idiomatic expressions**. Examples of this include: *out in the mulga* (in the bush), *kangaroo court* (where members of a group judge others without following correct procedures), to *boomerang* (backfire).

Galah and *boomerang* have also undergone semantic extension (in other words, their meanings have broadened). The former can mean a fool, the latter signifies a dud cheque, something that is lent and has to be returned or a scheme that backfires. *Secret women's business* and *secret men's business* have become ways of describing delineation of gender roles and affairs in general Australian society far beyond those cultural rules and traditions originally intended by the expression from Aboriginal English.

Around one third of Australia's place names have their origins in Aboriginal languages (see Moore 2008). They include Victorian places such as: Balla(a)rat (resting place), Banyule (hill), Echuca (meeting place of waters), Geelong (*jilong* land, cliffs), KooWeeRup (*kuwirup* blackfish), Maribyrnong (*mariburnong* saltwater river), Warragul, Warrigal (wild dog).

5.1.2 GRAMMATICAL FEATURES

In this section we consider those features that are genuinely Australian English, as well as those that are used more frequently in this variety compared with others. Particularly in focus are nonstandard or vernacular features. In Australia, these attributes tend to be more prevalent in rural areas, although it is difficult to talk about regionally defined variation in this case without appealing to social aspects. We've already mentioned that basically the higher up the social scale speakers fall, the more closely these speakers are aligned to the standard language; nonstandard traits are more characteristic of the lower socio-economic classes.

There is going to be some heavy-duty linguistic terminology here, but it is a good opportunity to see a number of grammatical terms and concepts in action.

PRONOUNS

The following are among the most common colloquial Australian usages to do with pronoun forms; some are used by people who would consider themselves speakers of Standard English, while others

are more obviously nonstandard.

- The plural second person pronoun forms *yous* and *you guys* (***Yous****'d worked on it*).
- Gender marking on both animate and inanimate nouns (*He put* ***'er*** [= leg of lamb] *on the plate*).
- Decline of *whom* (considered very formal) in favour of *who* in all varieties.
- Preference for object personal pronouns (like *me*) over the subject pronouns (like *I*) following *than* (*He's bigger than* ***me***.)
- Demonstrative *them* in place of *those* (*one of* ***them*** *things*)
- Possessive *me* in place of *my* (*He's* ***me*** *youngest*)
- Object forms in reflexive pronouns (*I thought to* ***meself***), and in coordinated pronouns (***Me*** *and Fred / Fred and* ***me*** *are coming too*; ***Me*** *and* ***her*** *were the last to go*)
- *Us* in place of *me*, especially after verbs of giving and receiving (*Give* ***us*** *a light for me pipe*)
- Extended use of *myself* in place of *me* or *I* (*Please contact John or myself if you have questions*)

VERBS AND VERB PHRASES

Here we've included the most common colloquial Australian usages to do with verbs; as before there is a mix of stigmatized and almost standard features. Some of these features are widely attested and we recommend you visit the interactive online atlas eWAVE (http://ewave-atlas.org) that shows vernacular grammatical features in the Englishes around the world.

- Greater use of *–ing* progressive (*I* ***am enjoying*** *Living Lingo*); there has been a general rise in the use of *–ing* since the second half of the 20th century, but the increase is much larger in the Antipodes
- Widespread and growing use of the present perfect in simple past contexts (*Then she'****s broken*** *her leg*
- *Have*-deletion (*I ø only been there a couple of times*).
- Increasing use of *of* in place of *have* after modal verb forms *could, should* and *would* (*I would* ***of*** *waited*).
- Continued demise of *shall,* pushed out by modal *will* (***Will*** *I call a taxi?*)
- Increasing use of *may* and *might* unmarked for tense; both indicate past possibility and hypothetical possibility (*I think he* ***might/may*** *come*)
- Modal use of *better* and *gotta* in place of *had better* and *have got to* (*we* ***better*** *go*; *you* ***gotta*** *do it*).
- Growing use of the *get*-passive (compare *He* ***got*** *arrested* with *he* ***was*** *arrested*)
- Continued normalizing of irregular verbs (*show-showed* and *shine-shined* pushing out *show-showed-shown* and *shine-shone*)
- Fixed past tense forms for the verb *be* (*You* ***was*** *late again*; *'Course they* ***was***).
- Singular *there*-construction with plural subjects (*There'****s*** *fairies at the bottom of my garden*).
- Increased use of *gotten*, especially in intransitive constructions (*She's* ***gotten*** *really angry*).
- Revival of something called the 'mandative subjunctive' (*I insist that he* ***arrive*** *at 9.00* in place of *I insist that he* ***arrives*** *at 9.00*).

OTHER GRAMMATICAL FEATURES

Following is a collection of features to do with negation, clause combining and discourse structure.

- *Don't* in place of standard *doesn't* (*'E* ***don't*** *run away with it, y'see*)
- Some use of *aint* as an all-purpose negative auxiliary for *be* and *have* (*He aint happy*

- Double negation (*I **never** said **nothing***)
- *Never* as a general negator (*You **never** opened it* = You didn't open it).
- Invariant negative tag *isn't* or *innit* (*You're going home soon, **isn't it**?*).
- Relative clauses with zero marking for subjects (*I knew a girl worked in an office down the street* compared with *I knew a girl who worked in an office down the street*)
- Use of connective *which* especially in speech (*[...] unless you get 88 **which** some universities are not going to give those marks*)
- Sentence-final hedging *but* (*He's a bit of a bastard **but***)

Some of these nonstandard features are well on their way to becoming grammatical markers of Standard English generally, all the more so with the increasing colloquialization of English worldwide. This trend is even more marked in Australian English because of the more informal character of the Antipodean culture in general, and its greater willingness to use colloquial styles of discourse. Not all Australians approve, of course; there is still a constant barrage of complaints about falling standards of language and literacy.

The awful Australian

It is not difficult to imagine how the colonial vernacular would have thrived in the 18th and 19th centuries — they were rough and extremely macho times. In the words of Edward Wakefield back in 1829: "[...] bearing in mind that our lowest class brought with it a peculiar language, and is constantly supplied with fresh corruption, you will understand why pure English is not, and is not likely to become, the language of the colony". These sentiments are echoed in Valerie Desmond's condemnations of Australian English in her 1911 book with the memorable title *The Awful Australian*:

> But, in addition to this lack of good-breeding and the gross mispronunciation of common English words, the Australian interlards his conversation with large quantities of slang, which make him frequently unintelligible to the visitor. [p. 20]

5.1.3 MORPHOLOGICAL FEATURES

No discussion of Australian English can avoid mention of the striking use of **diminutives** — in particular, words shortened to one syllable with an additional suffix then added, either -ie or -o. In Chapter 2 we gave you many examples. Here some classic illustrations: *After brekkie we got a good possie in front of the tellie and opened our Chrissie pressies from the rellies*; My *mate Jacko, a weirdo journo from Freo, slipped on a bit of lino during his smoko and ended up in the ambo that arvo; poor dero couldn't get compo*. These could only be satirical representations of Australian English.

Linguists like Anna Wierzbicka, who have studied this aspect of our lingo, describe how these shortened expressions are a reflection of cultural values such as informality, mateship and egalitarianism. When you look at words like *journo* and *pollie*, what do you see — laid-backness, outgoingness, good humour, casual toughness, and perhaps even a good dose of that celebrated Australian anti-intellectualism? Do you think Anna Wierzbicka is right — does the Australian love of abbreviations also stem from a dislike of big words and an association between short words and friendliness?

Perhaps this is a self-image that has had its day — will it endure, or are the changes in Australian society such that the day of *journos* and *pollies* has passed. We've already seen the decline of a lot of the "you beaut", "dinky-di", "tru-blu" Aussie lingo; however, the Australian love of diminutives does seem to be as strong as ever. Indeed the 2014 addition of Australian *selfie* as international "Word of the Year" suggests the feature is here to stay — and might even be spreading.

5.1.2 PHONOLOGICAL FEATURES

Australian English is classified into the three overall varieties we mentioned earlier — Broad, General and Cultivated. The Broad variety (known colloquially as 'Strine') is the most distinctly Australian English accent and is the one most familiar to other English speakers because it is associated with iconic Australian television and film personalities such as Steve Irwin (better known as the 'The Crocodile Hunter') and Paul Hogan ('Crocodile Dundee').

Dialect stereotyping

Interestingly, a linguistic study of the Crocodile Hunter's accent revealed that he didn't speak particularly broadly at all.
The researchers (Daniel Schreier, Karin Deubelbeiss and Katrin Forrer) concluded that it was an impression of broadness that came from both his larrikin image and two vowel sounds in particular (those in words like *mouth* and *price*). So it was a case of dialect stereotyping and over-use of some phonologically striking features.

The three accent varieties are distinguished largely on the basis of variation in the vowel phonemes; in particular, five vowels. The following table gives some idea of the range of variation that exists. The symbols we have used are based on the original descriptions by Mitchell and Delbridge.

Variation in five of the vowel phonemes of Australian English

Phoneme		Cultivated	General	Broad	Ethnic Broad
/i/	beat	[i]/[ɪi]	[əɪ]	[əˈɪ]	[əˈɪ]
/eɪ/	bait	[ɛɪ]/[eɪ]	[ʌɪ]	[ʌˈɪ]	[aˈɪ]
/oʊ/	boat	[oʊ/ɒʊ]	[ʌʊ]	[ʌˈʊ]	[aˈʊ]
/aɪ/	bite	[aɪ]	[aɪ/ɒɪ]	[ɒɪ]	[ɒɪ]
/aʊ/	bout	[aʊ]	[æʊ]	[æˈʊ]	[ɛʊ]

As we move from the Cultivated end to the Broad end, the vowels become longer and more drawn out. The broader varieties have 'slower' diphthongs (indicated here by ˈ); this means that the first element is longer. Diphthongs also tend to be 'wider'; this means that the distance between the endpoints of the diphthongs is greater.

So-called ‘Ockers’ (or speakers of Strine) are becoming rarer these days. Many people avoid the Broad end of the spectrum in favour of the middle-ground General accent. This has the advantage of being a distinctly Australian accent, but avoids the stigma that broadness has for some people. The trend is very clearly towards General Australian, as evident in the accents of international celebrities such as The Wiggles, Hugh Jackman, Nicole Kidman and Cate Blanchett. TV and radio announcers have also moved right away from the BBC inspired accents that once used to dominate.

The awful Australian revisted

Australianness in an accent is not such a bad thing anymore and observations like the following are dated.

> [...] the common speech of the Commonwealth of Australia represents the most brutal maltreatment which has ever been inflicted upon the language that is the mother tongue of the great English nations. [William Churchill 1911 *Beach-la-Mar: the jargon or trade-speech of the Western Pacific*; p. 17]

> The Australian accent has frequently been described by travellers, but none have done justice to its abominations. Many unobservant persons, shuddering through three or four months' experience, have left Australia saying that the people of the island continent use the dialect of the East End of London. This is a gross injustice to poor Whitechapel. Neither the coster of to-day, nor the old-time Cockney of the days of Dickens, would be guilty of uttering the uncouth vowel sounds I have heard habitually used by all classes in Australia. [Valerie Desmond 1911 *The Awful Australian*; pp. 15–16]

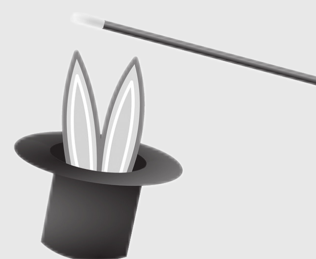
Here are some additional distinctive features of the Australian English accent:

RHOTIC R

We are very familiar in Australia with the emphasised **rhotic** [r] of general American English. We hear it all the time in movies and on TV. It is also found in the English spoken in Canada, northern and western England, Scotland, and Ireland. But Australian English is **non-rhotic**, and in this respect, Australian English is similar to the national varieties of New Zealand, South Africa and the standard British and south-eastern English regional varieties. Non-rhotic means we don't pronounce [r] at the ends of words like *father* or where it occurs before a consonant, as in *cart*. Basically, a vowel has to follow the [r] for us to pronounce it.

Pulling Mr Rabbit out of the hat

A striking feature of Australian English is the ‘linking [r] ’ in a string of words like *beer in* or *father and* (most even put in an [r] in something like *idea-r-of it* or *law-r-and order* and even *draw-r-ing*). So the pronunciation of ‘Mr Abbott’ would always come out as [mɪstəræbət]. In 2010 the Australian public unfairly criticised the then Prime Minister Julia Gillard of deliberately slurring her speech so she could call Mr Abbott (the opposition leader at the time) Mr Rabbit. This is the perfectly standard ‘linking R’ in Australian English — there is a rabbit in Mr-r-Abbot.



VOCALIZED L

One of the features of Australian English that confuses speakers of other national varieties, as well as speakers of other languages, is the pronunciation of [l]. It is pronounced with the tongue further back in the mouth than in many other varieties of English, such as British and American ones, and there is a tendency for it to be **vocalised**, that is, for it to become like a vowel. You can hear it in final clusters (e.g. *milk* [mɪuːk]) and end position (e.g. *hill* [hɪuː]), and it's becoming more and more frequent.

WEAK T

The general weakening of stops is widespread in the community. Between vowels (e.g. *thirteen, city, get it*), [t] tends to be **flapped** (so the [t] is pronounced rather like a very rapidly pronounced [d]). Final stops tend to be unreleased (e.g. *bit, bid*); this means that the organs of speech come together, but they don't part to make the little explosion that characterizes the stopped consonant. There is also a tendency to **glottalise** [t], especially before consonants (e.g. *not now, butler*); that is, briefly articulate between vowels, something that was previously generally identified with Cockney in words such as *bottle* and *atlas* where the [t] was replaced by a glottal stop. Increasingly, something called fricated [tˢ] can also be heard, especially at the ends of words (e.g. *That's a beautiful hat* [hætˢ]); it's a consonant often associated with Irish speakers.

AFFRICATION

A feature that appears to be on the increase is the affrication of [tr] and [str]; the word *tree*, for example, is pronounced something like 'chree' [tʃɹi]. In younger speakers, there are signs of this affricated pronunciation spreading to the [stj] cluster heard in words such as *student*.

YOD-DROPPING

The palatal [j] (which is called a yod) tends not to be dropped after alveolar consonants before [u] (*news* [njuz]), although there is considerable variation (e.g. how do you pronounce the word *nude* — is it [njud] or [nud]). There is also merging of [tj], [dj], [sj], [zj] to [tʃ], [dʃ], [ʃ], [ʒ] (e.g. *tune, dune, assume, presume*). There is also variation (eg. *assume* [əˈsjum]~[əˈʃum]), although palatal versions are more likely in unstressed syllables (*educate* ([ˈɛdʒəkeɪt]).

H DELETION

The deletion of [h] is common in unstressed (function) words, such as *him* and *her*, but in content words (e.g. *helmet, happen*) it remains stigmatized and tends to occur more at the Broad end of the accent spectrum (more usually in male speech).

MIXED FRICATIVES

Substitution of [f] for [θ] ('fink' [fɪŋk] for *think*) and [v] for [ð] ('muvver' [mʌvə] for *mother*) is more widespread than is usually acknowledged. Historical evidence indicates that the spread of this feature is fairly recent.

There's nothing wrong with nothink

There are four words whose pronunciation in Australian English often catches the critical ear of certain speakers. These are the little pronominal "thing" words: *something, nothing, everything* and *anything* — in particular, the pronunciation "somethink", "nothink", "everythink" and "anythink".

The story behind this pronunciation is complicated. Originally, all words ending in *-ing* were pronounced exactly as their spelling suggests — with a final [g]. Then a sound change took place that deleted the [g]. So something like *sing* lost its [g] and came to be pronounced as we do today [sɪŋ]. There are still conservative dialects in places like Birmingham, Stoke-on-Trent and Liverpool where the consonant didn't vanish — for these speakers *singer* still rhymes with *finger*.

In pronunciations like "nothink", the final "g" didn't drop off but lost voice and turned into [k]. This "-ink" pronunciation is recorded as early as a thousand years ago and today it's still scattered throughout the Midlands and also in some parts of southeastern England. It features strongly in Cockney, too. These are many of the dialects in the original melting pot that gave rise to Australian English and it's clear from early 19th century descriptions that "-ink" was here downunder from the very beginning. Curiously, it seems always to have been restricted to the pronominal "thing" words like *nothing* and *something*. There is no evidence of pronunciations like "I'm goink runnink".

SCHWA

The schwa vowel [ə] is realized across the board in a wide range of unstressed contexts; for example, *rabb**it**, box**es**, comm**a*** all have schwa in the second syllable. Schwa has been crucial to the heartbeat of English for a long time, and it produces a rhythm very different from the rhythm of languages like French or Italian (it's a the tum-tee-tum-tee-tum rhythm, as opposed to a rat-a-tat-a-tat rhythm). We can tell by the confused spelling of unstressed vowels in Old English that this little vowel would have been around even then.

LOSS OF DIPHTHONGS

One of the most characteristic features of diphthongs in Australia is their pronunciation as a single vowel; for example, the monophthongal [ɔ:] pronunciation for words such as *poor, moor, sure* (instead of [ɔə]). The word *tour* is hanging in there; some speakers have gone over to [tɔ:], but many continue the diphthong [tuə]. (Note, if the [uə] sound occurs, it is generally following [j], as in *cure*.) Many speakers also produce monophthong variants for the centering diphthongs [iə]; for example, *near* and *square* are pronounced as [ni:] and [skwɛ:].

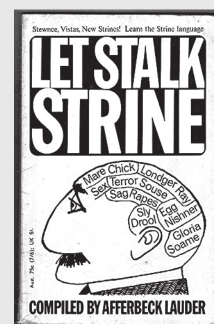
SOUNDS IN CONNECTED SPEECH

So far, our discussion has centred on individual sounds. But sounds always occur in a context (we utter groups of sounds), and each of them will be influenced by the surrounding sounds. As you would expect, Australian English shows the same sort of connective speech processes that you find in any language. We've already discussed the processes at length in Chapter 2; so we will just briefly summarize them here:

assimilation involves sounds changing their shape to become more alike; e.g. *pancake* pronounced as 'pangcake' (here the nasal is assimilating to the following velar stop).
vowel reduction in unstressed positions; e.g. the weak forms of *and* as [ən, 'n]; deletion of unstressed vowels in in *Kev(i)n*, *p(o)lice*, *bas(i)n*, and t(e)rrific.
elision involves the slurring or omission of certain sounds in a phonological context, such as 'ol'man' (*old man*) and 'haman'eggs' (*ham and eggs*).
insertion involves the addition of sounds where they previously didn't exist (it is less common than deletion); e.g. nonstandard pronunciations like 'ath-e-lete' [æθəlit] for *athlete*, 'fillum' [fɪləm] for 'film.

Let Stalk Strine

Informal Australian English, particularly at the broad end of the spectrum, is characterised by a great degree of loss and modification of sounds through deletion, elision and assimilation. This was drawn to the public's attention in the book *Let Stalk Strine* by 'Afferbeck Lauder' (Professor of Strine Studies, University of Sinny). This is an extremely successful book that exploits stereotypical features of the Australian accent for humorous effect. Most of the humour derives from respellings based on broad vowel sounds, exaggerated assimilations and deletions. Using the features we have covered in this chapter and earlier, describe how the 'Sinny Professor' arrives at the respelled words below. How faithfully do you think they represent the Australian accent? [Hint: you will probably have to read these out aloud].



Cover of the 1969 edition of *Let's Stalk Strine* by Afferback Lauder

Emma Chissit ("How much is it?")
Gloria soame (= "glorious home")
Aorta (= "They ought to")
Get chews twit (= "get used to it")
Cheque render (= "jacaranda")
Where cheque etcher hat? (= "Where did you get your hat?")

5.1.3 SPELLING FEATURES

On the whole, Australian English has adopted an **orthography** similar to the one that now predominates in British English, with some features associated with American English, and some alternatives. For instance, words such as *centre* and *theatre* are spelt with -*re* as in British English and not -*er* as in American English. The noun is *defence* (or *licence)*, not *defense* (or *license*) as in American English, but *program* (also generally American) is preferred over the predominantly British *programme*. There is variation between -*or* (which is now more common in American) and -*our* (which is more normal in British) in words such as *color/colour*, though most Australian newspapers have now adopted -*our*. The name of the Australian Labor Party institutionalises the American spelling. There is a preference for –*ise* (for instance: *naturalise*), but the -*ize* spelling is also found. As in this book, writers often fluctuate and don't rigidly adhere to one or the other.

5.2 ATTITUDES TO AUSTRALIAN ENGLISH

As we've already seen, for a long time observers from afar (Britain in particular) were highly critical of the Australian version of the English language, labelling it ugly and grating on the ear, lazy, lacking enunciation and even incomprehensible. In response to these criticisms, Australian writers and film-makers defiantly began producing material that not only portrayed these stereotypes but joyfully celebrated and gently mocked them. Movies like *They're a Weird Mob*, *Dimboola* and *The Adventures of Barry McKenzie*, made in the 1960s and 1970s, are definitely cringe worthy these days, but at the time they were created they perpetuated the myth of the beer swilling, nasal, swearing, drawling Aussie male.

Bazza's Aussie vernacular (from *The Adventures of Barry McKenzie*)

Splash the boots, strain the potatoes, water the horses, go where the big knobs hang out, shake hands with the wife's best friend, drain the dragon, siphon the python, ring the rattlesnake, unbutton the mutton, point Percy at the porcelain, shake hands with the unemployed: **take a leak**

Chunder, big spit, technicolour yawn, yodelling, laugh at the ground: **vomit**

As dry as a dead dingo's donger: **in desperate need of a beer**

We turn our attention now to how Australian English has gradually established itself, both here and abroad, as a legitimate and desirable variety. We discuss how Australians themselves perceive their language, including its variations, and the tensions between prescriptive and descriptive attitudes to language use in Australia.

5.2.1 AUSTRALIAN ENGLISH FINDS ITS FEET

Traditionally, Standard British English has served as Australia's linguistic norm, with the rules for use, or **codex**, provided by the Oxford English Dictionary, and institutions such as the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) providing the model. Australian English was frequently condemned as inferior or bad British English. The emancipation of Australian English from this position in the 1970s and 1980s was facilitated by the reconceptualisation of Australia's national identity and the redefining of Australia as an independent multicultural nation. A contributing factor was Britain's retreat from the Asia-Pacific region and its entry into the European Economic Community (which was later developed into the European Union). Australia's National Policy on Languages (Lo Bianco 1987) stressed the complementarity between English, the national language and **lingua franca**, and the other languages, both community and indigenous languages. And it described Australian English as Australia's national language.

Recent decades have also been characterised by the declining presence of British English among Australia's elites and in institutions in which it had previously been considered appropriate. Forty

years ago, the career path of an Australian academic in the humanities and social sciences was to take a second degree at Oxford or Cambridge. Some budding school teachers would also study at Oxford and spend time teaching in England before returning to Australia. Australian artists, writers, and musicians would generally only be accepted in Australia after success in England. They returned after years of work in Britain sporting modified accents and, together with many members of the judiciary, provided a model of "pommified Australian" (or "modified cultivated Australian" as it came to be known). Incumbents of important offices of state, such as governors and governors-general, were almost always imported from England, and despite one or two appointments in the 1930s and 1940s, it has only been since 1965 that Governors-General of Australia have been Australian citizens in their own right. It was not until 1977 that Melbourne's first Australian-born Anglican archbishop was appointed. Until about that time, the appropriate way of talking to God or about God was widely considered to be in Standard British English. The accepted (or overt) norm today is Australian English in all domains, including religion, administration, the judiciary and education.

Until the 1980s, the Australian Broadcasting Commission (now Corporation) trained its non-British news readers to present news broadcasts in the same variety as employed by news readers on the BBC. Eventually the ABC was not only to accept but even to propagate Australian English as its norm, the instrument of Australian national identity. It is telling that when the Managing Director of the ABC, Brian Johns, took over in 1995, he is quoted as saying "We don't want an out-dated accent" (by which he meant the local 'cultivated' accents closest to RP).

The appearance of Australian style manuals (e.g. Peters' *Cambridge Australian English Style Guide*) and markedly Australian dictionaries (e.g. the *Macquarie Dictionary*; first edition in 1981, as well as those published by Oxford University Press, such as the *Australian Oxford Dictionary* and the *Australian National Dictionary*) has done much to establish a distinctive standard for Australia and to boost Australians' self-confidence in their language. No longer does the country look to British norms and standards for linguistic guidance.

Guidelines produced by the ABC's Standing Committee on Spoken English (SCOSE) provide the only Australian pronunciation codex. SCOSE (recently renamed ABC Language) essentially makes rules for the pronunciation of proper nouns, including place names, and arbitrates on questions of doubtful pronunciations. SCOSE guidelines are available to ABC presenters and not to the general public (except in occasional reports), although its decisions affect the wider community as broadcasters have the function of modeling language use for the rest of us.

European interest in Australian English is exemplified in the representation of a packet of *Jumpy's* (the German equivalent of *Twisties*) which is reproduced here. *Jumpy's* contains a series *Say it in Australian: The Aussies have a very distinctive way of expressing themselves. Learn Australian with Jumpy's*. In this example, the words translate as:

Q. An Aussie asks where the nearest quack is. What could be meant by that?
A. A doctor who is 'no good'.

5.2.2
VERBAL HYGIENE

A common lament by older generations is that the young don't know how to speak "properly" any more or that there are declining standards in our English. As with all sweeping generalisations, the reality is more complicated than might first appear. The complaint about falling standards could be heard when our parents and grandparents were growing up as well. Part of this is a reaction to change, and as mentioned earlier, the variety of the younger generation often becomes the basis of the mainstream variety of tomorrow. While Australians appear to be more tolerant of nonstandard forms, it is clear from the regular discussions in the media that many continue to fret over the state of the language and are constantly vigilant.

Here is a selection of the literally hundreds of queries and complaints that we receive on a regular basis:

1. I am being driven to distraction by some Australians use of the word "but" at the end of a statement as in "Dropped the kids off at school just now but" or "me sister just told us she's pregnant but". Where did this come from? What, if anything, does it mean? Is it even part of the Australian language? But what?
2. To me the word 'data' is plural, so I will say 'the data are' but everyone around me always says 'the data is' and that does something to my neckhairs.
3. Why is it acceptable to pronounce words with the letter "Str" as "Shtr"? For example: Australia-->Aushtralia, Street --> Shtreet, Strict-->Shrtict.
4. What's happened to "me"? I've been noticing more and more in speech and written language that "me" has become "I" in certain sorts of sentences eg "he selected several people including you and I". (Heard this on Late Night Live).
5. There is something I have observed especially over the last few years, that I find irritating, and that is the use of the 'L' sound. In words like 'milk', 'little', 'Australia', 'self', etc. the 'L' sound (for some of the population) seems to become almost a 'Y' or a 'W' sound. For example 'Austray-ya'. Are we becoming lazy with our tongue?
6. I am becoming increasingly irritated by people's mispronunciation words such as grown, flown, blown. I have noticed these type of words are pronounced "grow+en", "flow+en" etc (one syllable word becoming a 2 syllable word). Is their any reason for this?
7. I absolutely hate the word 'gotten' that seems to be used a lot on American TV shows. Whatever happened to 'have got', and is 'gotten' in their dictionary now?
8. Every time I hear the word "Kilo meter" on television or radio my soul goes into anguish. Why must we have ki lometers. ? My greatest fear is that we will soon have ki logram, ki lopsicals and ki loliters. PLEASE PLEASE PRETTY PLEASE WILL YOU EDUCATE ABC AND OTHER BROADCASTERS AS TO THE CORRECT PRONUNCIATION OF THESE WORDS. Ie Kilo-meter
9. I had to write before I either put my foot through the t.v. or toss my radio through the window! Why?? Have you not noticed how ENDEMIC has become the word "issues"? Many ill-formed speech patterns make me cringe but this word "issues" has sprung up from nowhere and is used ad nauseum. There are no problems anymore. Everyone now has issues. issues;issues issues. I could scream. Where the hell did this come from and how has it become so widespread?
10. I wonder if you have any comments about the loss of the past tense form of so many words in favour of their participle form. I find my teeth on edge every time I hear the term sunk instead of

sank. Just today it was reported on the ABC that "Telstra's shares sunk". It sounds so awkward to my ears, I can't understand that everybody can't hear this. Even more disturbing is the pace at which this change is happening.

Identify which of the linguistic subsystems are under discussion in each of the quotes above (1)-(10). Which of these complaints do you agree with, if any?

But are there signs of change? Growing egalitarianism and social democracy are now seeing the solidarity function of accents gaining over the status function. The relationship between standard and nonstandard usage is clearly transforming, with changes in educational practices heralding the end of years of institutionalized prescription. Colloquialization, liberalization and the effects of e-communication now mean nonstandard language "is achieving a new presence and respectability within society" (Crystal 2006:408). So will this spell the end of linguistic prescription?

And what of younger English speakers today (like readers of this textbook) who have grown up with variation and change as facts of linguistic life. A survey of first year linguistics students at Monash University revealed that these young speakers overwhelmingly showed intolerance towards language change, especially when it came to the influence of American English (Ferguson 2008). Of the 71 students surveyed, 81% expressed the view that the incorporation of American elements into Australian English was detrimental to the language. Here are some of the explanations offered:

- Because Australian English would then slowly perish and it won't be unique anymore.
- Loss of Australian identity.
- Often US English seems to use "wrong" words, I don't like the use of "z" instead of "s" and cannot stand "for free".
- Why would we want to speak American English?
- I think 'they' are lazy with language.
- American accents are so nasal and it sounds yuck. American rap terms ≠ cool.
- Even though it's not sociolinguistically correct to say this, but I think that American English is 'bad' English and we should try and stay away from it as much as possible.

These students have gone through the "pragmatic" approach at school. They have also had one year of linguistics and been immersed in the accepted wisdom of the discipline. But there doesn't seem much evidence of any new open-mindedness in linguistic thinking. David Crystal has predicted a new egalitarian linguistic era where "eternal tolerance" will replace the old "eternal vigilance". Perhaps it is simply, as he says, that new attitudes and practices take time.

The Internet, and in particular social media, has added another ingredient into the prescription mixing bowl. Here's PhD Allie Severin writing about her research on attitudes to language use on the Internet.

Prescription and the internet, by Allie Severin

As part of my PhD, I'm examining prescriptive behaviour as it occurs on the Internet.

If you are looking for examples of a specific language behaviour these days, you will have a high chance of finding it online. People produce texts on the Internet in all kinds of languages and dialects, using both standard and non-standard forms. The result is an immense wealth of linguistic diversity. As with all human behaviour, however, displaying difference in the language we produce opens us up to critique.

Correcting the language of other people is an incredibly common practice online. It's often cited as being incredibly rude, yet people still do it anyway. One of the important questions underlying my research is why this might be so. The most commonly suggested reason for the prolific nature of online linguistic nit-picking is the anonymity of online communication (As it says in Peter Steiner's 1993 New Yorker cartoon: 'On the internet, nobody knows you're a dog'). Essentially, it's often proposed that people are less concerned about being polite to one another when nobody knows who they are. You're less accountable for your actions when people can't figure out who they are speaking to. I suspect, however, that the issue is far more complicated.

1928 Australian Government poster encouraging immigration.

Standard English is the language of authority, education, and power in much of today's world. So long as this continues to be the case – and so long as all varieties of non-standard English are lumped together and pitted against the standard variety – it's difficult for non-standard forms not to be associated with anything but being lacking in these qualities. Prescriptive behaviour can act as an in-group marker for an educated discourse community and people assert their right to belong to the group by demonstrating their knowledge of language rules. I believe internet users' desire to belong to the privileged standard-language using group trumps the politeness concerns associated with correcting others. In essence, being a language stickler provides internet users with a form of what the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu referred to as 'cultural capital'.

What do you think? Do you believe online language users are simply being rude when they correct each other – or are they making the most of some kind of social value associated with being prescriptive?

Mainstream Australian society has now become much more aware and accepting of ethnic varieties, and their status is changing dramatically. Very telling is to compare the situation today with the results of a Sydney speech study carried out in 1985.

Linguist Barbara Horvath identified a variety employed by first generation Greek-English and Italian-English bilinguals, which she termed Ethnic Broad. (This was based on an approximation of Broad Australian vowels to Greek and Italian vowels; these sounded even 'broader' than Broad Australian.) What was interesting about her study was that it showed the second generation speakers

(those who were born here of parents who migrated to Australia), moving right away from the Ethnic Broad of their parents and shifting instead towards General Australian (more towards Cultivated in the case of Greek-Australian females). In other words, all signs at this time were that ethnic groups were choosing to distance themselves from the linguistic patterns of their parents and assimilate linguistically to the mainstream. Ethnic Broad had become stigmatized, and these speakers did not want to be typecast as working class and migrant. However, this is no longer the case. Witness the huge success of television comedies and dramas whose themes deal with ethnic issues and whose central characters use their own version of Australian English; non-mainstream accents used by news presenters and other broadcasters are now regularly heard on radio and TV. These varieties are a considerable force for change in the English of the country.

By comparison, there is still a lot of ignorance and bigotry in Australia towards Aboriginal ways of speaking. Sociolinguist Diana Eades has even shown how this ignorance has ended up putting the wrong person in gaol. One now famous case she worked on involved a man whose confession to a murder was fabricated by the police. Kelvin Condren maintained his innocence, claiming that he was verballed in the police record of interview. Although Eades showed that there were grammatical structures occurring frequently in his "confession" that were not part of his Aboriginal English, the judges ruled the linguistic evidence inadmissible and Condren was jailed for life. These judges had failed to grasp that this Queensland man could speak a variety of English that was related to Standard Australian English but had nonetheless very different grammatical rules. It took seven years before Condren's conviction was eventually quashed. (For an account of this and other cases, see Eades 2010.)

Many Indigenous Australians speak an array of varieties that are the fall-out of language contact, such as Aboriginal English and/or a creole variety such as Torres Strait Creole and Kriol. In his description of this linguistic variation, Ian Malcolm examines the educational implications, especially the need for a better integration of these Englishes into the school system.

> Although school systems are beginning to recognize the fact that creoles and Aboriginal English may be coherent linguistic systems, there is still a reluctance to allow them any significant place in the development of school literacy. It is assumed that literacy skills in St(andard) E(nglish) will be best acquired by concentrating only on that variety, despite research evidence of the relevance of home language to effective learning of standard varieties. (2004a: 668)

Through the work of linguists like Ian Malcolm, people have come to see Aboriginal English as an equally rich linguistic variety, and disparaging descriptions such as "rubbish English", "broken" or "distorted English", are now rarely heard. Nonetheless, Australians are a long way from fully appreciating the complex linguistic context from which Indigenous people come, and a great deal more needs to be done to increase understanding in the wider community and in specialist contexts like education and the law.

5.3 REGIONAL VARIATION IN AUSTRALIA

Australian English is remarkably uniform, especially for a country that is some thirty times the size of Britain. As we commented earlier, this unity is the result of the original dialect mixing and leveling, and the transience of the settlers in those early years. But times are changing.

All it requires are three ingredients — time, physical/social distance and the processes of linguistic change. English-speaking settlement in Australia is recent (not yet 300 years), certainly not long in terms of language change. Yet, the distances between Australian cities are considerable and regional chauvinism, as evident in the sort of strong rivalry between places like Sydney and Melbourne, is a major incentive for people to start highlighting their distinctiveness linguistically. The combination of these factors will inevitably give rise to more regional variation and the fact that there is no single prestige regional variety of the language in the country also means that, if groups want to be defined regionally, varieties are freer to go their separate ways.

The separation of urban and rural communities looks to be inspiring some of the richest regional diversity at the moment. Older forms sometimes last longer in rural areas than in urban ones. This is because change often begins in the city and spreads gradually to the country, where identity markers take longer to disappear or change. For instance, 'h-dropping' (such as *Arry's in a bituva(n)'urry today*), which was a characteristic of some Broad varieties of Australian English, is disappearing in Melbourne while still quite prevalent in many rural areas of Victoria. There are also differences with respect to speed and also broadness of accent. For example, people in Melbourne tend to speak faster than those of the same socio-economic background in surrounding rural areas. In the bush, there is also a greater proportion of speakers who fall at the Broad end of the accent spectrum. There remains much work to be done, however, on the emerging regional variation. To date, only small parts of the country have been surveyed (largely on the eastern coast) and only a handful of regional differences have been noted.

AusTalk: An audio-visual corpus of Australian English

Austalk homepage

Researchers within Austalk (also known as the Big ASC, or the Big Australian Speech Corpus) are working hard to improve our knowledge of regional (and also social) variation around Australia. This is a huge research project that is collecting the voices of more than a thousand speakers of Australian English from every state and territory of Australia. Each speaker will be recorded on three separate occasions and in a variety of scripted and spontaneous speech situations. They include Australian born, migrants of different ethnic backgrounds and Indigenous Australians. All must have spent their entire school education in Australia to qualify. As the website describes:

"AusTalk will be a national treasure that will provide a permanent record of Australian English, support Australian English speech science research and development, and help develop Australian speech technology applications, from better telephone-based speech recognition systems (e.g., taxi bookings) and computer avatars, to hearing aids and Cochlear Implants improvements, or computer aids for learning-impaired children".

You yourself can become involved in this wonderful project; just visit (austalk.edu.au).

Between city and bush, there are also some significant differences emerging in terms of vocabulary and grammar. It is likely that, statistically, nonstandard forms are represented more highly in rural areas of Australia than in urban ones, though this has yet to be proven. With the disaffection of many country people with the way they are treated by decision makers in the urban centres, in which the vast majority of the population lives, urban prestige forms of language, and changes in general, may take considerable time to spread — if they ever do.

We have focused on the distinctive features of Australian English and its increased status as the national variety of Australia. Next we discuss variation within Australian English, focusing on regional variation across the most important linguistic subsystems.

5.3.1 PHONOLOGY

Many people claim they can identify someone's place of origin purely on the basis of how they speak. These claims are exaggerated. As we suggested earlier, accent differences in Australia are still not particularly striking. More likely they are a matter of statistical tendency, with a certain pronunciation occurring more in one place than another.

Significant regional variation involves the pronunciation of vowels in words such as *dance*, *castle* and *graph* (or *chance*, *sample*, and *photograph*); the words that participate in this variation have [nasal + stop/fricative] or [fricative] following the vowel. Speakers from Hobart, Brisbane and Melbourne tend to pronounce *dance* and *castle* with an [æ] vowel, somewhat like that of *romance*, while people from Sydney and Adelaide generally pronounce the same words with an [a:] as in *can't*. A common contrast cited is in the pronunciations of the names of the large regional city in NSW, *Newcastle* (pronounced with [a:] in NSW) and the country town in Victoria, *Castlemaine*, pronounced by the locals with [æ].

However, the situation is actually more complicated than this. The vowels do not occur uniformly across all words which could potentially have the same vowel; for example, many speakers in Melbourne say *c[æ]stle* but *gr[a:]sp* and *contr[a:]st*.

There are also complex social and stylistic factors involved and these vary from city to city. The [a:] variant tends to be more formal and belongs to a higher sociolect, especially for words with [nasal + stop/fricative]. In many countries, but in Australia particularly, regional variation at the phonological level goes hand in hand with social variation. For instance, people are more likely to sing *adv[a:]nce* in the national anthem (*Advance Australia Fair*), even if it is not their normal vowel in this word or in others.

In the table below are the findings of a survey carried out by David Bradley in 1991. Check your own pronunciation of these words, and survey at least ten others. Identify any patterns in your results; e.g. regional background, age, gender and also linguistic context (what sounds follow the vowel).

Percentage of [æ] in State Capitals

Lexical Item	*Hobart*	*Melbourne*	*Brisbane*	*Sydney*	*Adelaide*
GRAPH	100	70	44	30	14
CHANCE	100	40	15	100	14
DEMAND	90	22	22	50	0
DANCE	90	65	89	93	14
CASTLE	40	70	67	0	14
GRASP	10	11	11	30	0
CONTRAST	0	0	0	9	29

The following are examples of changes involving the vowel systems of capital cities (based on the findings of Cox and Palethorpe 2001, 2004; Horvath 2004; Bradley 2004; Clyne et al. 2006):

- The vowel in words such as *school* and *pool* tends to be more rounded in Adelaide than in other capitals, but there is much overlap between regional and social variation.
- There is vowel merging underway in environments before [l]. Melbourne and Brisbane share with New Zealand a neutralization of the [ɛ] and [æ] vowels before laterals. For many younger speakers, the words *shell* and *shall* are indistinguishable; i.e. homophones.
- Speakers in Hobart and Sydney are showing a merging of the vowels [i] and [ɪ], and also [u] and [ʊ] before [l], with the higher vowels ([i] and [u]) collapsing into the corresponding lower vowels ([ɪ] and [ʊ]); hence the words *deal* and *dill; fool* and *full* are not distinguished.
- In Melbourne there is evidence of a lowering of the vowel in words like *dress* to [æ] and an advancing of the vowel in words like *north* to a front variant of [ɔ].
- Melbourne speakers are lowering and retracting the vowel in words like *trap* towards [ɑ] (but not as far as in Northern English or Scottish English).

To get an idea of the emerging differences in accent around Australia we recommend you visit a website dedicated to work on Australian English carried out by researchers at Macquarie University: http://clas.mq.edu.au/voices/. Here you can click on a map of Australia and hear speech from all different parts of Australia. You can hear voices of Lebanese and Vietnamese Australians; there is also an account of the linguistic repertoire of Aboriginal people.

5.3.2 LEXICON

It is in English vocabulary that we can see clear evidence of regional variation over the last two decades. Even though Australia tends to be more homogeneous than many other parts of the world, since the 1980s there have been several surveys on language use in different parts of Australia that have uncovered considerable variation in some items.

Here is a taste of the lexical differences that you might encounter around Australia; perhaps you've had experience of it. A medium size glass of beer (approx 285ml) in Melbourne is a *pot*, in Sydney a *middy*, in Adelaide a *schooner* and in Alice Springs a *ten*. The same sausage is called a *strassburg* or *straz* for short in the southern mainland, *fritz* in South Australia (the state with the largest population of Australians of German descent), *polony* in Western Australia, *devon* in New South Wales, *luncheon sausage* or *windsor sausage* in Queensland, *belgium sausage* in Tasmania and Rockhampton, and *empire sausage* around Newcastle. The guttering along the roof is called *spouting* in Victoria and Tasmania, *guttering* elsewhere. The slide that children play on is a *slippery dip* in New South Wales, Queensland, and Victoria. *Slide*, the term used elsewhere, is also employed as a synonym in Victoria. It is often the case that one of the regional alternatives also

Aussie lifesavers in their cossies

functions as a nationwide synonym. *Swimming costume* is used Australia-wide, with *bathers* commonly used in the southern states, *swimmers* and *cossies* in New South Wales and *togs* in Queensland and the south-eastern mainland. Another example is the more general *sandshoes*, used in Victoria interchangeably with the regional term *runners*. *Cocktail frankfurts* have two regional variants – *cheerios* in Queensland and the north-east of Victoria, and *little boys* in the south-east. The collapsible chair on wheels to transport young children is a *stroller* in New South Wales and Queensland, but a *pusher* elsewhere. The corner shop is a *milk bar* in most parts of Australia but a *deli* in South Australia and Western Australia. *Delicatessen*, for which *deli* is an abbreviation, is a shop specialising in smallgoods and other delicacies in other states.

A useful on-line mapping resource of lexical regionalisms is the *Macquarie Dictionary Word Map* (www.macquariedictionary.com.au/resources/word/map/); it is an interactive site that collects and records regionalisms for some 27 regional divisions. These divisions capture the fact that expressions usually transcend state boundaries. Expressions in the NSW Riverina often coincide with those used in most of Victoria (e.g. *pusher, spouting, runners*), and there are also correspondences between Mount Gambier and Victoria-Tasmania (e.g. *nature strip* rather than *median strip*). This is because of shared infrastructures and therefore shared loyalties. In the Riverina, people will probably read Melbourne rather than Sydney daily newspapers, send their children to boarding school in Melbourne, listen to ABC regional stations relaying Melbourne broadcasts, drink Melbourne beer and traditionally play Aussie Rules rather than Rugby.

Now, much of this is variation you only become aware of when the interlocutors, the people talking to each other, order a sausage or certain types of potato snack or get up on the roof, but it does symbolise identity. For instance, older South Australians might feel they are giving up something of their identity if they do not use the words *rock melon* and *trombone* for what other Australians call a *cantaloupe* and a *marrow* respectively. On the other hand, some of the distinctive items (for instance *slippery dip*) are losing out to the more generic terms which may reflect a decline in parochialism. Companies are marketing their products throughout the nation; *sneakers* are being sold in *runner* or *sandshoe* country and referred to as such.

5.3.3 SYNTAX

Research into grammatical differences requires a lot of time and a lot of material — quite simply, it's harder to do than any phonological or lexical investigation. For this reason we have very little to report here. In this regard, Andy Pawely's 2004 study of what he has called Tasmanian Vernacular English stands out as a gem.

This variety shows quite a number of distinctive grammatical features, including irregular verb forms *(The last Percy **seen** of 'im was they **was** goin' over the brow o' the hill, y'see);* plural "you" ***(Y's** woulda took it off 'im);* marking of familiar noun phrases with "old" *(and on the corner was this **old** mountain duck*) and general negator "never" *(I never* [= didn't] *'ad 'er).*

As we saw earlier when we looked at informality in language, these features are nonstandard in many places where English is spoken, including other parts of Australia (indeed, some fall under the label 'vernacular universals'). However, Andy Pawley describes some distinctively Tasmanian Vernacular features as well. Of particular interest is the appearance of gender marking on both animate and inanimate nouns. Tools are feminine, trees are masculine and items of food and drink are always feminine: *I put **'er*** [= the bottle of beer] *down that bloody quick that I blew the top off **'er.** And* [he] *took **'er*** [= leg of lamb] *in and put **'er** on the plate*. This practice goes well beyond the use of *she* for

cars and ships, which you may be familiar with; it has a longer and more general history.

Systematic grammatical differences such as these, as well as lexical differences, are sufficient to make Tasmanian Vernacular English a distinctive nonstandard regional dialect. However, social factors are crucial here, too — it's difficult to talk about regionally defined variation without appealing to social aspects of the area. Vernacular Englishes like this one, for example, are nonstandard varieties typical of the lower socio-economic classes in a speech community. Basically, the higher up the social scale you go, the less remarkable the regional differences tend to be. When we look more closely at socially-defined variation, we'll see again how tangled up it is with regional variation.

5.4 SOCIAL VARIATION IN AUSTRALIA

> We are, after all, a microcosm of the world in its cultural diversity [Clyne 2005:181]

As we've just described, regional differences, like the [æ] ~ [a:] variation, are often mixed up with other variation, especially social. While age and gender don't seem to influence whether you say [dæns] or [da:ns], the [a:] variant is definitely perceived as belonging to a higher social class. It is also more formal, especially for words like *dance* and *plant* (that have a following nasal+consonant). These matters of style have to do with the way we alter our language to suit the occasion. The focus is on variation that is related to speakers, in particular their background and their social group; in other words, we are looking at social dialects (or sociolects). In Australia, there are all sort of differences that classify us. They include those marked by level of educational achievement, level of income, type of occupation, type of school attended (e.g. government, Catholic or independent), ethnic background, gender, age and sexuality. These differences are reflected in the way we speak English – in the way we use sounds, our choice of vocabulary and our grammar. Here we introduce you to a sample of a few of these different dimensions.

5.4.1 THE DIMENSION OF SOCIO-ECONOMICS

In places like Britain, where the class lines are still fairly rigidly defined and people tend to be more class conscious, the features of class dialect are easier to identify and people are linguistically more attuned to these differences. Many people in Australia believe that this sort of marked class system does not exist in their country. It's probably true that divisions are less rigidly structured and less explicit than in Britain, in that people are less class conscious and are able to cut across class boundaries with greater ease. Nonetheless, we all tend to associate with those who are similar to ourselves in terms of things like educational background, occupational status and income. Even in Australia people fall into different social groups and this will inevitably have consequences for the language they use. In short, all countries show social stratification to a greater or lesser extent and all languages show socially-defined linguistic variation to a greater or lesser extent.

The variation that exists along social dimensions is not as marked as in regional variation. Within any given region what you typically find is the higher up the social ladder someone is, or the more formal education that person has received, the more likely he or she is to speak Standard English. Nonstandard dialects are associated with speakers who fall towards the other end of the social scale.

However, there's a lot of variation, even within the one social dialect. People's use of forms is generally more a question of frequency rather than absolute use or non-use. For example, much can depend on the setting. We've already seen that nonstandard usage is more usual in informal contexts. Under more formal circumstances, when people typically pay more attention to their speech, they are more likely to avoid these forms. Speakers will adjust their accents or their grammar 'up' or 'down' the scale depending on the situation they find themselves in. It's natural — we all do it.

5.4.2
THE DIMENSION OF GENDER AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Gender is another important social division in cultures, and not surprisingly is also a part of our identity that is reflected in (and reinforced by) our linguistic behaviour. This is another growing area in sociolinguistic research. However, the research findings on language variation and gender are often contradictory and paradoxical, and include results indicating that women:

- tend to use prestige forms which, in most language communities, are the varieties closest to the standard language;
- sometimes tend more towards the nonstandard local variety (dialect);
- sometimes play a role in norm setting and the redefining of status forms.

Recent research suggests these conflicting studies are the result of an issue of conformity. Women deviate from linguistic norms less than men when these norms are well established and accepted by the community, but more than men when the deviations are not proscribed.

All of the studies carried out have something interesting to offer with respect to the linguistic behaviour of the sexes. One thing they all agree on is the fact that language is a social phenomenon, and as Trudgill (2000: 79) neatly puts it: 'Men and women are socially different in that society lays down different social roles for them and expects different behaviour patterns from them. Language simply reflects this social fact'.

Linguistic communities are also formed by social groupings such as lesbian, gay, transexual, and bisexual men and women with each community using linguistic features to identify group membership. One of the earliest linguistic studies was carried out on Polari (aka Parlare, Pa(r)lary, Parl(y)aree), the slang used by British homosexuals in the 20th century; it probably derives from slang used by actors and other show-people, and overlaps with slang still widely used in the London area (and perhaps elsewhere). But the field of language and sexuality has been gaining in importance in recent years. Indeed, there is now a branch of linguistics known as Lavender linguistics dedicated to the study of language used by LGBTIQ speakers.

According to Michael Quinion, Polari is a linguistic mongrel. Words from Romany (originally an Indian dialect), Shelta (the cant of the Irish tinkers), Yiddish, back slang, rhyming slang and other non-standard English are interspersed with words of Italian origin. In the 1960s Polari was immortalized in a BBC radio sketch show called *Round the Horne*. Here's an example of the double-entendre and rhyming slang that characterized Polari:

SANDY: Roll up yer trouser legs ... we want to vada yer calves.
JULIAN: Hmmm ... his scotches may be a bit naph but his plates are bona.
[*scotch* = Scotch egg = leg; *plates* = plates of meat = feet]

5.4.3 THE DIMENSION OF AGE

Age is an important social division in all cultures, and not surprisingly it is also something that people demonstrate through their use of language. Sometimes the variation is indicative of changes underway. As you might expect, the speech of older generations is generally more conservative than that of younger generations — linguistic changes take a while to catch on and this fact is reflected in age differences. However, age variation doesn't necessarily signal change in progress. As the life-cycle of slang expressions shows, a linguistic innovation that appeared, say, in the 1960s may be carried through by speakers into their 50s as a permanent change, but it may simply remain a marker of the speech of the under-25 crowd. Ground-breaking linguistic behaviour may have long-term effects on the language or may simply be indicative of the developmental characteristics of a certain age group.

Linguistic studies of adolescent speech show a higher concentration of interactional features (e.g. expressive markers such as discourse *like*) and this is usually attributed to the animated nature of teenage talk. Teenspeak is full of reported opinions, attitudes, emotions, dialogue, repetitions, expressive noises and gestures — teenagers re-enact speech exchanges much more than adults do, and this makes for interesting linguistic differences in their verbal exchanges. And facility and innovation in online communication is accentuating these differences even more.

CASE STUDY: HIGH RISING TERMINAL

Often social factors are closely entwined and it is impossible (and probably not even useful) to tease them apart. A striking example involves a prosodic feature of Australian English known by various names: **High Rising Terminal** (HRT), Australian Questioning Intonation, even Uptalk.

This feature involves the high rising contour on basic clauses, and is especially common in narratives and descriptions. Some good examples can be found in the following 'Panic Room' transcript. In the extract below, note that the arrow (⇑) in M.'s speech indicates the rising intonation at the end of a clause or sentence.

> [so if] anything happens like .. there's like if someone tries to rob them or something, they run into the panic room ⇑ and lock themselves in the panic room, it's got like cameras all round the house, and .. no one can get into the panic room once the door's shut and stuff⇑ **[..]**
>
> Yeah but the thing is that the robbers that've come in ⇑ what they want is in the panic room with the people ⇑ what they want is in the panic room ⇑

Basic clauses like these (declaratives) are usually used to make statements — in other words, they tell other people facts, give information and are **not** typically used to ask for information, as in questions. So you would expect such statements to have a falling intonation at the end of the sentence, not the rising intonation you find here.

This HRT is also found in North America and Britain, but it has been stereotyped (and often stigmatized) as a distinctive pattern of Australian English since the early 1960s when people first became aware of it. Although this sort of questioning intonation is used by speakers of all ages and backgrounds, popular image links it to young people, especially females. (Of course this is something that would encourage some males move away from this usage — cultural stereotyping can be a powerful influence on linguistic behaviour.)

Early accounts of this phenomenon also suggested that it was a marker of insecurity. Indeed, out of context a sentence with rising intonation might well give the impression that a speaker doesn't feel terribly committed to what they are saying, However, as researchers now point out, the intonation pattern more usually occurs in the construction of extended turns (as in a narrative) and has a variety of functions to do with regulating conversational interaction and politeness. One of these is an invitation to **back-channelling**; that is, to indicate that the listener has understood the communication. But there are other factors involved, too, such as creating solidarity. Take this example of a message left on an answering machine:

Hope you're all well⇑ And talk to you SOON⇑

In her 1985 study of Sydney English, Horvath identified the following social distribution of HRT:

- Teenagers use it more than adults
- Lower Working Class use it more than Middle Class
- Women use it more than men

This study therefore suggested that the typical user would be: <u>Lower Working Class female teenager.</u>

This intonation pattern appears to be on the increase. Australian phoneticians Janet Fletcher and Debbie Loakes (2006a & b), for example, examined the conversational data of females from Melbourne and surrounding rural districts in the eastern state of Victoria. Their studies confirmed that HRT is characteristic of the floor-holding intonational tunes of adolescents in South-Eastern Australia, and more abundantly so than what was reported in Horvath's earlier study. Interestingly, they found little difference between rural and urban findings in this regard.

The awful Australian⇑

There is some evidence that HRT was around in early times. Certainly, the following early description by that astute observer of Australian English Valerie Desmond is suggestive of something going on (even though we should probably take much of what Valerie says with a grain of salt — just as we do current-day lay condemnations of the speech of 'others'):

> But it is not so much as the vagaries of pronunciation that hurt the ear of the visitor. It is the extraordinary intonation that the Australian imparts to his phrases. There is no such thing as cultured, reposeful conversation in this land; everybody sings his remarks as if he was reciting blank verse in the manner of an imperfect elocutionist. It would be quite possible to take an ordinary Australian conversation and immortalise its cadences and diapasons by means of musical notation. Herein the Australian differs from the American. (Desmond 1911: 15)

5.4.4 THE DIMENSION OF ETHNICITY

Ethnicity is an important part of social identity and is something that people want to demonstrate through their use of language. Where community languages are strong, English has a less important

role to play in ethnic differentiation. But where these languages are disappearing it is far more likely that speakers will start adopting linguistic features in order to accentuate their ethnic origins. Here in Australia we see language groups seeking to assert their own identity, with different ethnic varieties of English becoming an important means of signaling the group boundaries. Italian, Lebanese, Vietnamese, Greek or Aboriginal English features are now potent markers of a group's ethnicity.

Variation in Aboriginal communities is particularly complex because it involves the interaction of Aboriginal English, Australian English, creoles, local indigenous languages and mixed varieties. Typically speakers have access to a range of these varieties. Other ethnically defined varieties of Australian English come from the large numbers of migrants, in particular those from non-English speaking backgrounds. These speakers have enhanced the overall variety by retaining, for example, aspects of their own migrant English accents and foreign accents. The general population is now more exposed to these varieties, particularly through the production of television comedies such as *Fat Pizza* and *Legally Brown*. And some of these features are now spreading and being adopted by the wider community.

Because this is such an important aspect of Australian English, we need to go into more detail here.

5.5 ETHNIC VARIATION IN AUSTRALIA

In recent times, the numbers of language groups in Australia have increased dramatically, clearly spurred on by the effects of globalization and economic development. The majority are settling in major cities and, as new languages continue to arrive, these urban centres are seeing a constant expansion of multilingualism. This is having the effect of intensifying urban and rural differences. At the time of the 2011 census, the overseas born population of Melbourne was 36.7%, and 29.1% spoke a language other than English at home (of course, the figure would have been much larger, if the census had more sensibly omitted the restriction 'at home' — many people speak other languages routinely outside their house). According to this census, there are 251 languages spoken in Melbourne — more languages than there are countries in the world. In an analysis carried out by Fairfax Media, 200,000 more Melburnians are speaking a language other than English at home than a decade ago. Despite perceptions that refugees and asylum seekers are flooding into Australia, the number remains relatively small, and most of these people are isolated from mainstream Australians. As Monash University population researcher Bob Birrell describes, economic currents are preventing language groups from dispersing through the city like earlier generations of migrants, but rather forcing them towards greater segregation.

> "As Melbourne's population expands very rapidly and competition for housing increases … those with limited resources, particularly recently arrived migrants who are from the family reunion and refugee stream, will have no choice but to move into relatively low-cost middle and outer suburbs."

Conduct a quick survey around your classroom. How many other languages are spoken by members of the class? In what contexts are other languages used? With whom? About what topics? Can you discern any patterns?

Despite the multilingual and multicultural population in Australia, the pattern has been one of on-going language attrition and shift to English. And this is what is providing the striking ethnic dimension to current-day Australian English. We mentioned earlier that ethnic varieties of dominant languages can become potent markers of a group's identity, especially in the face of language attrition. As speakers start to value ethnic features in their English, these markers then take on the important role in accentuating ethnic differentiation.

For the Indigenous communities, we have been seeing wholesale extinction of many languages. Only around 120 of the original 200-250 languages remain today, according to the National Indigenous Languages Survey published in 2014. Even the remaining robust languages are under threat, despite vigorous efforts being made to maintain them. Only 13 have more than 500 speakers, and 5 languages have fallen out of this category in the last 10 years. It has been estimated that the number of surviving languages might decline by as much as 50% in the next 20-30 years, as the most critically endangered languages lose their last speakers.

5.5.1 MIGRANT ETHNOLECTS

Due to cultural and linguistic diversity in the Australian population, many people are recognisable from their Australian English as non-native speakers or specifically as first-language speakers of another language such as Arabic, Spanish, a Chinese variety or Vietnamese. But there are also second and later generation Australians of non-English-speaking backgrounds who employ two different varieties of Australian English – a mainstream variety when they are speaking to most interlocutors, and an **ethnolect** (ethnic variety) when they are speaking:

- to their parents and their parents' relatives, especially once the community language declines in use;
- to all members of their communities, regardless of age (at least sometimes);
- to anyone recognisable as not being a first-language speaker of English irrespective of language and ethnicity (in fewer cases).

The two varieties enable speakers to identify with two groups that they belong to and to express their multiple identities. Non-Australian native varieties of English, such as Irish, Scottish or American, are also used as ethnolects in Australia, partly in variation with mainstream Australian English, but this has not been formally studied as yet. Ethnolects are marked variously by lexical, grammatical, phonological and/or prosodic features. Their use stresses common bonds, a common past experience, and common cultural knowledge between the interlocutors.

Over time, an ethnolect may be identified in a number of ways to reflect its speakers' multiple identities. The German ethnolect of the Tarrington-Tabor area of the Western District in Victoria (east of Hamilton) and parts of the Wimmera marks region and religion (Lutheranism) as much as it does German ancestry. This ethnolect has been gradually disappearing over the past three generations, and syntactic and semantic features like the following are disappearing:

- The expressions, *come with*, *bring with*, *take with* (come along, bring along, take along), based on German *mitkommen*, *mitbringen*, *mitnehmen*;

- The use of *yet*, *already* and *different* in the sense of German *noch* ('still/yet'), *schon* ('already') and *verschieden* ('different'): *We don't speak the German any more but we have some German books* ***yet****. They came to pick up the bottles on Tuesday* ***already****. That's happened* ***different*** *times.*
- The use of *to* to express relationship, for instance: *He's an uncle* ***to*** *Ted Schulz.* He's Ted Schulz's uncle (Possibly influenced by: *Er ist Ted Schulz sein Onkel* literally, 'He is to Ted Schulz his uncle', but possibly a relic of earlier Australian English).

This German ethnolect also contains phonological features such as voiceless stops and fricatives in final position, especially [s] for [z] as in *voices*; also [f] for [v] as in *five*, [t] for [d] as in *guild*, [k] for [g] as in *flag*.

One example of an ethnolectal feature which was identified with religion and is now widely a general alternative variant is *haitch* H (instead of *aitch*). Originally a feature of Irish English in Australia, it was once an indicator of attendance at a Catholic school. Nowadays, it is widely used by people without an Irish-Catholic identity. This may be related to the acceptance of Australians of Irish-Catholic background as part of the mainstream. The term *Anglo-Celtic* conceals the long and bitter conflict between Protestant and Catholic Australians and the latter's former minority status.

As touched on earlier, recent studies show that second generation Australians of non-English-speaking background are developing an Australian English of their own, different from the Ethnic Broad accented English of their parents, but different also from General Australian English. Cox and Palethorpe (2006), for example, describe the features of the ethnolect that is used by Australian born speakers of Lebanese background (so-called Lebanese Australian English or Lebspeak). This is linguistic variation that is not necessarily the result of second language learning; in other words, these ethnolects cannot be described as foreign-accented Australian English — many speakers now have English as their first language.

An early work by Warren in 1999 suggested that the second generation of migrants may also adopt what might be described as hyperdialectal elements of Ethnic Broad; these are features used as in-group markers of non-Anglo ethnicity. This variety is a kind of stylized multi-ethnolect, a pan-ethnic variety, which Warren calls "Wogspeak".

> … some young people of the second generation adopt a distinctive accent and speech patterns which distinguish them both from their parents' values and from those of the Anglo host culture, in their search for 'a place to speak' [p. 89]

5.5.2 COMMUNICATING ACROSS CULTURES

Aside from the influences of lexicon, phonology and grammar amongst second language speakers, it is the pragmatic and discourse aspects of the first language and culture of a migrant group that linger the longest in their English. This can be demonstrated in the organisation of spoken and written discourse, particularly in respect to:

- the length of turns between speakers in a conversation (turn lengths)
- ways of maintaining and appropriating turns in conversation (turn-taking)

Here are a few examples of how inter-cultural communication breakdown and conflict can originate from these discourse features (based on Clyne 1994):

BEING POLITE

Different cultures and sub-cultures have different ways of being polite. Some express speech acts such as **directives** (requests and commands) and **complaints** more directly than others and transfer their ways of communicating into English. So speakers of Spanish, German, Serbian or Hebrew are more likely to request something or complain in a more direct way — *Give me a pound of apples, please!* or *You should not have borrowed my book* — in preference to the Anglo pattern *I'd like a pound of apples, please.* Or *Funny, I could have sworn the book was here last week.* The communication patterns in east and south-east Asian cultures are still less direct than Anglo ones. Thus, when people communicate in English across cultures, some may be insulted, others stereotyped as rude, devious or dishonest. This is exemplified in the case of a Serbian migrant who got into trouble as a result of becoming enraged on a Qantas plane. He had asked for a drink in what seemed to him a polite manner: "Give me a glass of Coke". When the flight attendant asked him to say 'Please', he felt he was being required to behave like a "Gipsy beggar". This episode ended with his being placed on a 12-month good behaviour bond.

Alphonse and Gaston, 1901 comic strip by Frederick Burr Oper

INFORMATION FLOW

Some cultures attach less importance to form or structure of the spoken or written discourse, unlike Anglo-based cultures that value linearity (moving directly from one point to the next). This is not considered important in most continental European patterns of discourse. Instead, the content of the discourse is valued, and discursive passages that to the Anglo mind would seem irrelevant or tangential are expected and rewarded in European-based cultures (particularly in academic or school settings). In most east and south-east Asian cultures it is considered impolite to stick rigidly to a topic; politeness norms dictate that information should not be stated very explicitly but should unfold gradually. To someone from an Anglo culture this can appear repetitive and circular.

PATTERNS OF INTERRUPTING

Some cultures, including mainstream Australian, generally require one person to be heard before the other begins to speak when engaged in a polite or friendly conversation. In other cultures people interrupt each other and take over one another's turns and this is considered to be normal and acceptable. The rules for signaling the end of a turn and for taking over or keeping your turn vary across cultures, whether in meetings or in private encounters. Recall what the expectations are in an Australian context about ordering turn-taking in a conversation. What are the 'signals' you give to show that you are listening, and that you are ready to make a comment? Across cultures there are a number of options for managing turns in spoken interactions; for example, an increase in the speed and volume to maintain or appropriate turns (predominantly central and southern European), increase in speed and volume to maintain turns and decrease in speed to appropriate them (largely south Asian), and decrease in speed for both (mainly south-east Asian).

Because of Australia's cultural diversity, we are confronted in everyday situations with issues of inter-cultural communication that also occur internationally in areas such as business, tourism, education and academic communication.

5.5.3 ABORIGINAL ENGLISH AND ABORIGINAL CREOLES

It wasn't long after the arrival of the Europeans that pidgin varieties started to appear in Australia. These varieties became increasingly important for contact, not only between Aboriginal speakers and English speakers, but also as a lingua franca between speakers of different Aboriginal languages. In areas where these pidgin varieties stabilized, creoles evolved (the Kimberley Region, the Roper River area and parts of North Queensland). These various English-based creoles have much in common, but they also show some regional differences, depending on the Aboriginal languages represented in the community where the pidgin originated, and also on influences from other pidgins and creoles brought into Australia from the outside.

Aboriginal English is an ethnolect that grew out of this original contact situation and is now maintained in Indigenous Australian communities across Australia. It differs from Australian English at all linguistic levels, including pragmatics. Accent features range from a "heavy" accent (close to the sound system of traditional Aboriginal languages) to a "light" accent (close to the sound system of Australian English). Lexical differences can be striking: some words are borrowed directly from Aboriginal languages (e.g. *gubba* 'white man', though probably originally *governor*); familiar-looking English words can have quite different meanings (e.g. *dust* 'to overtake on a road'); and words can change in function (e.g. *lie* in *We lie-don't look* 'we pretended not to look'). The grammar of Aboriginal English also has many creole-like features that can be very different from English. For example, varieties spoken in remote communities use a transitive verb suffix *-em* or *–im* (*We see**im** buffalo got big horn* "We saw a buffalo with big horns").

Aboriginal English forms something called a creole continuum of speech varieties ranging from pure creole (so remote from Standard Australian English as to be mutually unintelligible) to forms close or identical to Standard Australian English (in everything but accent). In between these two polar extremes you find a whole range of varieties. Generally speakers have command of a number of these varieties and they move along the continuum according to the situation and the audience.

5.6 NATIONAL IDENTITY

Throughout this chapter we have been talking about cultural changes in Australia and our flourishing Australianness. Now, we want to focus more closely on the question of national identity.

The identity function of language is of paramount importance. The way we speak and write, the words we use, the way we pronounce or spell them, the meaning we attach to them, sometimes the way we string words together and how they become instruments of action – all this identifies us as belonging or not belonging to a particular group. But, as already discussed, we all have multiple identities. So we are Australians, with gender identites and sexual orientations, of a particular age group, live in a specific part of Australia and may have lived elsewhere before, and attend or have

attended a particular type of school. All this may be revealed in the way we use English. We may also sometimes or always mark ethnic background or social group affiliation in our speech. How much we mark our identities through language may vary between individuals or over our life span, because the relative strength of our allegiances also varies over time.

The most general of our identities is national identity. We typically reveal through our English that we are Australian; in other English-speaking countries there are speakers who may recognise us as Australian only if we have a distinctively Broad Australian accent. How readily British or American speakers of English identify us as Australian will depend on their experience of listening to Australians. Some speakers of other varieties of English may recognise us as Antipodeans and then decide we don't have a New Zealand accent, which is more striking than an Australian accent to other English speaking people.

Decades ago there were many Australians who experienced cultural cringe, played down their Australianness and played up their educational level and social class background by speaking with a Received Pronunciation accent. Then there are those Australians who, when they spend time in England, the US, Scotland or New Zealand, accommodate their accent to those of their interlocutors. Most Australians will accommodate their vocabulary to ease communication, especially when in an environment where lexical items of another national variety of English (such as *sidewalk* or *streetcar, lorry* or *brook*) relate to the context of situation. Other Australians will diverge from the English of their non-Australian interlocutors to emphasise their Australian identity.

Politicians have a role in defining national identity. Successive Victorian premiers have made inclusive statements on the Australian population which are all-embracing. For instance, former Premier Jeff Kennett said, "We are the result of successive waves of immigration from countries around the world starting 40,000 years ago". Here *we* clearly encompasses the entire Australian population – Indigenous, non-Indigenous, of Anglo-Celtic, European, Asian or other origin, regardless of religious background - without privileging or excluding any section of it. A more explicit statement from former Victorian Premier Steve Bracks describes "Australian" in the most inclusive way possible and defines people's rights and responsibilities allowing for multiple identities:

> "…our heritage does not belong to any one individual or group. Every man, woman and child is equally Australian…This is the bargain that Australia strikes with all its citizens, new and old. Live as you choose, wear what you choose, speak your mind, practise your beliefs – and allow your fellow Australians to do the same".

An inclusive statement directed towards fostering national unity was the formal apology to the Stolen Generations made at the opening of Parliament on 13 February 2008 by the new Prime Minister at the time, Kevin Rudd. It ended a long controversy about whether one generation of Australians should take responsibility for the actions of previous generations, with the benefit of hindsight and a changed world-view. It was therefore important to get the wording right. This was an exercise in applied pragmatics.

Apologising entails taking some responsibility for something done in the past either by us or by an entity of which we are part or a successor. The apology is in the form of a Litany (with many of the rhetorical devices we examined earlier). The inclusive tone is set by the first person plural (we) of unity and the construction of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders as fellow Australians, as well as the use of kinship and other terms shared by the entire Australian population.

> We apologise for the laws and policies of successive parliaments and governments that have inflicted profound grief, suffering and loss on these our fellow Australians.
>
> We apologise especially for the removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their

families, their communities and their country.

For the pain, suffering and hurt of those stolen generations, their descendants and for their families left behind, we say sorry.

To the mothers and the fathers, the brothers and the sisters, for the breaking up of families and communities. We say sorry.

And for the indignity and degradation thus inflicted on a proud people and a proud culture, we say sorry.

Farzad Sharifian, in an ABC *Lingua Franca* program (July 2008), www.abc.net.au/rn/linguafranca/stories/2008/2305483.htm draws attention to the **polysemy** of *sorry* in mainstream Australian English – expressing penitence, a feeling of sympathy or an apology.

In Aboriginal English, *sorry* is a very powerful word associated with sharing the burden of grief (*sorry business*), something that contributed to the effectiveness of Rudd's speech. Sharifian argues that Rudd's apology would therefore have satisfied both the Indigenous and non-Indigenous population.

In their accompanying statements, both Kevin Rudd and Opposition leader Brendan Nelson went to trouble to find precise formulations to express what had been done. Rudd used *ripped away, forced separation, physically separating, forced extraction* and *forcibly taken* while Nelson chose *forcibly removed*. Nelson compromised the value of his own apology by simultaneously trying to please both supporters and opponents of an apology: 'We formally apologise…an act of separation is painful but necessary'.

5.6.1 THREAT TO OUR NATIONAL IDENTITY

People these days, even laid-back teenagers, seem worried about Australian English and its relationship with its powerful relative, American English. In particular they express concern for the 'Americanization' of the language — it's a hot topic in the media. Given the global presence of the United States and the inevitable loosening of ties between Britain and its former Antipodean colonies, it would be surprising if there were not some sort of linguistic steamrolling going on. There are identifiable American influences on teenage slang and more generally on teenage culture; yet the impact elsewhere on the language appears to be minimal. Despite this, news articles, letters to the editor and talkback calls on the radio continue to rail against "ugly Americanisms" (many of which, in fact, are not Americanisms at all). The following are extracts from two of the many written complaints we have received on this matter. (Note, any typos are original.)

Example 1 — letter from JP (concerning the Americanization of English)
I have just heard your discourse on the Americanisation of English of ABC Wide Bay. I am one of the population who is *very much against* this phenomenon, particularly on the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, because, after all, I am one part of the public who help to pay the ABC announcers wages. The words which particularly annoy me are **cere moany** and **hurri cane**. […] On several occasions I have written to the ABC Head Office complaining about these words in particular and received written replies regarding their Word pronunciation computer.

You made reference to many other words which have been integrated from the French or British language in relation to food, but these are accepted words to describe the article. **Cere moany** and **hurri cane** are not!

[…] If the offenders are so enamoured of the American language that they have to inflict these words on the Australian listeners, they should be made redundant, emigrate to the United States of America, and go get paid by the American Broadcasting Commission.

Example 2 — email from IM (on the demise of the subjunctive)

I find your reference to the subjunctive being a relic, offensive. It's not just something from the past. People who have been educated or take an interest in our language still use it.

The only reason it isn't used is it that people are ignorant. Grammar hasn't been taught in school for over 30 years and now our language is suffering. It is becoming a sort of Pigeon English: omitting words such at that and which and ending sentences with a prepositon for example.

I use the subjunctive and if people think I'm mixing my tenses then that's their problem. The onus is on them to be educated. Just because the government school system has let them down is no excuse. If something isn't possible, then why confuse the issue by speaking as though it is?

People generally seem to be quite happy to let English deteriorate into a kind of abbreviated American juvenile dialect, but I'm not. I'll continue resist incorrect grammar and American English.

Hitherto I have enjoyed your segment and found it educational and interesting. It is just this particular issue on which I disagree.

Note that the email in example 2 concerns the demise of the subjunctive; yet IM links this feature to the overall Americanization of the language. He writes: "People generally seem to be quite happy to let English deteriorate into a kind of abbreviated American juvenile dialect, but I'm not".

So what aspects of American English have we taken on? There are some apparent American imports involving pronunciation; for example, features of stress (*prim**ar**ily* instead of ***pri**marily*) and voicing (and flapping) of /t/ between vowels (*latter* to *ladder*). But since examples like these illustrate natural sound changes, it is difficult to establish the exact role of American influence here. Imports can be grammatical, although in this instance they are very few in number. For example, verbs like *to protest* and *to appeal (something)* with direct objects are replacing the expressions *to protest against* and *to appeal against (something)* as in *to appeal (against) the decision*. Linguists also argue that there is a type of subjunctive (the so-called 'mandative subjunctive') in the States that is catching on elsewhere, producing forms like *she asked that she not be identified* and *we require that he leave immediately* (a nice irony given IM's complaint in email 2 above.). The trouble is there is always a good chance with grammar that we're dealing with independently motivated change rather than actual borrowing, in other words, parallel but independent development. So once again it's hard to gauge the exact role of American English in this change.

It is perhaps the high visibility of spelling that intensifies the widespread perception of American influence. When, in 1969, the Australian State of Victoria advocated spellings such as *color* and *honor* in place of *colour* and *honour*, writers ignored the edict: "why should our spelling be changed to follow the American pattern", one writer complained (letter to the Melbourne *Age* 9th October 1969). Public pressure persuaded *The Age* newspaper to return to the *-our* spelling in 2001. Even though many prestigious British publications, including the *London Times*, various editions of Daniel Jones' *English Pronouncing Dictionary* and the *Oxford English Dictionary*, promote the *-ize* spelling on words such as

legalize; most Australians reject it outright because it smacks too much of a deference to the USA.

Most of the complaints, however, centre around vocabulary. Words are accessible and lexical influence is often the most conspicuous. A lexical invasion may also be feared because it's seen as "the thin end of a wedge". Certainly, we are incorporating new words all the time and some — as you would expect — come from the USA. Many of these words reflect the now worldwide usage of English — they are truly international and belong to Global English (which perhaps for some Australians might well be just as bad!).

In 1998 Kate Burridge and Jean Mulder compared everyday Australian, British and American cooking terms and expressions. At that time, their investigation strongly suggested that the reports of an American takeover were exaggerated. Australian usage either differed totally from both US and UK usage, or else aligned much more frequently with British usage than American usage.

Survey your family and friends and see where you stand with respect to this terminology. Here are excerpts from the original tables to guide you:

OZ	UK	USA
EQUIPMENT/COOKING EXPRESSIONS		
frying pan	frying pan	skillet
greaseproof paper	greaseproof paper	wax paper
grill	grill	broil
INGREDIENTS		
bicarbonate of soda	bicarbonate of soda	baking soda
caster sugar	caster sugar	granulated sugar
desiccated coconut	desiccated coconut	shredded coconut
essence	essence	extract
glacé cherry	glacé cherry	candied cherry
icing sugar	icing sugar	confectioners' sugar
self-raising flour	self-raising flour	all-purpose flour with baking powder

The are a few clear exceptions where the American term is preferred in at least Australia:

OZ	UK	USA
eggplant, eggfruit	aubergine	eggplant
snow pea	mangetout	snow pea
zucchini	courgette	zucchini

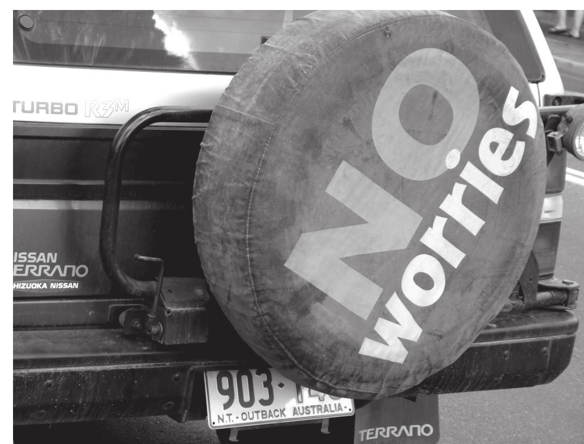
Occasionally both US and UK usage co-exist, as in:

OZ	UK	USA
tin/can	tin	can
patty pan/muffin tin/ patty tin	patty tin	muffin tin
tomato puree/paste	tomato puree	tomato paste

But there are also cases where the preferred Antipodean usage differs totally from both US and UK usage as the following illustrate:

OZ	UK	USA
EQUIPMENT/COOKING EXPRESSIONS		
crushed (but not of meat)	minced	pressed
seeded (sometimes stoned)	stoned	pitted
INGREDIENTS		
capsicum/(sometimes pepper)	pepper	bell pepper
cream	single cream	light or coffee cream
flour	plain flour	all-purpose flour
lemon cheese/butter	lemon curd	lemon spread
mince meat	hamburger steak	ground beef
stock cube	bouillon cube	broth cube

It would seem Australian English is in no immediate danger of being overwhelmed by American English. Sure, there are some contexts like the fast food area or computer technology where American imports are more evident. But even if the borrowings flood in, is this really such a terrible thing? After all, English has borrowed from a staggering 160 different languages — in terms of its vocabulary, it is a mongrel language indeed. And consider this for a bit of human doublethink. When lexical aliens made their appearance well and truly in the past, no one bats an eyelid. During the Middle Ages an astounding 10,000 French words flooded into English, but these days we speak with pride about the richness and the versatility of our language, especially with respect to its wealth of foreign terms.



As is always the case, such lay concerns about language usage are not based on genuine linguistic worries, but reflect deeper and more general social judgments. Hostility towards American usage is born of linguistic insecurity in the face of a cultural, political and economic superpower; expressions like *bro* and *guys* are merely symbols of this American hegemony, but they're easy targets for anti-American sentiment.

Globalization and the influence of American English and American culture are clearly changing languages around the word, including Aussie lingo, especially at the colloquial level. But remember, it is also the nature of slanguage that it is constantly on the move — adopting but also adapting. Once

upon a time this treasured lingo was largely British. Yet we beat it into shape to suit our needs and gave it a distinctly Australian look — we'll likely do the same with any new arrivals.

Of course, people worry generally about globalization. Many worry that with the global melting pot of English varieties there is emerging a creeping homogeneity in the world's Englishes, stripping them of what is distinctive. Will we all end up speaking a kind of bland monotonous World English? Certainly, there will be a World English, there probably already is, at least in the written form. But don't forget communication is only one function of language. Another main function is solidarity. Language is a potent symbol of a group's identity, whether it be professional, social, regional, ethnic, or national. In the face of globalism, many countries are climbing out of this melting pot and are asserting a separate national and political identity with their own distinctive English, consisting of accent, vocabulary, grammar and ways of speaking. When we look at the history of English, we can say with certainty that English has never appeared in so many diverse forms as it does today. This is precisely why we now need a plural form - Englishes.

ACTIVITIES
AREA OF STUDY 1

INTRODUCING AUSTRALIAN ENGLISH

1. Here are four definitions of Standard Australian English.
   a. Discuss how closely each one matches your own understanding of SAE.
   b. In which contexts do you most usually hear and see SAE?
   c. Based on these definitions, write your own definition of SAE.

   Standard Australian English - Glossary Term (from ACARA – Australian Curriculum Glossary)
   the variety of spoken and written English language in Australia used in more formal settings such as for official or public purposes, and recorded in dictionaries, style guides and grammars. While it is always dynamic and evolving, it is recognised as the 'common language' of Australian

   What is Standard Australian English and why is it 'standard'? (from NSW Board of Studies – Aboriginal Education)
   The idea of a standard language can be a form of gatekeeping to disadvantage certain groups, but many Australians speak a non-standard English much of the time.

   Australian English (from Australian Voices, Macquarie University)
   Australian English (AusE, AuE, AusEng, en-AU)
   Australian English is spoken by the majority of Australians. It is used by people who are born and raised in this country and also by those who immigrate during childhood. Australian English is a regional dialect of the English language. Within the Australian English dialect, there are three major subgroups:

   - Standard Australian English
   - Aboriginal English
   - Ethnocultural Australian English varieties

   English in Australia (from Englishtown travel advice)
   Many English-speaking Australians trace their family origins to the UK. But because Australia is so far from other English-speaking countries and has been influenced by both native peoples and extensive immigration, it has developed a very unique type of English. Australians are instantly recognizable both by their accent and their expressions.

FEATURES OF AUSTRALIAN ENGLISH

2. "Australian Voices" is a website dedicated to documenting and researching Australian English and all its varieties. It is located at Macquarie University in Sydney and is a project of the Department of Linguistics. Explore the website, starting with the link 'Australian English' from the menu. http://clas.mq.edu.au/australian-voices/

3. Read the article below and answer the questions that follow.

I speak Aboriginal every day, but I don't understand a word.

Kate Holden, 26 January 2011

The origins and meanings of place names — from local streets to mountains — so familiar to Victorians are most often unknown but can tell so much about the Aboriginal heritage of this state, writes Kate Holden.

I grew up near the intersection of two roads, Tooronga and Dandenong. Nearby were Warrigal Road, Koornang Road, Neerim Road, the suburb of Murrumbeena and other places. Through the landscape of stout Anglo and Scots names marking out tidy lines of tidy houses, there snaked these long, vowelled, 'foreign' words. I never paid any attention to them, except to divine that the further out from the city you got, the more of them there seemed to be. The natural features of those places have mostly long since vanished and the meaning of the words are forgotten. All that is left are front gardens, petrol stations, a highway.

When I was young, Australian history seemed a pretty grey, meagre thing. It started with a lesson on the Depression — stubbled men with sagging faces under sagging hats trudging to sagging verandas to beg work — in blotchy, faded black-and- white. Sepia footage of Edwardian folks jerkily crossing empty streets in big frocks and top hats like a bunch of lost and nervously grinning exiles. Then it worked backwards through a misty 19th century apparently violent and trivial; and before that, something about boats and shouty men in uniforms founding the nation. It was all dreary, somehow embarrassingly small, and profoundly alienated from me.

Of course the real stories are more vigorous, terrible, wonderful and many. Stupid me, I've only just recently discovered this, and am exploring the history of a country I barely recognise but now fiercely want to. Part of that has to be noticing what I already know. And the vocabulary that passes my lips every day as I navigate is a starting place. It turns out that in one sense indigenous language is as domestic to me, it seems, as European.

Prahran turns out to be an Aboriginal word — a corruption of Birrarung (mist, or land surrounded by water). Dandenong was Tathenong (big mountain). Geelong comes from Tjalang (tongue). Moorabbin means 'mother's milk'. Looking up a single page in a street directory now to check a spelling (because I know these words better spoken than written), I find Kanooka, Kanowindra, Kanowna, Kantara, Kantiki, Kanu, Kanuka, Kanumbra, Kanyana … and on and on. Forty-five per cent of Victorian place names are Aboriginal. All these words, and the places and things they describe, are now very often simply names on a street sign, perhaps displaced from their original use but still words we navigate by, shapes we make with our mouths. It was only when a friend visited from overseas and I

heard these words coming so naturally from my English-speaking mouth that I realised how effortlessly I, an oblivious Anglo girl, bear these revenants in my world. And how amazing it is that I have had not a clue what they signify, nor, until recently, the curiosity to find out.

I wonder at the process of naming places. After the great surveyors such as Robert Hoddle (and an unrelated Holden!) briskly laid down the grid of the central business district, people went on a spree, and we ended up with 70,000 'Victoria Roads' and 'Nicholson Streets'. And innumerable babies once born in the British Isles were forever immortalised by having their adult titles blazoned on a thousand maps. These days there is a governmental authority (the sternly all-caps VICNAMES) that oversees the naming of places, and the *Geographic Place Names Act* 1998 encourages community participation in this process. VICNAMES' website declares that 'to help advance reconciliation with Australia's Indigenous communities, Victoria is committed to encouraging greater respect and understanding of Indigenous place names.'

Today is Australia Day, anniversary of the First Fleet landing on *Terra Australis Incognita*, when the process of renaming Australia began. It seems a miracle, really, that under the smothering cloak of colonial nomenclature anything earlier survived. But First Fleeter Lieutenant William Dawes sat in his shack in Sydney and learnt phrases such as 'Putuwa' (to warm one's hand by the fire and then to squeeze gently the fingers of another person) from his female companion Patyegarang, and began a tradition of listening, if not always remembering.

Names are power. For Aboriginal peoples, the names of places are mnemonics, collapsing past and present, evoking not only nature but memory. And now we too have forgotten who Mr Neagle, Mr Hedderwick and Mr Crossakiel were but for the streets that bear their names, and the falls that gave its misunderstood name to the Yarra River have been smoothed away, but there is still mist at Birrarung Marr, and a big mountain called Dandenong.

QUESTIONS

a. Make a list of some of the names mentioned in this article. Check a dictionary of Aboriginal languages to find out their meanings.
b. What was the focus of the history lessons the author experienced as a school child?
c. What might have motivated Holden to write this article on this day?
d. What is Holden's main message in this article?
e. Identify some Aboriginal names in your own suburb. Find out the meanings of these words, and if possible, discover the history of the choice of these names.
f. Visit the VICNAMES website and find out what its role is and how place names are chosen.

4. Australian lexical innovations that are also used beyond these shores include: ugg boot; bogan; selfie; rort; pink slip; get the arse. However, the meanings are not always the same.

   a. Research the etymology of these and other words you can think of.
   b. What has been the fate of these words? For example, can any now be found in dictionaries overseas; have any been claimed by other language communities; what different meanings are there?

5. Linguist Anna Wierzbicka has suggested that abbreviated words like *mozzie* (for *mosquito*) and *journo* (for *journalist*) are a kind of linguistic enactment of the Anglo-Australian self-image, reflecting cultural values like the cult of informality, mateship and egalitarianism. She maintains that the *–ie/y* words tend to be more everyday, common vocabulary items, while the words that end with *-o* are not. By putting the *-o* **suffix** on them we are making them sound more everyday and familiar; for example, *compo* from *compensation*; *ammo* from *ammunition* and so on.

   a. Make a list of shortened forms that end in *–o* or *–ie/y*.
   b. What are these suffixes doing?
   c. Can you identify any difference between the words that end in *–o* and *–ie/y*?
   d. Do your examples support Anna Wierzbicka's theory about these *–ie/y* and *–o* words?

6. Linguist Jane Simpson (2004) identified shortened place names as an example of regional difference in Australia. Some are simply shortened, for example *Shep* for *Shepparton,* while others receive one of the diminutive endings, for example *Rotto* for *Rottnest (Island).*

   a. Make a list of shortened forms of Australian place names you know.
   b. Do you notice any patterns in how the shortenings are formed, e.g., according to geographical location?
   c. Why do you think we shorten place names in this way?

7. With a partner develop a short role-play or dialogue to demonstrate the High Rising Terminal (HRT). You may like to use an existing script from a play you have studied, and to 'Australianise' it with features of Australian English pronunciation as outlined in this chapter.

8. Devise a survey to test out people's pronunciation of vowels and consonants as described in this chapter. Develop a sentence for each one. Ask a range of speakers to read these aloud and note down the results. Create a graph showing your findings. Here are some examples of sentences to get you started:

   The idea of it upsets me. (testing rhotic [r])
   The students slept under the tree. (testing affrication of [st] and [tr])
   It's sure to be an exciting tour, but I'm going to be poor afterwards. (testing monophthongisation of vowels)

ATTITUDES TO AUSTRALIAN ENGLISH

9. a. Identify the subsystems referred to in each of the following 'Pet Peeves'.
   b. Explain what the concern is in each case, and the explanation (if any) given by the complainant (e.g., Americanisation of Australian English, influence of social media).
   c. Choose four of these complaints and write your own response to them.

   i. Why is it that Australians pronounce words with letters that are not there or, alternatively, eliminate them? The lead in commercials for the TV show Law and Order is a perfect example of this. The announcer says, "Lore and Ordah" rather than the phonetic pronunciation. Every time I hear this, it makes me smile. I'm a Yank, by the way, living in Perth
   ii. I have two words that annoy me. Can you explain why CONTROVERSY – News readers started it and pronounce it CONTRA VERSY. They say it as two words. There is no A so where it comes

from I don't know. The other word is LIEUTENANT. In England and Australia it is pronounced as LEFTENANT not LOUTENANT as said in the USA. Why is it LEFTENANT and from where does it come?

iii. I am being driven to distraction by what I feel is overuse of the word "obviously". In particular it annoys me when commentators on TV who are meant to be giving expert opinions use the word regularly. If everything was so obvious why do we need the experts to tell us? To help ease my frustration I would appreciate it if you could explain when it is appropriate to use this word.

iv. As a teacher, I know that children are still taught the correct form of the past tense of verbs such as spring (sprang), drink (drank), sing (sang) and yet they say, it sprung, I drunk, I sung. I think that this is due to the influence of the media. I have even had correspondence with Irene Poinkin, ABC Research specialist, who had no problem with these errant forms being used without their accompanying auxillary verb by ABC reporters. What are we to do?

v. I teach Grade 5 and 6 students and the word forehead came up for discussion recently. Most of the students pronounce it fore-head while I and my teacher aides say ''forred". Is the former pronunciation due to the invidious impact of American TV?

vi. I'm constantly annoyed by people using the phrase 'for free'. The word 'for' is unnecessary, and in effect when people say this they are saying 'for for free', as 'free' means 'for nothing'. Anyhow - I hear this on the radio and television and read it in papers and magazines and everywhere around me. Can we stop this, or discourage it, or am I going to cringe every time I hear it?

vii. My question is "Where have personal pronouns in the objective case gone? Is it correct or even decent to replace personal pronouns with all the reflexive pronouns? In fact where has case gone?

viii. I am old and taught English for a while in a Melbourne secondary school when I was in middle age and taught "to me" "to him", "with him"etc. I was given a very good education as girl at a rigorous university and did five years of Latin. I have given in to many changes of the language over nine decades. I would love your help in accepting this latest corruption. As a senior citizen I can't help but get annoyed at the use of the word AMOUNT when refering to the NUMBER of. Why/how has this misuse of amount occured?

ix. The demise of the mighty 'might'. The takeover of the modest 'may'. The rules might/may be blurring irrevocably. 'Might' used to imply uncertainty, 'may' when indicating permission. Today one seldom hears 'might' used at all in either context. Does it matter? Shrug. Sigh. Smile.

REGIONAL VARIATION

10. Visit the Macquarie Dictionary Word Map website: https://www.macquariedictionary.com.au/resources/word/map/

   a. Conduct a search of two regional areas on the map. Identify 6 other lexical items that are specific to each region.
   b. Search the site for the following items: *jubbly, toe rag, dingbat, no wuckers, lacker band.* Write down the meaning of each one and indicate in which region it is most commonly found.
   c. Conduct a search for six other terms of your own to see where they are heard or originate from.

SOCIAL VARIATION

11. There are a number of comedy programs on TV and the internet that use the language of different socio-economic groups for humour, such as *Upper Middle Bogan*, the character Alf Stewart in *Home and Away*, *Bogan Pride*, the character Poida in the comedy series *Full Frontal,* and the twins in *We can be heroes*. Clips from all these shows, and many others, are available online and in some cases on DVD.

   a. Select one or two episodes and note down examples of the language used by the characters.
   b. What features of pronunciation, lexicon, semantics and discourse are exploited for humour?
   c. What is your own experience of this aspect of social variation in Australian English?
   d. Write a personal reflection as a result of your research.

12. William Leap coined the term “Lavender Linguistics” in 1995. It refers to the study of language practices and features of the LGBTIQ community. It followed the recognition by linguists that in addition to the study of gender and language, research into language use based on sexual orientation was lacking.

   a. Conduct an investigation into this field of linguistics, including its forerunner from the 1950s, ‘Polari’.
   b. Prepare a report of your investigation in a format of your choice.

13. The case of “Awesome”.

At around the time of the release of *The Lego Movie* in 2014 there was some discussion about the word “awesome”, as featured in the sound track.

Everything is Awesome,
Everything is cool when you’re part of a team
Everything is Awesome when you’re living out a dream.

Some commentators lamented its overuse; others claimed it was an old term with origins as far back as the Bible. Some joked that the word was so ancient that only older people used it, as illustrated in this dialogue:

An exasperated father once sat down with his teenage daughter and pre-teen son. He had decided it was time to lay down the law.”There are two words,” he began, “that I never again want to hear used in this household. One is ‘gross,’ and the other is ‘awesome’.””Sure, Dad,” said his daughter. “What are they?”

   a. Investigate the origins of the “awesome” and the semantic changes it has undergone over time.
   b. Interview around ten people of different ages about their use of the word and their attitudes to it.
   c. Does your research indicate variation in language use according to age?
   d. Write a report of your findings.

14. The Australian National University's online blog Ozwords is a source of current and fascinating information about Australian English. Visit the site www.ozwords.org

    a. Go to the archive and locate the following words and phrases: stoush (April 2015); egg-shell blonde (February 2015); shirtfront (December 2014); dob (August 2014); check-out chick (May 2014); Clayton's (January 2013). Identify the word class they belong to and note down the meaning of each term.
    b. Research the archive to locate some of the words of the month that have been listed on the site over the past year. Select six words that are of recent origin and six words that have been around for more than 20 years.
    c. Are any of the words associated with a particular age group or generation?
    d. Has semantic change occurred (broadening, elevation, shift etc)?
    e. If you know of a new term (word or phrase) you can register it with Ozwords by clicking on the 'Wordbox' link.

CULTURAL VARIATION

15. A fictional-style documentary called *Big Hair Woman* (directed by Don Parham in 1996) features the character Effie, star of several TV series and 'wogdramas'. You can access clips from the film at www.aso.gov.au In these clips Effie is shown visiting Papua New Guinea in a sort of travelogue show. When you view the clips, notice her Broad Australian accent mingled with her Greek ethnolect. Jot down some of her utterances and transcribe them using the International Phonetic Alphabet.

16. *Temple of Dreams* (by Tom Zubrycki, 2007) is also available at www.aso.gov.au Clip 3 'The Youth Conference' features an interview with young Muslim-Australians at a mosque in Sydney. In a small group, discuss the language features you have observed in this clip. Note the lexical items and common phonetic features of these community languages.

17. Visit one of the many websites that provide advice for visitors to overseas countries and investigate how cultural norms and expectations are portrayed. Start with tips for travellers to Australia to see how accurate they are.

    a. What are some of the tips given for communicating in various situations in Australia?
    b. Do they sound right to you?
    c. What might be some of the limitations of websites such as these?
    As a start you could try this website: Kwintessential Cross Cultural Solutions www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/country-profiles.html

18. In *No Sugar,* playwright Jack Davis depicts Aboriginal humour and the phonology of Aboriginal English with great skill and authenticity.

Excerpts from *No Sugar* by Jack Davis

Excerpt 1

Billy: Big mob politjmans, and big mob from stations, and shoot 'em everybody mens, koories, little yumbah. [He grunts and mimes pulling trigger.] They chuck 'em on a big fire, chuck 'em in river. [They sit in silence, mesmerised and shocked by Billy's gruesome story.]

Jimmy: Anybody left, your mob?

Billy:	Not many, gid away, hide. But no one stop that place now, they all go 'nother country.
Joe:	Why?
Billy:	You go there, night time you hear 'em. I bin bring cattle that way for Wyndham Meat Works. I hear 'em. Mothers cryin' and babies screamin'. Waiwai! Wawai! Wawai!

Excerpt 2

Sergeant:	Look, there's nothing I can do about it except put in a reminder to the Department in Perth. Why don't youse go around to St John's and ask the vicar?
Milly:	For blankets? He'll give us nothin', he's like that.
Gran:	[adopting a praying attitude] Yeah, when he come to Gubment well he goes like that with his eyes closed and he says the Lord will help you, and now he prays with his eyes open, 'cause time 'fore last Wow Wow bit him on the leg … musta wanted a bit a' holy meat.

Identify one or more examples of each of the distinctive features of Aboriginal English in the dialogues above:

- plurals formed by analogy (ie, by generalising –*s* ending)
- uninflected verbs
- distinctive lexical items
- use of present tense to recount past events
- interrogative without auxiliary
- omission of article

NATIONAL IDENTITY

19. Vox Pops: Extracts from a Channel Ten News report. (F = female interviewee; M = male interviewee)

Question: Exactly what does it mean to you to be Australian? What defines us?
(F) We're a small country only 22 million so to be Aus is to do your best and be who you are and you're allowed to be who you are.
(M1) Freedom. We are the lucky country many people in the world don't get it as good as us. I love it.
(M2) It means being tolerant of everyone, it means taking people on their merits, it means having a good sense of fun.

Conduct a survey on the question "What does it mean to be Australian, and what defines us?". Create a five minute Vox Pop to show the class.

a. Interview a range of people and record their responses (audio or video). You will need to explain to your interviewees what you want to do with the recording and ensure you have their permission.
b. Edit together the short pieces of audio or video to make a podcast or vodcast (or other digital presentation).
c. Write and record an introduction explaining how the interviewees have expressed their identity, referring to phonology, morphology, lexicon, semantics and discourse features.

20. 'A report released by the European Union in 2013 revealed that English is the most popular foreign language in all but five European countries. Two thirds of people across Europe have at least a fair working knowledge of English. French, once the language of international diplomacy, is no longer the preferred second language in any European country. The report stated that 94 per cent of secondary school pupils and 83 per cent of primary age pupils across the EU are learning English as their first foreign language.'

    a. Brainstorm a list of the implications of each of the statistics quoted in this item.
    b. Consider the linguistic implications for English and non-English speakers around the world, as well as the impact on European and non-European cultures.
    c. Write a paragraph to summarise your analysis.

OUTCOME TASKS

1. **Folio of annotated texts**
   Write and perform (or record) a 2-3 minute rap in which you demonstrate your knowledge of the features of Australian English. The song could be written in an Australian English variety, or it could be about Australian English. Annotate your script to show the features you have chosen.

2. **Essay**
   Imagine you are a linguist who appears regularly on a program called 'Wordsmiths'. Each week you respond to questions or complaints about language that have been submitted by viewers and listeners. After this week's show you received some feedback as follows:

   > It's an inescapable fact that new arrivals to this country need to learn the language, good old Aussie English. I'm all in favour of strict rules about passing a language test. It's typical of linguists like you to make excuses – 'no single form of English in Australia'. Haven't you ever heard 'G'day mate' and 'fair dinkum'? Steve Irwin would be rolling in his grave if he heard the rubbish you trot out on your program. — Colin, enraged Aussie viewer.

   Prepare a script for a 2-3 minute presentation for next week's program in which you respond to this comment.

3. **Investigative report**
   Ethnolects in Australian English

   a. Investigate three of the main ethnolects in Australian society, eg, Lebanese, Italian, Vietnamese.
   b. Describe their features and provide an audio sample of each ethnolect (recorded by you or from an online source such as the Australian Voices website http://clas.mq.edu.au/australian-voices/ethnocultural-voices).
   c. Explain how these ethnolects establish and reflect the identities of the groups that use them.
   d. Investigate the community's attitudes to these varieties of Australian English by interviewing people and by online research of opinions in the media and in discussion forums.
   e. Summarise the results of your investigation in a form that can be made available to the rest of the class.

LANGUAGE IS A GREAT FORCE OF SOCIALIZATION, PROBABLY THE GREATEST

— Edward Sapir

SENTENCE DIAGRAM

AREA OF STUDY 2

INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP IDENTITIES

6.0 SOCIAL IDENTITY AND ITS MANY FACES

The way we use English identifies us as Australians. But there are many other things about ourselves that we give away in our speech. When we talk, it is not only our accents that reveal a lot about us – it is also the words we use, the way we use grammar, the communication patterns we employ. These features can let slip our geographical origins and our ethnicity and many different aspects of our social background and our relationships with the people we are speaking to.

Throughout this chapter, our focus will be on identity. We will be concentrating on how language works to reflect and construct both individual and group identities through subconscious and conscious language variation, according to factors such as age, gender, sexual orientation, occupation, interests, aspirations and education. We look further at the way individual identity is derived from the personality traits that make us unique. We also look at the way our social identity is drawn from membership of particular groups, where linguistic features work as in-group trademarks both to include and to exclude others.

You will see how speakers can construct a prestigious identity by sticking to the norms that are associated with Standard English — norms that are admired and have kudos within the wider community. Language can function as a social disadvantage for people in different language communities; social attitudes and personal prejudices give rise to discrimination against speakers who do not use the standard dialect and the high-status accent. However, speakers can turn their backs on this overtly prestigious identity and instead construct an identity as a member of an in-group. Where nonstandard English features are used deliberately they reinforce solidarity and the speakers' sense of belonging, as well as reinforcing social distance by excluding those who don't use these features as outsiders (or out-groupers). We will see how sub-languages such as jargon and slang can be powerful forces for both inclusion and exclusion. The fact that we know about 'morphemes' and 'schwas' identifies us all as jolly good fellows and part of the same linguists club — and those that don't have a clue as unfortunate outsiders.

Before we start, let's review some relevant terminology. Recall that the language of a particular region or group of people is very generally referred to as a **variety**, as in a regional or social variety. Recall, too, that regional (or local) varieties are sometimes termed **dialects**, while social varieties are referred to as **sociolects**. However, previous chapters show there may be considerable overlap between sociolects and dialects because certain regional features may also be markers of social class or status. Sociolects include markers of social variables such as gender, age or generation, sexual orientation and ethnicity as well as social class, and these also overlap. The term **speech repertoire**

refers to the range of linguistic varieties that speakers have available to them and that they draw on to perform particular social roles.

In the next sections, we will be exploring variation across a range of dimensions, and though we separate the different social variables involved, be aware that the reality is a tangle of factors – age, socioeconomic status, gender, sexual orientation and also geography are all closely entwined.

6.1 SOCIAL AND PERSONAL VARIATION

> You're an educated man — it shows in your cleanliness and your vowels sounds.
>
> Tramp to Oliver Priest, *Oliver's Travels* BBC Comedy

We've referred previously to the musical *My Fair Lady,* based on the play *Pygmalion* by George Bernard Shaw. It is one of the few theatrical works of literature about **sociolinguistics**. One of the main characters is Professor Henry Higgins, and he is supposedly modelled on a real-life 19th century London phonetician, Henry Sweet (1845-1910). In the musical version, Professor Higgins famously sings: 'The moment an Englishman speaks, it absolutely classifies him'. (This was before the days of gender-inclusive language.) Higgins's assertion is true of most languages and most societies, at least to some extent. Even in Australia, where we tend to think of ourselves as being egalitarian and classless, there are differences that classify us. They include differences of class, which are marked by level of educational achievement, level of income and type of occupation. These differences are reflected in the way we speak English – in the way we use sounds, our grammar, and our choice of vocabulary. Such features of language constitute social variation in language, and in this way language serves as a 'mirror of society' (to cite the 18th century German poet, Schiller). Through the study of language we are able to learn a significant amount about the structures, relations and changes in the society or community concerned. And we can also learn much about individual and group memberships when we look at the language choices that people make.

Professor Higgins and Eliza, a scene from *My Fair Lady*

6.1.1 PHONOLOGICAL VARIATION

Earlier, we discussed the Australian accent continuum consisting of Cultivated, General and Broad. We mentioned that there are correlations here between variety, gender and region. This range of socially relevant variation would have been present from the earliest time of English-speaking in Australia. In other words, both the Cultivated and Broad ends of the spectrum would have been transplanted. The accents of officials and clergy would have represented an early form of Received Pronunciation, the modern prestige accent, and those of the convicts would have represented the low prestige version. Subsequently, greater social mobility in Australia and the movement of linguistic features both up and down the social scale had the effect of bringing these two extremes closer together.

The relationship between accent and prestige is currently in the process of a shift. Basically, talking 'posh' doesn't have the same cachet that it once had. As in the UK, growing egalitarianism and the higher participation rates in upper secondary and tertiary education are now seeing the solidarity function of accents winning out over the status function. General Australian is gaining ground from both Cultivated and Broad and research in progress in Melbourne suggests that some recent changes transcend the older sociolectal continuum described by Mitchell and Delbridge. Individuals may not want to identify with an ocker image in their linguistic behaviour; nor do they want to identify with what might be perceived as British affectation. Both ends of this accent spectrum have now become the butt of much comedy.

Do a quick survey around the room and place your class-mates' accent on this continuum from Cultivated to Broad. Discuss the linguistic evidence that enables you to reach these conclusions.

6.1.2 GRAPHIC VARIATION

Once upon a time, the way people wrote, in particular their use of orthographic conventions (such as punctuation), could be an indicator of level of education (and perhaps even age or generation). Increasingly however, people are using this linguistic feature as an expression of their identity, both group and personal. As journalist Jessica Bennett wrote, "these days, it's as if our punctuation is on steroids [..] But it's also as if a kind of micro-punctuation has emerged: tiny marks in the smallest of spaces that suddenly tell us more about the person on the other end than the words themselves (or, at least, we think they do)". And with the diminishing prevalence of handwriting, this aspect is more readily observed in electronic formats such as online communication. Think of those contexts that remain where handwriting is called for. There aren't many; for example, hastily scribbled notes, shopping lists, postcards and exams (though this is also changing).

We've already seen examples of how unconventional e-English can be. In many ways, it has much in common with the written language we find in earlier times, before there was a standard language and a prescriptive ethos telling people how to behave linguistically. They simply wrote as they spoke. In electronic communication, we see forms of regional and social variation, but most importantly personal variation — where people use punctuation (such as the interrobang and capitals CANT WAIT!!!), spelling (*hiiiiii, soooo*), abbreviations (*wtf, wysiwyg*) and graphics (☺ and :D) to reflect their natural speech and their personalities. Increasingly we see old punctuation marks being pressed into new services.

The interrobang is a good example of the dramatic changes now happening to punctuation. The concept was introduced as early as 1962 by Martin K. Speckter in an article written for *TYPEtalks Magazine*. The idea was to create a symbol that would add an exclamatory aspect to the question mark. At the time, it didn't take off. However, the Internet has how given it a new lease on life. As described by Urban Dictionary, this "cool little punctuation mark" is now much loved by social media (where emotion is required but not at the cost of brevity). E-communication formats have also been busy resuscitating the careers of many other moribund characters, such as at @ and underscore _.

An interrobang

Changes like these aren't surprising. The internet has created a brand new society where people converse with each other in virtual communities just as they do face-to-face in real communities. On social networking websites, from Facebook to LinkedIn and Instagram, members can express their individuality in many different ways. As part of their profiles, people can add friends and personal information (birthdays, educational and career details, political views, religious beliefs, interests and hobbies). There are then links connecting these interests to pages that enable members to chat with like-minded people online. Thousands of these interest groups have sprung up as virtual speech communities where people communicate in writing. In order for members to express their identity, personal and shared, they have to break free of the straitjacket of the written standard.

The humble full stop has new meaning in the digital age

In the standard written language, the full stop (or period as it is known in American English) is the usual way to conclude a sentence. In electronic communication, however, it has reportedly become something more meaningful, even antagonistic.

In text messages and online chats, it's quite usual to not indicate the end of a sentence at all.

on way home will call when reception better

So, when people do chose to use a full stop, there might be more to it than simply concluding a sentence. They're being emphatic in some way — perhaps even indicating displeasure about the situation.

Mark Liberman, Professor of Linguistics at the University of Pennsylvania commented: "Not long ago, my 17-year-old son noted that many of my texts to him seemed excessively assertive or even harsh, because I routinely used a period at the end".

How would you interpret the following reply to the previous text message (*on way home will call when reception better*)

Thanks.

Do you see a significance in the use of the full stop (is there a kind of 'thanks for nothing' message here)?!

6.1.3 MODES OF ADDRESS

The way we address each other is closely linked to identity and cultural value systems. If you are familiar with languages other than English, you will know that most languages have several pronouns of address corresponding to you, such as *tu* and *vous* (French), *tu, lei* and *voi* (Italian), *du* and *Sie* (German), and *engkau, kamu, tuan, njonja*, and *nona* (Indonesian). Such pronouns enable interlocutors to include and exclude others, to express common ground and degrees of social distance, indicating age, status and degree of formality.

In English we have terms that take on some of the functional load borne by pronouns in other languages to increase or decrease social distance. These include the honorific *Mr* or *Ms* plus last name and other formal modes (*sir/madam*). Informal terms such as *mate*, used to a male by another male (and to a lesser extent by a female), *love*, used to a declining extent by women in customer

service roles, and *boys, girls* and *guys*, mark the degree of formality of the relationship between the interlocutors. *Mate* can have a mitigating intention, where a friendly intent is used to mask a more business-like intention. Former Australian Government Science minister Barry Jones provides an excellent example of mitigating intention in the story he tells in his autobiography of a phone conversation with a colleague on whose vote he was counting to retain his ministerial position.

> 'Mate,' he began and with that word I knew that I was gone. 'Mate, I'll have to break my promise to vote for you.' (Jones 2006: 392)

In Australian English, in comparison with other languages or even most other national varieties of English, the use of first names is widespread. This may be related to a belief in egalitarianism in Australian society. Australians are likely to introduce themselves with their first name face-to-face and on the phone; they are then referred to and addressed by their first names (even in status-marked situations such as in the work domain). Name tags worn by people who work in retail settings, such as supermarkets, usually bear only the first name (compared to last name in many European countries) to encourage first name address and also to guarantee the anonymity of the employee. More formal modes of address (honorific and last name such as *Mr Smith* or *Dr Jones*) are still preferred by many in the older generation as they are believed to express respect (in this case indicating age and/or status). *Sir/madam* have made somewhat of a comeback in service encounters as part of a new global entrepreneurial politeness. On the other hand, the use of *Sir* by students to teachers in boys' schools in return for being addressed by the last name, has been superseded. In the contemporary classroom, a student addresses the teacher as Ms/Mr Smith and the teacher responds using the student's first name. The more familiar people become with each other, the more likely they are to move to first name terms. It is quite common these days for people in a fairly formal relationship to say 'call me David' as the social distance between them decreases.

Nicknames are the most obvious expression of intimacy, or at least of a positive or friendly attitude, and they're most commonly found in close-knit groups. People who get them tend to be good friends or family, but they can be enemies too - perhaps people in authority or in the public eye. But somehow they must be special. The ABC is known nationally as Auntie, and politicians are often renamed — Menzies was known as Ming the Merciless, Bob Hawke as The Mild Colonial Boy and The Silver Bodgie, Gareth Evans acquired Biggles when he was appointed attorney-general in 1983. More recently, pop artist Azealia Banks slammed fellow rapper Iggy Azalea with the nickname Igloo Australia.

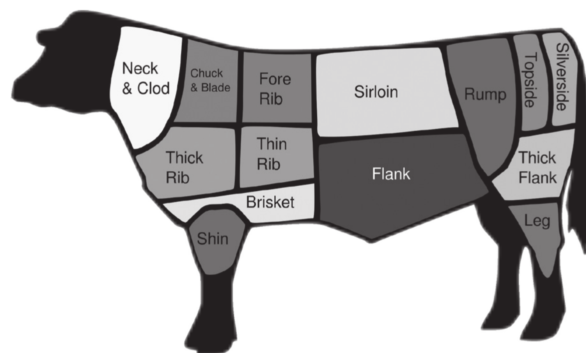
Origin of surnames

In the early middle ages people only had first names — surnames came later as a means of distinguishing people who had the same first name (the word *surname* first appeared in the 14th century comes from French *sur + nom* 'additional name'). Most English surnames fit into four broad categories. The majority derives from a placename/or general location and originally indicated where a person came from (*Moor, Wood, Stone*). Another large group shows a relationship to a parent or ancestor, usually via an affix (*Johnson* = son of John, *MacDonald* = son of Donald, *Fitzpatrick* = son of Patrick), or just simply a first name without any ending (*James, Thomas*). The third class includes occupational last names, derived from the specialty crafts and trades of the medieval period (*Baker, Miller, Dempster*). The last group (around 10%) involve nicknames, usually descriptive (based on personality or physical appearance) — so these are the surnames names like *Moody, Rich, Young, Long, Little* and *Black*.

A LINGUISTIC ASIDE — SIRLOINS AND SURNAMES

A *sirloin* is considered the choicest cut of beef taken from the upper loin (= hindquarter) of a cow. Its linguistic connection with *surname* is via the early French *surlonge* or *surloigne* (*sur* 'over' + *longe* 'loin'). But English speakers (notorious for remodelling foreign words) changed it it to *sirloin* and then dreamt up a wonderful history to justify this: the beef was considered so good, it was given a knighthood Sir Loin of Beef.

A lot of nicknaming happens in schools. As researchers Kerry Taylor-Leech, Donna Starks and Louisa Willoughby write: "Nicknames are frequently developed and acquired in the teenage years, where regular, close and intense contact between school students provides fertile ground for nickname formation". The examples they found in their survey of 642 students included: Ranga, Fatty, Fuzzy, Adelaiden, Yank, Turk, Wog, Bubbles, Cookie, Groover, Thought, Little Red, Blackie, Care Bear and Collywobbles.



In Australia nicknames frequently have an ironic twist to them: Shorty (for someone exceptionally tall), Fatty (for someone skinny), Curly (for someone with dead-straight hair) and, of course, Blue or Bluey (for someone with red hair — the colours red and blue are about as distinct as you can get). These researchers suggest, however, that this practice appears to be dying out.

Brainstorm a list of the nicknames that you use for the people around you, in various contexts. Classify them according to categories; e.g. "Legs" (physical attributes).

As we saw earlier, Australians love abbreviations and many of our informal names end up being simply truncated forms of first names, usually shortened so they end in a consonant like Man for Mandy, Rach for Rachel, Ness for Vanessa, Tone for Tony. Some of these get an extra bit added on the end — Tez for Terry, Gaz for Garry, Baz for Barry. Names like Jules for Julie or Marz for Mary show that this is actually an ending — it's not that we're changing the 'r' of Terry or Garry to a 'z'. It's probably the same ending that you find on pet names like Cuddles, Ducks and Toots. Like most cuddly endings, this one creates a warm, friendly feeling; it indicates that something or someone is endearing to us. Some remodeling takes the names well away from the original. Older examples include: Jack as the pet name for John, Bob from Robert, Peggy from Margaret and Polly from Mary. Language is notorious for short cuts and spectacular sound shifts, but nowhere is this more obvious than in names. It's almost as if the more severe the pruning and the more excessive the sound change the more affection we show.

The nickname research already shows how Australian nicknaming conventions are being adapted to fit non-Anglo names, attesting to the strong multicultural nature of Australian society. They give such nicknames as Papa (for Papapavlou) that show shortening, and also others that entail more complex phonological adjustments (and also wordplay), in forms such as Zucchini from Zukic.

6.2 JARGON AND SLANG

We've already spent some time delving into different occupational 'lects', (jargons / registers), and also slang; however, we'll now explore both these concepts from the angle of identity. Both jargon and slang are all about unity and belonging — they are fundamental indicators of individual and group identities. Both show familiarity, marking activities, events and objects that are routine to members of a group. They can be used to safeguard privacy or secrecy — a matter of keeping outsiders in the dark. You will notice that there is some overlap between the two in our discussion. Indeed, people sometimes use the terms slang and jargon almost interchangeably. The relationship between the two is not straightforward and so we'll try to tease them apart.

6.2.1 JARGONS AND REGISTERS

Recall that jargons and registers are the 'specialized' languages used within a trade, professional, hobby or some other group. They are varieties that we use when we are 'on-the-job', so to speak; unlike variation that is regionally or socially determined, they do not involve 'permanent' linguistic fixtures. People involved in different professions distinguish themselves by their speciality languages. Pop singers, for example, demonstrate their identity through pronunciation and even some grammatical forms in their lyrics — indeed, any group of people which can be identified as socially important will show differences to some degree in their linguistic behaviour while they are at work or at play. And like all the various 'lects' we have considered so far, linguistic features that are used among people who have a common work-related or recreational interest also perform the additional function of reinforcing and displaying group identity.

We distinguish these varieties on the basis of subject matter and also on the basis of domain; that is, the activity in which the language plays a part: so the law, government, linguistics, religion, and so on are all domains. Hence, among the many jargons around we find the special registers of the bureaucracy, real estate agents, various academic disciplines, football and racing commentaries, stock market reports, and the legal and medical professions. Outsiders will often be put off by the lexicon that may not be readily comprehensible to a novice. The material in this subject English Language has introduced a host of special terms, such as *morpheme*, *prosody*, *fricative*, *schwa* and *agentless passive*, which has made it easier to talk in precise terms about language. People without some background in linguistics may feel excluded and consider the terminology to be pretentious. This applies to any field of learning, whether in the natural, social or human sciences, or indeed any area where interests are shared. Carpenters, wine connoisseurs, rap artists and surfies — all have their specialized vocabulary. In some cases, an ordinary language item will bear a different meaning in the register; e.g. *rap* ('blow, stroke' > 'music type (usually rhyming and often improvized)'; *glass* ('hard brittle substance' > ' the inside of a perfect *pipe* in surfing).

Although we use a label like Legalese as if it referred to a discrete entity, there is no one-to-one correspondence between the contextual factors on the one hand and the features of jargon on the other. Jargons

are by no means fixed. They vary continuously in response to a complex set of different situational factors; if any one factor is changed, the language may change accordingly. These factors are: (A) the relationship between speaker (writer), hearer (reader) and any other participants within earshot (the audience); (B) where the communication takes place (the setting); (C) whether a spoken or written medium of transmission is used (mode); (D) what is being communicated (the subject matter or field).

Jargons (or registers) have a number of functions, the most important of which are:

- To satisfy the communication needs of the group.
- To mark group boundaries and promote in-group solidarity (which may entail making the language not readily comprehensible to 'outsiders').

These two functions have given rise to very different definitions of 'jargon' in the literature. Here are two typical definitions:

> Jargon is the language peculiar to a trade, profession, or other group; the language used in a body of spoken or written texts dealing with a circumscribed domain in which speakers share a common specialized vocabulary, habits of word usage, and forms of expression. (Allan & Burridge 2006: 239)

> Jargon: unintelligible talk; gabble; gibberish (Johnson 1755)

The *Macquarie Dictionary* entry for 'jargon' includes both these senses:

> **1**. the language peculiar to a trade, profession or other group: *medical jargon*. **2**. speech abounding in uncommon or unfamiliar words. **3**. (*derog.*) any talk or writing which one does not understand. **4**. unintelligible or meaningless talk or writing; gibberish. **5**. debased, outlandish or barbarous language.

These functions are captured rather nicely in Hudson's apt description of jargon as 'a kind of masonic glue [mortar] between different members of the same profession' (1978:1). In the case of criminal jargon (sometimes called argot), there is the added motivation of supposed secrecy. This may even be true of respectable jargons such as legal English, which has been described by many as a kind of secret language, designed deliberately to assert the superiority of the legal profession and keep all the rest of us in the dark. It is, of course, outsiders who find jargon 'abounding in uncommon or unfamiliar words', and therefore 'unintelligible or meaningless talk or writing; gibberish' to quote definitions 2 and 4 from the *Macquarie Dictionary*. So while jargons aim to facilitate communication on the one hand, they also do a good job of erecting communication barriers on the other.

A jargon may be characterized by at least four criteria:

- Lexical, such as abbreviations and acronyms in real estate advertisements;
- Syntactic, such as imperatives in recipes, agentless passives and impersonal constructions in academic discourse, full noun phrases rather than pronouns in legal documents;
- Prosodic, as in racing and football commentaries and livestock auctions;
- Graphic representation or format.

When you look at the following four examples, it is hardly surprising that for many, the label jargon has come to be not 'technical language' but rather 'unintelligible gibberish'.

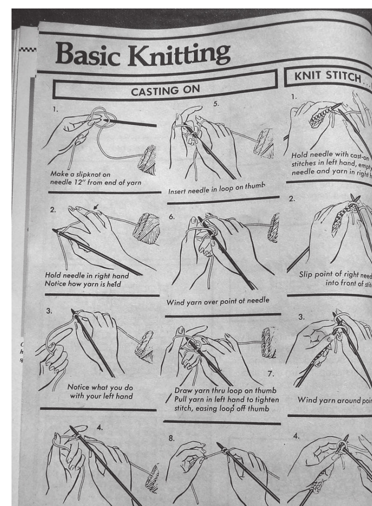
(1) A fast-medium right arm inswing bowler needs two or three slips, a deep third man, a gully, a deepish mid-off, a man at deep fine leg and another at wide mid-on. (Cricketese)

(2) Cast on 63 sts: Knit 6 rows plain knitting. 7th row: K4, wl. fwd. K2 tog to the last 3 sts. K3. (Knittingese)

(3) We ll NjoyD hearN Mary tlk pasion8ly bout d cre8tN of d stoR n her ethos of sellN bux W its str$ on d HUmN tuch — gud retro cust svC!!! (Tweet)

(4) EXPLANATORY NOTE

Regulation 3 of the Local Government (Allowances) Regulations 1974 ('the 1974 regulations') (S.I. 1974/447) made provision prescribing the amounts of attendance and financial loss allowance to members of local authorities. Regulation 3 of the Local Government (Allowances) (Amendment) Regulations 1981 ('the 1981 regulations') (S.I. 1981/180) substituted a new regulation for regulation 3 of the 1974 regulations. Regulation 3 of the Local Government (Allowances) (Amendment) Regulations 1982 ('the 1982 regulations') (S.I. 1982/125) further amends regulation 3 of the 1974 regulations, with effect from 8 March 1982, by increasing the maximum rates of attendance and financial loss allowances. Regulation 7 of the 1982 regulations would have revoked both regulations 3 and 5 of the 1981 regulations (regulation 5 being a regulation revoking earlier spent regulations) with effect from 1st April 1982. These regulations preserve regulations 3 and 5 of the 1981 regulations by revoking regulation 7 of the 1982 regulations. (Bureacratese)



Learning to speak Knittingese

Here we've been using the labels jargon and register interchangeably. The only reason the term 'register' doesn't have the same negative associations as jargon is simply that it is a 'term-of-art', a technical term, and not generally used in ordinary language, so it has escaped the deterioration in connotation suffered by jargon.

JARGON — THE INSIDER PERSPECTIVE

Let's further explore the use of jargon to meet the communication needs of members of a group. AFL commentary provides a good illustration, with its distinct grammatical structure.

There are a number of special constructions that are particularly distinctive about this variety. In many ways, they represent something of linguistic antiquities, relic uses from the past that we tend now to associate more with literary language such as we might find in poetry. Some of these constructions should already be familiar to you.

Subject-verb inversion

First, there is the familiar inversion of subject and verb. We've seen it before as a literary device, a means of heightening expectation, or a way of simply focusing the subject by shifting it out of its normal position. In the case of a football commentary it can also be a kind of survival technique — a means of postponing mention of a player's name until the identity is known for sure.

*Here comes **Essendon**!*

*Across the top of the pack **comes Kickett**, and Kickett has taken a magnificent mark!*

Passive

The frequent use of passive is another handy delaying technique. Perhaps the football commentator can't yet identify the player who has unexpectedly stopped a kick. The passive provides some breathing space.

*Kick Daniher to the centre **is well marked by Young**.*

*Ridley tried to hold it low down, couldn't do so, **soccered on by Wanganeen**, **picked up** though for Footscray and **chipped out** towards the boundary line, and eventually over **by Watts**.*

Heavy noun phrase modification

Football commentary is characterized by noun phrases that are heavy with modifiers, especially post-modifiers like relative clauses, appositional noun phrases that restate the noun, and even postposed adjectives (i.e. those that appear after the noun, not before as is usual). The examples below are also unusual because of the number of modified proper nouns (in ordinary discourse, proper nouns are not modified, except in unusual idioms like 'poor Fred').

*Symons **out-bustled** can't get into the contest for the Dons.*

*Handpass to **the running** Doolan*

*Handpass backwards to the Axe who pokes a kick onto **the leading** Grant.*

*Williams **for Essendon** beautiful smother.*

Present tense

Football commentary is unusual in its use of the present tense. You might be thinking, well this is hardly remarkable — present tense reports action happening at the time. But if you read the relevant section in our toolkit in the appendix, you'll see that present tense is rarely used now to report strictly present time. While Hamlet might have asked of Polonius, *What do you read my Lord*, this now sounds very unEnglish to our modern ears. In ordinary language, it's usually used to report habitual actions as in *I play football for the school team*. The use of present tense in football broadcasting is another linguistic antiquity. It has considerable dramatic force and makes for particularly lively narrative sequences.

*West **goes** sideways **finds** Ellis who **chips** it on to Quill who **pokes** it on*

Ellipsis

Also typical of football commentary is ellipsis, or the omission of elements of sentence structure. The missing material can of course be immediately supplied by the context. If you render the next sentences into ordinary English you will see that you have to supply a lot of additional words, including main verbs and subjects.

Heeeading back into play knocked out by Kernahan went to Denim sharked a beautiful left foot kick went straight into the hands of Symons. Symons on the backline. Someone went A over T.

Regular followers of football would have no trouble following any of this commentary, indeed would expect the commentators to use this special register.

Football poetry

JARGON — THE OUTSIDER PERSPECTIVE

Let's explore further the second function of jargon (its role in marking in-group and out-group boundaries). Here it's tempting to immediately go to jargons such as Bureaucratese, but let's look at the jargon of disciplines like linguistics, education, sociology and so on. In many ways, this language can be even more alienating. The everyday nature of the subject matter renders these jargons even more baffling and offensive to outgroupers, who feel they ought to understand.

Take the example of linguistics. Outside the discipline there already exists an extensive nontechnical vocabulary used by the lay public when talking about language. Unfortunately, this terminology is

too imprecise and vague to be of use in the discipline of linguistics. Linguists are therefore faced with having to narrow and redefine everyday terms like *sentence, word, syllable* and *grammar*, as well as adding a number of new terms to overcome the imprecisions and to make distinctions (or distinguish *denotata*, to use a bit of linguistics jargon) that ordinary language ignores. For example, linguists find the term *word* insufficiently precise for all their purposes and so occasionally need to distinguish between *grammatical, orthographic* and *phonological words* as well as introducing new terms like *lexeme* and *morpheme* to capture additional distinctions. If this were quantum mechanics and not linguistics no one would question the right to furnish the discipline with a technical vocabulary all of its own. But to a non-linguist, the practice probably seems unnecessarily pedantic. The technical language is perceived as academic jiggery pokery, and all the more irritating precisely because it deals with familiar subject matter.

Sociologists and psychologists are faced with the same problem. In a serious piece of academic writing, a child psychologist wrote *punitive external control* rather than refer to *hitting a naughty child* (to which the child then provided *sensory feedback* rather than *yelled*). Here's another example from sociology:

> the objective selfidentity as the behavioural and evaluative expectations which the person anticipates others having about himself
>
> (Smith *British Journal of Sociology* 1968:80)

When you encounter pieces like this (and there are plenty in linguistics too), there is a feeling that the writer is somehow deliberately mystifying the topic: why doesn't Smith use *self-image*? Is this just puffed-up jargon to augment Smith's own 'objective self identity as the behavioural and evaluative expectations which the person anticipates others having about himself'? To be fair, this particular gem of jargon does not look so bad in the context of the whole paper from which it is selected; and, as we said earlier, it's always easy to criticize the jargon of others.

It is not surprising then that there have been so many social and political movements pushing for clear and simple English, particularly in laws, legal documents like contracts, and government documents of all kinds. Such movements have sprung up throughout Europe. In Sweden there has been a strong push for comprehensible Swedish officialese in place of *krangelsvenska* 'muddled Swedish', and in Norway there are courses on 'Plain Norwegian for Bureaucrats'. Parallel cries can be heard in Germany and France. In a sense, these movements represent a current push to "dejargonize jargon"!

To conclude this discussion of jargon, here is a biblical example from Luke 2:8-10, but this time written in good clear modern Officialspeak:

> Additionally, the identical geopolitical hegemonic system contained **ovine supervision operatives** in **a nocturnal holding posture vis-à-vis a carcass and fleece production pasture unit**. And, of limited stature, they were interfaced with **a paranormal extra-terrestrial android manifestation in a hyper-illuminated adulatory authoritarian environment** and they experienced **a deleterious mood change motivated by intrapersonal insecurity**. The paranormal manifestation previously identified verbalized antithetically to their self-induced negative confidence syndrome. "Become visually cognitive of the informational benefits I present. Which will orientate your peer group within **a meaningful celebration situation**. (Richard Stilgoe, BBC broadcast *Potted Tongues*)

Here's a more tradition version of *Luke 2:8-10* from the *New International Version of the Holy Bible* (1980). You'll note, there is a certain amount of Christian religious jargon here, such as 'an angel of the Lord', but otherwise it is not too distinct from modern everyday English.

> And there were shepherds living out in the fields near by, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.

Finally, a Twitter version of *Luke 2:8-10*, rendered into the pure and pithy modern lingo of e-speak.

> n der wr shepherds livN ot n d fields nr by, keepn woch ovr their flocks @ nyt.
> An angl of d Lord appeard 2 em, n d glory of d Lord shone arnd em, n dey wr (:=(.
> Bt d angL z 2 em, “Do not B fraid. I brng u gud nws of gr8 joy that’ll B 4 ll d ppl.

Match the five bolded noun phrases in the Officialspeak version of *Luke 2:8-10* with the more traditional English version.

6.2.2 SLANG

Colloquialisms are often used among people who have a common work-related or recreational interest, and they perform the function of reinforcing and displaying group identity, especially when used to exclude others. Slang is a correlate of human groups with shared experiences, such as being children at a certain school or of a certain age, or being a member of a certain socially definable group, such as nurses, jazz musicians and cyclists.

In Australian hospitals, we find the slang expressions *crumbles* ‘the frail and elderly at death’s door’; *grots* ‘derelicts and alcoholics’; *vegetables* ‘unresponsive or comatose patients’; diagnoses like *F.L.K.* ‘Funny Looking Kid’; *G.O.K.* ‘God Only Knows’; and someone who has *passed through the valley of tears* is simply *cactus* or ‘dead’. This is just a small sample of hospital slang (given the rapid turnover of slang, these examples might well be out-dated by now). To outsiders these expressions seem disrespectful and harsh, but for insiders gallows humour has an important function; i.e. to distance hospital staff from the sickness and death around them, and to help to blot out the awareness of their own vulnerability and that of their co-workers. There is also much playfulness here. Frivolity is extremely common among staff in aged care facilities when talking to each other. For people who have to deal with the dying and with death every day, this seeming irreverence for human life makes such work much easier to bear. Levity towards what is feared is widely used as means of coming to terms with the fear, by downgrading it. At the same time, these expressions also identify activities, events, and objects that have become routine for those involved and have an important function in creating rapport in the work environment by virtue of it serving as a ‘clique’ or an in-group recognition device.

Where slang is associated with activities in conflict within the more established sectors of society the language has the added motivation of secrecy. Within “underworld” subcultures, the function of slang expressions can be to conceal the nefarious nature of whatever they designate, with the express purpose of keeping outsiders in the dark. The following is a handful of examples from the over 2,300 street terms that refer to illicit drug types or drug activity (taken from a glossary compiled by the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy): *get snotty* (‘to use heroin’); *candy sticks* (‘marijuana cigarettes laced with powdered cocaine’); *gym sticks* (‘steroids used by athletes’); *hugs and*

kisses ('methamphetamine and methylenedioxymethamphetamine' or 'MDMA'); *lipton tea / lemonade* ('poor quality drugs'); *klingons* ('crack addicts'). The high turnover rate of this vocabulary means that these terms quickly become passé; the need to maintain secrecy ensures that as soon as a term's cover is blown, it has to be replaced.

The linguistic disguise need not always be to conceal the disreputable, however. The merchant slang of Dutch fishermen reverses syllables and also sometimes words to disguise expressions so that other fishermen won't uncover their secrets. This secretive aspect was the original function of slang. In the 18th and 19th centuries, it was also known as 'thieves Latin', the 'vulgar tongue of the lowest blackguards in the nation'. Since this time slang has been, by association, 'bad language', such that any expressions disapproved of on moral grounds (such as profanity, swearing, obscenity) will be branded as 'slang' and subjected to censoring.

TEASING SLANG AND JARGON APART

Let's briefly summarize the features that identify language as slang. It's informal, usually spoken not written and it involves mainly vocabulary. One striking feature is its playfulness. The whole point of slang is to startle, amuse, shock. It also has to be short-lived — so an important feature is that it is ephemeral. Slang serves the dual purpose of solidarity and secrecy. It indicates membership within a particular group as well as social distance from the mainstream. At the same time, it also prevents bystanders and eavesdroppers from understanding what's being said.

So, how does slang differ from jargon? Both are much maligned in ordinary usage. Someone early last century described slang as being to a people's language 'what an epidemic disease is to their bodily constitution'. We've just seen that poor old jargon has almost become a 'smear' term too. Jargon is what turns a *toothbrush* into a *home plaque removal implement* — it's intellectual quackery. But equally we could describe *jargon* as simply the language peculiar to a particular group of persons such as a profession or a trade. As just discussed, whether or not you apply the term *jargon* contemptuously will of course depend on whether or not you're a member of the group in question.

So jargon and slang do overlap. Both identify activities and entities that have become routine for those involved. Both have an important function in creating rapport in the work or play environment. The difference is slang is more colloquial and has a much faster turnover rate. Also slang can usually be replaced by more standard expressions. Hence the dictionary description 'colourful, alternative vocabulary' [our emphasis here]. You could describe someone as *pickled, pissed* or *plastered* or you could simply say they're *drunk*. It's true that a lot of jargon is very replaceable, too. Legal language, for instance, is characterized by curiosities like *thereupon, hereinafter* and *herebefore* which could quite easily be dispensed with, or at least replaced with modern-day equivalents. Like slang, jargon items such as these are a matter of style. They are built into the linguistic routine of this particular jargon and are now part and parcel of the rituals of the legal profession. But then again, many jargon expressions don't have viable alternatives in ordinary language — the lawyer's *plaintiff*, the art historian's *skeuomorphy*, the linguist's *morpheme*, even the cricketer's *man at deep fine leg*. These refer to concepts peculiar to each group and they fill a need. And in this respect, jargon can be very different from slang.

Eavesdropping

Finally, there are two features both slang and jargon clearly share. One, they have always been generous contributors to the

ordinary English lexicon and two, they both have an important role to play in establishing individual and group identity.

6.3 SOCIAL EXPECTATIONS AND COMMUNITY ATTITUDES

> **Narrator**: Fly decided to speak very slowly, for it was a cold fact of nature that sheep were stupid, and there was nothing that could convince her otherwise.
> **Fly**: Please, someone tell me... what happened this morning.
> **Narrator**: The sheep decided to speak very slowly, for it was a cold fact of nature that wolves were ignorant, and there was nothing that could convince them otherwise.
> **Sheep**: It was Babe... he saved us... the wolves killed Maa... But Babe drew the wolves away!
> [from the screen play *Babe*, based on Dick King-Smith's book *The Sheep Pig*]

You've seen throughout this book how people use language to locate themselves inside a social space, and you've been given a taste of the array of social variation that exists out there. Obviously how someone speaks is going to be an important source of information about that person's social characteristics, information that we need to know (as interlocutors) in order to tailor our linguistic behaviour accordingly. It's good to know the sorts of things that person might value, how the person might react to something we say and so on.

However, we may believe that one group's way of speaking is better than another, and linguistic forms then become a source of linguistic value judgements. The habit we have of forming opinions based on the social signals we find in people's speech is what constitutes linguistic prejudice. You've already seen a little of how hearers can jump to all sorts of conclusions about people and where they fit within a social space based on the way they speak. These conclusions can be positive, negative, accurate, but more often than not totally wrong-headed — never let linguistic facts get in the way of a good story! This point has been beautifully illustrated in Dick King-Smith's book *The Sheep Pig* (which you may know better as the movie *Babe*). We've given you an extract from the movie script above.

Not surprisingly, much will depend on the values of the group to which we see ourselves as belonging – that's just self-respect. As children we're told that we should speak a certain way and so we then pass judgement on the language of others (whose different speech will therefore be "bad" speech). Early 19th century novelist Captain Frederick Marryat is famously quoted: 'My speech is pure; thine, wherein it differs from mine, is corrupt'. So we go through life evaluating each other favourably or unfavourably on the basis of our speech. Some features will suggest characteristics that we happen to value a lot, and therefore we'll end up also valuing that speaker a lot. And vice versa. Linguistic research has shown that speakers of high-status speech styles are stereotyped in terms of competence and attributes relating to socioeconomic background, while speakers of low-status speech styles are stereotyped less favourably along these lines, but favourably in terms of the more human attributes to do with social attractiveness. In short, speakers will draw on features of other people's speech to provide non-linguistic information about them, such as their social background and even personality traits like their honesty, reliability, friendliness, toughness, intelligence and so on.

A.G Mitchell pioneered the study of Australian pronunciation. He had a lot to say on the ability of speech to arouse prejudice in people. Here's an extract from an article he wrote in September 1942 in the *ABC Weekly* (Volume 4: 36; p.3):

> Question a man's pronunciation of a word and you may touch him as nearly as if you doubted his moral integrity. Differences in political opinion are often more readily tolerated than differences in pronunciation. We are prepared to believe that a man who differs from us in politics may still be a quite reasonable person. But many of us go through life in the comfortable faith that any man who speaks differently from the way in which we speak must be a knave or a fop or a chump.

Granted we don't speak about *knaves, fops* or *chumps* these days, but you can still appreciate the connection that Mitchell has made here between 'bad' language and moral decline.

Tattoos, once viewed with disdain and suspicion by the general population, are now commonplace in Australian society. People of all ages and both sexes are 'inking up', some modestly and others seemingly unwilling to leave a patch of skin bare. People speak of "tatts" with tolerance, even fondness. But in past times, people (usually men) with tattoos in many people's minds were regarded as outsiders – the knaves and chumps of the era. As Kathryn Hughes puts it: "These sailors, lorry drivers and Hell's Angels of the postwar world marked themselves as living outside the social norms where the rest of us quietly resided. They looked like members of a dangerous tribe that might surround the stockade in the middle of the night." Conduct your own straw poll amongst the people around you: what stereotypes and assumptions are there about tattoos? With which individuals and groups do they associate tattoos? Do attitudes show gender bias? What are some of the linguistic pitfalls of tattooing? Provide some examples.

However, prestige is a slippery notion. Someone's speech can invoke qualities that are highly valued by the dominant community (earlier we referred to this as overt prestige) or by local sub-groups within the broader community (this is covert prestige). Standard Australian English is associated with power, education and wealth, and these things are highly valued by many people. This variety therefore has overt prestige, and people will seek to use these norms to achieve particular social purposes. Conversely, in the case of covert prestige, language users adhere to the norms of the subgroup (and these might blatantly contravene the norms of the wider society). So, it's possible for a socially stigmatized feature in one setting to have covert prestige in another. For example, British royal Prince Harry was reported using the overtly offensive term *raghead* when referring to a member of his platoon. The royal family issued an apology, insisting the prince had used the term about a friend and it was without malice. However he was condemned by the media and many commentators for his racist language.

A good illustration of the impact of overt and covert norms and their associated prestige can be found in a famous piece of research by Giles and Powesland in 1975. A male psychology lecturer, who could use both BBC English and a Birmingham accent, presented the same lecture to two groups of 17 year-old students, using a different accent for each group. When asked to write down what they thought of the lecturer, the students rated him more intelligent when he used his BBC accent (recall

it was the same talk); the students also wrote more about him when he used this accent; they seemed to like him more in his RP guise.

But maybe it's toughness that is highly valued and carries the prestige for a group. There is plenty of evidence that working-class speech sounds more masculine, even macho, than middle-class speech. This link between working class speech and masculinity was captured by very famous research carried out by John Edwards in 1979. Judges were asked to identify the sex of twenty young boys and twenty young girls by listening to their recordings of their voices (the children were prepubescent so the boys' voices lacked the low pitch associated with male speech). Its seem the judges weren't bad at guessing, but where they went wrong was misidentifying the working class girls' voices as boys' voices and the middle class boys' voices as girls' voices. In other words, the judges displayed gender bias on the basis of the relative prestige of the accent.

6.3.1 EXPECTATIONS OF GENDER

Sexual differentiation of language is at the forefront of contemporary linguistics research, and is a good example of how social expectations and community attitudes impact on language behaviour. The differences between men's and women's language have been of interest and commented upon since at least the middle ages and, as we work our way through each of the linguistic levels, we will first consider some of the popular or folk-linguistic ideas about sex differences in speech. We will then move on to consider just whether or not modern sociolinguistic findings support any of these traditional stereotypes.

LEXICAL AND SEMANTIC VARIATION

Men and women have been said to have different vocabularies. Well, this is hardly surprising and you probably don't need university studies to back up these claims — the sexes do after all tend towards different interests and different activities. The variation we find is the inevitable fall-out of sex-preferential interests (i.e., not sex differences as such). While women might differentiate colours more than men (for instance, using colour terms like *mauve* and *lavender* rather than just *purple*), you'd imagine a male interior decorator or perhaps a painter could be well versed in the subtleties of *red*, *claret*, *vermillion*, *magenta*, *garnet*, *scarlet* and so on. Those passionate about cricket can likely tell you all about *silly mid-offs* and *-ons*, men *at deep fine leg* and those others *at wide mid-ons*. All of this is common sense.

However, more interesting are the value judgements that have attached to men's and women's vocabulary over the centuries. In the past, there have been some rather infamous statements made on the knowledge and use of words by women. Writers (who would have been men) from the 18th and 19th centuries wrote about the ephemeral (or short-lived) nature of women's vocabulary — a lot had to do with the perceived unimportance of what women had to say. This was the golden age of prescription and standardization, when it was thought desirable to fix the language forever – change was viewed as a thoroughly undesirable thing (of course, this last view is not confined to early times; many people these days don't like change either, particularly language change). The aim of dictionaries and grammars was to create a standard and fix that standard forever. And what were women doing? They were introducing ephemeral words, making the task of standardizing and fixing the language all the more difficult.

Even Otto Jespersen, a wonderful linguist who wrote wonderful things about the English language in the early 20th century, was guilty of this sort prejudice. In his 1922 book, *Language: its nature, development and origins,* he wrote on page 247:

> Men will certainly with great justice object that there is a danger of the language becoming languid and insipid if we are always to content ourselves with women's expressions, and that vigour and vividness count for something ... Men thus become the chief renovators of language, and to them are due those changes by which we sometimes see one term replace an older one, to give way in turn to a still newer one and so on.

Do women gossip more than men?

Hang on, you're probably thinking — a moment ago, women were blamed for changing their vocabulary and giving in to fashion, and now men are being praised for being the 'chief renovators' of the language. Here is an excellent example of what sociolinguist Jennifer Coates dubs 'the androcentric rule'. She put it this way: "Men will be seen to behave linguistically in a way that fits the writer's view of what is desirable or admirable; women on the other hand will be blamed for any linguistic state or development which is regarded by the writer as negative or reprehensible" (1993: 15). Jespersen was writing a century after the golden age of prescription; he had a healthy regard for change and saw linguistic innovation as desirable and a sign of a healthy language. It was men, he believed, who were responsible for introducing "new and fresh expressions" into the lexicon. Needless to say, both sexes are innovators when it comes to the lexicon. Most of us suffer from incurable leximania — a compulsive desire to invent new words (like *leximania*).

Many have also observed that women's language is characterized by an excessive use of hyperbole, especially in the form of intensifiers — as one writer from the 18th century complained, expressions like *vastly, horridly, abominably, immensely, excessively* "make up the whole scale of modern female conversation". Even Jespersen wrote that "the fondness of women for hyperbole will very often lead the fashion with regard to adverbs of intensity and these are very often used with disregard of their proper meaning" (1922: 250). Most intensifiers are words that are used without regard to their proper meaning. Look at words like *awesome,* whose original meaning, like that of *awful,* was 'terror-stricken'. Nowhere has this sort of linguistic behaviour been shown to be peculiarly female. Humans are natural born exaggerators and 'terrible emphasis', as it has been called, is widespread among the world's languages.

DISCOURSE

Is it true that women talk more than men? Certainly it's age-old belief that they do. English literature is filled with characters supporting the stereotype of the chattering woman. Rosalind in Shakespeare's *As You Like It* says at one time 'Do you not know I am a woman? When I think, I must speak'. Proverbs abound in languages from round the world, all expressing a similar view. In Spanish we have 'a nightingale will run out of songs before a woman runs out of conversation'. 'Ten measures of verbosity came down from heaven', says the Talmud, 'and the woman took nine of them'. In Chinese apparently 'a woman's sword is her tongue and she does not let it rust' and Japanese wisdom has it that 'where there are women and geese, there's noise'.

Find out more about the scold's bridle,
a Middle Ages invention to curb the 'nagging of women'.

Scold's bridle

Despite this widespread belief that women are more talkative than men, research findings constantly contradict this — it's men who talk more. Here's what linguist Jen Coates has to say on the subject: "Men have been shown to talk more than women in settings as diverse as staff meetings, television panel discussions … and also husband-and-wife pairs in spontaneous conversation. When asked to describe three pictures, male subjects took on average 13.00 minutes per picture, compared with 3.17 minutes for female subjects – more than four times as long" (1993: 115). New Zealand linguist Janet Holmes found the same pattern (1995). After analysing the discussion time at 100 public seminars, she found in all but 7 instances men took up more of the airtime than women; what's more they asked around two thirds of the questions.

"It was the speech that enthralled and aggravated the nation. Enthralled because it marked the final point in Australia's 'when will this end?' federal election saga, and aggravation because it just went on and on … and on. Viewers wanted a simple 'Labor or Liberal' response. Instead, independent MP Rob Oakeshott delivered a sprawling speech complete with puns, history lessons and pop culture references". This is how Crikey.com described what became known as the "never-ending speech", delivered on August 21st 2010. Oakeshott was convinced he had only spoken for a few minutes.

So, how do we explain the spurious portrait of the garrulous woman? One reason is surely that we appear to have quite different expectations of male and female talk. As Coates points out, in many cultures the silent woman is held up as some sort of ideal type. Even Sophocles (in the 5th century BCE) wrote: 'Silence makes a woman beautiful'. So, if silence is deemed perfection, then any talk will of course be too much talk. It also has to do with the type of talk. Oscar Wilde put it this way: "Women are a decorative sex. They never have anything to say, but they say it charmingly". Women's talk is often depicted as trivial prattle.

It is the nature of such stereotypes that they are self-fulfilling prophecies. Part of our stereotyping behaviour is that we take note of those features that confirm our expectations. They overshadow other features and become the main characteristics of that person. Any talking will then be perceived as talkativeness. And such stereotypes don't typically develop — they petrify. Over time they become part of shared cultural 'knowledge' and acquire an authenticity that seems immune to change. This has been shown quite clearly in classroom studies: teachers assert that boys and girls are given equal air-time, but tape-recordings of the classroom interaction show this is not the case — the distribution of talk is uneven with boys dominating pupil discussion time quite clearly.

However, it's actually a bit more complicated than this. When evaluating talk by the sexes, we do need to take into account context and social purposes. In particular, we need to recognize a difference between the public speaker and the private speaker. Whereas there is no doubt that males contribute

more of the talk in public and formal domains such as seminars, committee meetings, and classrooms, women are much more likely to hold their own in a more relaxed informal environment. Women are more comfortable contributing to private speaking than public speaking, but this is changing. It would seem that women and men might be using talk for different purposes. This sort of private talk is not so much concerned with asserting status and power; it's more a matter of developing and supporting social relationships. Janet Holmes (1998) puts it neatly in her essay *Women Talk too Much*: "men's talk tends to be more referential or informative, while women's talk is more supportive and facilitative". More recently Carmen Fought, linguistics professor at Pitzer College in California phrased it this way: "Young women take linguistic features and use them as power tools for building relationships".

Women do the heavy lifting in conversations

There are other types of evidence supporting the notion that men and women talk for different reasons. Research from around the English-speaking world has shown that women generally use more question forms in conversation. They also use more linguistic forms associated with politeness than men, more linguistic hedges like *I think* and *sort of*, more back-channelling like *mm* and *yeah* and more paralinguistic responses like smiling, nodding and grimacing. Research reported in the *Journal of Language and Social Psychology* in June 2014 supports this earlier work. While discourse markers (such as *I mean, you know, like*) are widespread in spoken conversation, it's women and younger speakers who use them the most. Some studies also suggest that women are linguistically more supportive in interaction; they work harder to initiate and maintain conversation than men and yet are less successful. Linguist Pamela Fishman was quite blunt about it — women do more of the "conversational shitwork".

So, what do we conclude here? Well, quite clearly women aren't the empty-headed chatterboxes depicted in the folk-wisdom of those proverbs we began with. And neither are men the strong silent types that are so often admired. These are fictional stereotypes that have no basis in reality; nonetheless they are powerful stereotypes and we need to be aware of them — especially if it means some conversational participants are getting a raw deal.

PHONOLOGY AND GRAMMAR

Very early observations on women's language, particularly with respect to grammar, rested on the assumption that women actually used 'incorrect' language. Lord Chesterfield is famously quoted as saying (1741) "most women and all the ordinary people in general speak in open defiance of all grammar". Even Otto Jespersen remarked that women often produce half-finished sentences — he suggested as a result of not thinking before speaking. He also made the claim that men's grammar uses subordination and sub-subordination (complex sentences; think of those *-eses* like Bureaucratese). On the other hand, women are more prone to coordination, or simple juxtaposition (think the structures that characterize speech). He wrote that a man's sentence "is often like a set of Chinese boxes, one within another", while a woman's sentence "is like a set of pearls joined together on a string of *ands* and similar words" (1922: 252).

How could Jespersen arrive at this conclusion? What seems to be going on here is a failure to distinguish between spoken and written language. We saw earlier in this book that half-finished sentences, ellipsis and coordination are natural features of spoken language. In the past men received more education than women, and so their speech would have been more affected by written norms. It is therefore likely that observations like Jespersen's compared men's writing with women's speech. It is also the case that complex sentences have always been greatly admired, while mere juxtaposed sequences of clauses have been sneered at as primitive. So, this is another instance of Coates' 'androcentric rule' that we described above.

Interestingly, more recent accounts of women's language totally contradict early descriptions. They paint a picture of women as the bastions of all that is 'proper' and more 'correct'. Indeed, the fictitious Miss Fidditch, a well-known character often referred to in grammar books, has become a symbol of all those who uphold 'correctness' in language, especially grammar. This more modern stereotype does appear to have considerable support. The strongest evidence (at least an area where most research to date has been done) is phonology. We mentioned earlier that women were once more likely to have a cultivated accent than men. Mitchell and Delbridge's early study indicated that teenage girls in the 1960s were more likely to speak Cultivated Australian than teenage boys. However, one question about these findings relates to the method of data collection: the information used in the study was based on young people speaking and reading to their teachers, and it might well be that the girls were able to switch from a more informal to a more formal variety in this context than were boys; i.e. the girls were not speaking in the way they would naturally have done.

Studies based on Western communities in USA, Britain and also Australia and New Zealand do suggest that there is a sort of tug-o'-war going on between the sexes with women pulling one way (towards the overtly prestigious forms), and men the opposite way (towards the covertly prestigious forms). In these studies, women, when compared with men of the same social class, age and educational level chose forms closest to Standard English. On the other hand, use of nonstandard forms correlated not only with working class speech but also with male speech. Women also showed on the whole greater shifts to the prestige patterns in their formal styles (as compared to more informal styles).

The speculative explanations for these differences between women and men are numerous and varied. Suggestions include the status-consciousness of women, the influence of their social networks, their social powerlessness, their roles in society and their tendency to speech accommodation. Perhaps it is that society expects 'better' behaviour from women. We've also seen that women are generally more cooperative conversationalists and so they might simply be adapting their speech to the more formal interview setting. But the research is very contradictory — many studies also show females pulling in the other direction, away from standard (overtly prestigious) norms and adopting innovative (slangy) ways of speaking.

Other linguists focus more on men's behaviour, appealing to the function of vernacular speech as an expression of masculinity (of roughness and toughness). Take the popular image of the Ocker, for example. It can act as an important norm enforcer for Australian men who don't want to seem effeminate and weak to their peers. In this way, nonstandard forms, a broad Australian accent and the use of conventionally tabooed language become desirable macho markers of gender identity. The solidarity factor, as we've seen, can be very important. We also shouldn't underestimate the power of cultural stereotypes to influence linguistic behaviour; these shape our perception of what are and what are not appropriate ways of speaking.

[jɛəs prɔɪm mɪnɪstə]

Julia Gillard served as the 27th Prime Minister of Australia, and leader of the Australian Labor Party (from 2010-13); she was the first woman to hold either position. Of course politicians are often criticized for their language, but Gillard's language (especially her accent) was subject to intense and bigoted scrutiny during the time she was in office. The fact she is female made her accent doubly offensive to many Australians — as sociolinguistic studies show, accents perceived to be coarse or broad are typically more negatively evaluated in females than males.

Comments were overwhelmingly disparaging. Adjectives included "horrible", "atrocious", "excruciating", "manufactured", "fake", "painful–almost fingernails on a blackboard" (and these were among the more flattering ones). Voice quality was often commented on, invoking elaborate images as varied as cheese graters, metronomes and mincers (e.g. "[Her voice has] all the charm, variation and responsiveness of black pudding being fed through a mincer"). These descriptions, together with comments like "If her brain matches her accent she is in trouble", are quite out of whack for an era that professes equality for all and a desire not to offend.

Julia Gillard speaking to the media

Some claimed Julia Gillard's accent was evidence she must have had voice training; others claimed her accent was evidence that she hasn't but should. In fact, she denied she had any coaching at all, and certainly before and after snapshots of her vowel sounds show that nothing much changed after her rise to political power (and for evidence see Musgrave and Burridge 2011). The interesting thing about Gillard's accent (in view of popular opinion) is that it is not strikingly Broad at all. One striking feature she has is the quintessential Adelaide vowel in words like *dance* and *circumstance*; this is the [a] variant, which is more formal and belongs to a higher sociolect.

Australian linguist Lauren Gawne has also pointed out that Julia Gillard was pilloried for many other features of her language (such as ending sentences with prepositions, speaking in the passive voice, using subjunctives and using too many adverbs) — all features widely used by other (male) politicians, indeed by English-speakers generally.

6.3.2 EXPECTATIONS OF GENERATION

'Youthspeak' or 'Teenspeak' is a significant social dialect. Young people's language is a way of expressing a special in-group identity and excluding the out-group. However, it may also become part of the everyday language of the group, even in communication with others, and therefore expresses their identity within mainstream society.

Sociolinguistic variation is closely related to language change, and the way younger people speak can provide interesting clues as to where language might be heading. What linguists have to do is

figure out which aspects of their language might endure and become part of English in the future. The speech of older generations is generally more conservative than that of younger generations. Linguistic changes take a while to catch on and this fact is reflected in these age differences. New forms that are on the increase will be more prevalent in the speech of younger people, whereas forms on the way out will be more prevalent in the speech of older people. A linguistic innovation like *cool* that was widely adopted in the 1960s was carried by some speakers into adulthood, and is now quite standard. However, age variation doesn't necessarily signal changes in progress. A recent appearance on the scene is a linguistic feature known as **vocal fry** (or **creak**). It is associated with younger speakers (especially female) and it remains to be seen whether or not it is a feature that will endure.

So, let's now look at some of the linguistic forms that are currently used by the younger generation and that may well be making their way into more mainstream usage.

LEXICON

The lexical features innovated by younger speakers tend to be viewed by the wider community as (at best) a passing fad and (at worst) a threat to standards — shortenings like *defs* 'definitely' and *probs* 'probably' are seen as evidence that the language is going to the dogs. The trouble with writing about this feature of language is that examples quickly become out of date. An earlier edition of this book had a list of lexical items used by younger speakers (*wicked / sick / mad / zesty / groovy* for 'good' and *seedy, krusty, festy, sad* for 'bad') — and most of them are now old hat (defs). So we leave it to you to flesh out this part of 'Youthspeak' — you, after all, are the speakers of this variety.

Watch an episode of the TV series *Summer Heights High* and make a list of lexical items used by Ja'mie. Identify expressions that are still commonly used, and conversely identify those that have now dropped by the wayside after just a few years.

PHONOLOGY

One example of a widespread phenomenon that started with young people, especially young women, is the HRT in Australian English, a feature we looked at earlier under distinctive prosodic features and also under the social dimension of gender. Research among Melbourne upper secondary school students has also revealed the following features in the vowel system:

- Lowering of the vowel in words like *dress* to [œ] (so that the vowel in *dress* rhymes with the vowel in *crass*);
- Lowering and backing of the vowel in words like *trap* towards [a] but not as far as in Northern English or Scottish English;
- Monophthongization of words like *fear* to [fiː] in variation with [fiːa];
- Monophthongization of words like *hair* to [hɛː] ;
- Diphthongization of *do* [dəu] (think of a long drawn out version of the word *do*);
- Triphthongization of *know* [naʊə] and *why* [wəɔɪ] (just think of an even longer version of these words).

You might check your own pronunciation of these words against our descriptions, which are based on the forms that occurred, at least to some extent, in practically all of a group of boys and girls from a range of schools and social backgrounds throughout Melbourne in a corpus collected by linguists at Monash University from Melbourne upper secondary students in the late 1990s. They co-occur with phonetic features from different points on the continuum of accents (from Cultivated to Broad). Some of the young people employ these forms more than others, but none of them use them all the time, suggesting that change is still in progress.

We turn now to an interesting 'Youthspeak' feature of phonology that intersects with morphology (or word structure). It concerns the pronunciation of the articles *the* and *a/an*. First, we need to introduce you to the 'standard' pronunciation of these words.

The indefinite article, as you well know, has two forms *a* [ə] and *an* [ən]. Variants such as these typically appear because there is some sort of conditioning factor involved. More often than not it's a pronunciation thing and has to do with the phonological environment, which is the case here. Look at the two columns of words below and try and work out the forms of *a/an* you would use.

lemonade	iced tea
sandwich	open sandwich
main dish	entree
starter	antipasto
Lancashire hotpot	Irish stew
morning tea	afternoon tea
poached egg	omelette

Which form appears depends on whether the word following the article begins with a consonant (in which case, we use [ə]) and if it begins with a vowel sound (then we use [ən]) — and we'll ignore the thorny issue of why some people say *an historical fact* (but basically they are dropping the [h] there).

In this case, the variation is reflected in the spelling. However, it not so obvious with the definite article. When older speakers put 'the' in front of the list of words above, the pronunciation varies between [ðə] (before words beginning with consonants) and [ði] (before words beginning with a vowel).

What we have just described here doesn't hold necessarily for all speakers of Antipodean varieties of English. You are probably among those younger speakers who use [ə] and [ðə] before all words (i.e. it doesn't matter whether they begin with consonants or vowels). It remains to be seen whether this feature will spread beyond 'Youthspeak', and we suspect this is what is happening. It is anyway a natural change that these function words continue to reduce over time (bear in mind that *a/an* derive historically from the numeral *one* and *the* from the much fuller Old English demonstrative forms þeo, þone and so on).

GRAMMAR

A recent grammatical phenomenon amongst young people is the variation between 'I did so' (in response to *You didn't do that or Why didn't you do that?)* and the newer *I so did*. In fact, teenagers use *so* to intensify virtually anything in the sentence, even entire verb phrases, as in *I'm so not going to do that.*

When we looked at word formation processes earlier we saw that in English parts of speech (or word classes) move from one class to another with considerable ease (eg. 'Has table 13 been beveraged yet', an example of 'Waitspeak' that uses the noun *beverage* as a verb). In this regard, something interesting has happened to the word *fun,* and for older speakers it is a little unsettling. Essentially, *fun* has crossed the border into the territory of adjectives. As your usage will hopefully confirm, anyone within earshot of a teenager these days will hear examples such as 'We had the

funnest time' or 'It was so fun'. Of course, 'We had a fun time' is perfectly standard — nouns have always been able to modify other nouns in this way (compare *brick wall* and *student teacher*). What has changed is that the word *fun* is a real adjective that can carry endings like *-er* or *-est* and to older ears *funner* and *funnest* sound just ghastly.

Because of its expressive nature, negation is an aspect of language that is prone to variation and change. In recent times, there has been a curious development in this regard; it takes the form of post-sentential negation as in: *You're a terrific linguist — not.* (i.e. 'You're not a good linguist at all'). This still appears to be a rather faddish construction, and is limited in contexts of use. But it is precisely these kinds of constructions that provide the basis for real change in the language; so this is one to watch. Mind you, it is extremely rare for a free-standing negator to appear so far away from its verb in this way. In all likelihood, post-sentential negation will likely remain a fashion accessory of younger speakers. Some older speakers use it, but it is generally with a self-mocking and ironic twist.

DISCOURSE

Discourse markers are employed extensively by young speakers to indicate their solidarity with members of their group or other people like them. Indeed, as you've probably experienced, older speakers will often complain that young people are very much the "kinda, like, sorta" generation. In fact, one American linguist once described current-day Teenspeak as the linguistic equivalent of an impressionist painting where things are presented not the way they are, but the way they seem — kinda like, sorta you know what we mean. In fact, there is a good reason why youthful speech has more discourse markers than that of older generations as we'll explain below.

One earmark of the variety is *like*. As is the case with all other discourse markers, *like* is a complex little word. It has at least three distinct uses. One is for emphasis (e.g. 'I'm not like depressed, just had a lousy day'). A second is to soften the force of something (e.g. 'Can I like borrow your notes?'). These two 'likes' have probably been around for some time, although it's difficult to know how long. The third and most recent *like* is something dubbed the 'quotative *like*'. Here the combination of the verb *to be* with *like* is used to refer to what someone has said:

> And my mum was like [LAUGH] go on, we need you to throw up. (Female upper secondary school student)

This *like* can be compared to *go* that signals a direct quotation, as in:

> I had a fifteen minute discussion with Stephanie um, she was trying to work out what oregano was?, we were trying to order pizzas? and we're *going* oregano. (Female upper secondary student) [? = rising intonation]

Certainly, the construction *be* + *like* has some commonality with *go* (*goes, going*), as in this example, except that *like* does not cite the exact words used. To better illustrate the difference between these two constructions have a look at the following snippet of a mobile phone conversation:

> And I go how much is it? And she goes about $10. And I'm like cool!

You can see how *go* introduces direct speech here, while *be* + *like* says 'this is something akin to what I was feeling and thinking at the time'. In this way, *like* can introduce reported speech, even noises, facial expressions, quoted thoughts and attitudes (e.g. 'And I'm like *SHRUG*').

This last *like* looks as if it is here to stay. For one, it makes occasional appearances in print — it also shows up in the speech of older people. Of course, it remains most abundant in Teenspeak, as you would expect of a change in progress. However, it's also the expressive nature of this variety that triggers such a rich exuberance of these kinds of expressions. Teenagers re-enact speech exchanges much more than adults do. Adults don't tend to go in for story telling in the same way. Both *like* and *go / goes / going* make for lively dramatic reporting of speech — the use of present tense brings the drama even more to life.

There are sex differences here, too. These features appear to be more usual in girls' speech. Young females go in more for this kind of reconstructing of dialogue, perhaps because (as some have argued) they are more interested in friendship networks — who said what and who they said it to, who's going out with whom and what everyone was feeling at the time. It would be interesting to get your views here. It would also make for a very interesting research project.

We have two pieces of advice to offer you if you are ever criticized for your use of discourse markers, especially *like*. You might point out to your complainant that we all drop discourse markers into our conversations – and we do this because of the mismatch between language and thought, the disparity between what we're thinking and the language resources we have for expressing these thoughts. And no, we are not saying here that teenagers use so many *kindas* and *likes* because they can't express themselves adequately. As linguists who study these features have pointed out, we (and that's all of us) resort to these sorts of approximating phrases because of the inadequacy of our language to satisfactorily express ourselves.

Secondly, you might be able to comfort the older speakers in your lives by pointing out that the linguist Suzanne Fleischman discovered an equivalent of English *like* in languages all around the world. French has *genre* (e.g. *elle téléphone genre dix fois par jour* 'she telephones like ten times a day'); Italian has *tipo*; Spanish has *como*, German has *so*. There are equivalents in languages as diverse as Japanese, Russian, Finnish, Hebrew, Lahu, Bislama and Swedish. Even Ancient Greek appears to have had a 'quotative *like*'.

6.4 SO WHY DOESN'T EVERYONE SPEAK PROPERLY THEN?

If Standard English is perceived to be the ultimate correct form of the language, why doesn't everyone try to speak it? In fact the world is full of linguistic groups who think they speak badly. Studies evaluating Cockney versus standard accented voices, for example, consistently show Cockney as rated negatively — and by the Cockney speakers themselves. New Yorkers too hold their own speech in low esteem. So, why don't all these people speak as they think they should? The fact that so-called sloppy pronunciation and bad grammar endure suggests that there is more to it that simply what is good and what is bad. And indeed this is the case.

Never lose sight of something that lies at the heart of this book. Language has two very distinct functions. Its primary, or orthodox function, is of course to facilitate communication. The other is to promote identity, or in-group solidarity, to preserve a group's uniqueness or to establish its presence. The importance of this second function should never be underestimated. We've just seen

that language is a potent symbol of a bewildering array of different affiliations, ethnicity, sex, race, sexual preference, religion, generation, abilities, appearance, profession. We wear aspects of accent, vocabulary, grammar as we do emblems on a T-shirt — they define the gang.

It is therefore very risky for speakers to alter aspects of their linguistic behaviour. For one, it means giving up their allegiances to their social group. It also means adopting symbols of another group and they run the risk of never being a proficient enough speaker to ever be accepted there either. At this point we recommend a book by linguist Jeff Siegel *Second Dialect Acquisition*. Perhaps some of you have had the experience of what Siegel describes as 'the double dose of foreignness' – you go back home after some time away and you are accused of sounding foreign; however, those in your new home continue to see you as an exotic. And of course you're in a bind. If you do attain a second dialect successfully then you're seen as not being true to yourself, you're being dishonest. If you start saying graph [græf] and dance [dæns], when you used to say [graf] and [dans], then it is you who is being phony.

Real-life Pygmalion

Changing your speech is not always a risky business. The former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher famously took lessons in the 1970s to make her voice seem firmer and more authoritative. She managed to make her voice sound deeper and more powerful. In the online *Telegraph* article *From 'shrill' housewife to Downing Street: the changing voice of Margaret Thatcher* you can hear before and after sound bites illustrating this transformation. For her this was an entirely successful move — love her or loathe her, Margaret Thatcher became a force to be reckoned with.

Another complication here is that, even within the one speech community we are not seeing a simple matter of one group having more prestige than another. Certainly varieties like the standard language are associated with power, education and wealth, and these things are of course highly valued by many people. Such varieties have overt prestige. But we know that 'bad language' can have a prestige all of its own, too, a covert or hidden prestige. Nonstandard usage, for example, can have a macho value for men. And as attitude studies show, so-called low or powerless speech styles are also associated with more human qualities like integrity, social attractiveness and friendliness. We've seen many examples in this book of the tug-of-love between the overt prestige of the high-status groups, symbolically the wider community, versus the covert prestige of the local, non-prestige groups.

6.4.1 IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATION

All this of course has important educational implications, especially for those teaching English to students whose home grown variety is nonstandard. Many feel that it is the job of schools to eradicate all signs of these nonstandard blots on the English language landscape, and because of the way our society is structured, sentences like *I done it* can indeed put people at a disadvantage. This is why teachers have to give students access to Standard English, in order to protect them against this sort of prejudice. But educators can be in a difficult position.

For one, the standard language does not necessarily have prestige all the time. As implied earlier, prestige is a relative term and the status of a dialect varies from situation to situation. If the standard is not the speech of the people we most closely identify with, then speaking the standard in an intimate setting with family or friends is out of place. It would be inappropriate, offensive and in many ways much the same as breaking a social convention. People would accuse us of trying to 'speak posh' or 'putting on airs' — or they may just laugh at us.

We see this very clearly in Australia where ethnic varieties are involved. For example, many linguists have described the animosity felt by some Aboriginal groups towards Standard English. When it is used in the company of their friends and family, they call it 'flash language'. An Aboriginal teaching assistant once described it this way: "If you talk ... you know, *flash* as they call it at home, that's what they think you are trying to be: stuck up or something you know, and you've got to talk on their level".

In addition, teachers strive to make sure they are not pushing the school language (i.e. the standard) in a way that's demeaning to children. Getting someone to give up their linguistic behaviour and adopt another is not like getting them to give up their brand of cornflakes; you're also asking them to give up their allegiance to their own social group — to reject the values, aspirations and accomplishments of those people they hold most dear. It is through the use of language that we make known our social identity and schools have to be sensitive to this. To disparage a child's dialect is to disparage that child's family and friends, and that child's sense of self. We know it's linguistically unjustified. And it certainly isn't educationally sound either — it does nothing to encourage a positive attitude towards school.

Jeff Siegel's book does a good job of highlighting the problems faced by students whose first dialect is valued at home but is marginalized by society. There is a surprising ignorance in the broader community when it comes to language matters, and when this ignorance involves those responsible for determining educational policy, the outcomes can be catastrophic, with consequences well beyond poor school performance. Children are supposed to acquire the standard rules and those that don't are seen as recalcitrant, lazy and incompetent, even stupid; they are said to have poor grammar – or, worse, no grammar at all.

Children can in fact develop two accents, two vocabularies, two dialects even — one for school and one for home. Another Aboriginal teaching assistant stated: "...it's not good going home and talking the same way as we do at school. You've got to have two lots of English in other words: one for home, one for school". Many Aboriginal speakers are bidialectal. They might be native speakers of a nonstandard variety and have learnt the standard as a second variety in school. Generally they're skilled at switching between varieties according to context.

A bidialectal policy makes sense all round. For a child, there are personal benefits for retaining the home language and there are also advantages to learning the language of the wider community. Pedagogically the policy is sound, too. Teaching the school language will be much more effective if it builds on what the child already knows about her or his home language. And approaching this home language as a legitimate and

Liam Byrne photographer; source: Indigenous Literacy Foundation www.indigenousliteracyfoundation.org.au

rich variety, and not as a collection of endless mistakes, will help a child to learn the standard more effectively. From a scientific point of view we're better off, too — maintaining vernacular varieties ensures greater linguistic diversity and this diversity benefits us all.

However, these are difficult messages to get across. Little of the research in this area has reached even educators, certainly not the general public. There is also the problem of getting the wider community to accept the idea that nonstandard varieties are legitimate linguistic systems and not just undesirable aberrations that must be stamped out. Siegel's book stresses the need for an approach that does more than simply emphasize the importance of valuing the home dialect. He suggests strategies that go further than just getting children interested in participating in an inequitable educational system (one that values the teaching of the standard). The aim should be to get all students (not just those from the dominant culture) to critically analyse the ideologies and practices that underpin language varieties in the educational setting.

Language is a culturally transmitted system. Even if one of the scientifically engineered languages, such as Esperanto, were ever accepted and used worldwide, it would end up changing in precisely the same way that a natural language changes. There would soon be different regional and social varieties springing up all over the place. Speakers do not give up wanting to signal their aspirations, their adherence to certain life styles or their allegiance to different social and ethnic groups.

ACTIVITIES
AREA OF STUDY 2

MANY FACES OF SOCIAL IDENTITY

1. Read the transcript of a conversation between a tradesperson (T) and a householder (H). (If you are unsure of the annotations, refer to chapter 3.) They are talking about someone the tradesperson knows who went to work in the USA.

a. Discuss the language features that enable the two interlocutors express their views about Americans, and how they establish rapport in the conversation.
b. Are there any linguistic clues as to the gender, educational background or social class of the two participants?

1. T: Well actually
another mate of mine decided to go out on his own.
He actually went to Texas/
2. H: Yep.
3. T: And over there you know (.)
they love Aussies/
And he was doing jobs in clubs and bars and that/
4. H: Yep.
5. T: And he'd always get a free meal everywhere he went/
If he'd done a job,
there was always an open invitation to come back for a meal.
6. H: Yeah?
7. T: And he did it for two years,
and he quite liked it.
8. H: They say (.) you know,
that Americans are rea=lly rea=lly nice people,
and really hospitable.
9. T: Yep.
10. H: I've never been there myself.
11. T: Well I've seen them (.) um in Fiji and places,
and they're really bombastic
and arrogant and rude you know/
12. H: Yeah yeah -
13. T: But as you say,
in their own country they're really hospitable.
14. H: Yeah that's right,
and let's face it,
Australians can be pretty bombas-
loud and rude when they're away too.

15. T: That's true.
16. H: It's not just the Yanks.

2. Here are some contributions to a British online help forum discussing accents.

A. I have a really posh voice plz help?
B. i hate posh voices, they sound really annoying...but the problem is...i have one. i dont wanna sound like a chav, i just wanna sound normal. nobody else in my family talks like me, it just comes naturally when i talk. i dont like it. how can i sound normal?
(NB: chav = a term used to refer to teenagers in the north of England who exhibit aniti-social behaviour).
C. 'Posh' voices are normally pretty good in society, and could get you far.
D. And the fact is, that voice is a part of you, and you really should just learn to live with it.
E. i will switch voices with you. I don' t have a posh voice but I want one.
F. I know you might hate your voice, but try watching Eastenders or Will and Grace — you'll be thankful to have the voice you do.

a. What do these opinions suggest are the prestige accents amongst these language users?
b. What are some attitudes to 'posh' accents and 'down to earth accents' in your own community? Conduct your own poll. Interview friends, family and acquaintances and write a report of your findings. You may like to use some examples of public figures whose accents are good illustrations of the range of accents available, including politicians, broadcasters and social commentators.

3. In a study conducted by scientists at the Technical University of Munich, it was discovered that employment advertisements that favoured words associated with male stereotypes discouraged women from submitting job applications. Descriptions such as "assertive", "independent", "aggressive" and "analytical" were typically off-putting for women searching for a job, while words like "dedicated", "responsible", "conscientious" and "sociable" were more appealing. Male applicants, on the other hand, were not noticeably influenced either way by these language choices. Discuss how these findings relate to the concept of prestige. How does this sort of gender-related language exploit overt norms?

4. In his book *The Secret Life of Pronouns*, Dr. James Pennebaker recounts some of the results of his studies into the use of function words, and in particular, pronouns. He states that by analyzing language you can easily tell who amongst two people has power in a relationship, and their relative social status. He discovered that the person with the higher status in an interaction uses the word "I" less frequently than the person with lower status. He concluded that we use "I" more when we talk to someone with power because we're more self-conscious. We are focused on ourselves — how we're coming across — and our language reflects that.

a. Collect some examples of your own writing and note a few instances of your spoken interactions as well.
b. Identify how you use pronouns, especially "I, me, my, mine". Does you linguistic behaviour concur with the findings of this study?

SOCIAL AND PERSONAL VARIATION

5. Watch an episode of the Australian TV series *Kath and Kim* that includes the characters Prue and Trude (or go to www.kathandkim.com where you can access brief snippets of audio of Prue and Trude).

a. What features of accent are targeted for humour? Note down your observations about the way the characters pronounce words, their prosody and any other aspects of their dialogue.
b. Compare the features of Prue and Trude's speech with the information you have read about how women talk.
c. On the website is a list of Prue and Trude's favourite words. Translate the words phonetically (using the IPA).
d. What patterns of pronunciation do you observe?

6. Recall that we mentioned a linguistic study that indicated that overall Steve (Crocodile Hunter) Irwin's accent was more an impression of Broadness, and the researchers suggested that this comes from his "ocker" image and a couple of very obvious broad vowel sounds in particular. It was a case of dialect stereotyping and over-use of some phonologically striking features. Watch the clip of Steve Irwin at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=raCmXRwzLGw

a. On the basis of Australian English features you find in this clip, do you think these researchers are correct — or do you think it's more than just an impression of broadness?
b. Do you think his accent gives him authority as someone who is an expert in Australian flora and fauna?

7. In an article published in the online magazine *Literally Darling*, Kristin U discussed her revelation about the use of "just" in her discourse. She reflected that it represented a sense of insecurity. "I don't get why I undermine myself in front of authority – but I do. Simply by using the word 'just'. That four-letter word is so simple, yet powerful. It implies that I am trying my utmost to be quick, succinct as possible, so the listener/reader won't have to spend too much time listening/reading my thoughts."

a. What are your own linguistic "tics"? Ask your friends what they have noticed about the way you speak and write, and listen to yourself (and observe your writing) over a short period – one or two days should be enough.
b. Summarize your observations in a brief profile called: Linguistic Me.

MODES OF ADDRESS

8. Popular (mis)understanding of Ms
In our society it has been customary for unmarried women to be called 'Miss' and married women to be called 'Mrs'. Men, on the other hand, are not called by different titles as a result of their marrying. The introduction of title 'Ms' was an attempt to overcome this inequity.

In a study carried out in 1987, Anne Pauwels investigated the use of 'Ms' by 250 women and tried to gauge its success. She found that only 20 per cent admitted to using the term. She also found that a considerable number of women (64 per cent) did not recognise the term as a universal title for women not revealing married status. Many of those women understood it as applicable to certain categories of women (e.g. divorced, separated, unmarried mothers, those in de facto

relationships and so on). As Pauwels points out, the title has for these people been integrated into the existing system, but has now created a now three-way system: 'Mrs', 'Miss' and 'Ms'.

Collect some of your own data on the use of Ms in contemporary Australian society. You could:

a. Make a note of use in official documents and the media - is there evidence of Ms replacing Miss/Mrs?
b. Interview at least five men and five women to ascertain: To what extent do they use Ms? How do they pronounce it? What do they understand by it?
c. What are the implications of your findings? Write a brief report on the use of Ms as discovered in your investigation.
d. Over one week make a note of how you have been addressed by different people (age, sex, socio-economic class) in different situations (e.g. phone calls, service counters, restaurants, casual contexts etc.). Are the terms of address reciprocal? Think about these forms in terms of parameters like solidarity and status.

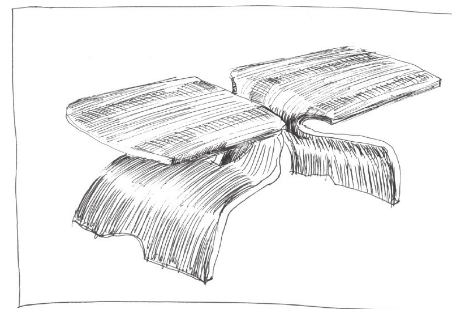
9. People can be addressed or named (not always flatteringly) using animal terms. Think of as many animal terms as you can that are used in this way. Consider whether they are typically used to refer to women, or men or both and note whether there are any differences in meaning depending on the sex of the person referred to (e.g. compare he's a pig/she's a pig; he's a dog/ she's a dog). Do you notice any asymmetry in the actual terms themselves (e.g. compare fox and vixen)?

JARGON AND SLANG

10. Here is a description of an item of furniture. See if you can work out what it is. As you read, annotate the text for the language features (lexical, grammatical, semantic, morphological) that distinguish it as 'occupational jargon'.

The form is a variation on several ideas: first, an economy of parts –two identical halves, two abbreviated supports, a centerblock, a single fastener. Second, the defining of furniture as a tool for counteracting mass and gravity. As with evolved forms in Nature, the morphology here is shaped by the 'work' of resisting compression. The volume-enhancing curvilinearity below contrasts with the static, planar, two-dimensionality above. The 'post and lintel' solution, with its structural angularity, has given way to the tensile and organic.

But there is also something counterintuitive here. The viewer's eye is drawn to an ambiguous absence at the plane of mirror symmetry. One anticipates a solid connectivity, yet there is a gap. Likewise, the cantilevers of the tabletop defy the expectation of a visible supporting structure underneath. Something expected is missing, yet something unlooked for is present - the two halves do not present a stable, relaxed equilibrium but are rather joined together in taut suspension. The two reverse curves have stored up the compressive energy which formed them.



"... the morphology here is shaped by the work of resisting compression."
(Answer: a table)

11. Read the following four examples of Legalese (a-d) from www.partyofthefirstpart.com/hallOfShame.html and then match them up with the plain English translations (i-iv) that follow.

a. Therefore, no error, omission or inaccuracy in Exhibits A or B creates any legal right in either spouse or gives rise to any legal remedy including, but not limited to, challenging the validity or enforceability of this Agreement.

b. In fact, bereft of supplication of the documentation specified in plaintiff's Request to Produce any opinions of defendant's bio-mechanical expert are mere net opinions unsupported by facts, appropriate authority or the like. As such, it is respectfully submitted that it is appropriate in this litigation to bar defendant's purported bio-mechanical expert's report and trial testimony due to non-compliance with the afore referenced discovery requests.

c. A superseding cause is any force which, by its intervention in the sequence of events leading from the defendant's negligence to the plaintiff's injury, legally prevents the defendant from being held liable for the injury even though his negligence has been a substantial factor in bringing the injury about. To establish that a third person's intervening act was not a superseding cause of an injury, the plaintiff must therefore prove at least one of the following facts: first, that the third person's intervening conduct was not a legal cause of the injury; second, that such conduct was not intentionally harmful; and/or third, that the injury was not outside the scope of the risk created by the defendant's negligence.

d. We will continue to give priority attention to this matter in order to ensure finalisation in a timely manner.

Translations:

i. Even if the defendant behaved carelessly, you cannot find him liable if the defendant's injury was actually caused by the harmful act of another person.

ii. We'll put a rush on it.

iii. Neither spouse can rely on the accuracy of the exhibits in any context whatsoever.

iv. The court should bar the defendant's expert's report because it does not cite facts.

12. Collect some examples of graffiti and create a display (e.g. digital, poster). Write a commentary that explains how identity is being expressed in this public forum. Be sure to discuss lexical, semantic, phonological, morphological, discourse and visual elements as applicable.

13. *Words from the City* is a documentary exploring Australian hip hop through intimate and candid observations of some of the nation's most potent and compelling MCs. One of the artists featured is Wire MC. He describes himself elsewhere as 'Abodigital': "Hip-hop is really a voice of the community, of the area. It helps you represent where you're from. It teaches you self-knowledge and self-awareness. I'm Abo-digital because I'm a 21st century

Aboriginal, I'm down with laptops and mobile phones and home entertainment. But I'm not Aboriginal. I'm Abodigital. At the beginning of time, our ancestors had a Dreaming, which all our people today are connected to. I'm connected too, but mine is a digital Dreaming.

Watch the documentary (or a clip from the film about Wire MC on Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ZhjQmP6y1k)

Here is a short transcript of some of Wire MC's interview.

That there represents the barbed wire,
Let me talk about the barbed wire and the symbol,
and of why I call myself Wire.
Yeah a lotta people as me Whyaaa?
Call that myself. Call that myself?
Yeah, bitta backwards North Queensland pidgin language there for ya.
'You be fine if we gonna go down town now eh,
Can't understand what the [xxxx] say.'
Well man I'm a small town mission boy,
from the land of Gumbaynggirr,
also known as Bowraville, yeah that's what it's called on your map,
in the Nambucca Valley but the Gumbaynggirr nation is wider than that.
Anyway one day I was up at [xxxx].
So we was up there doin our thing.
When I was up there there was a lot of different people up there.
There was South American brothers you know,
and brothers from other lands you know,
all representing the same mighty dreaming you know,
that we're still dreaming you know.
And my Asian brother over here what laid the tracks for these people,
so they could get to work you know all that sorta shit you know.
All that was going there was all this different mob there you know.
And it's just like OK black what does it mean for me to be black.
Born long ago creation's keeper.
That is what we fundamentally all are.
And the first verse — black what does it mean for me to be black.
And black like you know black is like when you close your eyes,
you know you can't see nothing
but you can hear what I'm talkin about know what I'm sayin?
So you can't cast no discriminatory light upon me.
And as soon as I shed that light upon ya, you know you know I'm a black man now.

Black, what does it mean for me to be black
What makes me black, not just my skin colour
For even the blackest brother can be WHITE
Black is a thought process, for me a way of life
How long can they silence the violent facts about what really happened to the blacks?

Step back as I come on the attack
You know this ain't racial, I'm just searching for some facts.

So to be an MC you gotta be able to speak to people in a lotta different ways.
You gotta be able to relate on their terms ya know?
You don't rock up to a club and go 'it's my house'
Not unless they're at your house you know?

a. Annotate the transcript as you listen to the clip.
b. How does Wire MC portray his sense of self and his identity as a black man? Focus on lexis, phonology, syntax and discourse in your discussion.

EXPECTATIONS OF GENDER

14. Conduct an investigation into gender differences in male and female text messages or instant messaging. Are there any of the differences between the ways men and women communicate, as outlined in this chapter, in SMS or IM communication? Write a report of your findings.

15. Investigate the ways in which male and female speech is portrayed in comic strips. Compare a popular comic that has been around for generations, such as Superman, Blondie and Dagwood or Footrot Flats with a more recent version, such as Buffy, Wonder Woman or Lara Croft. Choose editions from the 1950s or 1960s to compare with recent comics.

Suggested websites:
www.blondie.com
www.dccomics.com/characters/wonderwoman
www.tombraidercomics.com
www.bbc.co.uk/cult/buffy/ecomics

a. Briefly describe the identities of the male and female characters in each of the comics. Include physical appearance, how they behave and what they are interested in.
b. In what ways do male characters use language differently from female characters (e.g. grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, politeness, use of slang, swear or taboo words etc).
c. What stereotypes are embodied in the language of the comic characters?
d. What do your observations suggest about society's attitudes to men and women and have these changed over time?
e. How have any changes been reflected in the language of modern society?

16. Read the full article about Julia Gillard's language by linguist Lauren Gawne at:
http://blogs.crikey.com.au/fullysic/2011/09/15/gillard-grammar-and-the-language-of-politics/

'Poor Julia; she copped it from all sides at the start because she didn't speak enough like a politician, or at least enough like a female politician should - and now she's being accused of sounding too much like a pollie. In a world where every speech of every politician can now be analysed ad nauseam, some people just can't catch a break.'

a. Make a list of the 'language transgressions' that are dispelled in the article.
b. Compare this with some of the commentary about Tony Abbott's language, after he replaced Rudd as Prime Minister in the 2013 election. Are the concerns expressed

similar? Do they reveal assumptions or expectations about women's and men's speech patterns?

Here is a starting point: http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/tony-abbott-becomes-a-slowtalking-pm-20140118-311s7.html

'Prime Minister Tony Abbott speaks 100 words a minute slower in media interviews now than in opposition and is also speaking in a more monotone voice, according to a study of his speech patterns. The speech delivery of the nation's leader resembles that of a puppet and is equal to the wooden communication style ridiculed in former Prime Minister Julia Gillard, says the director of the Voice Research Laboratory at the University of Sydney's faculty of health sciences, Cate Madill.'

For a comparison of Gillard and Abbott's speech: http://www.abc.net.au/news/2011-06-20/frenkel---the-speech-match-e28093-gillard-v-abbott/2764622

EXPECTATIONS OF GENERATION

17. Visit the website of the Australian Screen archives and locate Clip 3 'Life's Expectations' http://aso.gov.au/titles/documentaries/colour-bars/clip3/ from a documentary entitled: Colour Bars (1997) in which the discourse marker 'you know' features.

a. Note down each time the interviewee says 'you know', and explain the semantic function of this feature of his idiolect.
b. Can you hear any other features, such as high rising terminal?

18. Tick the Gen Y words that you are familiar with or that you use in the list below. (From www.mccrindle.com.au/resources.htm)

slammin' adj. Awesome! Outrageous! 'That's a slammin' outfit.'

smak n. Untruth, negative, usually derogatory, comment or conversation about (or to) another person. 'He be talkin' smak 'bout me.'

sound adj. Cool, great, well liked. 'Sure Jimmy is faky - but at least he's sound'.

spent adj. Tired. 'Man, I'm spent.'

sprung adj. To be obsessed with, usually in an amorous fashion. 'Vanessa's so sprung on Todd, he's all she talks about.'

s'righ adj. Derived from 'it's alright'. Everything is okay, no problems. 'J.T., you want me to help you with that?' 'S'righ.'

step off v. An exclamation warning someone that they had better 'back off'.

sticking it / nailing it v. Pulling off a feat or trick. Landing a trick on a board, motocross bike, etc. 'Did you see Nathan sticking it out there on the wake board?'

stoked adv. A skater or grunge term for extremely happy. 'Did you see that trick? I'm stoked I landed it!'

straight up adv. A phrase uttered in the midst of any sentence when no other cool sounding words come to mind. Similar to the old slang word 'totally.' 'He just straight up told me that he straight up liked me!' 'Oh, straight up!'

sweet adj./adv. The super-cool pronounce it 'saw- wheat'. A '90s term for very good, excellent, usually followed by the ubiquitous 'as'. 'His 4WD is sweet as!'

taxed v. To borrow or steal. 'I taxed my brother's ipod.'

that bites adj. A derogatory phrase. Uttered when possibly unfair or unfavoured circumstances are taking place. 'We drove all the way to the beach for a surf but it was closed due to a shark sighting.' 'That bites!'

a. Choose five examples and find their dictionary definitions.
b. Do any of them have the same definitions as those above? If not, write out the dictionary definition.
c. What implications are there for intergenerational dialogue, i.e. between parents and teenagers, when these words and phrases are used?
d. With a partner, write a short dialogue between a parent and a teenager in which you exploit the potential humour of such an encounter. Read it to the class.

19. Investigate the phenomenon of "Vocal Fry", which has been observed since about 2011. What are its origins and influences? What are its features? Amongst which groups is it found? What are the reported disadvantages of vocal fry for language users? Prepare a report about vocal fry in a format of your choice.

20. Brainstorm a list of the idioms, words and phrases used to refer to or describe older people in our society. Some of these are derogatory, such as 'fossil', 'wrinkly', others are admiring, such as 'as old as Methuselah' or 'ripe old age'. Arrange these terms along a semantic continuum. Choose six and explain the attitudes that underlie them.

Old as Methuselah

SPEAKING PROPERLY

21. Investigate initiatives to challenge the linguistic norms of society, such as laws against swearing in public or lobby groups seeking to change the negative connotations of words like 'slut' and 'bossy'. How do people respond to these movements? Write a case study of one instance, either in Australia or another country.

22. Below is a list of words whose pronunciation is often disputed.

castle, grass, chancellor, plant, graph, dance, laugh, castle, can't, France, path, sample, photograph, romance, Advance Australia fair, demand, grasp, polygraph

a. Read them aloud and take a note of whether or not your pronunciation is [a] or [æ] — for example [frans] versus [fræns].
b. Put the above words into a larger list with other words (so your informants don't twig to what you are investigating, and alter their pronunciation accordingly!).
c. Now find ten people — five of each sex. Take note of age, educational and regional background.
d. Ask each of these people to read this list. Make a note of the pronunciation of these words. Determine where which vowel sound they use ([a] or [æ]).

e. Do you notice any correlation between the vowel they use and:

  - degree of formality/difficulty of the word
  - regional background of the speaker
  - occupational/educational background of the speaker

  (When people read aloud from lists like these, they are generally more conscious of their speech and they might make an effort to make their language more standard. But in casual conversation they probably are not paying much attention to the form of the speech and so and their speech is more natural.)

f. Next, provide your subjects with a passage to read that contains some of these words and ask them to read it aloud.

g. Do you notice any difference in their pronunciation of these key words? (Given they might be more likely to lapse into their natural vernacular you might expect them to show more [æ] vowels.)

23. 'We are way behind down here and some of us more unquestioning Australians still respond to someone with a posh voice in a fancy suit who says he is a peer of the realm. I have no idea why this is the case but it seems to be the truth.'

Write a response to this comment, drawing on what you know about covert and overt prestige, and cultural and social expectations of language use.

OUTCOME TASKS

1. **Folio of annotated texts**
   Select one of the popular TV series portraying people in Australia — e.g. *Fat Pizza* (2003), *Summer Heights High* (2007), *Angry Boys* (2011), *Redfern Now* (2012). Watch one or two episodes of the show. Choose one female and one male character for the focus of your study into gender differences in language.

   a. Briefly describe the identities of the male and female characters. Include physical appearance, how they behave, what they talk about, and how they relate to others or to the camera.
   b. Make a list of speech characteristics that reflect the identities of each of the two characters, including morphological, lexical, syntactic, prosodic, semantic and discourse features.
   c. How are stereotypes embodied or dispelled in the language of the characters?
   d. Do the characters conform to/transgress the covert and/or overt norms of language in various situations? Provide some examples of lexical, semantic, prosodic and syntactic features to illustrate your analysis.

e. Transcribe a passage spoken by each of the two characters that illustrates the characters' identities. Annotate the passages, pointing out examples of how their identities are constructed in each of the subsystems of language.

2. **Investigative report**
   a. Research the language of a particular interest or occupational group (eg, Scouts Victoria, a local football club, Oscar's Law, Pony Clubs Association Victoria).
   b. Outline the distinctive features of the group's language, including lexis, syntax, semantics using both spoken, written and online texts for evidence.
   c. Evaluate the extent to which the language of the group is inclusive and/or exclusive. Prepare a report (electronic or print) for a selected audience of your choice.

3. **Essay**
   'Take a quick 'surf' across various pages of the internet and it would not be hard for one to realise that every fourth or fifth page is filled up with some pejoratively aberrant content against respectable individuals and companies posted by untraceable, incognito and spiteful writers. From four-letter words to bigoted slanders to racist attacks, the net is now full of criminally damnable statements. Google, Wikipedia, Twitter and pages on social network sites overlook the fact that freedom to express doesn't mean freedom to defame. Citizen journalism is not about promoting gossips, displaying profanities in words and making biased mockery of humans and organisations.'

   Do you agree? Write an essay outlining your response, and include evidence and examples from your reading and research into individual and group identities.

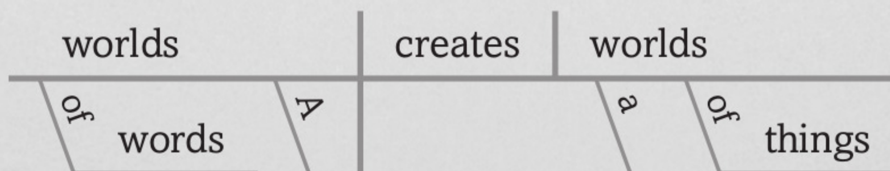
Article *Noun*

A WORLD OF WORDS CREATES A WORLD OF THINGS

Preposition *Noun* *Verb* *Article* *Noun* *Preposition* *Noun*

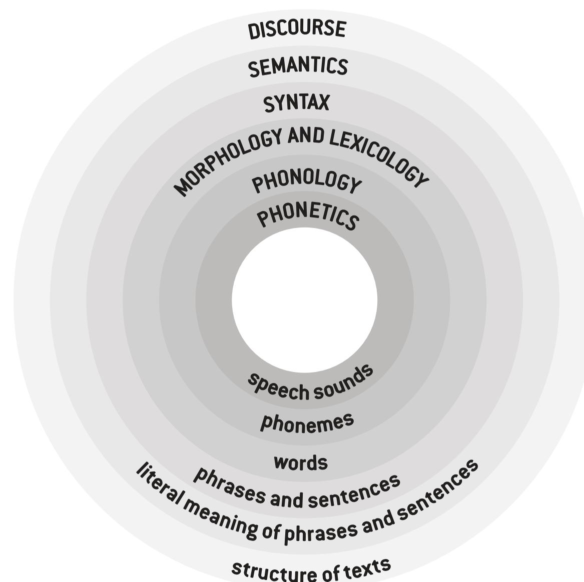
— J. M. Coetzee

SENTENCE DIAGRAM



APPENDIX

7.0 SUBSYSTEMS OF LANGUAGE — TOOLS OF THE TRADE



The following is a brief account of the major levels of linguistic structure; we cover concepts that are central to the study of language. This is a chapter for dipping into in times of need rather than reading from beginning to end. You won't need to digest all these new terms and ideas — just use the sections, together with the glossary, whenever you encounter something that puzzles you, or something you want to know more about.

Recall at the start of this book we mentioned that being able to use something as immensely complicated as a human language is our most extraordinary intellectual achievement. Language is complex, and some of the concepts covered here are difficult. In the Bibliography we point you to a number of excellent resources that explain the structure of English in far greater depth than we can here. If structure is your thing, you will find these resources fascinating, and even if it isn't, you should find them useful.

7.1 PHONOLOGY

> Take care of the sense, and the sounds will take care of themselves [the Duchess to Alice, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Lewis Carroll, 1865)

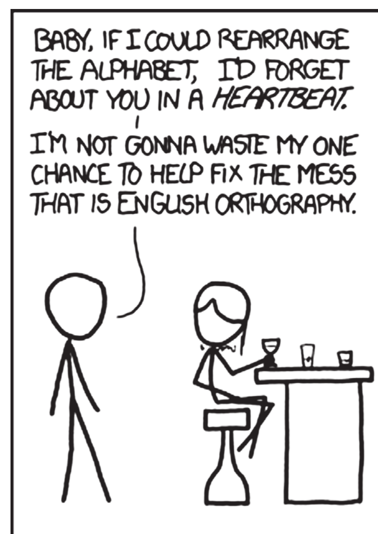
The Duchess and Alice, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*

The way in which the sounds of language are organised is known as phonology. The study of the sounds themselves is called phonetics. All languages have their own distinctive sounds, and even within the family of English varieties there are differences. Think about how differently the word *jacket* is pronounced in Australia [dʒækət] and New Zealand [dʒɛkət]. When studying the sounds of English we find there is a lot to consider, including vowels and consonants, manners and places of articulation and prosodics.

7.1.1 VOWELS AND CONSONANTS

Shop sign, Christchurch, New Zealand

Australian English has forty-four contrasting sounds and the English alphabet has only twenty-six different letters. You can see how spelling problems arise; for a start, there aren't enough symbols. English spelling is also full of inconsistencies and mismatches between sound and letter. Take the consonant sound [t] (to indicate that this is a sound, we have placed it in square brackets). This consonant is represented by the letter t as in tap, also by tt as in butt, te in rate, ed as in jumped, th as in Thomas, pt as in receipt, bt in debt, ct in victuals — even phth in the word phthisis (a medical term for some sort of wasting disease; not a term you'll likely use very often, but useful if you want to point out some absurdities of English spelling.). There are in fact at least twelve different ways of spelling the consonant [t] — this is hardly ideal. So in order to answer the question 'How many sounds are there in the word jumped?' we have to forget all about spelling and listen to the sounds. There are only five sounds here: [dʒʌmpt].



Not surprisingly, linguists resort to systems like the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) in order to provide a unique written representation for each sound that occurs in English (or any other language of the world). The set of characters used for

representing the sounds of Australian English are drawn from the IPA; most are probably familiar since many are found in the Roman alphabet. Dictionaries such as *The Macquarie* and *The Oxford* also use IPA symbols in their pronunciation guides.

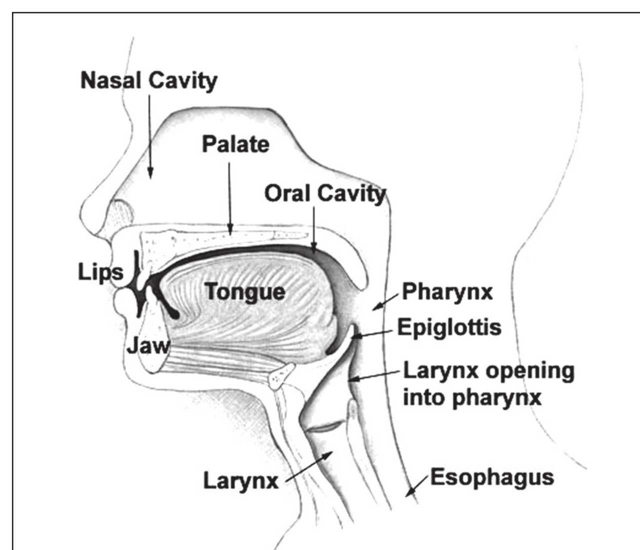
The symbols we use for English consonants and vowels are given below. But in any variety such as Australian English there are many variants reflecting differences in age, social background, sex, region — even individual identity. Many of you will pronounce the word *dress* so that it rhymes with *crass*, or you might also pronounce the words *shell* and *shall* the same (i.e. as homophones). This is age-related variation, and most older speakers don't have these pronunciations. The set we provide below represents a broad transcription of the sound system of Australian English.

Symbols for transcribing English consonants

Stops			**Fricatives**	
p	**p**at		f	**f**ine
b	**b**at		v	**v**ine
t	**t**on		θ	**th**in
d	**d**one		ð	**th**en
k	**c**url		s	**s**oon
ɡ	**g**irl		z	**z**oom
			ʃ	**sh**ine
m	**m**oon		ʒ	bei**g**e, **g**enre
n	**n**oon		h	**h**oon
ŋ	ri**ng**			
Laterals			**Affricates**	
l	**l**ive		tʃ	**ch**ive
r	**r**aw		dʒ	**j**ive
j	**y**our			
w	**w**ar			

The following table shows all the consonants of English, with descriptions of where (place of articulation) and how (manner of articulation) they are made.

Manner of Articulation	**Place of articulation**							
	bilabial	labio-dental	dental	alveolar	alveo-palatal	palatal	velar	glottal
Stop voiceless voiced	 p b			 t d			 k g	
Nasal	m			n			ŋ	
Fricative voiceless voiced		 f v	 θ ð	 s z	 ʃ ʒ			h
Affricate voiceless voiced					 tʃ dʒ			
Lateral				l				
Approximant	w			r		j		



PLACES OF ARTICULATION

The following terms describe the different places of articulation for English consonants.

- **Bilabial:** using both lips. Look in a mirror and say 'Billy Button bought a buttered biscuit'. You should be able to see and feel how the lips come together for the first sound in each of the words of this tongue twister.
- **Labio-dental:** using the lower lip and the upper teeth. Again look in a mirror, but this time say 'Freshly-fried fat flying fish'. When you make the first sound in each of these words, your lower lip will be raised until it touches the upper front teeth.
- **Dental:** using the tongue tip between the teeth or the tongue tip or blade close behind the upper teeth. Say 'The thirty-three thieves thought that they thrilled the throne throughout Thursday' and feel where your tongue is when you make the first sound in each of these words. It might be between the teeth or behind the upper teeth (or perhaps varies between the two positions).
- **Alveolar:** using the tip or blade of the tongue and the teeth (or alveolar) ridge — this is the bump behind your teeth. Say 'Do tongue twisters twist talkers' tongues' and again feel where the tongue is when you make the sounds at the start of these words.
- **Alveopalatal:** using the blade of the tongue and the back of the alveolar ridge. Say 'Sure, she ships shells'. To feel the place of articulation more easily, hold the position of the first sound in each of these words and breathe in. You should be able to feel the cool air rushing across the blade of the tongue and back of the teeth ridge.
- **Palatal:** using the front of the tongue and the hard palate. Now say 'Yikes, yelling yokels yodelled yesterday'. If you again hold the position of the first consonant and breathe in, you should be able to feel the air cool the front of your tongue and your hard palate.
- **Velar:** using the back of the tongue and the soft palate (or velum). Say 'crisp crusts crackle and crunch' and feel how the tongue touches the fleshy part of your palate when you say the first sound of each word.

- **Glottal:** using the space between the vocal folds. Finally, say 'In Hertford, Hereford and Hampshire, hurricanes hardly happen' and listen to the friction as the air rushes between the slightly open vocal folds. The [h] sound is a weakly articulated sound, and an endangered species in the dialects of English.

MANNERS OF ARTICULATION

We've just seen how consonants are made at different locations in the vocal tract. There are also six manners of articulation depending on how the airflow is obstructed. With one group of consonants, the nasals, the soft palate is lowered (so the air passes through the nose); with all the other sounds it is raised. If the vocal cords are vibrating, then the sounds will be voiced. In English the stops, fricatives and affricates can be either voiced or voiceless, whereas nasals, laterals and approximants are all voiced.

- **Stop:** a complete closure in the oral cavity. You should be able to feel the pressure build up when you say the initial sounds in ***pill, bill*** ([p], [b] = bilabial closure); ***till, dill*** (alveolar closure); and ***kill, gill*** ([k], [ɡ] = velar closure). In each of these pairs the initial sound of the first word is voiceless, whereas the initial sound of the second is voiced.
- **Nasal:** a complete closure in the oral cavity with the soft palate lowered so that air flows through the nose. All three nasals of English are voiced: ***mill*** (bilabial closure), ***nill*** (alveolar closure) and at the end of the word ***rang*** ([ŋ] = velar closure; note the velar nasal is a fairly new sound in English, so it still doesn't appear in the range of positions that other sounds do).
- **Fricative:** two speech organs come close enough together to partially block the airflow and create friction. When you say the sounds at the start of words like the following, you should be able to feel an almost tickling sensation: ***fine, vine*** (labiodental); ***thin, then*** ([θ], [ð] = dental), ***soon, zoom*** ([s], [z] = alveolar); and ***rash, rouge*** ([ʃ], [ʒ] = alveopalatal). As before, the highlighted sound in the first word is voiceless and in the second it is voiced.
- **Affricate:** first a complete closure is made in the oral cavity (as for a stop) and then there is a slow release of air so that a fricative sound is made. Start to say the sound at the beginning of the word ***chum*** but hold it — you should be able to feel the pressure building up, and hear the friction as you release the air. There are two affricates in English — both are alveopalatal but they differ in voicing: ***chin, gin*** ([tʃ], [dʒ]).
- **Lateral:** a partial closure is made by the blade of the tongue against the teeth ridge so that air can flow along the sides of the tongue and the roof of the mouth. English only has one lateral, and it is alveolar and voiced. You can feel how the air flows around your tongue when you say ***lovely lemon liniment*** — you can feel it even more if you hold the [l] sound and breathe in while you do so. You will feel cool air on the sides of your tongue.
- **Approximant:** the speech organs come close to each other, but not close enough that any audible turbulence is produced (which is why these sounds are sometimes called semi-vowels or semi-consonants). English has three approximants and all are voiced. They are found at the beginning of the words ***yes*** (palatal), ***west*** (lips are rounded and there is a narrowing in the velar region), and ***rest*** (tongue tip close to the teeth ridge for most Australian English speakers).

The following table shows all the vowels of English, with their symbols; they divide into monophthongs (single vowels) and diphthongs (combination of two vowels).

Symbols for transcribing English vowels with examples in key words

monophthongs		diphthongs	
i	**been**	aɪ	**buy**
ɪ	**bin**	eɪ	**bay**
ɛ (e)	**bet**	ɔɪ	**boy**
æ	**bat**	aʊ	**bough**
ə	**about**	oʊ	**bow**
ɜ	**burn**	ɪə	**beer**
a	**barn**	eə	**bear**
ʌ	**bus**	ʊə	**poor, tour*** [see below]
ɒ	**boss**		
ɔ	**bought**		
ʊ	**book**		
u	**boot**		

*This sound has disappeared for many speakers; you may well pronounce the vowels in poor and tour as [ɔ], so rhyming with *claw*.

MONOPHTHONGS

When you say a vowel, the air escapes through the mouth in a relatively unimpeded way. The different vowel sounds are created by varying the shape of the mouth cavity, and when we describe the vowels of English we need to specify the position of the tongue and the shape of the lips. Stand in front of a mirror and say *he* and then *ha*. The vowel in *he* is high and close to the roof of your mouth, whereas with the vowel in *ha* the tongue is lower. Watch as your jaw lowers when you move from *he* to *ha*. (You could also imagine yourself saying 'aahh' for the doctor.)

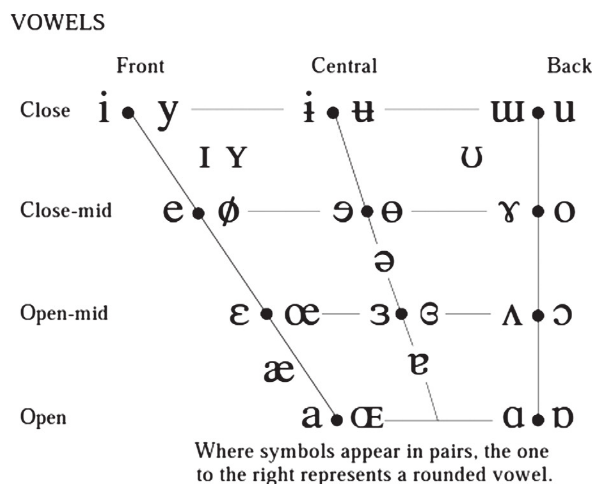
We can describe the vowel in *he* as a high vowel and that in *ha* as a low vowel. Now say the vowel sound in *he* followed by the vowel in *who* and feel your tongue move back in your mouth as you say the second vowel. In both vowels the tongue is close to the top of the vocal tract, but in the first vowel the tongue is toward the front of the mouth, whereas in the second it is more towards the back. We describe the vowel in *he* as a front vowel and that in *who* as a back vowel. Finally, say *hot* and feel where your tongue is as you say the vowel — this sound is a low back vowel.

While saying these vowels, you may have noticed that sometimes the lips were involved. The vowels in *who* and *hot* have rounded lips, whereas for the other two vowels they are unrounded.

When we talk about English vowels, we do so according to three parameters of description:

1. height of the body of the tongue
2. front-back position of the tongue
3. degree of lip rounding (rounded or unrounded)

The following chart is the International Phonetic Alphabet with the reference vowels used for describing all the vowel sounds in the world's languages — there are a lot more here than just English vowels. This chart is a kind of idealised diagram of the mouth cavity. You can see from the IPA chart that vowel quality is described as ranging from 'close' (or 'high') to 'open' (or 'low'), and from 'front' to 'back'. These terms all indicate the location of the highest point of the tongue body when producing the different vowels.



Where symbols appear in pairs, the one to the right represents a rounded vowel.

DIPHTHONGS

Diphthongs are like long vowels. When you produce one, the tongue moves from one position to another (these sounds are sometimes called **glides**). The first part of a diphthong is longer and also slightly louder. In a very slow and exaggerated way, say the vowel in the word ***right***. You should be able to feel your tongue move.

Transcription — spot the error

In each of the following English words, there is **one** error in the IPA transcription that indicates an impossible pronunciation for a native speaker of English. Circle the error in each word and give the correct symbol.

angry	[ængri]	**certain**	[sɛtən]
shutter	[ʃutə]	**refuse**	[rəfuz]
these	[θiz]	**schedule**	[shɛdjʊl]
adjustment	[əjʌstmənt]	**yesterday**	[yɛstədeɪ]
traffic	[træfɪc]	**citation**	[siteɪʃən]

7.1.2
PROSODIC FEATURES

We now go beyond individual speech segments to how groups of segments are pronounced. Correct pronunciation also involves timing, loudness, pitch and stress. These are prosodic (or suprasegmental) features and they relate to the pronunciation of syllables, words, and phrases.

Tempo: When we speak we can vary the tempo or speed at which we talk for a number of reasons. If we're excited, we speak more quickly; if we're lost in thought we might speak with a slow tempo. Tempo can also signal grammatical boundaries: a parenthetical aside can be signalled by a quicker tempo ('That cake they brought — *you know the one I mean* — was really rich'), or that it is functioning as a single word (a *devil-may-care* approach to life).

Volume: Loudness signals a range of feelings. Anger and excitement are often expressed in loudness; intimacy and sadness by softness.

Pitch and intonation: When we speak, the pitch or melody of the voice will rise and fall and the pattern of pitch changes that accompany a phrase or sentence is called an intonation contour. We alter the pitch of our voice by changing the rate at which our vocal cords vibrate. Basically, the faster they vibrate, the higher the pitch will be. Pitch has an important function when it comes to the meaning of sentences. Many questions are signalled by a strong final rise in pitch. Listen to the pitch of your voice when you say: *Are you coming to the party tonight*? Compare this to *You're coming to the party tonight?* This has the structure of a declarative but with strong rising intonation it can also indicate a question. A smaller rise might indicate a tentative statement.

Stress: Words of more than one syllable will have a syllable that receives the main or primary stress. It is made more prominent and this is achieved by making the syllable louder, longer and higher in pitch. For example, English has many pairs of two syllable words that are distinguished only by their stress pattern — nouns are stressed on the first syllable and verbs on the second. There are various ways of indicating stress. Here we have used a high vertical bar before the stressed syllable:

> *We made a ˈrecord.* (noun — stress on first syllable)
> *We always reˈcord our favourite show.* (verb — stress on second syllable)

In connected speech, variations in the use of stress produce the speech rhythm of a language. Australian English (like other mainstream Englishes) is what's called a stress-timed language; this accounts for the tee-tum-tee-tum rhythm of English (or heart-beat as David Crystal has described it). Speakers stress syllables at regular intervals and squash intermediate syllables between these, so that a word of, say, four syllables (such as *irregular*) does not necessarily take four times as long to utter as a word of one syllable (*rough*).

Before we leave phonetics and phonology we can point you to a few fun sites where you can practice both making these sounds and writing them:

The following is a link to a YouTube clip where you can see the vocal folds in action:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=v9Wdf-RwLcs

Here you'll find an interactive International Phonetics Alphabet Chart:

http://web.uvic.ca/ling/resources/ipa/charts/IPAlab/IPAlab.htm

Here is where you can download a phonetics font:

http://scripts.sil.org/cms/scripts/page.php?site_id=nrsi&item_id=DoulosSIL_download

The following link allows you to type phonetic transcriptions in the IPA. It lets you edit your text in the box and then you're able to copy it to whatever document you like:

http://ipa.typeit.org/full/

7.2 MORPHOLOGY

Grammar, a system of pitfalls thoughtfully prepared for the feet of the self-made man, along the path by which he advances to distinction [Ambrose Bierce *The Devil's Dictionary* 1911]

Here we look at how words are structured. Morphology (from the Greek word for 'form' or 'shape') allows us to investigate how morphemes combine to make words, while syntax is concerned with their external function and their relationship to other words within the sentence. The morpheme is probably best described as the smallest meaningful unit in speech. By 'smallest meaningful unit' we mean that we can't divide the unit any more without severely altering the meaning. For example, *strange, card, asparagus, random,* and *cardigan* are all words and they are all also morphemes. We can't cut them up into smaller units without radically changing the meaning. Perhaps you're thinking, surely we can divide *strange* up into [streɪ] (*stray*) or [streɪn] (*strain*). However, these have meanings that we cannot associate with the word *strange*; they are totally unrelated. In the same way, we wouldn't dissect *cardigan* into three morphemes:

car + dig + an ≠ cardigan

On the other hand, a word like *strangeness* can be divided into two smaller units, each of which does have a meaning that in combination results in the meaning of *strangeness*. This word therefore has two morphemes *strange* + *ness*. Similarly, *cars* has a meaning, but we can divide it into two meaningful units (or morphemes), namely *car* + the plural ending *-s*.

There are a number of different types of morphemes and a distinction is made between content and function morphemes. Content morphemes have meanings outside the language; that is, they

refer to aspects of human existence in the world. Function morphemes, on the other hand, have purely grammatical meaning and deal with the relationships between the items of our experience. Take something as straightforward as: *The boy's book is on the table*. The items *boy, book* and *table* are all 'referable' (therefore content morphemes), but what about *the*? This word merely tells us that we are referring not to any old book, but to a particular one, and that the table is a particular table. Perhaps these items are visible to the hearer/speaker or they are certainly known to them in some way. *On* is another functional morpheme, but this time it has to do with the spatial relationship between two of the lexical morphemes, the book and the table. *Is* tells us that it is present time and also that there is only one book involved. It also functions as a linking verb and that connects one lexical item *book* with the place phrase *on the table.* It fulfils the grammatical requirement in English that every sentence requires a verb.

The class of content morphemes will readily admit new members and is much larger than the class of function morphemes. This year will see English speakers create hundreds and hundreds of new morphemes, none of them likely to be functional. A grammar of a language will typically list the functional morphemes (these are exhaustive), but not the lexical morphemes. These you will find in a dictionary.

7.2.1 ROOTS AND AFFIXES

The vast majority of English morphemes are *roots* — these are single morphemes that represent the core of the word, or the basic meaning. Items like *walk, run, street, boy* and so on are the centres of words to which affixes such *as -ing, -er, -s, -ed, -er* and *-ness* are attached. We can distinguish between different affixes according to their position. (Note the hyphen here indicates how the affix is attached.)

Prefixes precede the root (the word itself contains an example of one); in words like *incomplete, impossible, indecent* there is some form of the prefix *in-*.

Suffixes follow the root (these are more plentiful in English); the plural suffix *-s* and the homophonous third person singular suffix *-s, -ing, -ed* and so on.

Infixes occur within the root; these are rare in the world's languages and only found in English with nonstandard intensifiers such as *fanbloodytastic, absobloominglutely,* and more recently in Homeric infixation found in words such as *edumacation.*

— *edumacated* **and** *sophistimacated*

The other important distinction is between inflectional and derivational morphemes. Something like the plural marker in English is one of the seven little inflectional affixes (all suffixes, you'll note) that you see below:

Stem	Suffix	Function	Example
jump	-s	3 person sing present	*He jumps every day.*
jump	-ed	past tense	*She jumped yesterday.*
jump	-ing	progressive	*He is jumping right now.*
beat	-en	past participle	*She has beaten everyone.*
chair	-s	plural	*The chairs are new.*
man	-s	possessive	*The man's leg is broken.*
fast (adj/adverb)	-er	comparative	*She eats faster than me.*
fast (adj/adverb)	-est	superlative	*She is the fastest eater of all.*

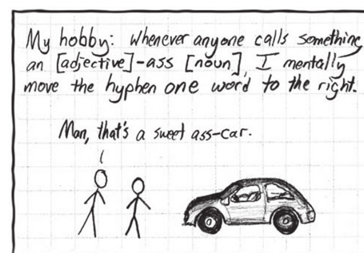
In contrast to these grammatical morphemes, English has quite a lot of derivational morphemes that attach themselves to words in order to make (or derive) other words. For instance, you could take a word (adjective) like *pure* and create another adjective *impure* or a noun *impurity.*

Root	**Derivational prefix**	**Derivational suffix**	**Inflectional suffix**
clean	**un**clean (adjective)	clean**er** (noun)	cleaner**s** (noun + plural)

Derivation differs from inflection in that it has a more dramatic effect on the category or meaning of the word. Take the verb *clean*. We see that adding the inflection *-ed* and *-s*, respectively, gives us the words *cleaned* and *cleans* which refer to the same kind of thing, the activity of cleaning. If instead a derivational affix is added to form *cleaner*, then the meaning changes. *Cleaner* does not refer to an activity, but to a person who performs that activity. More formally, we can say that whereas inflection always leaves the word in the same word class, derivation may change the word class; *clean* is a verb (or an adjective), while the derived *cleaner* is a noun. Derivation does not, however, have to change the word class. Take a derivational prefix like *un-* for example; both *clean* and *unclean* are adjectives, but the meaning change within the pair is drastic, in fact the meaning after derivation becomes the opposite of the original. The examples given in this paragraph also illustrate another difference between inflections and derivational affixes in English. Whereas inflections are always suffixes, we have both derivational prefixes (like *un-* and *im-*) and derivational suffixes (like *-er* and *-ness*). Note also that inflections always occur after the derivational affixes have been added, as in the example *cleaners* above.

BOUND VERSUS FREE MORPHEMES

Affixes (prefixes, suffixes, infixes) are always bound, which means they can't be used as words on their own as free morphemes. Most English roots are free; this means they can occur on their own as words without any additional morphology. However, English also has unusual roots that are bound. Often these have been borrowed from other languages (such as Greek or Latin). Examples include the root *-ceive* in words such as *re-ceive* and *per-ceive.*



In linguistic morphology, a cranberry (or cran) morpheme is a particular type of bound morpheme that doesn't have an independent meaning but still serves to distinguish words from each other. The term comes from the difficulty of dividing the word *cranberry* into morphemes. We have to put a morpheme boundary in the middle of *cranberry* (because of *berry*) but what's a *cran*? — it doesn't exist by itself. We know historically that *cranberries* derive from the name of the long-necked bird *crane* (even though no one is entirely sure why — perhaps cranes really liked the berry). But how far back ion history should we go when we assign our morpheme boundaries — should we think of *cupboards* as *boards* full of *cups*?

[kræn] + [bɛriz]

[krein]

Types of morphemes

i. What are the functional (or grammatical) morphemes in the following sentence?

The old man arrived. He had an umbrella and a large plastic bag full of books.

ii. List the bound morphemes in these words:

Fearlessly, misleads, previewers, shortened, unhappier

iii. In which of the following should 'a' be treated as a bound morpheme?

a boy, apple, atypical, AIDS

iv. What are the lexical morphemes in the following expressions?

It's raining; the cow jumped over the moon; my hovercraft is full of eels.

7.3 LEXICOLOGY

Dictionary, A malevolent literary device for cramping the growth of a language and making it hard and inelastic. This dictionary, however, is a most useful work. [Ambrose Bierce *The Devil's Dictionary* 1911]

The study of words provides us with endless hours of enjoyment. Words, or lexemes, are grouped into classes or categories that you've heard of before – such as nouns, adjectives and so on. These categories are known as word classes or, more traditionally, parts of speech, and we are going to look at these now in more detail. Each word class has a range of features and these are described according to their meanings and how they behave grammatically.

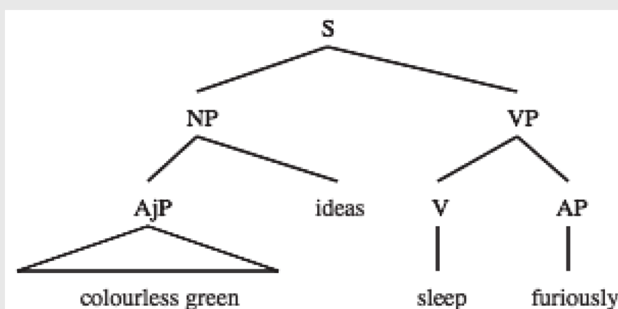
NOUNS AND NOUN PHRASES

Typical nouns refer to "things" such as people (*student*), physical objects (*television*), creatures (*lion*), abstract ideas (*happiness*), phenomena (*cyclone*) and qualities (*softness*). There are all sorts of ways they can be classified, but there are only two subclasses that have some bearing on the linguistic behaviour of nouns, and that is count nouns (like *bath, apple*) and mass nouns (like *water, fruit*).

Nouns can have a possessive form (i.e. *'s*). They also express number in their morphology. Singular is unmarked; plural carries a marker *-s.* As far as derivational morphology goes, the most frequent noun-forming suffixes are *-ness* and *-ity* from adjectives (*happiness* and *purity*) and *-er, -ee, -ation, ment* from verbs (*cleaner, employee, creation, employment*).

Nouns are the heads of noun phrases and characteristically function as subjects, objects, complements of verbs (like *seem* and *be*) and complements of prepositions (like *on* and *under*). They occur with modifying words such as adjectives *(small)* and determiners *(the, a, that).*

"Colorless green ideas sleep furiously" is a famous sentence that was invented by Noam Chomsky in his revolutionary book 1957 *Syntactic Structures.* He wanted to show that it was possible to have perfectly grammatical sentences that were nonsensical. It shows nicely the distinction between grammar and meaning. Of course, ever since that time people have been dreaming up figurative meanings for the sentence — *green* and *colourless* are perfectly compatible if we ignore their literal senses and assume the extended senses (for example, *green* as 'immature' and *colourless* as 'uninteresting, dull'). What sort of meaning can you come up with for "Colorless green ideas sleep furiously"?



VERBS AND VERB PHRASES

In general terms, verbs are those words denoting actions (*run*), processes (*become*), states (*be*) or events (*erupt*).

Most morphological complexity in English is associated with the verb. In addition to derivational affixes like *-ee, -er* and *-ment* (verb → noun) and *-able, -ing* and *-ive* (verb → adjective), the most

distinctive property of the English verb is its ability to inflect (or take inflectional affixes) to mark categories such as tense (past versus present). Most English verbs follow the inflectional pattern of one of the three verb types given below. Be aware that there are a number of departures from these basic patterns; we haven't got the space to go into these here.

Tensed forms:	**take**	**walk**	**shut**
Past tense	took	walked	shut
Present tense general	take	walk	shut
third person singular	takes	walks	shuts
Non-tensed Forms:			
Base form/Infinitive	take	walk	shut
Present participle	taking	walking	shutting
Past participle	taken	walked	shut

Verbs show two basic patterns of behaviour. There are intransitive verbs where the action doesn't transfer across to another entity; for example 'The boy slept, drank, ate, jumped'. Most English verbs can be transitive**,** where the action transfers across to some other entity or object: 'The boy kicked, caught, threw, saw the ball'.

AUXILIARY VERBS

A subclass of verb is the auxiliary (or 'helping') verb. There are two main groups of these: primary auxiliaries *be, have* and *do* and modal auxiliaries *can, could, shall, should, will, would, may, might,* and *must*. They determine the form of the verb that follows them. Modal auxiliaries and *do* take the infinitive or base (*He will eat; Do eat!); have* and (passive) *be* take the past participle (*He has eaten; The cake was eaten);* and (progressive) *be* takes the present participle (*They are eating).* Note that the primary auxiliaries can be full (i.e. lexical) verbs as well, in which case they are the main verb (sometimes the only verb) in the clause. The following pairs illustrate main verb versus auxiliary verb status for these three verbs:

- 'Mary *is* ready' versus 'Mary *is* cooking'
- He *does* the cooking' versus 'I *do* like cooking'
- She *has* my lemon zester' versus 'She *has* stolen my lemon zester'.

ADJECTIVES

Adjectives typically denote properties or states relating to shape, size, colour, evaluation and so forth.

Adjectives are gradable which means that they denote properties that can be possessed in varying degrees. Morphologically this is reflected in their ability to inflect for grade (e.g. *tall* — *taller* — *tallest*). As far as derivational morphology goes, there are suffixes (like *-ful, -less, -ly, -ish)* deriving adjectives from nouns (*careful, careless, friendly, greenish*), and suffixes (like *-able, -ing)* deriving adjectives from verbs (*doable, charming*).

Adjectives are the head of adjective phrases and have two important functions: as a modifier within noun phrases (e.g. 'The sick child'), or after verbs like *to be, become, look, feel, appear* (e.g. 'He became/looked/was sick'). Adjectives take various modifiers. Being gradable, they can take a range of intensifying expressions such as *more, most, too, very, much.*

ADVERBS

Typical adverbs express things like time, manner and place. In truth the class of adverbs is a mixed bag and is a very difficult class to define. Traditionally, they have been defined as words that modify verbs, adjectives or even other adverbs or entire clauses. For example:

Verbs	He ran *hard*.
Adjectives	She was *very/rather* short.
Adverbs	He ran *very/rather* hard.
Clauses	*Hopefully*, he'll be on time.

The word *hopefully* attracted very bad press when it first appeared as a sentence adverb with the meaning 'with any luck' (a meaning that grew out of the earlier meaning 'full of hope'). In fact there's still furious hostility to this use. See what you can find out about this.

~~Hopefully~~,
It is to be hoped that?

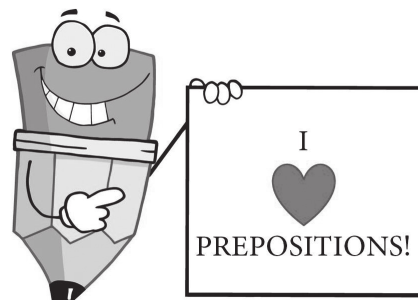
As far as inflectional endings go, adverbs fare rather badly. Many are gradable, but there are only a handful that inflect for grade; e.g. *soon-sooner*. In the case of derivational morphology, a large proportion of adverbs are derived from adjectives with the *-ly* suffix, such as *comfortably*. Other affixes include the suffixes *-wise* and *-wards* (*timewise, homewards*).

Some adverbs are gradable and therefore take the same range of dependents as adjectives (for example, degree adverbs like *too, very*): 'He behaved rather badly'. However, adjectives take a much wider range of dependents than adverbs.

PREPOSITIONS

Most prepositions have some sort of locational meaning. For example, imagine you are throwing a ball *at, over, under, though,* etc. a wall — these little words are all prepositions.

Some of these location markers have been pressed into grammatical functions, taking over the roles of the disappearing inflections. For example:



infinitive marker *to*: '**To** err is human' (compare, 'I walked **to** town')

indirect object marker *to*: 'I gave the flowers **to** Jack' (compare, 'He went **to** bed')

agent marker *by* in a passive clause: 'The dog was hit **by** the man' (compare, 'I stood **by** the desk')

possessive marker *of*: 'The cover **of** the book' (compare historically related preposition *off*, ('He jumped **off** the bed')

With the exception of a tiny handful of prepositions (e.g. *near, nearer, nearest the fireplace)*, there is nothing in the way of morphology; in other words, they don't change their shape.

Prepositions are the heads of prepositional phrases and occur in a range of functions, most notably as modifiers of verbs ('He relied on me', 'He ran in the morning'), of nouns ('cover of the book', 'the man in the moon') and of adjectives ('fond of meat'; 'tall for his age'). Prepositions also take noun phrase complements ('He ran up the hill'). Generally though, they allow much less modification than other word classes.

PRONOUNS

Personal pronouns are the most important groups of pronouns and they are normally set out in a table like this.

		Subjective case	Objective case
First person			
singular		I	me
plural		we	us
Second person			
singular/plural		you	you
Third person			
singular	**masculine**	he	him
	feminine	she	her
	non-personal	it	it
plural		they	them

CONJUNCTIONS

Conjunctions link clauses or parts of clauses together. Coordinators link units that are of equal status in a sentence like two noun phrases, two clauses and so on. The central coordinators are *and* (expresses addition), *but* (expresses contrast) and *or* (expresses alternatives), but they can also be reinforced with additional words e.g. *either* ..... *or; not only* ..... *but also; both* ..... *and*. Subordinators can also link units but these do not have the same grammatical status. For example, one clause could be subordinated to another; in the sentence 'It will be cooked, if it sounds hollow', the subordinate clause is joined to the main clause by *if*. Meanings that are expressed by subordinators include: time, place, purpose, condition, reason, concession.

DETERMINERS

Determiners express notions like definiteness, quantity, number and possession. In other words, they "determine" what kind of a noun follows — is it definite or indefinite, count or mass, concrete or abstract. There are a number of subclasses, but the most important are the articles**.** The meanings involved have to do with notions of reference and are notoriously difficult to define. Basically, the definite article *the* signals that a noun phrase is definite, perhaps because it refers to something in the immediate context *(Have you put* ***the*** *cat out?);* or it might refer back to an earlier noun *(Put* ***the*** *cat out — the* here refers back to the cat that was mentioned earlier); or perhaps an object that has become part of our shared general knowledge *(I love* ***the*** *animal programs on TV)*. The indefinite article *a* is used when a noun has not already been specified *(He gave me* ***a*** *cat for Christmas);* it can refer also to a general state of affairs *(I'm learning to be* ***a*** *vet).*

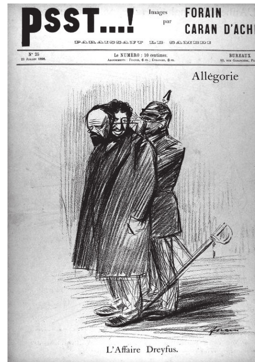
Word classes
Words are classified as word classes or parts-of-speech (noun, verbs etc.) according to their use in sentences. Circle the words after each sentence that could fill the blank in it, and state their word class. (Explain how you decided what part of speech to substitute in each place and say whether it belongs to the open or closed class):

a) Merlin has a ________ (magic, question, never, room, lengthen, friend)
b) He prefers the ____ one (large, endow, quickly, beautiful, round)
c) Morgaine did it ______ (room, quickly, then, pencil, steadily)
d) They ___ it (large, searched, very, grow, like)
e) _______ did that (He, Somebody, They, New, Tree, Druids)
f) He put it _______ the box (walk, in, under, near, quickly)
g) He left ______ she stayed (near, and, although, they, but)
h) _______, he said, it's gone! (In, Room, Oh, Ugh, Damn)
i) Uther drove ______ new chariot (the, a, but, of, when)

INTERJECTIONS

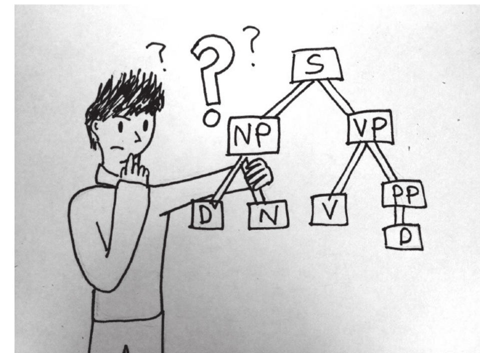
Interjections include items like *Hell! Wow! Phwoaaarr! Shhh!* They have some interesting properties; many have sounds that don't occur in "normal" words of English, and they also sometimes show unusual combinations of sounds. Something like *Psst!* (used to signal attention) or *Shhh!* (to signal 'be quiet') are unusual in that they have what's called syllabic fricatives (there are no vowels in these words — the fricatives make up the whole syllable by themselves). However, interjections are quite peripheral to the language, and so we won't pay much attention to them here.

Shhhhhhhh!



7.4 SYNTAX

> I'm not sure what syntax means. But it must be bad because it's got 'sin' and 'tax' in it. [William Rogers, American humorist]



Having looked at how morphemes combine to build words, we now look at the way words combine to form sentences. When we see a sentence written or hear it spoken we see or hear a string of words. The study of syntax allows us to investigate how the words form groups within sentences to construct meaning.

WORDS AND PHRASES

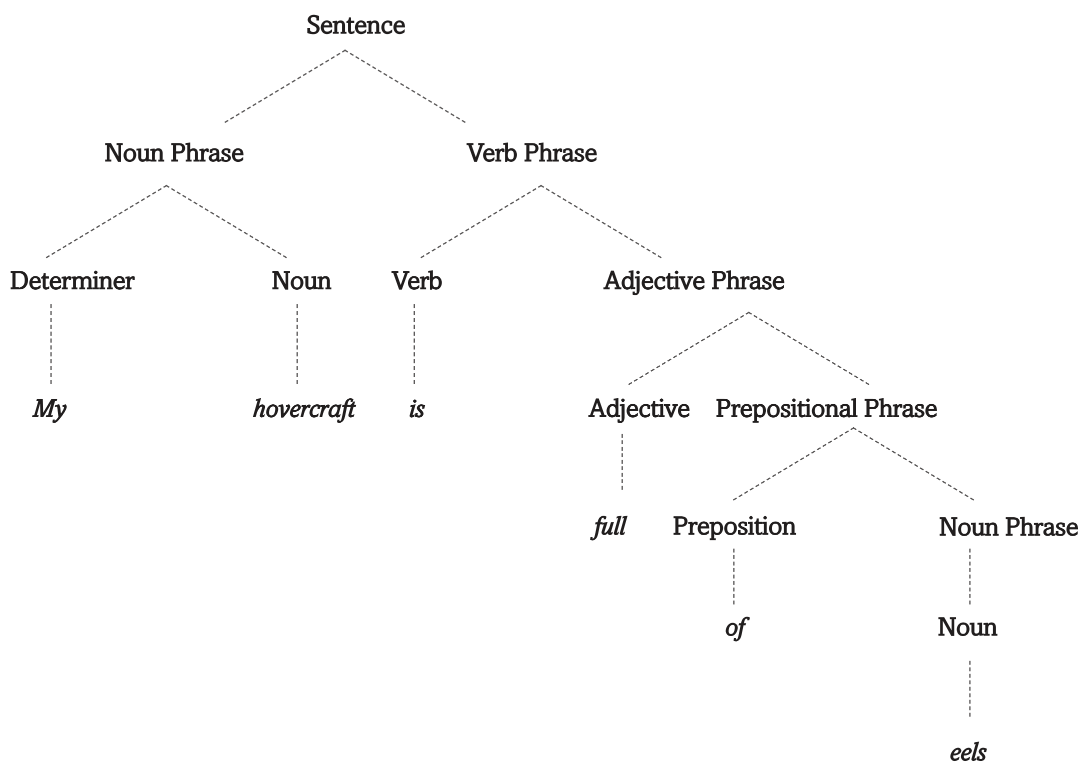
It is in fact quite clear that native speakers feel that, in English, a sentence is not just a plain sequence of words. They can divide sentences into groups of words that seem to belong together more closely than others. To begin, consider the sentence below:

'My hovercraft is full of eels.'

Probably everyone reading this book will share the intuition that *my* somehow modifies *hovercraft* and together these words form a natural unit in this sentence — *my hovercraft*. Similarly, *full of eels* forms a single unit. These groups of words that 'go together' in this way form structural units (or constituents) and are called phrases. Basically, phrases are groups of words that have some sort of

grammatical relationship with one another, such as *my hovercraft* and *full of eels*. Phrases can actually form a close group with another phrase; i.e. two phrases can together form a new phrase. Looking again at the sentence above, the phrase *full of eels,* when combined with *is* forms another phrase 'is full of eels'. So, phrases exist at different levels. They are really like linguistic Lego pieces in the way they pattern together to form larger and larger constituent structures. As will become clear, even the single words of a sentence are themselves constituents.

Phrases are always named after the most important word in the string. This word is really the core of the phrase and all of the four major word classes of nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs have corresponding phrasal categories; namely, noun phrases, verb phrases, adjective phrases and adverb phrases. We can represent *My hovercraft is full of eels* in a kind of tree diagram that shows the phrases that make up this simple sentence (don't worry about the details here; even something as straightforward as this sentence has quite a complex structure, as you can see):



If you like messing about with syntactic trees here are a couple of sites that you might like to visit. The first one allows you to generate trees but you have to provide a breakdown of the phrases to do this.

http://ironcreek.net/phpsyntaxtree/
http://www.ece.ubc.ca/~donaldd/treeform.htm

7.4.1 PHRASES AND THEIR FUNCTIONS

Phrases have a number of basic functions, and these are handy concepts to know.

SUBJECT

Basic clauses always require subjects. Traditionally they have been described in notional terms as 'what the sentence is about', 'actor/performer' and so on, but they are best defined in terms of a cluster of grammatical features:

- word class — subjects are noun phrases
- verb ending — subjects determine the inflection on the verb (***She*** *runs* vs ***They*** *run*)
- shape of pronoun — ***She*** saw *him* vs ***He*** saw *her*
- basic position — subjects occur before the verb (***She*** *hasn't come home yet*)
- question position — subjects occur after the tensed verb (*Hasn't* ***she*** *come home yet?*)

OBJECT

Traditionally objects have been described as being those entities most linked to the verb, but in fact they cover such a wide range of semantic roles that this description is not terribly useful. Once again they are best defined according to how they behave grammatically:

- words class — objects are noun phrases (*He kicked* ***the rubber ball***)
- passive — objects becomes the grammatical subject in passive (***The rubber ball*** *was kicked*)
- shape of pronoun — *She* saw ***him*** vs *He* saw ***her***
- basic position — objects typically follow the verb (*He picked up* ***the rubber ball***)

ADVERBIALS

Adverbials are typically not essential elements in a clause; usually they're optional and can be freely added or removed from a clause. They usually described things like location, manner and attitude

words class — adverbials are usually adverb phrases (*He kicked the ball* ***hard***) or preposition phrases (*He kicked the ball* ***through the goal posts***)

position — adverbials are flexible in where they occur in the clause (***Through the goal posts*** *he kicked the ball).*

Here are two examples to show these three functions at work (these come from Melbourne's *The Big Issue* 47:9)**:**

[*The bride's mother*] *threw* [*a large pickled gherkin*] [*at the tormented lover*]

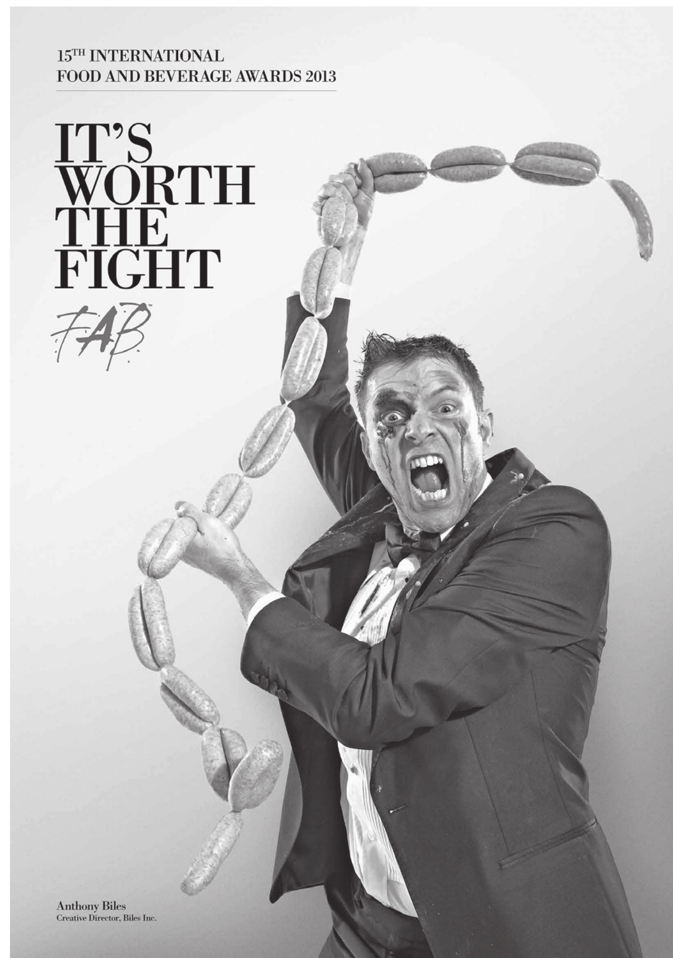
subject **object** **adverbial**

[*The other guests*] *pelted* [*the weeping Lothario*] [*with an assortment of crustless sandwiches*].

subject **object** **adverbial**

[*He*] [*eventually*] *collapsed* [*under a welter of pastries*]

subject adverbial **adverbial**



5.4.2 COMBINING CLAUSES

Sentences can be what we call simple sentences. All of the examples above (involving the food fight) comprise a single main (or independent) clause and are of this type. Here are some other examples of simple sentences (also from Melbourne's *The Big Issue*: 36:17).

I have pulled out the plastic tab.
A checkered shape bursts unconvincingly into a small, intelligent-eyed blob.
It sits above me, pacing from side to side inside its tiny white egg.
Its small square eyes stare meaningfully.
The Tamagotchi goes to sleep.
It wakes up.
This cycle continues.
It's much like your life, really.

Tamagotchi — virtual pet of the 1990s

Sentences can also be made up of a number of clauses. In such sentences the relationships between the clauses may be of two kinds: coordination (where the clauses are equal in status) and subordination (where a clause functions as part of another clause).

Coordination always involves the combination of equivalent structures — you can have coordinated words, phrases and also clauses. In coordinated clauses, the crucial thing is that the clauses are able to stand on their own; they are known as independent (or main) clauses. In English, coordination is signalled by coordinators (or coordinating conjunctions) like *but, and, or.* In the following examples, the two main clauses are underlined.

The Tamagotchi goes to sleep but it wakes up.

This cycle continues and it's much like your life, really.

Another feature of coordination is that you can often reverse the ordering of the clauses without affecting the grammaticality or the sense. (You can't, though, if there is a temporal or causal relationship between the clauses, as there is in the first example above — you have to go to sleep before you wake up.)

Coordination is relatively straightforward. Subordination is far trickier. It implies the combination of clauses that are syntactically non-equivalent. One clause, the subordinate clause, forms part of the main clause. So it is very different from coordination. We have linked clauses that are of equal status. Here's an example where there are two subordinate clauses (underlined):

When I got older I thought that I'd dealt with my chest hair fetish.

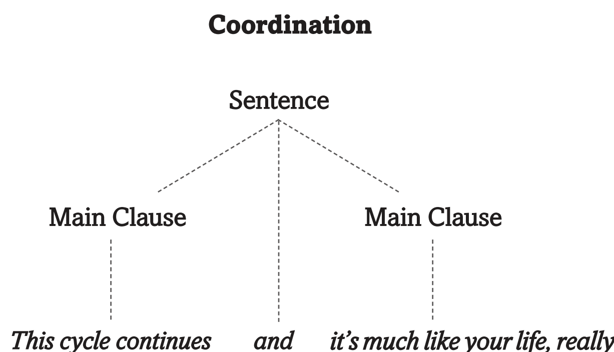
The verb in this sentence is built around *thought*. This main clause verb takes a subject, *I* and an adverbial expression (a clause) *when I got older,* as well as an object (a clause) *that I dealt with my chest hair fetish*. Note that the main clause is the whole sentence, not just *I thought.* Such sentences as this one, then, differ from the two we looked at above in that these subordinate clauses actually form part of the other clause — they are not independent the way they were above.

In this example there is something explicitly marking the beginning of the first subordinate clause, namely *when*. This is known as a subordinator (or subordinating conjunction). Other subordinators include *that, if, whether, after, because, until, while* and *although,* or relative pronouns such as *who, whom, whose, what* and *which*. In some subordinate clauses, you can omit the subordinator altogether and another version of the second subordinate clause above illustrates this. We can easily delete its subordinator *that* (and in fact, this is what we usually do in speech):

….. *I thought I'd dealt with my chest hair fetish*

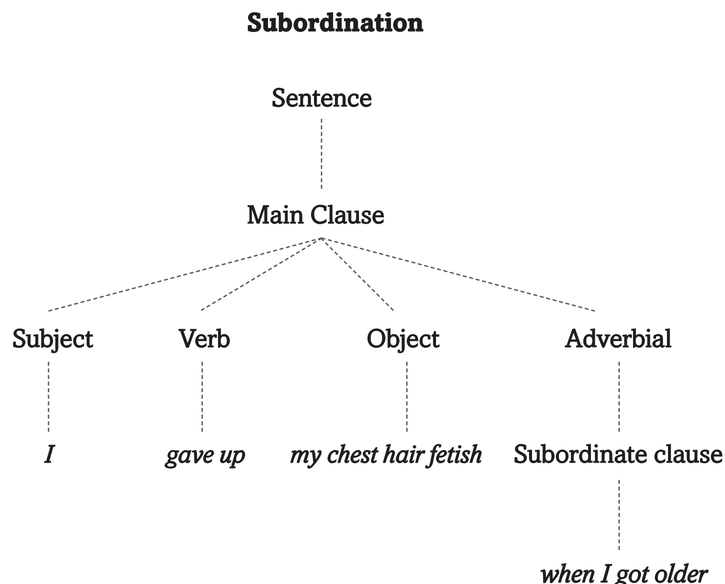
The following (rather rough) tree diagrams are perhaps helpful in indicating the difference between these two types of clause linkage:

Coordination



In the above example, we have what's called a compound sentence made up of two conjoined independent clauses — one is not subordinate to the other. Note, you can even leave out the coordinator.

Subordination



This is a **complex sentence** where one clause is embedded within another clause (the main clause) and is dependent on it; in other words, the clause *when I got older* cannot stand on its own.

It is also quite possible for a clause to be subordinated within another clause that is itself a subordinate clause. Things can get really complicated with subordination! The following example (from the Melbourne *Big Issue* 73: 38) looks like a straightforward sentence, but when you analyse it, you uncover three subordinate clauses (given in square brackets):

> *She looked at me* [*as if I had just told her* [*I was starting up my own sect and wanted* [*to use her cat as the supreme being and her hubby for the first offering*]]].

There is also a coordinated clause linked by *and*. This is an example of a **compound-complex sentence** (these can have two or more coordinated clauses and one or more subordinate clauses).

Clause combining
Label each of the following sentences as simple, compound, complex, or compound-complex.

> The secret of pavlova is in the cooking. The oven must not be too hot and it must not be too low. The dessert should end up crunchy on the outside without it being too browned. Beginners may need to practise a couple of times to master a good pav. You may find that you need to adjust your oven temperature as every oven is different.
>
> — adapted from Gabriel Gate, 'Pavlova Recipe'

SENTENCE FRAGMENTS

Not all sentences have a complete structure. Elsewhere in this book, we described the register of modern advertising which makes use of kind of "shredded English"; in other words, short sentences and sentence fragments. There are few (often no) verbs:

- Summer lunch with crunch! (Brownberry croutons)
- New Sugar Free Soothers. A taste worth shouting about. Treat your throat to Allan's Soothers.
- Fosters the Australian for lager.

7.4.3 TYPES OF SENTENCES

English has four main types of sentences that can be distinguished on the basis of their structure. They are:

Declaratives (make statements; i.e. assert something)
My hovercraft is full of eels.

Imperatives (issue directives like commands, requests, instructions)
Fill your hovercraft with eels!

Interrogatives (pose questions or request information)
Is my hovercraft full of eels?
What is my hovercraft full of?
Where are the eels?

Exclamatives (make exclamations; e.g. express surprise, disgust)
And what eels they are!

Each of the structural sentence types has a typical function (indicated in the brackets above). However, we emphasise this is just the typical correspondence between form and function. For example, interrogatives can be used for many purposes other than posing a question ('Got the time, mate' is a yes-no interrogative but does not require an answer *yes* or *no*; 'Why don't you jump in the lake' is not seeking information). Questions can also be asked without using an interrogative structure (the declarative 'I'm cold' could be a subtle way of asking someone to shut the window). It is for this reason that we need to distinguish form from function.

STRUCTURE OF DECLARATIVES

In a declarative sentence the subject noun phrase precedes the verb phrase. In the following, we've underlined the verb phrases.

I <u>have pulled out the plastic tab</u>.
A checkered shape <u>bursts unconvincingly into a small, intelligent-eyed blob</u>.
It <u>sits above me, pacing from side to side inside its tiny white egg</u>.
Its small square eyes <u>stare meaningfully</u>.
The Tamagotchi <u>goes to sleep</u>.

Since the declarative structure is probably what you would think of as the most normal way of arranging a sentence, all other sentence types are defined according to how they vary from this basic structure.

STRUCTURE OF IMPERATIVES

The following are examples of the most central type of imperatives:

Be good!
Don't be ridiculous!

The subject of imperatives is the second person pronoun (*you*), which is either understood (therefore absent) or present as in *You be good!* The verb is in the base form (or infinitive). The negative imperative (and also the emphatic construction) is always formed with *do* as in *don't be ridiculous*.

STRUCTURE OF INTERROGATIVES

There are three main types of interrogatives:

Open interrogatives seek information; in fact, they are often called 'information-seeking questions'

or *wh*-questions on the basis of the fact they contain one of the interrogative words beginning with *wh*: *who(m), which, whose, what, where, why, how* (*how* is actually a *wh-* word in disguise). For example, 'Who did you see?' 'What will you do?' and so on.

Closed interrogatives seek comment on the degree of truth. These are the most basic type of interrogative (sometimes called 'yes-no questions'). They include examples such as 'Are you bored?'/ 'Aren't you bored' (here there are two possible answers 'yes' or 'no' — this is why they are called closed interrogatives.

Tag interrogatives request the hearer to express agreement or disagreement (the intonation can be either rising or falling on the tag — the former indicates more doubt, the latter is more confirmation-seeking). For example:

You're going, aren't you?
You're not going, are you?

Not all varieties of English show this sort of complex tag. Simplified versions of the tag questions of Standard English are found in many colloquial and nonstandard varieties around the world. Some of these are simplified invariable forms of the standard tags, like *innit, ini, ana* and *na*.

STRUCTURE OF EXCLAMATIVES

Exclamatives are similar in form to interrogatives, but there is no subject-auxiliary inversion. The first example has a *wh*-word but doesn't invert the subject and verb. (All our examples here are taken from *The Big Issue*.)

What a spiteful, vindictive bloody sheep it is!

In fact, it is possible to form exclamatory messages by simply using appropriate intonation on all sorts of sentence types. For example, the message can be expressed with a declarative structure as in the following sentence:

You're alive, you stupid bastard!

The next example has the structure of a *wh*-interrogative but is clearly intended to be an exclamation.

Why can't he get his dirty-bloody socks into the laundry basket — just once!

Sentence types

Are the sentences declarative, interrogative, imperative or exclamative?

a) Why are you so edgy tonight, Bruce?
b) Don't bother your father, Carol.
c) She got arrested at the police-brutality protest because she brutalised an officer.
d) The cops'll get you for that, Walter.
e) Jeeves, we'll have dinner now.
f) Will you serve it in her, please?

g) Who knows when the crusade will succeed?
h) How sweet it will be.
i) How sweet will it be?
j) Just double my pay, and watch the justice flow.

PASSIVE AND ACTIVE SENTENCES

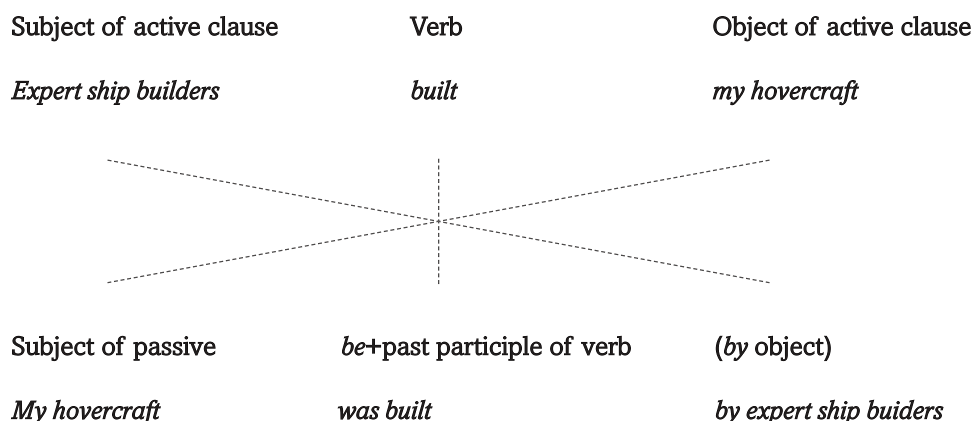
The sentence below shows the neutral word order Subject-Verb-Everything Else pattern that we expect of a basic English clause. It has an actor/agent subject and a patient object. This is the so-called active version.

Expert ship builders	*built*	*my hovercraft*
Subject	Verb	Object
Agent		Patient

What the passive version of this sentence does is reverse this order, so that the original patient becomes the grammatical subject and the original agent gets moved into a prepositional phrase headed by *by*. (Why we alter the word order in this way has to do with the flow of information; for example, what speakers or writers want to highlight or alternatively what they want to obscure.)

My hovercraft	*was built*	*by expert ship builders.*
Subject	Verb	Adverbial
Patient		Agent

When we make a passive sentence, we promote an object to a subject and simultaneously demote the subject to a *by*-phrase or we leave it out all together. But we also need to insert the appropriate form of the verb *to be* and change the original verb following into its past participle form. We can show this process in the following diagram.



7.5 SEMANTICS

> Pity the poor analyst, who has to do the best he can with meanings that are as elusive as a piece of wet soap in a bathtub. [Dwight Bolinger *Aspects of Language* 1975]

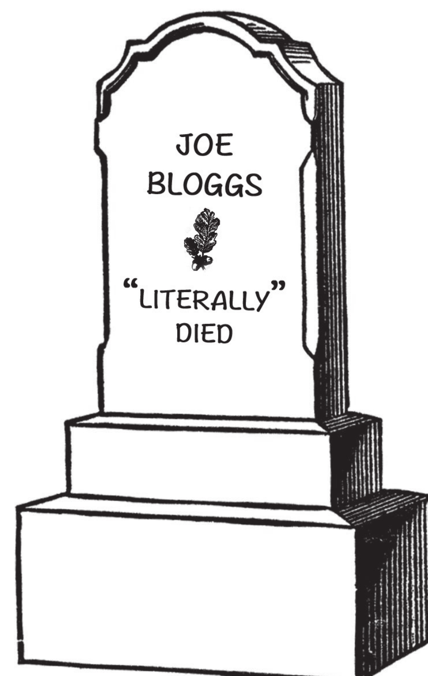
The relationship between the sign and its meaning is totally arbitrary; in other words, there is no necessary relationship between the form of a word and its meaning. It is simply a matter of convention; that is, learning a language means learning these agreed-upon meanings of strings of sounds and we are not free to change these meanings. Even new words enter a language with an agreed-upon meaning. Of course, there are some words (such as onomatopoeic words) that bear a close relationship between form and meaning. These are sound symbolic words (such as *woof, roof roof, bow-wow* etc). However, even these have an element of arbitrariness. Dogs in English go *woof woof* and in German *wau wau* [vaʊvaʊ] and in Korean *meong meong* — so much for arbitrariness!

JUST TO CLEAR THINGS UP:

A FEW	ANYWHERE FROM 2 TO 5
A HANDFUL	ANYWHERE FROM 2 TO 5
SEVERAL	ANYWHERE FROM 2 TO 5
A COUPLE	2 (BUT SOMETIMES UP TO 5)

There are many different kinds of meaning. Denotation refers to meaning such as we find in an everyday dictionary, meaning that is constantly associated with a word. Connotation is the meaning a word takes on by associations. These may arise out of speakers' beliefs, experiences, prejudices, or even the context in which the word is used. Sets of words can have the same sense, but differ hugely in their connotations: 'I'm generous' versus 'She's a spendthrift'; 'I'm careful' versus 'He's mean'; 'I'm strong-minded' versus 'He's plain obstinate/pigheaded'. The second member of each of these pairs has many more unpleasant connotations than the first. Connotation will vary (unlike denotative meanings) from individual to individual, and community to community, and the existence of connotation makes it extremely difficult (if not impossible) to find cases of absolute identity of meaning between vocabulary items (in other words, true synonyms). The expressions *cheap* and *inexpensive* are definitely not absolute synonyms, even though *cheap* is usually defined as 'inexpensive' in the dictionary. It is hard to imagine words that are identical in all the associations they have taken on from the different contexts in which they have been used.

Etymology is the study of the history of words and of word origins. It also examines the changes in form and meaning that words can undergo through their lifetime (as in the shift in the word *literally* from 'factually' to 'not factually, figuratively'). Meaning changes have been classified into various types. The classification falls along two axes. First, words can change in sense; that is, what we understand as the actual 'meaning' of a word. Changes here are



of three basic types: broadening, narrowing and shift. Second, words can change in connotation; that is, any associations a word might have because of our ideas and experiences. Changes here are of two types: deterioration and elevation. These labels are just a convenient way of classifying the change and they have no actual explanatory value — as you might expect from their contradictory nature.

GLOSSARY

Accent
A distinctive way of pronouncing a language or variety that is identified with national, regional, social or ethnic background (not to be confused with 'dialect'). Accents of Australian English are usually characterized as a continuum of cultivated-general-broad varieties that are primarily differentiated by variation in the vowel sounds.

Acronym (*Versus* abbreviations)
Words formed from the initials of other words; e.g. *pebcak* from 'problem exists between chair and keyboard'. Acronyms have to be pronounceable like other ordinary words in the language. Words that are pronounced as strings of letter names (PDQ 'pretty damn quick') are abbreviations (or initialisms).

Active
The most common type of 'grammatical voice', whereby the actor or agent of a transitive clause occurs as the subject and the patient occurs as the object (e.g. *Fred kicked the dog*). *See also* passive.

Adjacency pair
A part of a conversation that contains an exchange of turns by two speakers. The turns are related to each other in such a way that the first turn requires a certain type of response in the second turn. They include the automatic patterns you find when people apologize, compliment, greet or farewell.

Adjective
A word class that typically refers to qualities or states and can occur as a modifier in noun phrases (*a <u>tall</u> person*) and a complement in verb phrases (*that person is <u>tall</u>*). Gradable adjectives can often be inflected for degree (e.g. *tall, taller, tallest*).

Adverb
A word class that typically refers to time, frequency, place, manner and so on. Many adverbs are derived from adjectives via the *-ly* suffix.

Adverbial
A phrase (adverb phrase, prepositional phrase and even noun phrase) that is optionally included in the predicate. Adverbials show a range of different meanings (e.g. time, manner, place, frequency), and flexibility of word order; e.g. *He <u>eventually</u> collapsed; <u>Eventually</u> he collapsed; He collapsed <u>eventually</u>*.

Affix
Morpheme that can be added to a root (or a stem) to form a more complex word. Affixes are classified according to where they appear (indicated by a hyphen). Suffixes follow the root; e.g. *-s* (*probs*). Prefixes precede the root; e.g. *uber-* (*ubergeek*). A third minor type, infixes, must occur inside the root; these tend to be playful; e.g. *-ma-* (*sophistimacated* 'pseudo-sophisticated'). *See also* roots versus stems.

Affixation
A morphological process that involves the addition of bound morphemes (or affixes) to a word stem. *See also* derivation versus inflection.

Affricate
Sound produced by first making a compete closure

or stop in the oral cavity which is then slackened and released as a fricative (think of it as a stop with a slow release).

Agentless passive
A passive without an agent or doer of the action (in other words, the subject in the active version); for instance, in the sentence, *The world is considered round*, there is no agent noun indicating by whom the world is considered to be round. *See* also passive.

Alliteration
The repetition of consonant sounds at the beginning of nearby words; e.g. *fame and fortune, publish or perish*.

Alveolar
A sound produced using the tip or the blade of the tongue and the alveolar (or teeth) ridge.

Ambiguity
Can involve an expression with more than one meaning (= lexical ambiguity); for example, *Debbie is ravishing*, where *ravishing* can mean 'extremely attractive' or 'very hungry'. The structure of a sentence can also give rise to ambiguity (= structural / grammatical ambiguity); e.g. *I saw what Debbie did.*

Anaphoric reference
Involves expressions that refer back to something that has gone on before in the discourse (the antecedent). The antecedent is necessary to provide the information for the expression's interpretation.

Animation (*See* personification)

Antithesis
A kind of parallelism that involves the juxtaposition of contrasting phrases; speakers and writers use paired phrases and clauses that are similarly structured but show a difference in ideas; e.g. 'To err is human; to forgive divine'.

Antonym
Words that are the opposite in meaning; e.g. *fast* is an antonym of *slow.*

Archaism
Word or construction no longer employed or transferred from earlier phases of a language. Examples such as *manifold*, *ere*, and *prithee* may be found in historical novels.

Article
An encoding of the notions of definiteness and indefiniteness. English has a definite article (*the*) and an indefinite article (*a/an*).

Assimilation (*versus* dissimilation)
Sounds changing their shape to become more alike; e.g. 'hand bag' pronounced as 'hambag'. The opposite process is dissimilation where sounds become less similar to one another; e.g. Latin *purpur* > English *purple*.

Assonance
The repetition of identical or similar stressed vowel sounds for a special effect; for example, 'that dolphin-torn, that gong-tormented sea' (William Butler Yeats, *Sailing to Byzantium*).

Auxiliary
A group of verbs that are used to support non-finite forms of main verbs and that are inflected for person, number and tense; e.g. *was* in *I was running*.

Back-channelling
Involves words such as *yeah, ok* and sounds such as *hmm, uh uh* (minimal responses) that listeners use while someone else is talking.

Borrowing
The term given to the process of adopting linguistic features (words, grammar and so on) from another language. Vocabulary borrowing is the most usual; borrowed items are known as loan words.

Broad Australian
An accent at the end of the sociolectal continuum in Australian English that is furthest from British Received Pronunciation and therefore often considered overseas as the stereotypical Australian accent. It is sometimes identified with working class or rural Australians, especially males. *See also* accent.

Cataphoric reference
Refers forward to another expression that follows it; e.g. *If you want it, you can take my book.*

Clause
A structural unit that is larger than a phrase and may constitute a simple sentence or a constituent of a complex sentence.

Cleft construction
A focus device that splits off a part of a sentence in order to give it prominence. Two clauses are formed, the first introduced by an empty subject *it* and a form of *be,* followed by the highlighted constituent; the rest of the sentence is recast as a relative clause, beginning with *that*; e.g. to focus *last year* in the sentence *I saw him last year* you can create the cleft: *It was last year that I saw him.*

Cockney
A variety used by Londoners, especially working class people in the East End.

Code-switching
The practice of moving back and forth between languages in a single interaction. It is a normal and natural feature of the conversations between speakers who know the same two (or more) languages.

Codex
The set of norms of a (national variety of a) language. There are usually codices for the lexicon and orthography (dictionary), morphology and syntax (normative grammar), and pronunciation (pronunciation guide).

Coherence
The semantic connections that exist within a text to make it meaningful; i.e. if a text is coherent it makes sense.

Cohesion
The linguistic connections and ties that exist between words and sentences to give structure to a text.

Collective noun (*See* mass noun)
A noun that denotes a group of entities, such as *team, government* and so on. Depending on the dialect, collective nouns can trigger either singular or plural agreement on the verb.

Collocation
Involves words that routinely combine with each other; e.g. the phrases *rank weeds, rancid butter* and *rotten eggs* go together even though *rank, rancid* and *rotten* mean roughly the same thing.

Colloquialism
A word or phrase that is not formal or literary and is used in ordinary conversation.

Comment (*See* topic)

Community languages
Languages other than English spoken by immigrants and their descendants. The corresponding term in Canada and among some people in the US is 'heritage languages'.

Complement
Generally, any obligatory element in a grammatical construction. More specifically, it refers to a clausal element that completes what is said about the subject; e.g. *That sentence sounds peculiar.*

Complex sentences (*See* simple sentences)

Compound sentences (*See* simple sentences)

Compounding
A way of forming a new word by combining two or more free morphemes. The resulting compound is a word that contains a stem made up of more than one root; it can be written as two words, one solid word or with a hyphen (e.g. *ice cream, icecream, ice-cream*).

Concord (singular and plural)
Refers to a grammatical relationship where a singular or plural subject demands the corresponding form of the verb; e.g. *He likes fish.* Concord is also sometimes called agreement.

Connotation (*versus* denotation)
Is the emotional meaning of words that arises from people's personalities, beliefs and experiences; unlike

denotative (or dictionary) meanings, connotations can differ from person to person; e.g. the expressions *micturate, urinate, have a pee, go to the loo* have the same denotation but different connotations.

Consonance
A special linguistic effect that involves the repetition of sounds in a sequence of words; e.g. *the **t**orn up **t**imetables of cancelled **t**rains which drop like confe**tt**i on emp**t**y bo**tt**les of wine'.*

Constituent
Any functional unit of a grammatical construction.

Context
Can refer to the linguistic environment in which a feature (e.g. consonant or vowel) occurs, or the non-linguistic situation in which language is used.

Conversion
A way of forming new words by simply changing the function of a word; for example, *she didn't win but at least she medalled* shows the creation of a verb *to medal* from a noun *medal.*

Coordination
The combination of two or more elements (words, phrases or clauses) that are equal in function and status. The elements are linked by coordinators or coordinating conjunctions, such as *and* and *or* (these are the only ones able to conjoin more than two elements).

Corpus
A body of texts, utterances and other linguistic specimens collected through conversations, interviews or from written sources which are the subject of analysis or become a data base regarded as typical of a particular language or variety.

Count noun
Can be interpreted as an individuated entity and can therefore be counted and a distinction made between singular and plural. This is usually marked grammatically; e.g. *book, books; mouse, mice.* Count nouns may also occur with the indefinite article *a/an* and cardinal numbers. *See* mass noun.

Creative word formation
Includes the processes by which new words are made; e.g. compounding, shortening, affixation and so on.

Creole
A nativised pidgin; i.e. a pidgin language that has become the mother tongue of a speech community.

Cultivated Australian
An accent in that part of the sociolectal continuum in Australian English that is closest to British Received Pronunciation. It is sometimes identified with the educated middle and upper middle class, especially females.

Cultural Context
Refers to the cultural background of the discourse and includes what the participants know about the context, the reasons for their behaviour and their expectations of others involved in the discourse.

Declarative (*See* sentence types)

Deictic expression
Involves words such as *here* and *these* (the term *deictic* means 'pointing'); they represent a way of using language to 'point' to the temporal, situational and personal aspects of the event.

Demonstrative
Is a word that refers to persons and things by indicating their location in time and/or space; e.g. *this book* versus *that book* signals whether the book is near to speaker (*this*) or away from speaker (*that*). Demonstratives can include pronouns (*I like this*) and determiners (*I like this book*).

Denotation (*See* connotation)

Dental
Describes a consonant made by the tongue tip between the teeth or the tongue tip or blade close behind the upper teeth; e.g. the 'th' in words like *either* and *ether.*

Derivational affix (*Versus* inflectional affix)
Belong to a large open set of morphemes that form new words; they change parts of speech, have more

lexical meaning, appear close to the stem, show irregular distribution and occur with only some members of a class; e.g. adding *-er* to *run* changes the meaning from an activity to a person involved in that activity. Inflectional affixes belong to a small closed set of affixes that don't create new words, but add grammatical information; e.g. attaching *-s* to *run* in *runs* doesn't drastically change the meaning of the word. Inflections occur after derivational affixes; e.g. in *confect-ion-er-s* the plural inflection *-s* appears after all other (derivational) suffixes.

Determiner
A word class that expresses notions such as definiteness, quantity, number and possession. Subclasses of determiner include: articles, demonstratives, quantifiers, interrogative and possessive pronouns.

Dialect
A variety that has grammar and vocabulary that identifies the geographical or social origin of the speaker.

Dialogue
A piece of speech or writing that involves two (or more) persons.

Diminutive
An affix added to a common or proper noun that indicates smallness and usually expresses affection (though sometimes dismissal). It is very common in Australian English, where the suffixes are usually *-o* and *-ie* (as in *Tassie* and *Salvo*).

Diphthong/diphthongization
A vowel formed by the tongue moving from one position to another (e.g. [aɪ] in *like*). Diphthongs have two distinct qualities.

Discourse
Involves sequences of language that are larger than a sentence.

Discourse marker (particle)
Are features of talk that have discourse functions to do with focus and change of topic and conversational functions to do with turn-taking; they may also play a role in expressing social relationships, personal attitudes and opinions, conveying sometimes subtle nuances of meaning (e.g. *well, yeah-no, like, I mean, you know*).

Dislocation
Moves an element to the left or right hand end of the sentence, leaving behind some sort of copy (e.g. a pronoun) in the gap. The purpose is to focus the topic or to provide clarification. In left-dislocation, the fronted constituent sits outside the sentence structure, and a pronoun copy appears in the original position; e.g. *Icecream, I just love it.* Right-dislocation involves the same process as left-dislocation but with the rightwards movement of material (i.e. to the end of the sentence rather than the beginning); e.g. *I love it, icecream.*

Domain
A sphere of activity, concern, interest or field; for example, home, work, school, the law and government are all domains.

Double speak
A term coined in the US that blends *doublethink* and *newspeak*. It refers to language that conceals the true meaning of a word or utterance by making the negative seem positive and diverts the hearer or reader from the consequences of the utterance or speech act.

Dysphemism
The counterpart of euphemism. It involves the verbal resources for being offensive, being abusive, or letting off steam. Like euphemism it is motivated by fear and distaste, but also by hatred and contempt. *See also* taboo.

Elision
The slurring or omission of certain sounds in a phonological context, such as *ol'man* and *haman'eggs*.

Ellipsis
The deletion of items in a sentence because they either appear elsewhere or can be reconstructed from the context; e.g. *Wanna go for lunch?*

Ethnic Broad
One of the ethnic accents of Australian English that features strongly in media stereotypes (with characters such as 'Effie' and the 'Wogboys'). *See also* accent.

Ethnolect
A variety that identifies speakers by their ethnicity; usually influenced by their L1 (first language) or that of their families. Ethnolects are often employed as in-group codes in addition to mainstream Australian English.

Etymology
The study of the origins and history of words.

Euphemism
Avoidance language that involves sweet-sounding, or at least inoffensive, alternatives for expressions that speakers or writers prefer not to use on a given occasion; e.g. *pass (away)* in place of *die*. *See also* taboo.

Exclamative (*See* sentence types)

Extraposition
Changes a complex sentence around so that a subject clause can appear in the end position. In place of the original subject we put the pronoun *it*; e.g. *That we were wrongfully waylaid by the Elvenking is true —> It is true that we were wrongfully waylaid by the Elvenking.*

Face
The need people have to be well regarded; it relates to feelings of self-esteem and to the social status associated with one's reputation. (*See also* politeness)

False start
A kind of redrafting feature found in spontaneous (unplanned) speech. The speaker starts to say something but then reconfigures what they say.

Figurative language
Language that is used in a non-literal way in order to invoke revealing comparisons. It includes such things as metaphor, simile and oxymoron (e.g. 'my Dad is going to kill me').

Filled pause
A vocalized hesitation.

Finite verb
A form of the verb that inflects for person, number and tense and can occur on its own as the main verb of a clause; e.g. *He runs regularly. See also* infinitive.

Flapping
A single rapid contact between two organs of speech, such as between the tip of the tongue and the teeth ridge in the production of [t] in the word *latter. See also* tap.

Focus
The element(s) to which speakers and writers want special attention to be paid. There is front-focus (moves elements to the beginning of sentences, giving them greater prominence) or end-focus (given, old, established) information comes before new (unpredictable, surprising) information. It is usual to arrange the information in our message so that what is most important comes towards the end.

Fricative
A sound produced when two speech organs come close enough together to partially block the airflow and create a turbulence in what we can hear; e.g. [f] and [v].

Fronting
Involves a simple word order change. It moves something from the comment to the front of the sentence to give it special focus; e.g. *Icecream I love.*

Function word (*Versus* content word)
Has purely grammatical meaning and does not refer to anything in the real world; e.g. *the, to*. It contrasts with a content word that has real world (or dictionary) meaning; e.g. *table, leg*. These two types are sometimes called grammatical versus lexical words.

General Australian
The accent characterizing most Australians which lies between Cultivated and Broad on the sociolectal continuum. *See also* accent.

Given information (*See* old information)

Glottalization
The replacement of a post-vocalic consonant such as [t] by a glottal stop, where the glottis is closed so tightly as to obstruct breath.

Glottal stop
A stopped consonant that is released at the glottis; e.g. some speakers' pronunciation of [t] in words like *bottle, butter* and so on.

Graphemic
Refers to the system of the written language.

Hedge
A mitigating device to lessen the impact of an utterance. Hedges can be adverbs (or discourse particles), often in combination with modal verbs; e.g. *Could I like borrow your lecture notes. See also* discourse markers.

High rising terminal (HRT)
An intonation pattern characteristic of the speech of many Australian and New Zealand English speakers, whereby statements have an intonation that rises at the end rather than falling.

Homophone
Words with a different origin and meaning but with the same pronunciation. They may or may not be spelled alike; e.g. *soul* 'spirit' and *sole* 'underside of the foot'.

Hyperbole
Exaggerated language often for the purpose of emphasis.

Hypercorrection
A nonstandard form that speakers produce with the idea that they are correcting an error. It involves speakers overusing a pattern (e.g. a pronunciation or a construction), in particular one they consider to be more proper (and to carry more prestige); e.g. *hever* for 'ever' in Eliza Doolittle's "In Hertford, Hereford and Hampshire hurricanes hardly hever happen".

Hyponymy
Is a kind of meaning relation that involves the connection between a more general term (like *dog*) and a specific instance of that term (like *poodle*). *Poodle* is a hyponym of *dog* and when we put words together that are related in this way, we derive redundant expressions such as *poodle dog* (all poodles are dogs).

Idiolect
The linguistic system associated with an individual speaker.

Idiom/idiomatic expression
Complex expression that makes up a single semantic unit (its meaning cannot be deduced from the meanings of the parts); e.g. *kick the bucket* = 'die'.

Imperative (*See* sentence types)

Implicature
Anything that is inferred from what the speaker says (or fails to say); e.g. if you were to say *Some cakes were eaten* this implies not all the cakes were eaten (this is an implicature). *See also* inference.

Inference
The additional information assumed by hearers/readers in order to make a connection between what has been said/written and what is meant. Note that speakers/writers imply and hearers/readers infer.

Infinitive
The base form of a verb that occurs in dictionaries. Infinitives are not inflected for person, number or tense and may be marked by *to* (the '*to*-infinitive') or nothing (the 'bare infinitive'). *See also* finite verb.

Inflectional affix (*See* derivational affix)

Information flow
Refers to how speakers and writers go about 'packaging' their messages; i.e. how they provide the right sort of cues to help their audience interpret a text appropriately.

Insertion
The addition of sounds as the various parts of the vocal track move from one sound to another (e.g. addition of [b] in *family* to produce *fambly*).

Intensifier
A word or phrase that adds emphasis and colour; e.g. *very, awfully, terribly.*

Interjection
Minor word class involving words that have emotional meaning. Such words stand by themselves outside the clause; e.g. *Doh!.*

Interlocutor
Conversational partner.

International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)
A standard system of phonetic notation (based on the Latin alphabet) to represent the sounds of spoken language.

Interrogative (*See* sentence types)

Interrogative tag
A type of reduced interrogative 'tacked' onto the end of a declarative clause; it requests the hearer to express agreement or disagreement; e.g. *The hot chocolate is pretty hot, isn't it?*

Intonation
The way pitch changes across an utterance. *See also* intonation contour.

Intonation contour
A distinctive sequence of pitches in an utterance.

Intransitive
Describes verbs and clauses that do not require an object noun phrase; e.g. *he died. See also* transitive.

Intrusive [r]
The insertion of [r] between a final vowel of one syllable and the initial vowel of another, e.g. *law[r] and order.*

Inverted subject–verb order (subject–verb inversion)
Can be used for grammatical ends in the formation of questions (e.g. *Are you leaving now?*). It can also be employed for expressive means; shifting the subject out of its natural environment represents a way of changing focus, and it has dramatic force; e.g. *Out will come beef dusted with Japanese pepper, fingers of salmon with dill sauce and all that rocket in olive oil.*

Irony
Language that expresses incongruity between what might be expected and what actually occurs; e.g. *wonderful work* when said of something that is clearly woeful.

Jargon
Language shared by those who belong to a profession, trade or some other occupational group. It can distinguished by lexical, phonological, grammatical and discourse features. Jargons have two distinct functions: (1) to serve as technical or specialist languages (orthodox function); (2) to promote in-group solidarity. In ordinary usage, the label is often used pejoratively, and this sense derives from the second function (those outside the group can find the jargon unintelligible and alienating). *See also* register.

Labio-dental
A sound produced using the lower lip and the upper teeth; for example [f].

Left-dislocation (*See* dislocation)

Lexical
Pertaining to words (vocabulary).

Lexical items
Words or vocabulary.

Lexicology
The study of the vocabulary of a language (including both the history and the current state of words).

Lexicon
The vocabulary of a language.

Lingua franca
A medium of communication for people who have different first languages; English is said to be the global lingua franca.

Listing (*See* parallelism)

Lowering
Change to a vowel that is made more towards the bottom of the mouth.

Mass noun
Can be interpreted as an indivisible mass of material and does not make a distinction between the singular and plural; this is usually signaled grammatically; e.g. *milk, *milks, water, *two waters* (the asterisk indicates these are unacceptable). Sometimes mass nouns can be used as count nouns (they then acquire a narrower meaning); *beer* is any old beer, but *a beer* is either a glass of beer or a kind of beer. *See also* count noun.

Merger
The coming together of linguistic units or features that were previously different.

Metalanguage
A language that is used to talk about language.

Metaphor
Non-literal use of language where people refer to one domain by using language expressions normally associated with some other domain. There is a transfer of meaning from one context to another; e.g. describing someone as having *raven hair, emerald eyes*.

Minimal response (*See* back-channelling)

Modal auxiliary
Verbs like *can, could, shall, should, will, would, may, might,* and *must* that signal the attitude of the speaker and express notions such as probability, possibility, doubt, contingency, wishing and so on. They are exceptional in lacking any inflection *(*he musts)*. (The asterisk indicates this is unacceptable.)

Mode
Refers to the medium of communication (i.e. whether it is spoken, written, signed).

Monologue
A piece of speech or writing that is produced by a single person.

Monophthong
A vowel sound that is relatively constant, in contrast with a diphthong.

Morpheme
The smallest meaningful unit in the grammar of a language; e.g. the word *unfriendly* has three morphemes: *un-, friend, -ly; bargain* has only one. We cannot break up any of these morphemes any more without losing the meaning; e.g. *friend* does not further divide into *fri + end* and *bargain* is not made up of *bar + gain*.

Morphology
The study of word structure, especially in terms of morphemes.

Neologism
A newly coined word.

New information (*See* old information)

Nominalization
The process that turns whole clauses into noun-like structures; e.g. the noun *nominalization* from the verb *nominalize*. Prose that is heavily nominal in this way is more abstract.

Norm
A form codified as correct or put forward as a model.

Noun
A word class traditionally defined as 'the name of a person, place or thing'. Nouns express number in their morphology (*book/books*) and are the heads of noun phrases that function as subjects, objects and complements of verbs. They occur with dependents such as adjectives *(small)* and determiners *(the, a)*.

Object
A constituent of the clause that follows the verb in basic clauses. Objects can be noun phrases (*Max never eats fish*) or subordinate clauses (*Max swears that he never eats fish*) and can often be made the subject in the corresponding passive clause (*Fish is never eaten by Max*).

Observer's Paradox
An expression coined by sociolinguist William Labov. The paradox lies in the fact that linguists try to observe the way people speak when they are not being observed.

Old (Given) information (*Versus* new)
Two kinds of information. Old (or given) information is familiar in the sense that it refers to something that has appeared earlier in the text, or which is common knowledge. The new (most salient) information is what gains audience-attention.

Onomatopoeia
Involves words whose sounds convey or suggest their meaning. These words may mimic sounds in the real world (*cuckoo*). Onomatopoeia can be also used for literary effect ("Of the bells, bells, bells, bells, bells, bells, bells — In the clamor and the clangor of the bells" (Edgar Allan Poe's *The Bells*).

Orthography
The study of the use of letters in a language; it includes the rules of spelling.

Overt and covert norms (*See* prestige)

Oxymoron
A phrase that combines two contradictory terms; e.g. an adjective might disagree with the noun it modifies as in *deafening silence*.

Paralinguistics
Refers to those features of speech that are marginal to language, including aspects of 'body language' such as stance, gesture and gaze.

Parallelism
The use of similar sounds, words or grammatical constructions; e.g. the sentence *The sun rises; the sun sets* uses two similarly structured clauses in order to express ideas that are equally important. It often involves coordinated phrases or lists of words, as in *signed, sealed and delivered.*

Passive
The discourse strategy whereby an original object becomes the grammatical subject while an original subject gets moved into an optional prepositional phrase (or is left out all together; *see* agentless passive); e.g. *Fred kicked the ball* → *The ball was kicked by Fred.*

Past participle
A form of the verb that ends in either *-en* (*eaten*) or more regularly *-ed* (*jumped*). It must be supported by an auxiliary verb when it appears as the main verb of a clause (e.g. *The cake was eaten*).

Personification
A figure of speech that gives non-humans (such as animals, ideas, things) human qualities (such as emotions, desires, expressions and powers of speech); e.g. *the wind howled.*

Phoneme
The abstract distinctive sound units of a language.

Phonetics
The study of the production (also transmission and reception) of speech sounds.

Phonology
The study of the sound system of languages.

Phrase
A group of words that is smaller than a clause and that behaves like a structural unit; it is named after the head (the core or the most important word of the phrase); e.g. noun phrase, verb phrase and so on.

Pidgin
A makeshift language that springs up when speakers of different linguistic backgrounds come together and need to communicate. Usually the socially dominant language provides much of the lexicon while significant features of the grammar come from other sources.

Pitch
How high the voice is, reflecting how quickly the vocal cords vibrate.

Pleonasm
A kind of redundancy; expressions use more words that are necessary to express the meaning as in *free gift*.

Pluricentric language
Has official status in a number of different nations and shows some different norms in each national variety; e.g. English is a pluricentric language with differences in pronunciation, vocabulary, spelling and grammar between Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, North America, Singapore, India and so on.

Politeness (positive and negative face)
Language behaviour that shows an awareness of another's self-image and that might be counted as good manners. At best it is language that is pleasing to an audience; at the very least is inoffensive. Positive politeness makes someone feel good (e.g. by showing a flattering interest in their achievements or even accommodating to (or adopting) their accent); negative politeness follows from the idea of not imposing on someone else (e.g. by using language that is incoherent or irrelevant, or perhaps by not being a nuisance by, say, imposing on another person's time).

Political correctness
The avoidance of expressions or behaviours that are perceived to exclude, marginalize or affront groups of people who are disadvantaged or discriminated against. Politically correct terms may highlight aspects of a particular group's identity (e.g. *African American* emphasizes, not genetics or colour, but the historical roots of a group that now forms part of the US).

Positive and negative face (*see* politeness)

Pragmatics
The study of language use — how people make sense out of language given the context in which they hear or read it and the knowledge they have about each other and about the world and how it works.

Predicate
The part of the sentence that provides the information about the subject. It includes the verb and everything else; e.g. *He* *is a teacher; She* *has washed the car*.

Prefix (*See* affix and affixation)

Preposition
A function word that can be used for a number of semantic purposes. Prototypical prepositions express spatial relations (e.g. *by* in *He stood by my side*). They can also have a more grammatical function (e.g. *by* in *He was hit by the car* signals the agent in a passive construction).

Prescription (*Versus* description)
The approach that describes language behaviour in relation to standards or ideals about how the language 'should' really be, while the descriptive approach to research and teaching about language focuses on what can actually be observed.

Present participle
A form of the verb that ends in *-ing* (*running*). When it is the main verb of a clause, it must be supported by a form of the auxiliary verb *be* (e.g. *He is running*).

Prestige (overt *versus* covert norms)
High esteem. Linguistic features with overt prestige are those recognized by the culturally dominant group (the standard features). Features with covert prestige signal membership within a certain sub-group (a kind of "street cred").

Principle of end-weight
The placement of syntactically complex or 'heavy' structures (those heavy with modifiers) late in a sentence. If not followed, sentences can become clumsy and more difficult to process.

Progressive aspect (*See* present participle)
An aspect made up of some form of *be* together with the present participle. It indicates duration or incompleteness; e.g. *I am using Omo in my wash*. It is sometimes called continuous.

Pronoun
Function word such as *it, they, him* that is used in place of a noun phrase.

Prosodic
Pertaining to loudness, pitch, tempo and speech rhythm; prosodic patterns are used to differentiate types of utterances such as questions and statements.

Prosody
Used in phonetics and phonology to refer to the characteristics of pitch, rhythm, tempo, loudness (= prosodic features).

Public language
Variety of language used in a public (i.e. open and shared) context.

Pun
A type of word play that uses the different meanings of a word or brings together words that are similar in sound but have different meanings.

Quantifier
A noun modifier that expresses amount, such as *few, little, many* and numerals like *one, three* and so on.

Raising
Change to a vowel that is made towards the top of the mouth.

Rebus
A device that uses symbols to represent words or parts of words; e.g. *2 Y's U R* 'too wise you are'.

Received Pronunciation
The prestige and regionally neutral accent of British English; until recently it was the standard form used in British broadcasting.

Register
Any socially defined variety of language that is appropriate for a specific situation, occupation or subject matter; e.g. a register of scientific or religious English. In addition to phonological, grammatical and even paralinguistic differences like gesture, registers have distinctive discourse structures. *See also* jargon.

Relative clause
A subordinate clause that is 'introduced' by a relative pronoun (e.g. *who, which*) or the relative word *that* — the choice depends on the function of the 'replaced' noun phrase in the relative clause and whether or not the reference is to a person; e.g. *Fry, who gets frozen in a cryogenic chamber, was a good friend*. Except when it functions as the subject of the relative clause, the relative pronoun or word can be omitted.

Rhetoric
Involves techniques for effective or persuasive speaking/writing.

Rhotic
Varieties of English are said to be rhotic if speakers articulate [r] after vowels. Australian English is non-rhotic.

Rhyme
The recurring pattern of identical or similar sounds at the end of two or more different words; e.g. *Jack fell down, and broke his crown*.

Rhythm
The pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in language. Poets often use rhythm to emphasize ideas or to create mood; a rhythm might create an effect of effort or difficulty (e.g. the heavy rhythm of *Iambic feet are firm and flat*); another might suggest playfulness (e.g. the skipping rhythm of *Dactylic daintiness, lilting so prettily*).

Right-dislocation (*See* dislocation)

Root (*Versus* stem)
A single lexical (usually free-standing) morpheme; it represents the core of the word, to which bound morphemes can then be added (e.g. *baking* and *distasteful* formed from *bake* and *taste*). Affixes can directly attach to roots, as in *baking* and *distasteful*, or they can attach to constructions already containing one or more affixes. Such constructions are called stems; e.g. *friendship* has the root *friend* to which we can add the suffix *-ship* to create the stem *friendship* to which more affixes can then be added (*friendships*).

Rounding
Pronouncing a vowel with rounded lips.

Schwa
An unstressed vowel [ə] made in the centre of the mouth; e.g. the vowel heard at the beginning of *about.*

Semantic field (or Semantic Domain)
An area of meaning that is identified by a set of related lexical items; e.g. *claret, rosé, sangiovese, riesling,* and so on are part of the semantic field of wine.

Semantics
The study of linguistic meaning.

Sentence types
Declaratives, imperatives, interrogatives and exclamatives. These four main types of sentence can be defined in structural terms:

Declarative (e.g. *I like icecream)*:
subject + predicate
Interrogative (e.g. *Does he like icecream?*):
auxiliary + subject + rest of predicate
Imperative (e.g. *(You) eat your icecream!*):
(You) + predicate
Exclamative (*What a lot of icecream there is!*):
what/how + subject predicate

For each sentence type there is a corresponding meaning type that is typically expressed by that sentence type:

Declarative: making a statement
Interrogative: posing a question
Imperative: issuing a directive
Exclamative: making an exclamation

Simile
A figurative expression that involves a comparison between two things. In English, it is signalled by the words *like* or *as*; *lips like rubies.*

Simple sentence (*Versus* compound and complex sentence)
Contains a single independent clause (e.g. *I like butter*). By contrast a compound sentence has two or more coordinated clauses (e.g. *I like butter and he likes margarine*), and a complex sentence has an independent clause and one or more subordinate clauses (e.g. *I like butter, because I reckon it's better for you*).

Situational Context
Refers to contextual knowledge and includes the knowledge of who is speaking, who is listening, what's being discussed, and general facts about the world.

Slang
An in-group variety used by people with something in common; it is often bound by time and generation and is informal, usually spoken not written and it involves mainly vocabulary. A striking feature is also its playfulness.

Social Purpose
Refers to the use language is put within a particular social setting (for example formal versus informal).

Sociolect
A variety used by people of a particular socioeconomic status or educational background (high(er) sociolect, low(er) sociolect.)

Sociolinguistics
The study of the relationship between language and society.

Sound symbolism
The direct association between the sounds of a word and the external world. *See also* onomatopoeia.

Speech act
Is an act that is performed linguistically. You can perform speech acts (such as requests, promises, apologies, predictions, warnings, invitations, resignations, assertions and so on) by using a performative verb such as *promise, request, complain, invite* or *decline*, or you can do it indirectly with a different formulation, such as *Were you born in a tent, Come over tomorrow*, or *Sorry, I've got something else on.*

Standard English
An idealised variety that constitutes a notional set of norms generally adopted by educated speakers

of English. There are many standard varieties of English, according to age and generation and especially according to national origins.

Standard language
The prestige variety that is used as the institutional norm within a speech community; varieties that do not conform are said to be nonstandard.

Stem (*See* root)

Stop
A sound produced by completely blocking off airflow through the oral cavity; for example, [t] and [b].

Stress
How loudly and how long different syllables are uttered. We can differentiate between stressed and unstressed syllables and between heavy and light stress.

Subject
A clausal constituent about which something is stated (or predicated); e.g. <u>*The man*</u> *is tall*. English subjects can be noun phrases or clauses and they are obligatory. Subjects must agree in person and number with the verb; e.g. *The men* <u>*are*</u> *tall*.

Subordination
The combination of clauses that are syntactically non-equivalent; a subordinate clause is part of another clause (the main clause) and is introduced by a subordinator or relative pronoun; e.g. *I bought that book* <u>*because I liked it*</u> and *Here's the book* <u>*that I recommended*</u>.

Suffix (*See* affix and affixation)

Syllabic consonant
Consonant that can be used alone as a syllable; for example the [l] in *bottle* and the [n] in *button*.

Synonym
Words that have closely related meanings and can often be substituted for each other; e.g. *big* is a synonym of *large*.

Syntax
The study of sentence structure.

Taboo
Refers to prohibited behaviour and may include such things as bans on naming dangerous animals, food restrictions, prohibitions on touching or talking to members of high social classes and injunctions to do with aspects of birth, death and menstruation. The taboos of contemporary Western society rest ultimately on traditions of etiquette and are intimately linked with social organisation.

Tag
An element attached to the end of an utterance, such as *eh? innit?* (the 'invariable tag') or an interrogative tag such as *aren't they* or *don't we*?

Tap
A consonant made by a single rapid tongue contact against the roof of the mouth, such as the production of the [t] in *better*. (This is an alveolar tap and sounds like a rapidly articulated [d]).

Tense
A grammatical category that is associated with verbs. It locates the time of one event with respect to the time of another event (often the time of speaking). English has two tenses. Past tense refers to an event that occurred before some other event; present tense refers to events that occur in present time (*Smith runs with the ball*), but may also refer to habitual events (*I read fiction*), timeless truths (*Hens lay eggs*) and scheduled future events (*The train leaves tomorrow*).

Text
Stretch of spoken or written sentences that holds together and has a definable communicative function; texts include speeches, letters, diary entries, recipes, jury instructions, advertisements, novels and so on.

There-construction
The insertion of a dummy subject pronoun *there* in order to allow the understood subject (usually new and exciting information) to appear later, giving it greater prominence; e.g. *There are two kinds of lilies*.

Topic (*Versus* comment)
That part of the sentence that indicates what is being written or talked about. The rest of the sentence makes some sort of statement about the topic and this is called the comment. In the natural order of things, topical material occurs early in the sentence, often to provide a cohesive link with what has preceded. The comment then follows (and gives the new information).

Transitive
Applies to verbs and to clauses that require an object noun phrase; e.g. *Mary kicked the ball*. In transitive clauses, the action or event transfers from one entity to another.

Turn (and turn-taking)
A unit of talk by one speaker in a conversation. Turn-taking is the practice of alternating turns from one person to the other. *See also* adjacency pair.

Variable
Describes a linguistic feature that has different forms in different varieties; e.g. the pronunciation of *r* in words like *beer* and *pork*; in sociolinguistic research, a common feature of a sampled sub-group, such as age, gender or period of residence.

Variety
A sub-set of a language that is common to a group of people sharing regional origin (regional variety/dialect) or social characteristics (social variety/sociolect). It is sometimes also employed in situational uses of a language, such as legal or formal varieties, but it would be more appropriate to call these registers.

Vocal creak (or fry)
A trend (especially in female speech) that involves very slow and often irregular vibration of the vocal folds at the bottom of the pitch register. Similar to pitch lowering, it may represent an attempt to sound more authoritative.

Vocalization/vocalized
Articulating a consonant such as [l] as if it were a vowel.

Voiced (*Versus* voiceless sounds)
Sounds that are produced with taut vibrating vocal; they include all the vowels, the nasals and also sounds such as [b, d, g, v]. When the vocal cords are relaxed and not vibrating the sounds are voiceless; e.g. [p, t, k, f].

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

This is organized according to the main topics covered by the various sections in this book, and for each topic we provide ten publications. These include the major references given in the text, as well as additional readings to start you off on topics that you might want to explore further.

(1) ON LANGUAGE AND LINGUISTICS (general references will cover many ideas in this book)

1. Blake, B. 2008. *All about Language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
2. Bauer, L., J. Holmes & P. Warren 2006. *Language Matters*. London: Palgrave MacMillan.
3. Bolinger, D. 1975. *Aspects of Language*. (2nd ed.) New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
4. Crystal, D. 2010. *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language*. (3rd ed.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
5. de Saussure, F. 1916. *Course in General Linguistics* (trans. W. Baskin) Glasgow: Fontana/Collins.
6. Deutscher, G. 2005. *The Unfolding of Language*. New York: Owl Books.
7. Halliday, M. 2003. *On Language and Linguistics* (edited by J. Webster). London: Continuum.
8. Hockett, Ch. F. 1958. *A Course in Modern Linguistics*. The Macmillan Company: New York.
9. Pinker, S. 2007. *The Language Instinct: How the mind creates language*. New York: HarperCollins.
10. Yule, G. 2010. *The Study of Language*. (4th ed.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

(2) ON SOCIOLINGUISTICS (these references will cover many ideas in this book)

1. Bayley, R. & Lucas, C. 2007. *Sociolinguistic Variation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
2. Bell, A. 2014. *The Guidebook to Sociolinguistics*. Oxford: Blackwell.
3. Coupland, N. & A. Jaworski 2009. (eds) *The New Sociolinguistics Reader* London: Palgrave.
4. Eades, D. 2010. *Sociolinguistics and the Legal Process*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters
5. Holmes, J. 2013. *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*. (4th ed.) London: Pearson.

6. Hudson, R.A. 1996. (2nd ed.) *Sociolinguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
7. Meyerhoff, M. 2011. (2nd ed.). *Introducing Sociolinguistics* Abingdon: Routledge.
8. Trudgill, P. (4th ed.) 2000. *Sociolinguistics: An introduction to language and society*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
9. Trudgill, P. 2011. *Sociolinguistic Typology: Social determinants of linguistic complexity* Oxford: Oxford University Press.
10. Wardhaugh, R. 2010. *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics* (6th ed.). Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

(3) ON VARIATION AND STYLE

1. Biber, Douglas. 1988. *Variation across speech and writing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
2. Bolinger, D. 1980. *Language: the loaded weapon*. Harlow: Longman.
3. Coleman, J. 2012. *Life of Slang*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
4. Crystal, D. & D. Davy. 1969. *Investigating English Style*. London: Longman.
5. Culpepper, J. 2011. *Impoliteness: Using language to cause offense*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
6. Eckert, P. & Rickford J.R. 2001. *Style and Sociolinguistic Variation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
7. Goffman, E. 1967. *Interaction Ritual*. Chicago: Aldine Publishing
8. Grice H. P. 1975. Logic and Conversation. In *Syntax and Semantics*, Vol. 3; pp. 41-58.
9. Howard G. & P. F. Powesland 1975. *Speech Style and Social Evaluation*. London: Academic Press.
10. Joos, M. 1961. *The Five Clocks*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World.

(4) ON PRESCRIPTION AND THE RISE OF STANDARD ENGLISH

1. Bex, T & R. J. Watts (eds) 1999. *Standard English: the widening debate*. London: Routledge.
2. Burridge, K 2010. Linguistic Cleanliness is Next to Godliness *English Today* 26:2; pp. 3-13.
3. Burridge, K. 2007. Linguistic purism: the tug-of-love between standard and non-standard. In K. Dunworth (ed) *English in South East Asia: Challenges and changes*.
4. *Cameron, D. 2012. (2nd ed.) Verbal Hygiene. London: Routledge.*
5. Crowley 2003. *Standard English and the politics of language*. Palgrave Macmillan.
6. Curzan, A. 2014. *Fixing English: Prescriptivism and language history*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
7. Freeborn, D. 1992. *From Old to Standard English*. London: Macmillan.
8. Leith, D. 1983. *A Social History of English*. London: Routledge, Kegan & Paul.
9. Milroy, J. & L. Milroy (3rd ed.) 1998. *Authority in Language*. London: Routledge.
10. Shopen, T. & J.M Williams 1980. *Standards and Dialects in English*. Cambridge, MA: Winthrop Publishers.

(5) ON VARIATION AND SOCIAL IDENTITY

1. Cameron, D. 1999. 'Performing gender identity: Young men's talk and the construction of heterosexual masculinity. In A. Jaworski & N. Coupland (eds) *The Discourse Reader* (2nd edn). London: Routledge.
2. Coates, J. 1993. (2nd ed.) *Women, Men and Language,* London: Longman.

3. Coupland, N. 2007. *Style, Language Variation and Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
4. Eckert, P. & J.R. Rickford (eds) 2001. *Style and Sociolinguistic Variation*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
5. Eckert, P. & S. McConnell-Ginet, 2003. *Language and Gender*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
6. Ehrlich, S., M. Meyerhoff & J. Holmes (eds) 2014. *The Handbook of Language, Gender and Sexuality*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
7. Grant, T. 2013. The linguistic clues that reveal your true Twitter identity. *The Conversation* (20 November). http://theconversation.com/the-linguistic-clues-that-reveal-your-true-twitter-identity-2045.
8. Holmes, J. & M. Stubbe. 2003. *Power and Politeness in the Workplace: a sociolinguistic analysis of talk at work*. London: Pearson.
9. Holmes, J. 2006. *Gendered Talk at Work: Constructing gender identity through workplace discourse*. New York, Oxford: Blackwell.
10. Pavlenko A. & A. Blackledge (eds) 2004. *Negotiation of identities in multilingual contexts*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

(6) ON LANGUAGE AND THE INTERNET

1. Androutsopoulos, J. (ed.) 2014. *Mediatization and sociolinguistic change*. Berlin: de Gruyter.
2. Baron, N. 2000. *Alphabet to Email*. London: Routledge.
3. Crystal, D. 2004. *Language and the Internet*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
4. Danet, B & S. C. Herring 2007. *The Multilingual Internet: Language, Culture, and Communication Online*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
5. Herring, S. C. 2015. New frontiers in interactive multimodal communication. In A. Georgopoulou & T. Spilloti (eds) *The Routledge Handbook of Language and Digital Communication*. London: Routledge.
6. Herring, S. C., & S. Kapidzic, 2015. Teens, gender, and self-presentation in social media. In J. D. Wright (ed.), *International encyclopedia of social and behavioral sciences* (2nd ed.). Oxford: Elsevier.
7. Herring, S. C., D. Stein & T. Virtanen (eds) 2013. *Pragmatics of Computer-mediated Communication*. Berlin: de Gruyter Mouton.
8. Kapidzic, S., & S. C. Herring 2014. Race, gender, and self-presentation in teen profile photographs. *New Media & Society*.
9. Language@Internet (an open-access electronic journal that publishes research on language and language use mediated by the Internet, the World Wide Web, and mobile technologies).
10. Li L. 2000. Email: a challenge to Standard English? *English Today* 64: 23–9, 55.

(7) ON AUSTRALIAN ENGLISH (See also Aboriginal English and Creoles)

1. Cox, F. 2012. *Australian English: Transcription and Pronunciation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
2. Dixon, R.M.W., B. Moore, W.S. Ramson & M. Thomas 2011. (2nd ed.) *Australian Aboriginal Words in English: Their Origin and Meaning*. Melbourne: Oxford University Press.
3. Gupta, A. F. 1995. Markets for Australian English, In *Australian English in a Pluralist Society,* Proceedings of Style Council 95, edited by P. Peters, pp. 188-94, Macquarie University: Dictionary Research Centre.
4. Horvath, B. M. 1985. *Variation in Australian English: The sociolects of Sydney*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
5. Mitchell, A. G. & A. Delbridge 1965 (revised edition) *The Pronunciation of English in Australia*. Sydney:

Angus & Robertson.

6. Moore, B. 2008. *Speaking our Language: The story of Australian English.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.
7. Pawley, A. 2004. Australian Vernacular English: some grammatical characteristics. In B. Kortmann, K. Burridge, R. Mesthrie, E. Schneider & C. Upton (eds) *A Handbook of Varieties of English* (Vol. 2 *Morphology and Syntax*). Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
8. Peters, P. 2005. *The Cambridge Australian English Style Guide*, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press.
9. Peters, P., P. Collins & A. Smith *2009. (eds) Comparative Grammatical Studies in Australian and New Zealand English.* Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
10. Zion, L. 2007. *The Sounds of Aus* (Australia: Film Finance Corporation Australia and Princess Pictures) is a generally available documentary on the Australian accent, presented by comedian John Clarke.

(8) ABORIGINAL ENGLISH AND CREOLE

1. Eades, D. 2012. Communication with Aboriginal Speakers of English in the Legal Process. *Australian Journal of Linguistics*, 32(4), 473–389.
2. Harkins, J. 1994. *Bridging Two Worlds: Aboriginal English and Cross-cultural Understanding.* St Lucia: University of Queensland Press.
3. Harkins, J. 2000. Structure and Meaning in Australian Aboriginal English. *Asian Englishes* 3 (2), 60 – 81.
4. Leitner, G. & I. Malcolm (eds) 2007. *The Habitat of Australia's Aboriginal Languages*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
5. Malcolm, I. G. 2004a. Australian Creoles and Aboriginal English: Phonology, In E.W. Schneider, K. Burridge, B. Kortmann, R. Mesthrie, & C. Upton (eds) *A Handbook of Varieties of English* (Vol. 1). Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
6. Malcolm, I. G. 2004b Australian Creoles and Aboriginal English: Morphology and Syntax. In B. Kortmann, K. Burridge, R. Mesthrie, E. Schneider & C. Upton (eds) *A Handbook of Varieties of English* (Vol. 2 *Morphology and Syntax*). Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
7. Meakins, Felicity. 2013. Gurindji Kriol. In S. Michaelis, P. Maurer, M. Haspelmath & M. Huber (eds). *Atlas of Pidgin and Creole Structures, Vol II: The language surveys.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.
8. Sharifian, F. 2008. Saying 'Sorry' and Being Sorry. *Lingua Franca* (broadcast 19th July 2008); http://www.abc.net.au/rn/linguafranca/stories/2008/2305483.htm
9. Simpson, J. 2008. Language landscapes of children in remote Australia. In R. Amery & J. Nash (eds) *Warra Wiltaniappendi: Strengthening Languages: Proceedings of the Inaugural Indigenous Languages Conference* (ILC), 24 - 27 September 2007. Adelaide: University of Adelaide.
10. Walsh, M. & C. Yallop (eds) 1993. *Language and Culture in Aboriginal Australia.* Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press.

Abbreviation 24, 32, 42, 73–74, 76, 78, 90, 109, 110, 124, 126, 157, 172, 200, 203,204, 267
Accent 6, 9, 11, 88, 96, 98, 102, 137, 141, 144–147, 149–150, 160–164, 166–171, 174, 177, 179, 181–182, 186, 188, 194, 198–200, 212–213, 217–218, 222–224, 227–228, 267
Acronym (*Versus* abbreviations) 74, 82, 109–110, 132, 204, 267
Active 16–17, 135, 264, 267
Adjacency pair 63, 267
Adjective 20, 40–41, 112, 130, 133, 137, 148, 153, 207, 218, 220–221, 248, 251, 253, 256, 267
Adverb 16, 18, 40, 78, 214, 218, 250, 252, 256, 267
Adverbial 16, 18–19, 114, 257–258, 260, 267
Advertising 26, 92, 104, 112, 115, 118, 130, 134, 261
Affix 35, 107, 202, 247–250, 267
Affixation 40, 78, 81, 106, 267
Affricate 160, 240, 242, 267
Agentless passive 115, 204, 205, 268
Alliteration 43, 96, 104, 105, 130, 133, 268
Alveolar 36, 160, 241, 242, 268
Ambiguity 20,112, 128, 133, 268
Anaphoric reference 268
Animation 111, 268
Antithesis 117–119, 134, 268
Antonym 20, 66, 268
Archaism 268
Article 31, 41, 191, 220, 254,268
Assimilation (*versus* dissimilation) 33, 35–36, 73, 78, 81, 103,162, 268
Assonance 43, 44, 104, 131, 133, 268
Auxiliary 33, 64, 156, 195, 251, 262, 268

Back-channelling 64, 176, 216, 268
Beowulf 22
Borrowing 94, 103, 107, 186, 268
Broad Australian 167, 172, 194, 217, 268
Cataphoric reference 25, 269
Clause 31, 41, 49, 60–61, 73, 96, 102, 114–118, 157, 175, 207, 217, 251, 253, 254, 257, 259–261, 264, 269
Cleft construction 16, 269
Cockney 6, 44, 145, 153, 159–161, 222, 269
Code-switching 269
Codex 163–164, 269
Coherence 1 4, 19–21, 24, 64, 66–67, 269
Cohesion 3, 19–21, 65–66, 71, 269
Collective noun (*See* mass noun) 269
Collocation 37, 78, 107, 269
Colloquialism 30, 37–38, 40, 81, 148, 153, 209, 269
Comment (*See* topic) 15, 269, 272, 281
Community languages 176, 178, 194, 198
Complement 18, 163,250, 253, 269
Complex sentences (*See* simple sentences) 49, 102, 114–115, 216, 217, 260, 279
Commonization 38, 78
Compound sentences (*See* simple sentences) 81, 114, 260, 279
Compounding 32, 78, 108–109, 269
Concord (singular and plural) 269
Connotation (*versus* denotation) 43, 104, 106, 110, 112, 121, 145, 149, 150, 206, 234, 265–266, 269
Consonance 104–105, 131,270
Constituent 14, 16–17, 255–256, 270
Conversation 48, 53, ,62, 63, 80
Context 3–4, 14, 17, 20, 25, 29, 33, 42, 46, 59, 64, 66, 77, 83, 91, 112, 119, 128, 134, 140, 142, 161, 162, 168, 180, 188, 203, 270
Conversion 270
Cooperation 48, 68, 80
Coordination 58, 96, 114, 116, 260, 270
Corpus 45, 169, 220, 270
Count noun 250, 270
Covert and overt norms (*see prestige*) 136, 212, 227, 235, 277

Cranberry 269
Crashblossons 113
Creative word formation 78, 107, 132, 270
Creole 12, 168, 177, 181, 270
Cultivated Australian 164, 217, 270
Cultural Context 2, 99, 270

Declarative (*See* sentence types) 13, 175, 245, 261–263, 270
Deictic expression 20, 66, 270
Demonstrative 156, 220, 270
Denotation (*See* connotation) 37, 110, 265, 270
Dental 146, 240–242, 270
Derivational affix (*Versus* inflectional affix) 107, 248, 250–252, 270
Determiner 33, 250, 254, 256, 271
Dialect 7, 9–11, 32, 62, 65, 94, 98, 99, 141–149, 158–159, 160, 167–168, 173–174, 184, 188, 198, 218, 223–224, 228, 242, 271
Dialogue 5, 14, 19, 49, 50, 53, 58, 61–62, 65–66, 76, 92, 174, 191, 194, 222, 228, 234, 271
Diminutive 39, 157–158, 191, 271
Diphthong/diphthongization 158, 161, 219, 243, 244, 270
Discourse 3, 13, 271
Discourse marker (particle) 31, 57, 70, 216, 221–222, 271
Dislocation 19, 59, 271
Domain 271
Double speak 271
Dysphemism 119, 126, 128, 271

E-chat 73, 183
Elision 33, 162, 271
Ellipsis 2, 14, 31, 32, 42, 48, 74, 81, 90, 207, 217, 271
Ethnic Broad 167–168, 179, 272
Ethnolect 178–179, 181, 194, 196, 272
Etymology 131, 190, 265, 272
Euphemism 107, 119–121, 126, 272
Exclamative (*See* sentence types) 263, 272, 279
Extraposition 272

Face 8–12, 24, 277
False start 49, 53, 56, 58, 72, 73, 272
Figurative language 110–112, 272
Filled pause 67, 73, 272
Finite verb 272
Flapping 36, 184, 272
Focus 13, 16–19, 25, 59, 66, 272
Fricative 105, 160–161, 170, 179, 204, 240, 242, 245, 272
Fronting 18–19, 90, 272
Function word (*Versus* content word) 31, 32–33, 35–36, 160, 220, 221, 227, 272

General Australian 97, 145, 159, 168, 179, 200, 272
Gillard, Julia 161, 218, 232–233
Given information (*See* old information) 13–15, 17, 272, 276
Globalization 12, 177, 186
Glottal stop 160, 240, 273
Glottalization 273
Graphemic 153, 273

Hedge 68–69, 71, 216, 273
High rising terminal (HRT) 175, 191, 233, 273
Homophone 141, 171, 240, 273
Hyperbole 111–112, 133, 214, 273
Hypercorrection 273
Hyponymy 273

Idiolect 233, 273
Idiom/idiomatic expression 37, 92, 107, 121, 127, 149–150, 273

Imperative (*See* sentence types) 205, 261, 262–263, 273
Implicature 67, 80, 273
Inference 21, 25, 67, 81, 83, 273
Infinitive 252–252, 262, 273
Inflectional affix (*See* derivational affix) 248, 251, 271, 273
Information flow 12, 25, 71, 99, 180, 273
Insertion 162, 273
Intensifier 41, 214, 247, 273
Interjection 40, 46, 73, 255, 274
Interlocutor 3, 32–33, 60, 63, 135, 172, 178, 182, 201–202, 211, 226, 274
International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) 194, 239, 244, 274
Internet 25, 40, 45, 73–75,98, 120, 126, 166, 167, 193, 200–201, 236
Interrobang 200
Interrogative (*See* sentence types) 195, 262–263, 279
Interrogative tag 64,–65, 69, 274
Intonation 2, 19, 51, 52, 53, 59, 62, 67, 69, 73, 85, 92, 175–176, 221, 245, 263, 273, 274
Intonation contour 245, 274
Intransitive 19, 156, 251, 274
Intrusive [r] 274
Inverted subject–verb order (subject–verb inversion) 206, 274
Irony 44–45, 79, 83, 112, 122, 127, 274
Irwin, Steve 160, 196, 228

Jargon 7, 38, 42, 102, 110, 115, 116, 120–121, 130, 136, 148, 199, 204–211, 229, 274
Joos, Martin 24

Labio-dental 241, 274
Lavender linguistics 174, 193
Left-dislocation (*See* dislocation) 19, 59, 271
Lexical items 6, 32, 93, 141, 144, 153, 154, 182, 192, 194, 195, 219, 274
Lexical patterning 44, 106
Lexicology 249, 274
Lexicon 3, 7, 13, 14, 30, 33, 74, 96, 99, 130, 150, 153, 155, 171–172, 219, 274, 276
Lingua franca 163, 181, 183, 274
Listing (*See* parallelism) 117, 118, 134, 275
Lowering 171, 219, 275

Mass noun 250, 269, 275
Merger 275
Metalanguage 150, 275
Metaphor 42, 44–45, 61, 90, 101, 102, 111, 130, 133, 136, 272, 275
Minimal response (*See* back-channelling) 64, 268, 275
Modal auxiliary 69, 275
Mode 2, 3, 24, 48, 78, 89, 102, 135, 275
Monologue 53, 92, 97, 275
Monophthong 161, 219, 243–244, 275
Morpheme 246–249, 269, 270, 275
Morphological patterning 39, 107, 132
Morphology 2, 17, 39, 91, 94, 106, 108, 116, 153, 195, 220, 229, 246–249, 253, 275

Negative face (see politeness)
Neologism 37, 108, 275
New information (*See* old information) 13–18, 281
Nominalization 115–117, 275
Norm 9, 11–12, 23, 58, 125, 136, 152–153, 163–164, 174, 180, 194, 197, 198, 212, 217, 227, 234, 235, 275, 277, 280
Noun 41, 78, 107, 109, 112, 115–116, 133, 164, 172, 208, 220–221, 245, 250, 254, 269, 270, 275

Object 111, 114, 156, 184, 257, 275
Observer's Paradox 49
Old (Given) information (*Versus* new) 13–18, 272
Onomatopoeia 38, 43, 104, 131, 265, 276
Orthography 162, 276
Overlapping 51, 53, 62, 64, 71, 72, 85
Overt and covert norms (*See* prestige) 136, 212, 227, 235, 277
Oxymoron 112, 133, 272, 276

Paralinguistics 3, 89, 92, 216, 276
Parallelism 117–118, 268, 276
Passive 16–17, 25, 115–116, 117, 134, 137, 156, 204, 205, 206, 218, 251, 253, 257, 264, 268, 275, 277
Past participle 248, 251, 264, 276
Personification 90, 111, 268, 276
Phoneme 103, 158, 238, 276
Phonetics 238, 239, 245, 246, 276
Phonological patterning 43, 103, 130
Phonology 170, 179, 194, 195, 216–217, 219–220, 239, 246, 276
Phrase 13, 14, 16–20, 40, 59, 60, 78, 133, 156, 172, 205, 207, 209, 220, 238, 250–251, 253, 255–259, 262, 264, 276
Pidgin 12, 181, 231, 270, 276
Pitch 51, 53, 58, 67, 92, 213, 245, 274, 276, 281
Pleonasm 277
Pluricentric language 152, 277
Polari 174, 193
Politeness (positive and negative face) 8–10, 24, 25, 29, 61, 65, 76, 77, 83, 126, 167, 176–177, 202, 216, 232, 277
Political correctness 94, 107, 119, 121–127, 277
Positive (*see* politeness)
Pragmatics 2, 181, 182, 277
Predicate 13, 15, 277, 279, 280

Prefix (*See* affix and affixation) 132, 247, 248, 277
Preposition 33, 11, 218, 250, 252–253, 277
Prescription (*Versus* description) 125, 166, 167, 213–214
Present participle 251, 277
Prestige (overt *versus* covert norms) 142–147, 169, 174, 199–200, 212–213, 217, 223–224, 235, 273, 276, 277, 278, 280
Principle of end-weight 14, 277
Progressive aspect (*See* present participle) 277
Pronoun 14, 17–21, 23, 41, 49, 58–59, 64, 103, 125, 130, 141, 146–147, 155–156, 201, 205, 227, 253, 257, 262, 277
Prosodic 80, 92, 128, 175, 205, 219, 239, 245, 266, 278
Prosody 228, 278
Public language 12, 94, 104, 123, 278
Pun 96, 113, 115, 133, 215, 278

Quantifier 271, 278

Racist discourse 122, 123
Raising 278
Rebus 74, 90, 129, 278
Received Pronunciation 6, 96, 101, 145, 199, 278
Reduplication 39,78, 79
Register 4, 5, 7, 24, 30, 74, 76, 78, 80, 83, 99, 101, 108–109, 116–117, 131, 137, 204–207, 278, 281
Relative clause 17–18, 49, 157, 269, 278
Rhetoric 20, 91, 92, 96, 99, 104, 111, 117, 118, 278
Rhotic 159, 191, 278
Rhyme 43, 44, 78, 104, 131, 149, 161, 219, 240, 278
Rhythm 34, 58, 96, 101, 104, 117, 161, 245, 278
Right-dislocation (*See* dislocation) 19, 59, 271, 278
Root (*Versus* stem) 107, 125, 138, 154, 247–248, 278, 282
Rounding 243, 278
Rowling, J.K. 13–14, 16–19

Schwa 34, 161, 199, 204, 279
Semantic field (or Semantic Domain) 24, 38, 106-107, 278
Semantic patterning 37, 44, 110, 132
Semantics 3, 24, 96, 110, 238, 265, 278
Sentence types 262–263, 279
Sexist discourse 123
Simile 111, 271, 279
Simple sentence (*Versus* compound and complex sentence) 31, 114, 258
Situational Context 20, 279
Slang 12, 22, 35, 38–40, 42–44, 279
Social cohesion 80
Social harmony 119, 122, 127, 135
Social Purpose 77, 83, 137, 212, 215, 279
Sociolect 11, 146, 170, 173, 198–200, 218, 268, 269, 272, 279
Sociolinguistics 199, 279
Sound symbolism 105, 279
Speech act 180, 271, 279
Standard English 10–12, 42, 56, 59, 64, 99, 125, 140–147, 153, 155, 157, 167, 173, 199, 217, 222–224
Standard language 4, 12, 40, 73, 93, 99, 141–142, 148, 153, 155, 167, 174, 188, 200, 223–224, 280
Stem (*See* root) 107–108, 248, 269, 278, 280
Stop 35, 105, 160, 1672, 170, 179, 240, 242, 273, 281
Stress 34, 36, 58, 103–104, 109, 184, 245, 278, 280
Subject 2, 13–19, 58, 59, 64, 96, 114–116, 156–157, 206–207, 250, 257–264, 280
Subordination 58, 96, 102, 114–117, 259–260, 280
Suffix (*See* affix and affixation) 435, 39, 90, 107, 124, 157, 181, 191, 247, 248–252, 280
Swearing 45
Syllabic consonant 280
Synonym 6, 20, 65, 118, 133, 170, 265, 280
Syntactic patterning 40,114, 134, 137
Syntax 3, 10, 20, 24, 41, 80, 90–92, 94, 96, 114, 130, 172, 234, 238, 246, 255–256, 280

Taboo 45, 47, 57, 107, 119–120, 124, 127, 128, 135, 148, 217, 232, 271, 280
Tag 42, 64–65, 69, 157, 263, 274, 280
Tap 239, 272, 280
Tense 41, 156, 165, 184, 196, 207, 232, 248, 251, 268, 273, 280
Text 280
There-construction 13, 17–18, 156, 280
Topic (*Versus* comment) 281
Transcription 50, 52, 85, 240, 244, 246
Transitive 19, 181, 251, 281
Turn (and turn-taking) 48, 58, 61, 62–73, 176, 179, 180, 269, 281

Variable 3, 146, 199, 281
Variety 10, 25, 140, 147, 150, 152, 154, 158, 165, 281
Verbal hygiene 165
Vocal creak (or fry) 281
Vocalization/vocalized 160, 272, 281
Voiced (*Versus* voiceless sounds) 240, 242, 281

Yod 160
Youtube 8, 33, 130, 135, 145, 228, 231, 245

TRIBUTE TO **MICHAEL CLYNE**
(co-author first edition Living Lingo, 2009)

Where does one begin to outline a professional life such as that of Michael Clyne? During his career at Monash and Melbourne universities, Michael's research spanned numerous areas of linguistics and his output was prolific — he was always in demand to write something. His list of publications is impressively long (28 authored, co-authored and edited books and over 300 articles and book chapters) in areas such as bi- and multilingualism, intercultural communication and language policy.

Michael's achievements are far too numerous to list here, and any inventory can never capture the astonishing breadth of his scholarship, his passion and his unflagging energy for language and linguistics. His work extended over the entire scope of sociolinguistics, and he was an internationally recognized expert in most of its sub-fields — multilingualism and language contact, language planning, language in the workplace, the maintenance of community languages and the sociology of language in Australia. He pioneered and led many of these fields.

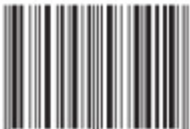
Michael had a wonderful way of being able to enthuse others and engage them in his research activities. He was instrumental in establishing VCE English Language in the late 1990s, and his enthusiasm for the subject knew no bounds. Despite his failing health at the time, Michael was one of the original authors of Living Lingo. We sincerely hope that in this new edition we have done justice to his ideas about language and his expression of these ideas.

For all his attributes and achievements, Michael was universally admired and publicly honoured. But it was also his generosity and his sense of humanity and fair play that distinguished him. These qualities set him apart within the academy. As celebrated American sociolinguist Joshua Fishman once wrote:

"I could write almost endlessly about Michael Clyne. He is one of the saints that God has placed here among ordinary mortals in order to enable us to follow his lead in doing good things for all and sundry".

"English is restless. It moves and morphs all the time. Fact is, English just evolved while you read the last sentence. To help keep track of the lingo — where it's been and where it's bound — I recommend you meet the glamours of grammar, Professor Kate Burridge and Debbie de Laps."

David Astle
author, word nerd,
puzzle-maker



LIVING LINGO

VCE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

units 3 and 4

Kate Burridge Debbie de Laps