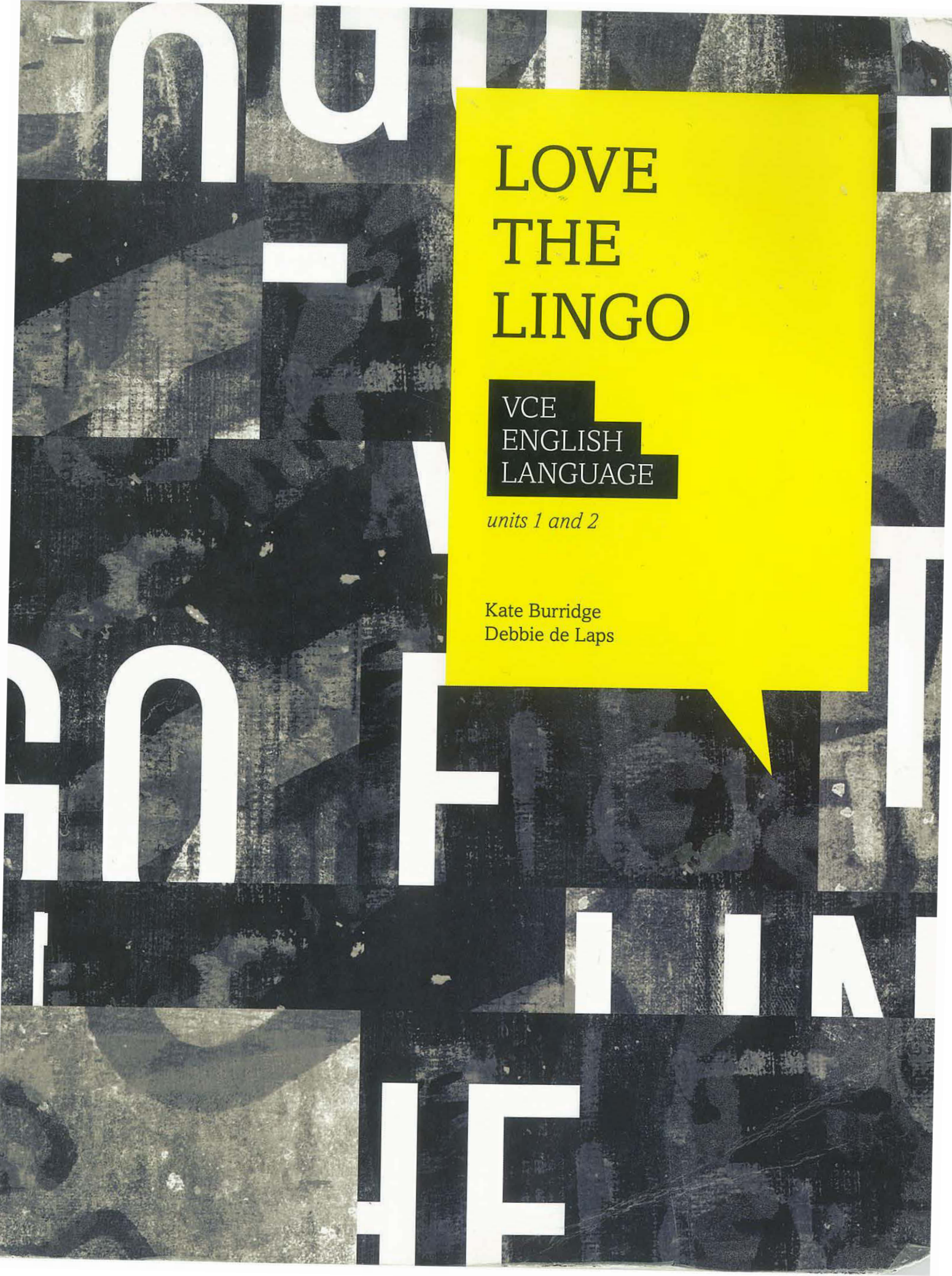

LOVE THE LINGO

VCE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

units 1 and 2

Kate Burridge
Debbie de Laps

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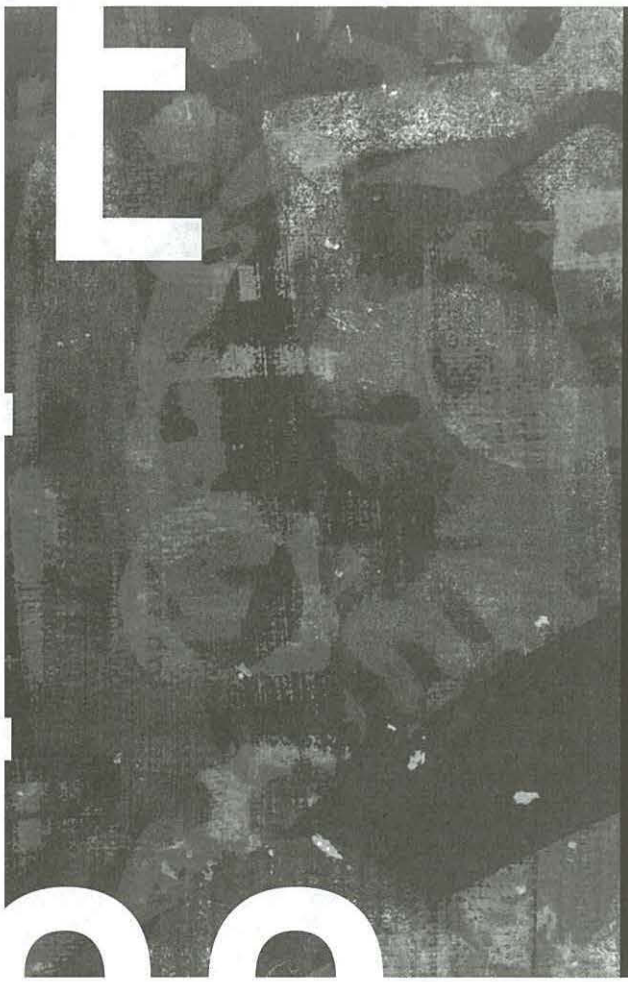


UNIT 1

LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION

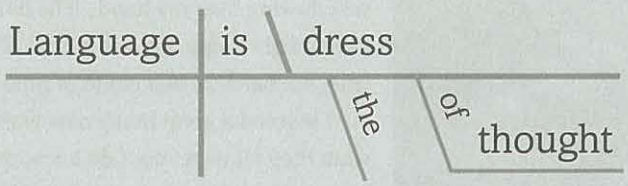
Noun

LANGUAGE IS THE DRESS OF THOUGHT

Verb *Definite article* *Noun* *Noun* *Preposition*

— Samuel Johnson

SENTENCE DIAGRAM



AREA OF STUDY 1

NATURE AND FUNCTIONS OF LANGUAGE

1.0 MIRACLE OF LANGUAGE

> Of all mankind"s manifold creations, language must take pride of place. Other inventions — the wheel, agriculture, sliced bread – may have transformed our material existence, but the advent of language is what made us human. Compared to language, all other inventions pale in significance, since everything we have ever achieved depends on language and originates from it. Without language, we could never have embarked on our ascent to unparalleled power over all other animals, and even over nature itself. [Guy Deutscher *The Unfolding of Language* 2005: 1]

Most of us take language for granted and it is impossible for us to imagine what life would have been like for someone like Helen Keller. Deaf and blind from the age of 18 months, Helen Keller was virtually isolated for the first seven years of her life. Apart from a few home signs (hand signs that only her family understood) that she used to communicate with her family, Helen had absolutely no way of connecting with the world. All this changed when Anne Sullivan came into her life. Anne taught Helen to communicate by spelling words into the palm of her hand, beginning with "d-o-l-l". Eventually, Helen realized that these gestures signalled the name of different objects that were around her. In an essay *The Day Language Came into My Life*, Helen describes the situation when, as she puts it, the mystery of language was revealed to her:

> We walked down the path to the well-house, attracted by the fragrance of the honeysuckle with which it was covered. Someone was drawing water and my teacher placed my hand under the spout. As a cool stream gushed over one hand she spelled into the other the word *water,* first slowly, then rapidly. I stood still, my whole attention fixed upon the motions of her fingers. Suddenly I felt a misty consciousness as of something forgotten — a thrill of returning thought, and somehow the mystery of language was revealed to me. I knew then that "w-a-t-e-r" meant the wonderful cool something that was flowing over my hand. The living word awakened my soul, gave it light, hope, joy, set it free! There were barriers still, it is true, but barriers that could in time be swept away. [...]
>
> I learned a great many new words that day. I do not remember what they all were; but I do know that *mother, father, sister, teacher* were among them — words that were to make the world blossom for me, "like Aaron"s rod, with flowers." It would have been difficult to find a happier child than I was as I lay in my crib at the close of

Helen Keller (left) and Anne Sullivan

that eventful day and lived over the joys it had brought me, for the first time longed for a new day to come.

Helen went on to become a successful speaker and writer, campaigning for deaf and blind people all over the world, as well as for numerous other causes.

1.1 FUNCTIONS OF LANGUAGE

Here is what a few famous people have said about the nature and the purpose of human language:

- Language is the means of getting an idea from my brain into yours without surgery. (Mark Amidon)
- Language is the dress of thought. (Samuel Johnson, 1779-81)
- Man does not live on bread alone: his other necessity is communication. (Charles F. Hockett, 1958)
- Language exists to communicate whatever it can communicate. (C.S Lewis, 1960)
- Language is a social fact. (Ferdinand de Saussure, 1916)
- Language is a great force of socialization, probably the greatest that exists. (Edward Sapir, 1933)

These quotations nicely identify some the main reasons that we use language.

LANGUAGE IS FOR COMMUNICATING

The primary function is to serve as a vehicle of communication. We all use language to get across ideas, facts and opinions. However, as you have surely experienced, language is not always precise when it comes to getting the meaning across. Perhaps you asked someone: "Could you pass the salt" and they answered "Yes" and just sat there. Of course, you wanted the salt to be passed, but were being polite and framing the directive as if it were a question. The other person misunderstood (perhaps a joke?) and chose to interpret your words literally as a question. So much communicating goes beyond the literal meaning of an utterance. At first blush, this might seem a weakness in human language; yet it is also one of its considerable strengths, as we go on to discuss in a little while.

LANGUAGE IS FOR RELATING SOCIALLY

> One of the things Ford Prefect had always found hardest to understand about humans was their habit of continually stating and repeating the very very obvious, as in *It's a nice day*, or *You're very tall*, or *Oh dear you seem to have fallen down a thirty-foot well, are you all right?* At first Ford had formed a theory to account for this strange behaviour. If human beings don"t keep exercising their lips, he thought, their mouths probably seize up. After a few months' consideration and observation he abandoned this theory in favour of a new one. If they don't keep exercising their lips, he thought, their brains start working. After a while he abandoned this one as well as being obstructively cynical and decided he quite liked human beings after all, but he always remained desperately worried about the terrible number of things they didn't know about. [Douglas Adams, *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*]

The character described in the quotation here is Ford Prefect, the hilarious creation of Douglas Adams. Ford comes from a small planet somewhere in the vicinity of Betelgeuse, but visted Earth in order to carry out research for an article he was writing for *the Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*. As Ford so astutely observes, many linguistic exchanges regularly take place without involving any

transfer of information at all. A lot of the time, people don't seem to be communicating anything particularly and much of their chit-chat involves stating the obvious — all that talk about health and the weather, and the linguistic formulae that fill up conversations (the pleases, the thank-yous, the you're-welcomes, the pleased-to-meet-yous, the have-a nice-days, the not-a-problems and so on). They don't advance the conversation as such. So what are they doing there?

This kind of social chit-chat (or small talk) is used to establish social rapport during an encounter. Most human interaction is non-hostile. Basically we're polite whatever we might be feeling deep down and these sorts of ritual linguistic exchanges are all part of this. It's a way we have of signalling that there is no animosity. These sorts of verbal routines also express important information to do with an individual's social characteristics, relationships and values. Mind you, not all cultures use language in this way. Not everyone speaks about the weather or their health!

So, as well as communicating ideas, language is all about facilitating social cohesion. In short, without language you would have no social life. Consider once more what Helen Keller's pre-language existence would have been like. In her essay, she describes her life as being "at sea in a dense fog" — "shut in by a tangible white darkness". Until the day she made that connection between the rag doll and the "d-o-l-l" that Ann Sullivan had spelled into her hand, "there was no strong sentiment or tenderness" in her dark and still world (to use Helen's description). Communication and social contact are central to human existence, and both require language.

LANGUAGE IS FOR EXPRESSING EMOTIONS

In addition to these two broad roles, there is a myriad of other jobs that language regularly carries out. One major one is to express emotions, and an obvious illustration here is swearing. Most cussing is an emotive reaction to frustration, something unexpected (and usually, but not necessarily, undesirable), or a sign of anger. This is the use of a swear word to let off steam. Imagine you've just pressed the send button and dispatched an email or text message message that really should not have been sent (the "onosecond", as it's come to be known). Expletives are kinds of exclamatory **interjection**, and, like other interjections, they have an expressive function; cf. *Wow!, Ouch!, Oh dear!, Gosh!, Shit!* Here are some actual examples taken from an article on Australian swearing (Allan & Burridge 2009).

1. Oh damn it's you see I turned I thought I turned that one on.
2. You know I was going gosh don't you remember anybody.
3. Oh sugar. We've burnt it.

Expressions like *bollocks, damn, gosh, sugar* are different from typical expressive phrases such as greetings or apologies, for the simple reason that they are not normally addressed to anyone. There might be people standing around (overhearers or bystanders), but they're not strictly speaking addressees. Instances of expletives, and other interjections uttered without an audience, involve a release of extreme emotional energy. Of course, they can involve full-blown taboo words (*shit!*), or remodelled disguises (*sugar!*)

In this electronic age a lot of these emotions can be expressed through emojis.

LANGUAGE IS MUCH MORE ....

With language we can complain, abuse, bully, curse, sweet-talk, deceive, wheedle, instruct, persuade, dissuade, gossip, greet, praise, delight, amuse, charm, seduce and much much more. Humans also talk about language and they play with language. What's more, they appear to derive a tremendous enjoyment from both these activities. Most of us love messing about with English, especially manipulating it to create new and exciting expressions. Even something as everyday as slang illustrates over and over again just how inventive we can be. But our love of language is also reflected in the time many people spend worrying about usage. Look at the hours some speakers of English invest in checking things in dictionaries and style guides, thinking and arguing about the words and constructions — especially, of course, the words and constructions that others use.

Brainstorm a list of 10 new slang words that you're unlikely to find in any dictionary.
Find or create emoji that represent these words as closely as possible.

1.2 NATURE OF ENGLISH

The ubiquity of complex language among human beings was a gripping discovery (Pinker 2007 31) The English that you speak has a highly organized structure, which (if you are a native speaker) you have internalized unconsciously by simply being a part of the speech community. When you know a language in this way, you automatically know the sounds, the words, and the sets of rules for their combination. We need to emphasize here that these rules are very different from the sorts of rules (or codes of regulation) that are imposed from outside; think of the rules that regulate your behaviour around the school. The rules that we are talking about here are quite different. They are the principles that account for the regularity of language behaviour. In a sense, they are more like the amazing facts that account for the workings of your cardiovascular system or some other functioning part of the body. You may not be able to say what these rules are, but you do know when something goes wrong. Consider the set of sentences below.

a. Des bang hawwe, des is alles im kopp.
b. I got one mate what goes to a Catholic school.
c. What's wrong with all them "Political Correct" people?
d. I never see no spirits.
e. Goodnight and in the pansy I can't say but into a flipdoor you can see it.
f. There's fairies at the bottom of my garden.
g. There are fairies at the bottom of my garden.
h. So the little Irish bloody pilot gets up 'n he says I'm five foot two 'n I'm sitting up the bloody front.

All of you (native and non-native speakers alike) will agree that (a) and (e) are not examples of English. If you are writing a grammar of English intended for language learners you might also want to exclude (b), (c) and (d), perhaps (f) and (h) too, even though many people who are native speakers of English would use and accept such sentences. How would you describe these sentences? Would

you call them ungrammatical or dialectal? Do you think that some of them belong more to speech than writing? The sentences in (f) and (g), for example, exemplify a notorious problem in English. Which of the two sentences would you use? Which would you consider acceptable English? Many grammars would describe (f) as "wrong" (or "bad English") and (g) as "correct" (or "good English").

Sentences like those above which people might take exception to as being "bad English" are not really errors of English, but rather errors of Standard English. The thing to always bear in mind is that we are all dialect speakers — everyone speaks at least one dialect of English, and Standard English happens to be the most important dialect in terms of the way society operates. It might surprise you to call this a dialect, because people tend to talk about the standard language, but standard language is a misleading label. Standard English is one of many different dialects of English — it just happens to be the dialect that currently has the greatest clout. How it got to this elevated position is something we explore later in this book.

1.2.1
DESIGN OF ENGLISH

> Imagine a piano keyboard, eighty-eight keys, only eighty-eight and yet, and yet, new tunes, melodies, harmonies are being composed upon hundreds of keyboards every day in Dorset alone. Our language, Tiger, our language, hundreds of thousands of available words, frillions of possible legitimate new ideas (From 'A Bit of Fry and Laurie' Series 1, Episode 3 1989).

Most of the time we speak without ever noticing the extraordinary complexity that underpins our language. Underlying every sentence we utter is a highly organized arrangement of layers. Around forty-four distinctive sounds (or eighty-eight keys to use Stephen Fry's image of a piano keyboard) are organized into the syllables that combine to form hundreds of meaningful segments of words. These in turn combine to construct thousands (or "frillions") of different words that then combine and recombine into an never-ending number of possible sentences and discourses. It's the "tremendous resourcefulness" of our language (as linguist Dwight Bolinger once put it) that sets it apart from nonhuman language. Let's explore the various layers (or subsystems) that make up this intricate structure.

PHONETICS AND PHONOLOGY — THE SOUNDS OF ENGLISH

The branch of linguistics that looks at the sounds of speech is **phonetics**. The way languages organize sounds is another branch that is known as **phonology**. Part of speaking Australian English is "knowing" the forty-four speech sounds in the language. Other varieties you will find have more or fewer sounds. Clearly our alphabet of only twenty-six letters can't capture all these different sounds; so we need a separate phonetic alphabet with additional symbols. We provide details of the **International Phonetic Alphabet** in Chapter 5.

At some level we also know the rules that describe all the possible and impossible combinations of sounds. We know that *tsmtot* is not a potential word in English because it violates these rules. This is not to say that these rules can't change over time. Loanwords from Yiddish have introduced three consonant combinations not previously found in English: "shl" (phonetically [ʃl] as in *schlep* 'carry'; "schm" (phonetically [ʃm]) as in *schmooze* 'suck up to' and "schn" (phonetically [ʃn]) as in *schnook* 'annoying person'. Of course, in addition to the tens of thousands of words that do exist, there are also tens of thousands of ones that could potentially exist. *Nevitts* 'the sandpaper-like bumps on cats' tongues', like all of comedian Rich Hall's wonderful budding words, certainly fills a lexical gap, but hasn't yet made it — it remains a *sniglet* 'a word that should be in the dictionary, but isn't'.

Slips of the ear

Speech is seamless. In normal rapid speech, the difference between sounds is often lost, and one word runs into the next. As Steven Pinker explains it, what we do is "hallucinate" a word boundary whenever we reach the end of a stretch of sound that matches up with an entry in our mental dictionaries (2007: 159-60). If the stream of sound coincides with more than one entry, one person's *I scream* becomes another person's *ice-cream.* Pairs of expressions like these are called oronyms; other examples include *euthanasia* versus *youth in Asia* and *gladly the cross-eyed bear* versus *gladly, the cross I'd bear.* These different hearings are entirely justifiable, as the sound stream can be carved up in different ways and it all makes sense.

Other mishearings are more like Chinese whispers. Slips of the ear in songs and poems usually aren't valid in quite the same way; for example, the Creedence Clearwater Revival's song *Have you even seen the rain* is often misheard as "Have you ever seen Lorraine" (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CwilMJciurg). Mangled, misheard and mispronounced song lyrics and poems even have their own label "mondegreens".

These sorts of mis-hearings can occur in ordinary language too. For example, people often misinterpret *for all intents and purposes* as *to all intensive purposes*, and students have been known change *rote learning* to *rope learning*. Usually it's a matter of turning an odd-sounding expression into something that makes more sense. Those students who came out with *rope learning* in place of *rote learning* probably had in mind expressions such as *learn the ropes* (much more meaningful than the rarely used *rote* 'mechanical manner'). *Casting aspersions* is occasionally transformed into *casting nasturtiums* and *tenterhooks* into *tenderhooks*. These are sometimes called folk etymologies. This usually involves odd-sounding expressions being turned into something that make more sense. *Casting nasturtiums* is more usual than *casting aspersions* and *tenderhooks* probably is more easily understood than *tenterhooks*. Of course, neither of these expressions has become standard yet, but there are many that have. The French borrowing *ecrevice* has been remodelled to *crayfish*, something that now sounds far more reasonable for the English. Slips of the ear can endure and bring about change.

Rope learning

MORPHOLOGY AND LEXICOLOGY – THE WORDS OF ENGLISH

As speakers of English we have also internalized the rules of word formation. This concerns the branch of linguistics known as **morphology. Lexicology** relates to the study of the words themselves. The concept of the word turns out not to be a terribly workable one when it comes to description and analysis. More useful are **morphemes**. These are the smallest units of meaning in the structure of the language. Morphemes (or meaningful forms) can be added to a **root** (or the core of a word) to form a more complex word. These are classified according to where they appear with regard to the root (indicated by a hyphen). **Suffixes** follow the root; e.g. *-ed, -s, -ing* in *cook**ed**, cook**s**, cook**ing***. **Prefixes** precede the root; e.g. *in-, non-, un-* in ***in**toxicating **non**alcoholic, **un**cooked.* A third minor type, **infixes**, must occur inside the root. In English the only viable infixes are non-standard; e.g. intensifiers like *bloody* as in *fanbloodytastic* and Homer Simpson's *-ma-* as in *edumacate.* These are all **bound morphemes**. A word like *painters* divides into three morphemes: *paint + er + s.* Something like *mothers* divides into only two: *mother + s.* (The *moth* and *er* in *mother* have meanings that are totally unrelated to *mother* — so we wouldn't divide this word into two morphemes: *moth + er*)

There is good evidence that even quite young children are aware of the morphology of words, and often their misunderstanding of structure provides the clearest evidence of this. Börjars and Burridge

(2010) report three cases. Nils when he was about 2½ years old was told off for having thrown his bowl of cereal on the floor. He defended himself by saying that there was only one "Weetbick" left in the bowl; in this case Nils analysed the final /s/ sound of the brand name *Weetbix* as the English plural marker, which you get in words like *tricks*. Ellen, at the age of 3, fell over in the playground and through her tears informed the nursery staff that she had hurt her "twohead". Once she had calmed down a bit she said "I mean my forehead". Ellen seems to have been aware that words can consist of parts which both exist separately as words. She would appear to have thought of this word as "four head", but being upset from her fall she got the number wrong. Finally, when Paul was told by his father not to argue he replied "Well, don't arg-me then". The final sounds of argue are identical to the pronoun *you* and Paul had therefore assigned the structure "arg-you" to the word. Nils, Ellen and Paul all seem to be aware of the fact that words have internal structure.

Morphemes like the plural marker are called **inflectional morphemes** (they add grammatical information to the elements to which they are added). When it comes to this kind of abstract morphology, Modern English is rather impoverished — there are only seven such endings remaining and their disappearance is something we explore later. However, when it comes to the morphemes that we use to create brand new words in the language, the language fares better. English has hundreds of **derivational morphemes** that attach themselves to words in order to make (or derive) other words. The potential for combining and creating in this way is huge. In fact, the number of words we can create is endless.

The longest word?

The impressive sounding *floccinaucinihilipilification* meaning 'the action of estimating something as worthless' is often cited as the longest word in the English language (e.g. "I loved him for nothing so much as his floccinaucinihilipilification of money"). However, this "longest word" record is one that will always be broken. As Stephen Pinker points out, we can create *floccinaucinihilipilificational* 'pertaining to the estimation of something as worthless' (2007: 129-30). That's got two more letters. Then again *floccinaucinihilipilificationalize* 'to cause something to pertain to the estimation of something as worthless' has another three. Or how about *floccinaucinihilipilificationalization* 'the act of causing something to pertain to the estimation of something as worthless'? But wait from that we can build *floccinaucinihilipilificationalizational* 'pertaining to the act of causing something to pertain to the estimation of something as worthless'. And so we can go on — there is no theoretical limit. There is of course a practical limit that has to do with the limited brain space available to keep track of all these *-als*, *-izes* and *–ations* — and the usefulness of these creations in everyday use!

New Zealand's longest place name

Compounding is one of many other ways that we can create new words. In this case, it's a matter of combining two or more **free morphemes** (as opposed to bound morphemes); e.g. *fur child* 'a pet animal, as a cat or dog, treated as one would a child' and *ego surf* 'search the world wide web for your own name'.

These two processes of English — compounding and affixation — means that our capacity for creating new words is colossal. In fact, as already suggested, there is no limit to the "frillions" of expressions we can create. Think about *your great grandmother, your great great grandmother, your great great great grandmother* and so on (or the affixes you continue to tack onto *floccinaucinihilipilificationalizational*) — the sky is the limit! Morphemes can combine and recombine into an infinite number of different words. It is this structural complexity and creativity that distinguishes our communicative behaviour from that of animals. As we'll discuss later, the infinite capacity to express and understand meaning is not found in the language of any other species.

SYNTAX – THE SENTENCES OF ENGLISH

> The engineering trick behind human language — its being a discrete combinatorial system — is used in at least two different places: sentences and phrases are built out of words by the rules of syntax and the words themselves are built out of smaller bits by another set of rules, the rules of morphology (Pinker 2007: 127)

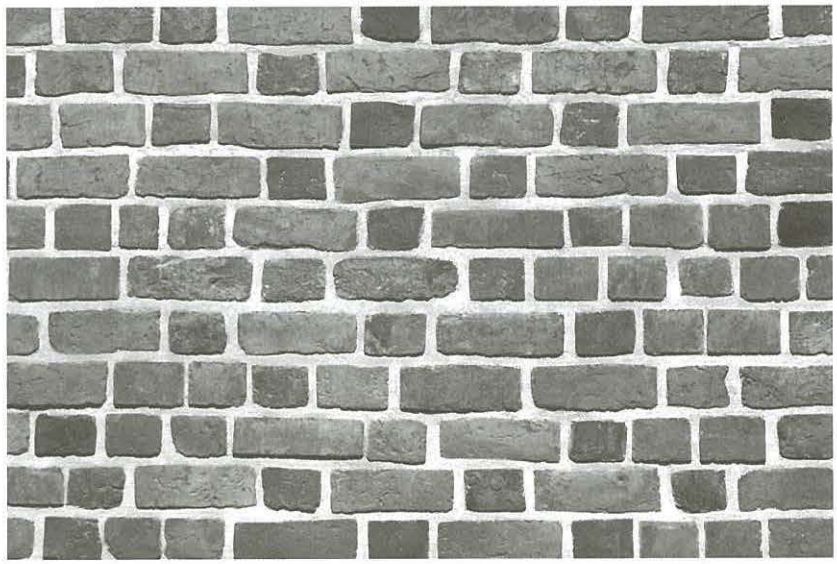
That part of linguistics that studies how words relate to each other and combine to form sentences is called **syntax**. Under syntax, we examine the structure of all the different sentence types of a language. English has four main types of sentences that can be distinguished structurally.

a) Declaratives (make statements)
   I've never seen Lorraine.
b) Imperatives (issue directives)
   Check out Lorraine!
c) Interrogatives (ask questions)
   Have you ever seen Lorraine?
   Where did Lorraine go?
d) Exclamatives (express exclamations)
   And what a wonderful person Lorraine is!

For each of the structural sentence types, there is a typical function, which is given in brackets. For example, interrogatives normally pose questions. However, they can be used for a whole lot of other purposes, too. The yes-no interrogative *Do you know when the train arrives?* is usually intended as a polite request, in which case it does not require an answer *yes* or *no* and any interlocutor who does reply in this way is not being cooperative. Some interrogatives can have the function of a directive (with an abusive component). They tell someone to do something, with the added intention of insulting or wounding them: for example, *Why don't you go jump?* or *Why don't you shut your face?*.

Syntax involves a degree of flexibility and open-endedness of structure that native speakers take completely for granted. Dwight Bolinger (1975: 17) illustrates what we can do with two simple words *red* and *brick* in answer to the request to "describe the house". With a simple rule of modification, we can get four very different meanings.

It's brick; It's red; It's brick red; It's red brick.



Explain the different meanings of these four sentences.

A good example of how syntax and morphology (= morphosyntax) work together is the following extract from Lewis Carroll's famous nonsense poem *Jabberwocky*:

'Twas brillig and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe
All mimsy were the borogoves
And the mome raths outgrabe

How is it that we can understand anything from this? On the level of vocabulary they are all nonsense words and therefore have no meaning as such. Yet many ring with sound symbolism. Onomatopoeic words such as *slithy* (perhaps a blend of *slippery, slimy, lithe*), *gimble* (a blend of *nimble* and *gambol*) and *brillig* (evokes *brilliant*) are all very evocative. Some of these portmanteau words (as Carroll dubbed these blended creations) have even entered English and you will find them in dictionaries; for example *chortle* (a combination of *chuckle* and *snort*). However, it is really the structures in this poem that allow us to make any sense of it at all. The words might be nonsense, but Carroll has broken none of the rules for forming words, nor the rules for forming the relationships between the words — so we know who is doing what and to whom because the form of the words and their position tell us heaps.

We know, for instance, that *toves* is a noun (like *birds*) because it carries the plural *-s* ending (its morphology) and because of its position (syntax). We also know that these toves are slithy (in English modifying words go in front of whatever they are modifying) and *slithy* is an adjective (like *happy*) because of the *-y* ending and its position (between *the* and the plural noun *toves*). We also know that the toves are the ones who are doing all the gimbling and gyring (both verbs). The word *did* is a special sort of verb (an **auxiliary** verb) that has to be followed by another verb (as in *did sing*). The poem beautifully preserves English structures and, because of this, people have even been able to translate the poem into other languages, such as German and French. Moreover, we can also

substitute each of Carroll's nonsense words with ordinary English words: *Twas sunny and the nimble lambs did skip and frolic in the paddock.*

Speakers of English are generally unaware of the complicated structural designs that support even the most basic of sentences. And the trick again is that there is no limit to the number of new and novel utterances that we can create. We can make up a novel sentence by simply embedding a new clause within an existing sentence, and we can keep doing this repeatedly — so theoretically sentences can be infinitely long; for example, *I hope that Mary believes that Bill knows that Fred likes John .....*

The House that Jack Built

The Mother Goose rhyme *The House that Jack Built* can illustrate this point. Here's the last verse:

This is the farmer sowing his corn,
That kept the cock that crowed in the morn,
That waked the priest all shaven and shorn,
That married the man all tattered and torn,
That kissed the maiden all forlorn,
That milked the cow with the crumpled horn,
That tossed the dog,
That worried the cat,
That killed the rat,
That ate the malt
That lay in the house that Jack built.

Each verse builds upon the previous verse by adding another clause — another illustration of "the tremendous resourcefulness of language".

Not all sentences you will encounter have a complete structure. In the register of modern advertising, for example, **sentence fragments** like the following are commmonplace.

An earmark of the conversationial style of modern ads has become these stand-alone noun phrases. The fragments are easier to understand, and they carry a greater emphasis. But there's a sneaky aspect to this shredded English too. What is missing of course are the verbs — dispense with verbs and the advertising message is more easily delivered without the possibility of question or doubt.

Search for some other examples of slogans that use sentence fragments for effect. Explain how the effect is achieved.

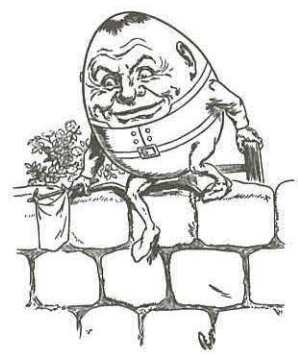
SEMANTICS AND THE MEANINGS OF ENGLISH

The field of linguistics that is generally considered to be the study of meaning (and related notions) is that of **semantics**. It is considered to be a separate subsystem, even though meaning clearly forms an integral part of all components of the language — sounds, words, phrases and sentences.

In any semantic analysis, the focus is on the conventional (or agreed-upon) meanings. Individual speakers aren't free to change these meanings or communication would soon grind to a halt. Recall the character Humpty Dumpty in Lewis Caroll's *Through the Looking-Glass* (1992 [1871]: 163). He has a rather idiosyncratic approach to meaning and language.

> "When I use a word", Humpty Dumpty said, in rather a scornful tone, "it means just what I choose it to mean — neither more nor less."
>
> "The question is," said Alice, "whether you can make words mean so many different things."

This famous scene has even given rise to a new word *humpty dumptyism* "the practice of insisting that a word means whatever one wishes it to". Needless to say, semantics deals with agreed-upon meanings, not humpty dumptyism.



However, in some respects Humpty Dumpty is perfectly correct. There are aspects of communication that fall beyond the conventional meaning of words and sentences. Like Alice, we all have to be able to recognize what people actually mean when they interact. When someone stops you in the street and asks, "Do you have the time?", you have to be able to interpret that this person is actually asking you what the time is. You wouldn't reply, "Yes", and walk on. Context and the communicative intentions of people affect the meanings of their words and sentences and are all-important when it comes to successful communication. Clearly, a lot of information will fall between the lines. There is a lot that goes on in our linguistic exchanges that is unstated — much of the time, we infer or conclude, not on the basis of the content of utterances, but rather based on what we assume the speaker is trying to accomplish.

DISCOURSE – THE TEXTS OF ENGLISH

Sentences rarely appear in isolation, but as part of connected speech and writing. **Discourse** is language beyond the humble sentence and **discourse analysis** studies how the stretches of

language that make up our written texts and spoken interactions are organized. Any discourse is just like a story. Shifts in focus, changes of players, beginnings and ends of scenes need to be signalled, and for this we have a number of special discourse strategies. These may involve all linguistic levels; for example, syntax (e.g. word order, special constructions), morphology and lexicon (e.g. special **discourse particles** like *yeah-no, like*), phonology (e.g. intonation, pausing) and even **paralinguistic** elements such as body language (e.g. gesture, eye contact).

IN SUMMARY

These then are the different levels of structure that make up a language like English. At the lowest simplest level are sounds, which occur in clumps (or syllables). These are meaningless until they combine to form words and parts of words (or morphemes). Above the word is the level of syntax, part of the organizational structure that gives rise to the paragraphs making up the discourses of our speech and writing. No non-human system of communication has been shown to be this ingenious and enterprising. You can read more about each of these different subsystems at the end of this book. There you will also find some activities that will help you come to grips with what might well be a lot of bewildering new terms and concepts for you.

1.3 MODES OF LANGUAGE

Language can be perceived and transmitted as speech or as writing (and we'll come to sign languages as a third distinction later). Though technology is blurring these two distinctions, they remain the two dominant **modes** of communication. There are various reasons we might have for using them, and in the list below we have provided some of the most common functions of language. We've given illustrations of both spoken and written language. There will be considerable overlap since many text types can be both spoken and written. For example, the rules for evacuating a building in the event of a fire can comprise oral instructions or be posted somewhere as a set of written instructions. You will also find that many text types have a range of different purposes. Social networking services like Twitter are also information networks since they also make known significant events happening around the world. Telephone use can be informative (communication between service providers and clients, bush-fire alerts), social (informal chats or texts between mates), persuasive (telemarketing calls and spamming texts), entertainment (Youtube clips) and even ceremonial (there are telephone ministries who offer a 24 hour prayer service).

Functions	Text types (spoken and written)
Information	public lectures, talks, presentations, news broadcasts, media interviews, sporting commentaries
	insurance policies, labels, road signs, newspaper reports, tweets, blogs, catalogues, dictionaries
Rapport	social chit-chat, gossip, courtesy expressions, verbal duelling (ritual insults or friendly banter)
	snail mail, postcards, email messages, SMS texts, facebook (and other social networking websites)

Instruction	fire drills, jury instructions, do-it-yourself TV shows, lectures
	how-to manuals, recipes, patterns, phrase books, stage directions, questionnaires
Persuasion	sermons, political speechmaking, debates, advice-giving, TV advertisements
	advertising billboards, advertorials, graffiti, letters to the editor
Entertainment	joke-telling, story-telling, chat shows, dramas
	novels, poems, short stories, cartoon strips
Play	tongue twisters, secret languages (Pig Latin), skipping rhymes, rhyming slang (*dead horse* = "sauce")
	crosswords, hangman, anagrams, rebuses (where pictures represent syllables and words; e.g. *ICUR* "I see you are")
Ceremony	opening/closing addresses, votes of thanks, toasts, eulogies, wedding vows
	memorial plaques, inscriptions, obituaries, written prayers, formulaic sections of legal contracts

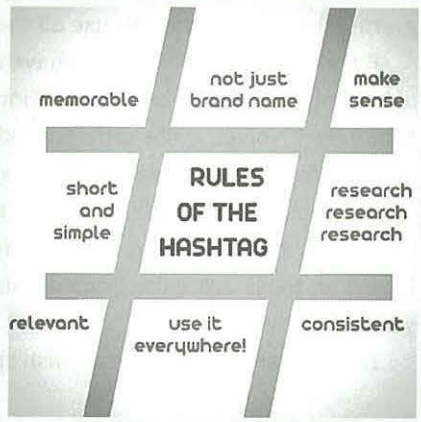
You will be able to add many more to these lists. Just think of all the different ways you use English in a single week.

We mentioned that the two main ways (or modes) we have for using language are speech and writing. Yet, Helen Keller's experience showed that this is certainly not the only way there is to communicate. As Helen describes in her essay, the day that language came into her life was the day she made the symbolic connection between what her teacher was spelling into one hand and the cool water she was feeling on the other. Even before she met her teacher, Helen used around 60 different "home signs", or special gestures that she used to communicate with her family. Clearly, this sort of gestural communication is another quite distinct mode of human language. The signs used by Helen's teacher relied on the visual alphabet of our writing system. One such system that is used today is "finger spelling". This encodes words letter by letter, using different hand shapes (or signs) for individual letters. It is usually thought of as an auxiliary system, useful for signing proper names or perhaps technical terms that don't have their own individual signs. Sign languages proper, as we will later discuss, are like any other natural language – they have highly developed and complex structures, but just happen to use manual signs rather than vocal or written symbols.

Speech and writing are very different in nature. The features of these two modes of communication offer certain advantages and disadvantages for various tasks. The speed and spontaneity of speech mean that there is not the same possibility for close analysis, organization and planning as there is with writing. Misunderstandings can arise this way (yet breakdowns can be identified and repaired on the go). Speech is also typically transient (unless you record it) and not much help if you need to keep something for future reference. By contrast, writing is permanent and for this reason is well suited for recording facts and ideas. However, the formality of writing might end up lending too much weight to the wording of a message, causing it to come across more seriously than intended. Speech is typically more informal and this could be more appropriate for a gentle reprimand. For example, if you write to a friend who has treated you badly, this might inflame the situation, whereas a quiet word in that person's ear could do just the trick. Another feature of speech is that it has a vast repertoire of expressive devices. Speakers have available prosodic features (like **intonation** and voice quality), gestures and facial expressions and these can convey quite subtle nuances of

meaning. Without such cues, a message may not convey the tone you intended and this is one of the main drawbacks of written language. It all becomes especially important when it involves awkward or delicate speech events such as apologies, reprimands and expressions of sympathy.

E-communication formats have introduced many changes for punctuation marks, bestowing upon them new tasks and new responsibilities. Once-neutral little symbols are taking on a whole heap of new significances, with fresh life now breathed into commas, colons, exclamation marks, question marks, apostrophes, quotation marks, full-stops and interrobangs (which have been brought back from the dead). Even ellipsis points are being used creatively. Like the Sherlock Holmes quote "the curious incident of the dog in the night-time", nothing means something here. A succession of full stops [...] no longer simply indicates missing text. And then there's the # hashtag, described in Urban Dictionary as: invented for Twitter in 2007, it's a way for people to search for tweets that have a common topic and to begin a conversation.



1.4 CHARACTERIZING SPEECH AND WRITING

In earlier times before the appearance of grammars and dictionaries, people wrote as they spoke. Speech was primary, and writing was the means they had of representing it visually; it was a special optional extra. These days, it's all very different. The clout of the written word means that people now tend to view spoken English more as the oral representation of writing. If you think about this from a linguistic point of view, it has become a case of the tail wagging the dog. For instance, the colloquial pronunciation of the word *swimming* is often described as having dropped a "g" (*swimmin'*). Yet, even the most careful pronunciation of *swimming* would never pronounce the "g" — the "ng" cluster of letters is the way we represent the nasal phoneme [ŋ] (for which we have no single alphabetic symbol). Words like *debt* and *subtle* are also said to have silent consonants. These letters have never been pronounced but were added in early times to make the words look more like Latin — now we accuse these words of losing these sounds. In fact, such is the power of written language these days that fancy respellings like these have even caused people to change their pronunciation in order to fall in line. Today, we pronounce the "l" in *fault* and *vault*, even though the consonant was simply added in the 1600s to give these words a classy Latinate look.

Most speech, particularly the sort of conversations that occur on a daily basis, is spontaneous and unplanned. By comparison, writing is not this sort of natural and spontaneous activity. You will probably have experienced those many (often painful) rewritings, reworkings and corrections that happen before the final written draft of an essay eventually appears — and if you haven't, then you should have! Most pieces of formal writing, especially for publication, involve layers of editorial involvement before it reaches a wider audience.

Speech is also typically a social activity and can be more informal and intimate than writing. Often it is face-to-face and can therefore also tolerate all sorts of ambiguity and vagueness because

any missing information can immediately be supplied by context. Moreover, as earlier described, the nature of speech means that speakers have a whole support system of oral and visual cues that are not available to writers. This support system includes **prosodic features** like intonation, pitch, rhythm, volume, tempo, pausing and also voice quality (like a breathy, creaky or harsh voice). It will also include what are called **paralinguistic features** like facial expressions, body language (such as gestures) and eye gaze. We use all these things to organize and present our information.

By comparison, writers may have no idea who their readers will be and they don't have the benefit of instant feedback (e-communication is a special case and we'll come to that in a moment). Writing generally involves quite different skills. To some extent unusual punctuation and even spellings can go some way to capturing the special meanings signalled by the nonverbal cues. The use of scare quotes, for example, or capital letters, can show that a word has a special sense by attempting to express the intonation and emphasis of spoken language ("I REALLY don't want to do that"). However, these are quite limited compared to the complex prosodic and paralinguistic features of speech.

In summary, we can distinguish speech and writing on the basis of the following formal features:

SPEECH	WRITING
Less highly valued in society	More highly valued in society
Social	Solitary
Dynamic and transient	Static and permanent
Often more informal and intimate	Often more formal and remote
Typically spontaneous and unplanned	Typically planned and reworked
Typically face-to-face interaction	No visual contact and no contextual support
Immediate feedback	No immediate feedback
Supported by prosodic and paralinguistic features	No prosodic and paralinguistic support

1.4.1 STRUCTURAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SPEECH AND WRITING

We now move on to discuss some of the structural features of these two modes, many of which are triggered by the formal differences just discussed. As a way of exploring these distinctions consider the two short spontaneous monologues given below.

There are a number of conventions for capturing prosodic and paralinguistic features. Here is a list of some that will help you with the following extracts and with your own transcribing later on.

- Each line represents one intonation unit (a stretch of speech often spoken in a single breath).
- Continuing intonation units are marked with a comma.
- Final intonation units are marked with a full-stop or with a question mark if the intonation is rising.
- Pauses are shown by three dots.

- Pitch can be indicated with slashes and dashes. For example, / for rising pitch, \ for falling pitch and — for level pitch.
- Speech that is soft is marked <P> or <PP> if it's very soft.
- Speech that is loud is marked <F> or <FF> if it's very loud.
- Tempo can be marked <A> for fast speech and <L> for slow speech.
- Truncated words are marked with a hyphen; i.e. word-.

Extract 1 Chris talking about her friend's cancer diagnosis

1. But she said,
2. that,
3. with these,
4. melanomas,
5. she said they,
6. the trouble is,
7. she said he could have had it for ten years?
8. They can take ten years to,/
9. an' she said they seed.
10. <L An' she said
11. that's why it's the deadliest form L>.

Extract 2 Peter talking about his childhood

1. We weren't allowed to do much,
2. weren't allowed to go out.
3. You know/(...)
4. like dad went to Korea,/
5. and come back from Korea,/
6. and met mum,
7. and got married,
8. and had us kids.
9. But uh,
10. yeah,
11. we lived in what they use to call,
12. housing trust rental homes which,
13. um,
14. working class suburbs,
15. you know,/
16. and uh,
17. yeah,
18. you know,
19. like if you mucked around,
20. you got kicked up the bum sort of thing.
21. But yeah,
22. I don't regret anything of my life,/
23. being brought up with my family.
24. (...) Pretty good,
25. actually,
26. I think,

Mucking around

27. you know.
28. Yeah,
29. <P some things,
30. I think,
31. I wish they were a bit more lenient P>,
32. but other than that,
33. yeah-no.

Rewrite these transcripts as pieces of acceptable grammaical writing. Note the changes that were necessary, e.g. in punctuation, spelling and syntax.

LEXICON AND PHONOLOGY

One obvious feature of these extracts involves colloquialisms (*mucked around, kicked up the bum*). Contractions and reductions (*isn't, it's, an'* etc.) are another. But because society has become much more accepting of informality, these features are now appearing in written language and are no longer exclusive to speech. These extracts also show the sorts of repairs and repetitions that are typical of language made on the go; there are occasionally hesitations, **false starts** and **filled pauses** like *um* and *uh*. Such features are sometimes lumped together under the rather negative label **non-fluency features**, but this is really an unfair description. They are a natural part of spontaneous, rapid speech. Speakers need them for planning time and hearers also need them in order to grasp the message (we actually process language rather slowly — think how hard it can be to follow writing that is read aloud). It's true, hesitation features such as the ones in these extracts look particularly glaring on paper, but co-operative listeners intent on the speaker's message typically edit them out. Indeed, unless something is going wrong with the interaction, speakers and hearers are cheerfully unaware of them.

SYNTAX

When you convert these examples into acceptable writing, you find that many utterances simply don't correspond to any well-formed sentences of English. For a start, speech events like these ones are full of **ellipsis**; in other words, speakers omit parts of sentences that are reconstructable from previous utterances or that can be inferred from context; often they leave sentences unfinished. Just have a look at lines 5-9 in extract 1 and 12-14 in extract 2.

Speech has what is called a very distinctive style where clauses are strung together, either without any linking item at all or linked by some sort of **coordinating** element, typically *and*. As you can see in both extracts, there is little in the way of **subordination** (combinations of clauses that are syntactically non-equivalent). These more complicated structures are more likely to occur in written language and also the fairly formal and careful usage found in grammatical descriptions of the language. This is because grammar books and style guides are generally based on the grammar of writing. This is not surprising — after all, until quite recently we didn't have proper access to live unsolicited speech. Unfortunately, what this means is that people have come to equate "normal" language with written forms, and they are very intolerant of some of the features of ordinary speech.

DISCOURSE

Monologues like the ones above are dotted with **discourse particles**, expressions like *like, well, you know, yeah-no, I mean, I think, anyway, sort of* and so on. These are anything but meaningless little expressions that speakers use to fill in time while they plan what they're going to say next. In the interview above, Peter is talking about his early childhood and the effect of the Korean war on his father. He finds himself revealing too much about difficulties in his family life and his relationship with his father, and his discomfort is apparent in his frequent use of **hedges** (these are expressions that are used to lessen the impact of an utterance). He stumbles to a close with a final *yeah-no*. Spoken interaction is much more personal than writing, and speakers continually refer to themselves and to their audience, which they can do with these sorts of expressions. For example, they might be used to check that the hearer has understood, to invite a reaction to what has been said, or to seek empathy. A phrase like *you know* might signal sensitivity towards the hearer, perhaps inviting the person to participate or, in the case of good mates, emphasizing common ground between the speaker and hearer. Usually these phrases have an array of different functions and have quite a complex effect on the utterances in which they occur.

1.4.2 E-COMMUNICATION

These days we are witnessing a linguistic revolution. The internet and the global trend towards e-communication is making even more of an impact than any of the previous technologies (from pen and ink, printing to the telephone, radio and television broadcasting). Emails, tweets, text messages and other social media are now routine aspects of most people's lives. They involve, of course, written language, but clearly they also share many of the features of speech. Special graphic devices like the emoticons and emoji, for example, can add an extra semantic dimension to this written medium. These smiling, frowning, winking, crying etc. faces try to communicate something of the same meaning conveyed by the prosodic and paralinguistic features of speech and make up for the fact that we tend not to give e-messages the careful wording we might, say, in a snail mail letter. Typically, we bang down the message, with almost the speed and spontaneity of speech, but of course without the full support of the expressive devices that speech can utilise. In e-conversations, people don't observe the same politeness conventions that go on in usual conversation. They don't undertake the same time-consuming routines that are so important when it comes to establishing social rapport (greetings and leave-takings and so on). Without this social lubricant to oil the interaction, messages can come across more brusquely and more directly than originally intended.

Even before the advent of electronic communication, some linguists preferred the labels "planned" and "unplanned" discourse, rather than "speech" and "writing". These labels better capture the fact that examples of speech and writing will show different features depending on their degree of planning and formality. Think of a hastily scribbled note versus a carefully worded essay; think of a regular conversation versus a public lecture. Either way, both sets of labels imply two polar extremes. The reality, of course, is there are many intermediate texts that exhibit features of both types of discourse to a greater or lesser extent. Emails, blogs, tweets etc. are important newcomers to the scene and it is interesting to see what impact e-communication is having on the future shape of the language. The straight-jacket that writing imposes on the language has been loosened, and this is something we return to in the second part of this book.

1.4.3
CONTEXT AND LANGUAGE CHOICE

FIRST YOUTH:	Hullo congenital idiot!
SECOND YOUTH:	Hullo, you priceless old ass!
DAMSEL:	I'd no idea you two knew each other so well!

This quote from an old *Punch* cartoon from early last century shows normally abusive address forms uttered without animosity, and they are similarly reciprocated. It all indicates real friendship. As in other native varieties of English, this usage is routine in Australian and New Zealand and speakers often report that the more affectionate they feel towards someone, the more abusive the language can be towards that person. **Context** is all-important. In other words, the situation in which the interaction takes place, the people involved, and their cultural expectations, all influence how the message is packaged and received.

Consider how you and others in your group might use abusive words to indicate friendship and affection. Make a list of some of the expressions you use with friends and family that, to an outsider, might sound abusive.

As suggested earlier, it's both a strength and a weakness of language that it is not always precise. Not all our linguistic contributions are simple propositions that can be evaluated as true or false. Words aren't maths symbols — they don't have a fixed and constant designation. Language has to cover a huge range of social behaviour. There is so much that goes beyond the literal meaning and that is never subject to precise definition. Imagine working in a supermarket and a customer comes up to you and asks:

"Could you show me where the butter is?"

Clearly this person wants you to show them the dairy section; you would not be tempted to take this literally (in other words, as an inquiry about your theoretical ability to find the butter). As we saw earlier, the polite way to request something in ordinary interaction is to frame it as interrogative structure.

Language is full of mismatches like this between the form of a structure and its meaning. This is what enables language to cope with the complexity of human interaction, but it is what also can lead to miscommunication. Therefore, an important concept behind much of how we understand each other is the way we (as speakers / hearers and writers / readers) make reference to the context — the situation in which an interaction is taking place. Communication is always going to work the best when players recognize a shared context.

Linguist Anna Wierzbicka explained the rich abundance of polite directives in English ("whimperatives", as they are sometimes called) as a culture-related phenomenon; specifically, the individualism of Anglo society and its emphasis on personal autonomy. Whimperatives such as "Could you show me where the butter is" or "Do you mind if I shut the window" reduce assertiveness and are more considerate of the

hearer — they avoid the impression that the speaker is trying to impose their will on anybody else (as would be conveyed by "Show me where the butter is" or "Shut the window"). Effective communication involves much more that bundling up meaning in a sound signal and broadcasting it through space. The language we choose will always be influenced by situational and also cultural contexts in which it occurs and is based on the conventional understandings and traditions that shape and reflect our view of the world.

None of us behaves linguistically the same way all the time. Our language varies constantly in response to a range of different factors — alter any one of these factors, and we change our language accordingly. Some might think this is being a bit phony. They might be thinking of a person who puts on a posh accent when speaking on the telephone (what some might call "a telephone voice"). We try to select the suitable language that goes well with the social purpose and the context we find ourselves in.

In short, language will always vary according to any of the following five factors:

1. function of the interaction
2. the relationship between speakers and their audience, and even anyone else who might be within earshot
3. the subject matter (or field)
4. the situation or setting
5. the physical mode — whether a spoken, written or signed medium is used

Language varies constantly in response to these different situational factors. An important type of contextually defined variety involves something called a **register**. Language is tailored to certain situations, occupations, hobbies or subjects; for example, there are registers associated with groups such as doctors, lawyers, airline pilots, advertisers, bank managers, musicians, gamers, hip-hop artists and so on. These varieties aren't tied to particular speech communities in the way that dialects are, and yet they can be just as distinct from each other, and like dialects differ across all subsystems. Descriptions of registers usually concentrate on their very distinctive vocabularies, and this is understandable — these specialist expressions name the things that are the particular focus of the domain. And it's probably also the case that unfamiliar words and phrases are more obvious (and perhaps more interesting). However, as the following example illustrates, registers involve much more than simply lexical differences. In the following few lines from Australian singer Iggy Azalea's hit *Trouble*, you can see how different the language is across all levels, bearing in mind also that she sings it with a distinctive accent (that is not Australian):

I shoulda known you were bad news
From the bad boy demeanor and the tattoos
Cause most guys only want one thing
But I'm undecided, tryna figure out if that's you
Either way though, I think you're worth a test drive
Cause (oo) you're so much better than the next guy
And a little trouble only makes for a good time
So all the normal red flags be a good sign

[Hook - Jennifer Hudson:]
Don't you come here thinking you ballin' (oh nah)

Ain't down for it
You seem like trouble to me
I can tell by the way that you lean
And the way that you kiss your teeth
And you turn up so fresh and clean
Smells like trouble to me

Examine the extract above and list the language examples (from each of the subsystems) that make this register distinctive.

1.5 UNIQUENESS OF HUMAN COMMUNICATION

You've probably seen nature programs on television that document dophin-speak, bird songs, bee dances, talking horses and the "love songs" of humpbacked whales. There are all sorts of websites that give examples of talking animals, too. There's Alex (the African Grey Parrot), Odie (the talking pug) — even a Turkish-speaking cat called Cingene, who apparently is captured on television making at least seven words. On these websites you'll find examples of talking elephants, mongooses (mongeese?), seals and lots of talking baby chimps. There was once a famous pink and grey galah called Samuel. He used to say "bless you" whenever anyone sneezed. His party trick was to utter "got a bad cough" and then have a coughing fit. Samuel actually died of some kind of nasty parrot consumption. Does this mean that all along he really was trying to let people know he was sick? Seriously though, are any of these creatures actually communicating in a meaningful way? And if so, how do their communication systems compare to ours?

Mr Ed and Wilbur, his owner, who was the only one who could hear Mr Ed speak.

Find out who Harvey and Mr Ed were. Brainstorm a list of all the TV programs and movies that have featured talking animals. Why do you think humans are so fascinated with the possibility of being able to communicate with other species?

Charles Hockett in the 1960s originally isolated thirteen features (or "design features", as he called them) that distinguished human language from the communication of animals. He later expanded this list to sixteen, but we'll just consider some of the most important of these features and see how many of them occur in the animal world.

SPONTANEITY AND DISPLACEMENT

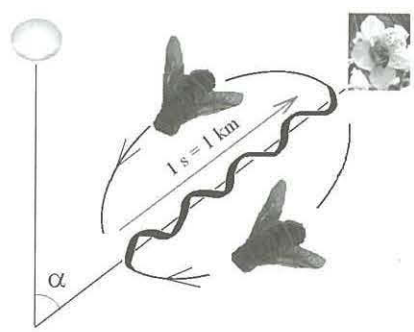
First, we humans initiate speech. You don't have to dangle a biscuit or a chocolate bar in front our noses to get us to speak. True, some birds show this sort of spontaneous feature in their talk, but it is generally not a feature of animal communication. Furthermore, we humans can talk about all sorts of things that are quite remote from the here and now. This is displacement. For instance, you might talk about your good friend who got a 50 for a VCE subject she did. Animals can't do this. Animals are "stimulus bound". Typically, they talk about nothing but the present moment and about things that they can see. Rover might greet you at the door with a bark that might suggest he's happy to see you. Ask Rover about his day and he'll probably make the same response. Bees can communicate about the location of patches of nectar (in beespeak the length of the waggle dance correlates with the distance of the nectar); in other words, it shows some ability to communicate beyond the here and now (i.e. displacement). But they can't report on that awesome patch of nectar they visited last week, or wonder about the plight of rural bees in drought-stricken Victoria. Bees can't swap stories either about great nectar sources they have known.

ARBITRARINESS

Something else about human language is that it is conventional and arbitrary — words are symbols and language works because we are all agreed on what they symbolize. These are important features that will come up time and time again in this book. For example, there is absolutely nothing about your physical or psychological make-up that causes you to use the word *book* to refer to the work you're reading at the moment (be it the e-book or the tree-book). There's no natural or no necessary connection between *book* and its meaning. It is simply the case that all speakers of English have chosen to call it "a book" (this does not include Humpty Dumpty, who undermines the very foundation of human language).

You might well be thinking, surely not all words are arbitrary. What about **onomatopoeic words** whose sounds do convey or suggest their meaning. And you're right. There are words like *cockedoodledoo, cuckoo, whoosh, slurp* and so on, which mimic sounds in the real world. The words you find on breakfast cereal boxes — *snap, crackle, pop* — do suggest the sound of pouring milk on puffed rice or cornflakes. Some individual sounds in English also seem to have meaning. Consider words like *teeny* and *little* versus *large*; *chip* (a small piece of wood) versus *chop* (a big piece); *a slit* versus *a slot*. What if you had borrowed someone's car and in doing so had a run in with a post — would you report the damage as a *dint* or a *dent*? There is some connection between sounds produced with the tongue high in the mouth and the meaning 'small'; by contrast, those with the tongue low suggest 'large'. However, you can only go so far with sound symbolism — what about the word *big* and *bit* (their vowels would suggest the same meanings). Shakespeare was correct: "That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet" (*Romeo and Juliet*). Our words are arbitrary symbols.

But back to animals. Many animal signals are iconic; in other words there is a very real connection between the message that's being sent and the signal. Jean Aitchison in her book *The Articulate Mammal* describes how angry crustaceans will wave a leg, and those that are really cheesed off will wave a very large claw (2007: 29). The speed of beespeak directly relates to the distance of the nectar. However, not all animal signalling is so, and arbitrariness is not in fact unique to human language. More significant is the fact that animal signals are based on



The bees' waggle dance

the principle of "one sound; one meaning" and this makes animals extremely limited in what they can say. Quite simply they don't seem able to come up with anything new. This leads to the next two features — the structure and open-endedness of human language.

How do you communicate with your own pets, or pets of others, and how do they communicate with you (in other words, how do they let you know what they want and how they feel)? Based on the features of sponteneity, displacement and arbitrariness, is this real language?

STRUCTURE AND CREATIVITY

Human language shows something Hockett described as "duality of patterning". Basically, this means that elements of a language can be combined and recombined in a systematic way to create new forms. This is a very economical aspect of human language. As we saw earlier, discrete units of sound (themselves not meaningful) combine to form meaningful signs (morphemes or words) — these then combine and permute to form even larger structures (in this case sentences). The "miaouw" of a cat or the "moo" of a cow doesn't show this duality of levels — these signals can't be broken down in this way.

Humans can talk about things that don't exist.

Human language is also an open system. The discrete parts of a language can be combined and recombined to produce an infinite number of different messages. This is something Hockett described as "productivity" and what we call "creativity". By contrast, animal communication is a closed system. In her 1992 book *Linguistics,* Jean Aitchison describes how one variety of male grasshopper has a choice of only six messages — "I'm happy, life is good", "I would like to make love", "You are trespassing", "She's mine", "Let's make love", "Oh how nice to have made love". It is true that some creatures (for example, monkeys) have quite an impressive repertoire, but they are always fixed, not open-ended in the way human language is. We humans can talk about literally anything we like, when we want to and where we want to. The male grasshopper could never come up with something completely nonsensical in this meme; humans can talk about things that don't exist — the man in the moon or the tooth fairy.

It is worth acquainting yourself with the brilliant sketch *The subject of language* by Stephen Fry and Hugh Laurie *https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MSylhapMdI8*

In short, human languages have a hierarchical structure and, most importantly, creativity — humans have an infinite capacity to produce new and novel utterances. Sounds organize themselves into syllables which combine to form parts of words, which combine to form words, which we can then combine and recombine into an infinite number of different structures (for instance, we can keep adding *which* clauses here — this sentence has no theoretical end). This organization of level upon level is what distinguishes human communication from that of other animals. No animal communication has this sort of infinite capacity. Even beespeak, it turns out, can't create a word for "up"!

CULTURAL TRANSMISSION

Humans hand their language down from generation to generation. Children learn the language or languages spoken around them, even if this is not the language of their biological parents. Think of a child born into a Cantonese-speaking community who is then adopted by parents living in an English-language environment. This child will have the physical features inherited from his or her natural parents, but will end up an English-speaker. Think of Rover in the same situation. His bark will never vary — it doesn't matter what environment he grows up in, his communication system is defined by instinct and therefore is genetic. Mind you, not all animals acquire their languages instinctively and this feature does seem to vary somewhat in the animal world. In birds, for example, you might find instinct combining with environment and transmission. The thrushes' song is innate but modified slightly by learning. Finer detail (matters of rhythm and pitch, for example) might be handed down. But the crucial thing is that birds brought up in isolation will instinctively sing songs, although they might be a bit odd. However, this is not the case if a child is brought up in isolation from adults – and we will see some tragic cases of this very soon. Such children will only begin to use language after they have contact with speakers. How normal their language ends up will depend on when this contact occurs. Cultural transmission is crucial and it must take place early if a child is to acquire full competence.

Bird banter

Breakthroughs are being made all the time on animal communcation. A professor of biology at the University of Montana, Erick Greene, has been trying to crack birdspeak. In particular he's been focusing on bird alarm calls and how they respond to the presence of a predator, using signals such as "snake on the ground", "flying raptor", "perched raptor" etc. Experiments he has been conducting suggest that birds can not only transmit these signals to each other, but to other species as well. Listen to an interview between Radio National's Natasha Mitchell and Professor Greene (http://www.abc.net.au/radio/programitem/pglxGLzW2V?play=true) and decide whether this is really language as we have been defining it here.

1.5.1
TEACHING ANIMALS HUMAN COMMUNICATION

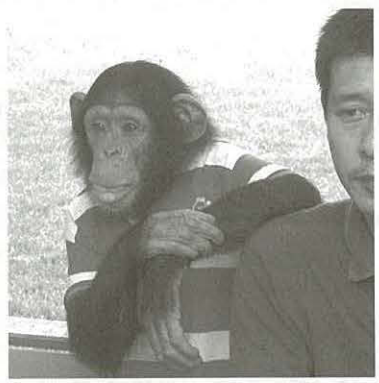
Okay, you might be wondering — what about chimp communication? In the past 80 plus years there have been many attempts at teaching apes human language. The first attempts in the 1930s and 1940s were a failure. Two chimps Gua and Viki were adopted and raised like children, but Gua never spoke a word and after three years Viki could make only three utterances: *papa, mama* and *cup* (which apparently she often confused!). Of course these animals were physiologically disadvantaged because they were made to use their vocal organs — the ape vocal apparatus is structured quite differently from that of humans and is fundamentally unsuited to the production of vowels and consonants. In the 1960s, there started a series of famous projects using either computer consoles and plastic shapes on boards or sign language. According to their trainers, these creatures learned hundreds of words and could string them together in meaningful ways. The most famous studies involved Koko

(a gorilla) and Nim Chimpsky (the chimp's name is a dig at linguist Noam Chomsky, who was well known at the time for holding the view that humans alone were "hard-wired" to develop language). Both apes were taught a kind of modified American Sign Language.

A little later came along an even more interesting primate, Kanzi (a baby bonobo, a type of chimp). He accompanied his mother to sessions where she was taught language through symbols on a keyboard. Although Kanzi appeared to show no interest in these lessons, he spontaneously started to use the symbols and soon outstripped his mother in ability. His linguistic skills are reputed to have been impressive – around 250 symbols, which he seemed able to put into simple grammatical sentences. He also consistently produced distinct noises when referring to things like bananas and grapes. Kanzi is the first of these "talking" primates to be immersed in language in a more naturalist setting and from a very early age; in other words, he didn't learn through direct training but simply through exposure, just as human children do.

From all these attempts, it does seem chimps can cope with arbitrary symbols and they show some displacement. They even display some creativity (e.g. Nim independently came up with the symbols *white* and *tiger* for "zebra"). Mind you, the skills they show are not as extensive as their enthusiastic trainers have claimed. The deaf native signer assigned to Nim, for example, didn't see all the signs that the hearing trainers did. As Jean Aitchison once suggested, trainers can sometimes be like overly fond parents (who are notorious for overrating the intelligence of their children).

The game of chess has often been used as an analogy for language — in which case, these apes have been taught well how to move chess pieces around, but are they really playing chess? See what you think. Here are some typical sentences from Nim Chimpsky: "Hug Nim", "Tickle Nim", "Nim eat Nim eat", "Me eat drink more", "Tickle me Nim play", "Me banana you banana me you give", "Give orange me give eat orange me eat orange give me eat orange give me you". What is always striking about ape-speak is the repetition. It is also very much oriented towards the idea of obtaining something — no meaningful communication of thoughts or ideas. If you were relying on a good conversational partner on a long haul flight, there probably isn't much separating Nim and the male grasshopper.



Nim Chimpsky

There is another relevant aspect of language; namely, the interaction between the players. As psycholinguist Stephen Pinker points out, even the linguistically gifted chimps don't seem to take part in conversation. Rarely do they sign spontaneously, they have to be drilled and coerced. And they don't go in for the sort of "verbal cuddling" that humans engage in — e.g. making comments just for the sake of it, which is something even small human infants do. Nim would cheerfully sign at the same time as his conversational partners, often even under the table or with his back to them. Pinker's conclusion is that "fundamentally, deep down chimps just don't get it" (2007: 340).

This stage in research suggests that Pinker is right. There isn't much evidence of any real linguistic processing going on, and certainly nothing approaching the grammar of human language. However, this is a controversial area and there is a lot of disagreement among linguists and psychologists. George Yule (2006:16) hits the nail on his head when he suggests the problem is that as yet we have no proper objective definition of what it means to actually use language. As he points out: "We

assume that when young human children make language-like noises we are witnessing language development, but when young chimpanzees produce language-like signs in interaction with humans, many scientists are very unwilling to classify this as language-use. Yet the criteria we use in each case do not seem to be the same". Some of these attempts to teach animals human language (especially success stories like Kanzi) do suggest that the line between human and nonhuman communication is more fuzzy than has traditionally been assumed — chimps are probably more than simply "highly trained animal acts" (as Pinker describes them). A safe conclusion to draw from all this is that humans appear unique in their ability to use language, at least according to those key properties that we outlined earlier.

Let's say you teach your dog to come to heel, to sit, to beg, to roll over, to play dead and to bark, using English words (such as *heel*) as commands. Would your dog be learning language — why or why not?

1.6 SIGN LANGUAGES

There is a third important mode of human communication still to discuss; namely, sign or signed language. The human vocal-auditory channel is clearly a key player in human communication. Sounds are made with the vocal organs and a hearing mechanism then receives them. But this is actually not a feature that distinguishes human communication from that of animals. There are many animals (think of birds, cows, apes, foxes) that have this facility. It is a useful and effective one. However, we need to emphasize that human communication doesn't have to involve vocal signals. Sound just happens to enter into the organization of human language, but it is not essential. Sign languages like Auslan (spoken by the Deaf community here in Australia) use visual symbols and these are fully-fledged languages in their own right. They show precisely the same sort of grammatical sophistication that we've discussed elsewhere.

There is a lot of misunderstanding about sign languages. Many people have the idea that they are invented languages. It is true, there are auxiliary signing systems that have been devised by linguists and educators. Recent times particularly have seen the creation of such versions as signed English and finger spelling. Sometimes these sorts of signing systems can provide the basis from which a sign language then emerges, but usually they're developed to bring sign languages, like Auslan, closer to the spoken language. Real sign languages are certainly not invented. They evolve naturally within communities of individuals who are deaf — and then with time the children of these communities eventually acquire the sign as a first language. Sign languages really have emerged only relatively recently — over the last 300 years, in fact. To have a Deaf community you need a large concentration of deaf people as a group, in one spot, and in Europe this only happened with the rise of large towns during the industrial revolution. Before that, signers were typically isolated from one another — scattered across villages and small towns.

We are now in the position of being able to watch sign languages emerge. Stephen Pinker cites the case of Nicaraguan Sign Language (2007: 36). As in many other places, it was only with the development of a Deaf school that this sign language started to flourish. This was in 1979. Children

brought their different signs from home; they started pooling their resources. And like all language users they were also creative; so they came up with their own signs when they interacted in the playgrounds. Back then the language was a rather makeshift version of what now exists — what could be described as a pidgin language. Like pidgin languages generally (and we'll see examples of these later in this book), it showed a lot of variation and different degrees of fluency. However, for the children now who grow up using this sign language, it is very different. Basically the rough and ready pidgin has metamorphosed into a mature and dynamic language, now able to serve its users in all kinds of settings and circumstances. This is also what happens to spoken pidgins if they survive. As soon they become a first language, there follows a speedy elaboration of grammar and vocabulary, as the language expands beyond its original very limited context of use. In the case of Nicaraguan sign language, the number of signs has increased, the signs themselves have become more stylised, more fluid, more compact; and the grammar has complicated itself. As Stephen Pinker puts it in reference to Nicaraguan Sign Language: "A language has been born before our eyes" (p. 37).

There are lots of different sign languages around the world — at least 103 known ones (and probably many more that haven't yet been documented). There is Chinese Sign Language, Japanese, Italian, Danish, French, American, British and of course Australian. Some of them are related, and these may or may not be mutually intelligible. Many deaf children from all over the British Empire, for instance, were educated in Britain. However, after they returned to their own countries, their language would have altered. Just as any other language does when it's flung around the globe, a sign language will change and there will always be plenty of dialectal variation. Auslan is related to British Sign Language (BSL) and also New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL), but it has been considerably influenced by the Irish Sign Language (ISL) that was used in Catholic schools until the 1950s. In recent times, it has also been borrowing signs from American Sign Language (ASL). Around the country, the Auslan used differs largely in terms of vocabulary; the grammatical differences appear to be minimal (as in the case of spoken Australian English). We expect, however, that regional variation will increase for Auslan, just as it will for Australian English. Johnson and Shembri in their 2007 book on Auslan report variation in the signs for NAME and CLEVER in Perth, Brisbane and Adelaide versus Sydney and Melbourne; e.g. Perth signers produce NAME at the forehead, while Sydney signers produce it at the jaw. Such differences could increase over time and eventually lead to more significant regional variation.

To finish, we need to emphasize again that all these established sign languages are fully-fledged linguistic systems with the same sort of intricate grammatical architecture underpinning them as you find in any spoken language. And they have the same sort of creativity (e.g. slang, swearing, and language play generally). They just happen to be manual and visual (not vocal and auditory). The grammar of sign language is based on configuration of the hand, place and movement. In these languages, facial expressions, head and body postures function as modifying words (such as adjectives and adverbs). Clearly, we can convey meaning effectively by visual or vocal symbols. Sounds are by no means indispensable to human language.

1.7 LANGUAGE AS A MIRROR

> If we hold language up as a mirror to the mind, what do we see reflected there? (Guy Deutscher *Through the Looking Glass: Why the world looks different in other languages*, 2010)

As Guy Deutscher explains, language is a mirror. The everyday cultural and social traits of speakers are reflected in the language they use. Moreover, as we'll see later in this book, languages also influence how these speakers think and how they perceive the world – and in profound and unexpected ways.

In this whole language, mind and culture debate "culture" refers not to the appreciation of literature, music and the arts (so-called "high culture", or what in Australian English might be labelled "The Yarts"), but rather the know-how we need in order to function in society; in other words, social conventions that are passed down from generation to generation. Culture is the group personality of a community and involves those everyday characteristics that are, as Deutscher puts it, "impressed so deeply in our mind that we do not recognize them as such" (p. 9).

One of the reasons we enjoy words so much is that they can provide such wonderful windows into a community's values and attitudes. Speakers of Australian English are quick to point out that their language has many expressions with no easy equivalents in national varieties elsewhere (e.g. *cultural cringe* 'the feeling that other countries are better'). They will also point to the flourishing of Australian Englishisms that are recognisably symbolic of cherished values such as 'laid-backness', fairness and community spirit (e.g. *she's apples/she'll be right/no worries* 'everything is under control'; *battler* 'persistent struggler against heavy odds'; *fair-go* 'the fair treatment to which everyone is entitled'; *bludger* 'one who lives off the efforts of others'); *tall poppy* 'a high achiever or overly ambitious person who generates envy and derision' — though sporting heroes are not included). For centuries, people have reflected on the character of different languages and their speakers.

The link between vocabulary and culture is very noticeable, to the extent that it is even talked about by speakers themselves. But what about the grammatical aspects of the language where there isn't this same awareness — those features of language that are more than skin deep, or "tongue deep", as Guy Deutscher might describe it. In other words, how do the cultural preoccupations of speakers find expression in the grammatical structuring of meaning in the language? Here we are dealing with how culture works at a much more subtle level. What you will find is that cultural preoccupations have a tendency to generate specialised structures, grammatical constructions that are made-to-measure and tailored with respect to social and cultural understandings. Remember all those roundabout ways English speakers have of issuing directives ("Could you shut the window"; "Would you mind shutting the window"; "Why don't you shut the window"; "Gosh, it's cold in here" and so on). As we described earlier, these can be seen as the fall-out of a culture that values personal autonomy and the individual. These constructions avoid the impression that a speaker is trying to impose their will on the hearer. Think how this sense of identity is also captured in personal mantras such as "do your own thing", "be true to yourself", "your life is the fruit of your own doing", "self help for positive life", "believe in yourself", "I will succeed" and so on).

TODAY YOU ARE YOU, THAT IS TRUER THAN TRUE. THERE IS NO ONE ALIVE WHO IS YOUER THAN YOU

—Dr Seuss

Languages differ just as widely in the meanings they express by their grammar and how they express these meanings as they do in their vocabulary. As we will see later, categories that we as speakers of English are familiar with and consider so natural can be totally lacking in other languages – especially those from another family. And here we come to the even more controversial question. If our language acts as a mirror, can we go one step further – is it also a lens through which we view the world? In other words, are the languages we speak a screen or filter for reality? This question we tackle in the second part of this book.

1.8 LEARNING ABOUT ENGLISH IS WORTHWHILE

If you are a native speaker of a language like English, then you will "learn" and adopt the rules of that language without thinking just by being part of the community. We've placed scare quotes around the verb "learn" here because the process of acquiring a first language is not the same as the processes involved in acquiring a second one. What we want native speakers of English to do is to step outside the language and think about it in a scientific way. This is very different from the sort of unconscious knowledge people have by simply being a speaker of the language. And this has all sorts of advantages.

When you are trained to examine how language works, you become more skilled in handling your own language. This is particularly true when it comes to good writing. In studying the English language you attain useful tools like grammatical analysis. You also learn about registers; in other words, varieties associated with particular contexts or purposes. Science reports, departmental memos, video instruction manuals and emails all have very different grammatical features and a knowledge of language (e.g. sentence patterns and constructions) can help writers chose appropriate language for these different situations.

We are not claiming here that linguistic awareness will instantly turn you into effective communicators. There are enough examples of bad linguistic prose around to know that this is not the case! An ignorance of linguistics won't prevent you from becoming effective communicators either. If that were the case William Shakespeare might well have ended up a wool dealer like his father John. Nonetheless, research evidence supports the beneficial links between language awareness and language skills, especially writing. After all, writing is not a natural activity in the same way that speech is — it has to be explicitly taught after basic grammar, sounds and vocabulary have been acquired. With a feeling for sentence patterning, we can better evaluate the different choices that confront us when we draft something written, such as a speech or a report. (On the evidence for this, we recommend you check out Richard Hudson's website *Educational Linguistics* http://www.phon.ucl.ac.uk/home/dick/education.htm. Here you will find a lot of discussion on the relevant research, especially to do with the teaching of grammar.)

There are plenty of other areas, too, where language awareness will stand you in good stead. Here are just some applications of English language that you might not have thought about.

- The film industry: who do you think it is that invents all those artificial languages in science fiction films? Many of you will be familiar with Klingon in *Star Trek* movies. Its creator Mark Okrand is a linguist, as is Paul Frommer, the brains behind Na'vi (of the 2009 film *Avatar*).
- Writing: there are really three groups of people who end up having careers in writing: the authors (who produce material for print and on-line media), the technical writers (who specialize in producing materials such as instruction manuals and software documentation) and the editors (who appraise and select content for publication).
- Foreign language learning: knowledge of English is particularly helpful if you are teaching the structures of another language, or learning them yourselves — especially if you are an adult. Learning a language later in life is far easier if you already come equipped with some explicit understanding of how your own language works.
- Information technology: with speech-based applications now used increasingly in human-computer interfaces, natural language processing and speech recognition technology have become two very significant areas of IT.

- Advertising and marketing: increasingly companies consult linguists when they are creating product names and preparing sales campaigns.
- Safety measures: there are all sorts of applications of the study of language (especially of discourse) to safety in the workplace. As discussed, language is not a precise notation like logic but is plagued with the contradictions, vagueness, indeterminacy, variability and ambiguity. The consequences can at times be dire.
- Speech therapy: an important task for speech therapists is to develop techniques that can help people improve their communicative abilities. In order to study and describe language that is "not normal", it is important to know what the structure of "normal" language is, and to master the terminology used to describe it.
- Forensics: it is becoming increasingly common for court cases to involve expert testimony by people with specific areas of linguistic expertise. This might involve speaker profiling and voice comparison; handwriting and stylistic analyses of documents to determine authorship; expert opinion when a trademark infringement has been alleged.
- Plain English: since the late 1970s, there have been social and political movements pushing for clear and simple language and for some time now linguists have been helping to translate documents, particularly legal language, into a form that is more accessible to people

The Australian Security and Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) employs linguists and describes their role thus:

> The language capabilities area in ASIO is a highly valued component within the intelligence cycle and is the centre of expertise for all language matters in ASIO. On a typical day you will review large volumes of foreign and English language material in support of ASIO's operational and investigative activities. You will provide unique cultural perspectives and, through sound judgement and strong communication skills, assist in identifying creative approaches to address intelligence questions. You will work in close partnership with others in ASIO, particularly linguists in other language groups, to complete multilingual tasks.

Finally, it is clear that we all attach an enormous importance to how we speak and write and everyone can benefit in some way from studying his or her own language (in other words, the discipline now known as "linguistics"). Language is after all central to what makes us tick and we should know something about it, in the same way that we should know something about basic mathematics and how bodies work. The sort of linguistic awareness you will acquire here will forever change the way you think about, and use, language.

ACTIVITIES
AREA OF STUDY 1

MIRACLE OF LANGUAGE

1. The story of Helen Keller has been made into movies – in 1962, 1979 and 2000. Watch one of these films, or read her autobiography *The Story of My Life*, to familiarise yourself with the miracle of how Helen learned to speak.

FUNCTIONS OF LANGUAGE

2. Here is a list of possible events that could take place in your life.
   a. Add five more from your personal experience.
   b. Decide which mode of communication you would use for each event and create a table – a couple of examples are provided to get you started.

- You need to ask someone for a very special favour.
- You've regret how you've behaved and you need to apologise.
- A friend of yours has treated you badly and you want to tell him how you feel.
- You have bought an item of clothing that you decide you don't particularly like and you now want to exchange it.
- You need to borrow some money.
- You have found a program on TV particularly offensive and you want to let the network station know how you feel.
- You are having a party and would like to invite a few friends.
- You are writing an essay about the functions of speech and writing and you've located an expert in this field. You decide you want this person's help.
- You want to protest the closure of your local swimming pool.
- An acquaintance of yours has lost a grandparent and you want to express your sympathy.

Event	**Mode: speech, writing, e-communication**	**Explanation**
Asking someone for a special favour		
Apologising for bad behaviour	Speech, text message	Face to face if it involves a friend, but by email if it is someone not as close.
Expressing sympathy for the death of a friend's relative		
Inviting friends to a party		

   c. Discuss your responses with a couple of classmates. Are your explanations similar for each situation?

d. Determine the patterns that emerge; for example, if you have to say something difficult or tricky, do you tend to choose writing or e-communication in preference to speech?
e. Suggest some reasons for these preferences.

3. What are some of the advantages and disadvantages of email over snail mail? Make a list, drawing on the list provided on pages 15 and 16 (differences between speech and writing).

4. A study into swearing online in 2014 examined 51 million tweets in English over a one-month period. The researchers categorized the swear words on Twitter and reached the following conclusions:

- one in every 13 tweets contains swear words
- the most popular days to swear online are Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays
- symbols such as @ are substituted for letters to lessen the force of the swear word online
- men are more likely to swear on Twitter than women
- women are more likely to swear on Twitter when communicating with other women
- emotions expressed in swearing tweets tend to be sadness or anger

Discuss these findings.

a. What reasons can you think of to explain each one?
b. What does this research contribute to your understanding of the functions of language and mode?

The researchers also hypothesised about the following. Do you agree with their views?

- anonymity in an online environment encourages people to say things they wouldn't otherwise say in person
- in face to face contact language users tend to self-censor more than they do on Twitter

5. For each of the following scenarios, identify:

a. where the communication is taking place
b. the nature of the relationship between the participants
c. the purpose of the communication.

i. A discussion between you and the shop assistant about today's weather.
ii. A conversation with the plumber about how much it will cost to repair the leak in the pipe.
iii. An exchange between you and your dentist about getting some X-rays of your teeth taken next week.
iv. An invitation to become someone's friend on Facebook.
v. A recorded set of voice-prompts when you call the phone company about your latest bill.
vi. A letter from a charity organisation asking you for a donation.
vii. The instructions on an exam paper.
viii. A signpost giving directions to the scenic outlook.

d. Choose two of these situations (one in written mode and one in spoken mode) and develop a script and a role-play to demonstrate the language that would be most appropriate for each one.

e. Provide an explanation for the language choices you have made.

NATURE OF ENGLISH

6. Here are some song titles that flout the rules of standard grammar. Identify the grammar transgressions in each one. What effect is created when you rewrite them in standard English?

- *Don't Come Around Here No More* – Tom Petty And The Heartbreakers
- *Ain't Gonna Hurt Nobody* – Kid 'N Play
- *Aint no mountain high enough* – Aretha Franklin
- *I can't get no satisfaction* – The Rolling Stones
- *If they say I never loved you, you know they are a liar.* – The Doors
- *You and I* – Jessica Simpson
- *Baby I'm A Want You* – Bread
- *We Don't Need No Education* – Pink Floyd

7. Identify which subsystem is referred to in the following statements.

i. We are Pommies. The other boys are Aussies. They laugh at the way we say 'butter', to sound like 'butcher'.

ii. A: Have I permission to discourse with you in English?
B: Pardon?
C: I think he wants a chat.

iii. Nicole Kidman is a very fine actress. I think she prefers to be called an actor, though.

iv. A: How was the movie?
B: Wicked!
C: Really? I thought it was supposed to be a good, old-fashioned love story.

v. The language polluters are at it again. The Canberra bureaucrats have imported 'range-lands' from the good old USA to describe 'the outback', 'back of Bourke', and all those beaut old Australian words we've used for two hundred years.

8. How many different sounds are represented by the letter grouping 'ough'? Referring to the IPA chart in Chapter 5 write the words out phonetically. Make sure you check the dictionary for the meaning of any of the words that are unfamiliar to you.

A r**ough**-coated, d**ough**-faced, th**ough**tful pl**ough**man strode thr**ough** the streets of Scarbor**ough**. After falling into a sl**ough**, he c**ough**ed and hicc**ough**ed.

9. Identify the morphemes in these words (for example, un + cook + ed):

superior	sadly	Melbourne	imprecise	cyberspace
hyperactively	metalanguage	paranormal	dysfunctional	

10. Fill in the missing morphemes in this passage.

It had been a rough day, so when I walked into the party I was very chalant, despite my efforts to appear gruntled and consolate. I was furling my wieldy umbrella for the coat room attendant when I saw a woman standing alone in a corner. She was a descript person in a state of total array. Her hair was kempt, her clothing shevelled, and she moved in a gainly way. I wanted desperately to meet her but I as I was travelling cognito it was going to be difficult. Beknownst to me, the host was already on her way over to introduce us. (Extract from 'How I met my wife' Jack Winter, *The New Yorker*, 1994)

11. Working with a partner, write down examples of compounds using the word 'challenged', eg, 'vertically challenged' (a person who is short). Make sure you include the meanings. Combine your list with others in the class.

12. Identify the nouns, verbs and adjectives in the following sentences:

"*Fury Road* is two hours of high octane action that is also a giant middle finger to every sexist action movie trope that has come before it. From the moment Imperator Furiosa takes a hard left into the desert to the second the end credits roll, Miller is not interested in the status quo whether it comes to stunts, storytelling, or stereotypes."

13. What are the structure and type of the sentences below?

A few days later, Mary was once again sitting in the bookshop, this time reading Matthew Flinders's book *Voyage to Terra Australis*. She decided she liked reading about remote places. Australia sounded like something in *Gulliver's Travels* and she had to keep reminding herself that it was a real place. On the Thames she had seen old ships filled with prisoners waiting to be transported to a place on the other side of the world. It sounded magical in Flinders's book and she wondered if any of the prisoners had read it before they left. It would, she thought, make them almost happy to be going. Mary smiled to herself. It was silly. Those poor men and women sent away to the other side of the world. How could they be happy?

Extract from *Summer of Monsters: the scandalous story of Mary Shelley*, Tony Thompson 2014

MODES OF LANGUAGE

14. Consider the two earlier spoken extracts *Chris talking about her friend's cancer diagnosis* and *Peter talking about his childhood* on pages 19 and 20. If you haven't already done so:

a. convert them into standard written English.
b. list (giving examples) the features of vocabulary, grammar and discourse that distinguish the spoken from the written versions.

15. The two texts that follow are examples of written and spoken discourse. Annotate each text using metalanguage showing particular features of lexicon, syntax, semantics and discourse as discussed in this chapter.

Written film review

The hype has been relentless (foreshadowing the relentless energy of the thing itself.) The good news is that it is better than being very good. For the record I loved it and I'll see it again

soon and after that, often. It's a cranking, imperfect, delirious, loud, elegant, provocative, violent, dazzling, bizarre and truly, weirdly nutty movie chock full of ideas and teeming with so much detail it seems tooled for repeat viewings. Still, it's more nuanced and complex than the net chat has suggested. For starters, it is not one long chase. The drama is carefully and cunningly modulated; in those moments where Miller and co. alter the pace from a fierce rush to a vigorous strut, he mixes in much tenderness inside the bleak, grim reality of the characters where say, a stillborn death is met with about as much heartbreak as a misorder of take-out. It is not a silent movie; there's actually quite a bit of dialogue, much of it smart and funny, though the film's leads have very little to say. It is very funny.

Youtube review of Mad Max Fury Road by Kristian and Mark

1. K: Hello Schmoeville.
2. What is it?
3. It's the Mad Max review,
4. for damn's sakes.
5. Fury Road.
6. M: Oh man,
7. what an anticipated film for both of us,
8. you see the trailer and you're like,
9. my god that looks like an incredible post apocalyptic world,
10. is it gonna feel like the old Mad Max films,
11. is it gonna be this incredible action bonanza for two hours?
12. You're damn right it is.
13. K: I'm let down.
14. M: Shut up. @@@
15. K: I'm let down I'm still not watching this thing,
16. it was awesome,
17. it was awesome,
18. we walked out,
19. the words were incredible awesome.
20. M: Everybody's buzzing about this movie,
21. when we walked out of our screening.
22. K: This is a movie,
23. no one is saying anything bad about it,
24. it is a spectacle.
25. One thing I will say here is this.
26. M: What do you got?
27. K: If you are a Mad Max fan in general,
28. if you liked the other three movies beforehand,
29. right,
30. M: OK.
31. K: you will love this movie.
32. The other thing to know is,
33. you don't have to-
34. M: No.
35. K: be caught up in the other Mad Maxes to enjoy this.

CHARACTERIZING SPEECH AND WRITING

16. These sentences are confusing because they are ambiguous – they can be understood in more than one way. Explain the different meanings for each one.

i. My daughter has grown another foot.
i. Visiting relatives can be boring.
i. I saw the man with the binoculars.
i. He fed her cat food.
i. Drunk gets six months in violin case.

17. Imagine you have just arrived in Australia from another country. What misunderstandings might arise for you because of what you infer from these statements?

- No standing any time.
- Please bring a plate to share.
- Oh, oh, now you're in hot water!
- My boss has just thrown a spanner in the works.
- You look as cool as a cucumber.
- We won that hands down!

UNIQUENESS OF HUMAN COMMUNICATION

18. Consider the widespread use of emoji, gifs and infographics in e-communication.

a. Identify six examples and explain what emotion or message they convey.
b. How do these digital techniques illustrate the creativity of human language?

19. Watch the videoclips of 'Kanzi with lexigram' and 'Alex the talking parrot' on Youtube. Do you think these animals are able to use language in the way that humans can? Give reasons for your answer.

20. Investigate one of the following studies into animal communication:

dolphin communication project
dancing honeybees
Nim Chimpsky
Kenzo
Koko
Washoe

21. Conduct observations of your own (or someone else's) pet over a few days.

Prepare a digital or written presentation of your findings, including reference to the following points made in this chapter:

- animal communication is stimulus-bound
- one sound - one meaning
- creativity in communication is not possible for animals
- animal communication is defined by instinct

SIGN LANGUAGE

22. Visit the website of Auslan, home of Australian Sign Language. http://www.auslan.org.au

I ♥ AUSLAN

a. Click on the link to Signbank and view some of the video clips showing how to sign different words.
b. Teach yourself signs for ten words you think are useful or important.

23. Signing is now a regular feature of public events, including comedy festivals. In 2015, a community organisation called Deaf Can:Do ran sessions at the Adelaide Fringe festival on how to swear in Auslan.

a. Watch the short video clip. http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-03-02/crude-words-help-boost-awareness-of-sign-language/6273878
b. Discuss some of the benefits of teaching hearing people how to swear, and sign generally, in Auslan.

LANGUAGE AS A MIRROR

24. Find out how many synonyms are listed for *man* and *woman* in a thesaurus. Create a table as illustrated below and categorise the words according to the connotations of each one, from positive to negative.

	Positive	**Moderate**	**Neutral**	**Negative**
Man				
Woman				

25. a. Using the large *Oxford English Dictionary* or a good etymological dictionary, chart the changes in meanings of the words below.

b. Although it is impossible to tell exactly then a particular usage becomes widespread (written will usually lag behind spoken language in this respect), take a note of when these words first seemed to acquire negative or sexual connotations.

Slut, slag, bimbo, floozie, broad, hussy, whore, wench, maid, biddy

c. Why do you think it is that words associated with women are particularly prone to the process of semantic deterioration / pejoration, whereas the terms to do with men remain relatively stable over time?

26. Examine the following pairs of words.

a. Are these terms equivalent except in terms of gender?
b. What conclusions can you draw about the influence of culture and thinking on language?

woman, man	*lord, lady*	*master, mistress*
bachelor, spinster	*governor, governess*	*sir, madam*
warlock, witch	*baronet, dame*	

LEARNING ABOUT LANGUAGE IS WORTHWHILE

27. In the popular TV show, Game of Thrones, the character Stannis Baratheon became somewhat infamous amongst followers and lovers of language for his interest in grammar. Here is an example from one episode:

The Watchmen: "Help the Wildlings? Why would we do that?"
Jon Snow: "Let them be picked off! Less enemies for us."
Stannis Baratheon : "Fewer."

Many fans reacted with glee to this brief incident. Here are a few of the many Tweets that ensued.

- I didn't like Stannis at first, but tonight when he corrected someone's grammar under his breath... I became a fan. #GameofThrones
- Stannis correcting a grammar flub is a perfect illustration of the fact his "unlikeable" characteristics are, actually, totally likeable.
- Stannis the one true King of Grammar. #gameofthrones @GameofOwns

How does this example illustrate the idea that learning about language is worthwhile?

28. Investigate the jobs that people with excellent knowledge of language are employed in.

a. Look beyond the academic field of linguistics and into areas where linguistic skills are useful.
b. Collect four position descriptions that show how knowledge of language and linguistics is important in the job.

OUTCOME TASKS

1. **Essay.**
Prepare an essay on one of the following topics. Refer to three subsystems and provide examples to illustrate your views.

a. 'The language we use both reflects and shapes our views and attitudes.' Discuss. Refer to the quotes below in your response.

(i) According to the Australian Parliamentary Library's research service, between 70 per cent and 97 per cent of asylum seekers arriving by boat at different times have been found to be genuine refugees (*The Age*, 9/1). This is distressingly contrary to the beliefs of 59 per cent of Australians, according to a poll by UMR Research. This misfit with tragic reality suggests several causes: selfish

chauvinism, a diet of distorted information, or both. Our government should help by correcting the falsehoods and promoting fellow feeling towards the wrongly disliked asylum seekers. But I would bet fourpence at long odds that it will not do either.

(ii) The poll reporting that 60 per cent of Australians want asylum seekers who arrive by boat to be treated more harshly shows what can be achieved by changing the description of refugees from "unauthorised boat arrivals" to "illegals". The majority of people who reach Australia by boat are found to be in danger if they return to where they came from, and so are indeed refugees. However, the constant use of the term "illegals" makes it appear that they have broken the law. It is sad to consider how easy it is to manipulate public opinion.

OR

b. 'As long as you know how to fast-talk your way out of situations it's not important to be good at writing.' As a linguist, do you support this view of language use?

2. **Text analysis and commentary.**
With a partner, read through the pamphlet about treating head lice. Make notes in response to the following:

Who is the intended audience?
Who wrote it?
What is the purpose of the pamphlet?

Identify some of the features that help to organise the text, and indicate which subsystem each of these features belongs to:

- The beginning of the 'story' or narrative
- The bolded words and phrases
- Headings and sub-headings
- Pictures and graphics
- Pronouns
- Types and structures of sentences

Write an analytical commentary, using your notes and providing examples from the text to illustrate.

Treating and controlling head lice

While children are at school many families will have contact with head lice. The information here will help you treat and control head lice.

Catching head lice

Head lice have been around for many thousands of years. Anyone can get head lice and given the chance head lice move from head to head without discrimination.

Head lice are small, wingless, blood sucking insects. Their colour varies from whitish-brown to reddish-brown. Head lice only survive on humans. If isolated from the head they die very quickly, usually within 24 hours.

People get head lice from direct **hair to hair contact** with another person who has head lice. This can happen when people play, cuddle or work closely together.
Head lice do not have wings or jumping legs so they cannot fly or jump from head to head. They can only crawl.

Finding head lice

Many lice do not cause an itch, so you have to **look carefully to find** them.

Head lice are found on hair itself and move to the scalp to feed. They have six legs which end in a claw and they rarely fall from the head. Louse eggs (also called nits) are laid within 1.5cm of the scalp and are firmly attached to the hair. They resemble dandruff but can't be brushed off.

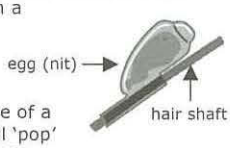
Lice can crawl and hide. The easiest and most effective way to find them is to follow these steps:

Step 1	Comb any type of hair conditioner on dry, brushed (detangled) hair. This stuns the lice and makes it difficult for them to grip the hair or run around.
Step 2	Now comb sections of the hair with a fine tooth head lice comb.
Step 3	Wipe the conditioner from the comb onto a paper towel or tissue.
Step 4	Look on the tissue and on the comb for lice and eggs.
Step 5	Repeat the combing for every part of the head at least 4 or 5 times.

If lice or eggs are found, the child's hair should be treated.

If your child has been treated recently and you only find empty hatched eggs, you may not have to treat as the empty eggs could be from a previous episode.

Head lice eggs



Head lice eggs are small (the size of a pinhead) and oval. A live egg will 'pop' when squashed between fingernails.

Dead eggs have crumpled sides and hatched eggs look like tiny boiled eggs with their tops cut off.

To optimise treatment remove as many eggs as possible.

Head lice combs

Combs with long, rounded stainless steel teeth positioned very close together have been shown to be the most effective, however, any head lice comb can be used.

Treating head lice

Concentrate on the head—there is **no evidence** to suggest that you need to clean the house or classroom.

Head lice products must be applied to **all parts of the hair and scalp.**

No treatment kills all of the eggs so treatment must involve two applications seven days apart. The purpose of the first treatment if to kill all lice, the second treatment is to kill young lice hatched over the next six days.

Cover the person's eyes, for example with a towel, while the treatment is being applied.

If you are using lotions, apply the product to dry hair.

For shampoos, wet the hair, but use the least amount of water possible.

Apply the treatment near the scalp, using an ordinary comb to cover the hair from root to tip. Repeat this several times until all the hair is covered.

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If you choose not to use an insecticide, the conditioner and comb method can be used every second day until there have been no live lice found for ten days.

There is no need to treat the whole family, unless they also have head lice.

Only the pillowcase requires special laundering; either wash it in hot water (at least 60°C) or dry it using a clothes dryer on the hot or warm setting.

Testing resistance

Head lice products belong in one of the following categories depending on the active compound they contain:

- Pyrethrins
- Synthetic pyrethroids (permethrin and bioallethrin)
- Organophosphates (maldison or malathion)
- Herbal, with or without natural (non-chemical) pyrethrins.

Insecticide resistance is common so you should test if lice are dead. If they are, treat again in seven days using the same product. If the lice are not dead, the treatment has not worked and the lice are resistant to the product and all products containing the same active compound. Wash off the product and treat as soon as possible using a product containing a different active compound. If the insecticide has worked, the lice will be dead within 20 minutes.

Any head lice product could cause a reaction and should be used with care by women who are pregnant or breastfeeding, children less than 12 months and people with allergies, asthma or open wounds on the scalp. If you are unsure, please check with your pharmacist or doctor.

Preventing head lice

There is no product available to prevent head lice. Using the **conditioner and comb method once a week** will help you detect any head lice early and minimise the problem. Tying back long hair can help prevent the spread of head lice.

Regulations

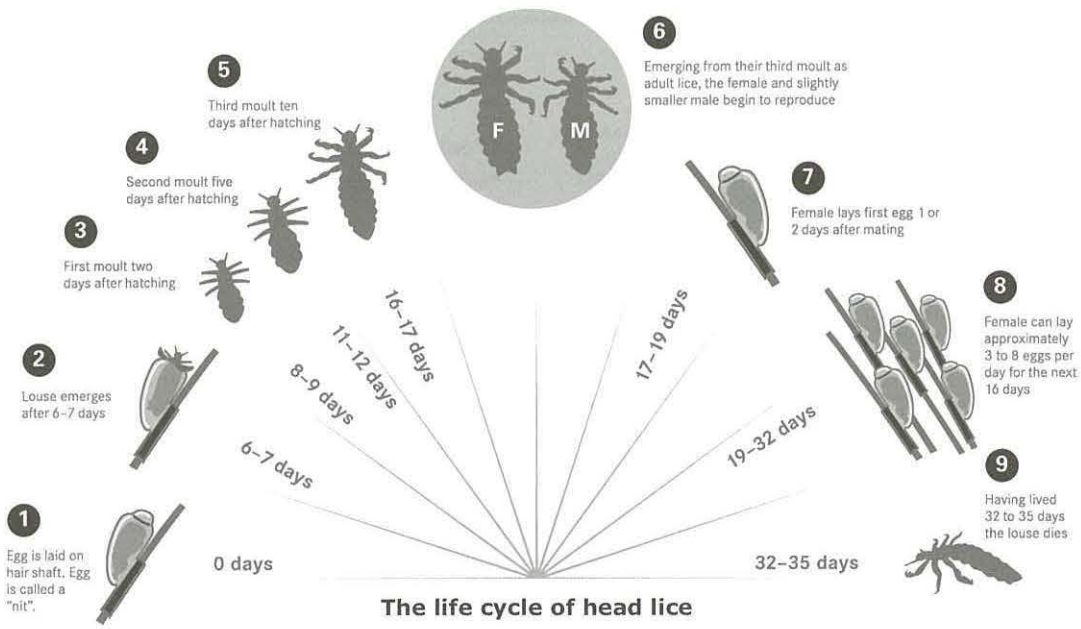
Children with head lice are required under the Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations to be excluded from school, day care or crèche until treatment has commenced. A child with head lice can be treated one evening and return to school the next day, even if there are still some eggs present.

Further information

See website:
http://www.health.vic.gov.au/headlice

The information in this pamphlet is based on the research conducted and written by Associate Professor Rick Speare and the team of researchers at, School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine, James Cook University.

Life cycle diagram courtesy of Nitpickers.



The life cycle of head lice

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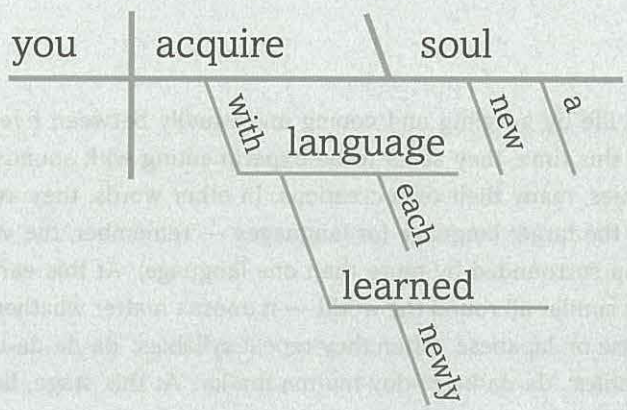
Preposition *Adjective*

WITH EACH NEWLY LEARNED LANGUAGE YOU ACQUIRE A NEW SOUL

Adverb *Noun* *Noun* *Pronoun* *Verb* *Article* *Adjective* *Noun*

— Proverb

SENTENCE DIAGRAM



AREA OF STUDY 2

LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

2.0 BORN TO TALK

The acquisition of something as complex as human language must surely be among our greatest achievements. Linguist Barry Blake expresses it this way:

> From the point of view of understanding language, the difficulties facing the second language learner are of interest largely because they highlight the almost miraculous ease with which children acquire language when they are too young to learn any other area of study. Music provides an interesting comparison. At one extreme there is Mozart composing at five, at the other extreme there are people like me who have difficulty singing the national anthem in tune. With language, every child is a Mozart. (Barry Blake 2008: 250)

2.1 STAGES OF CHILD LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Let's begin by considering the various stages that children go through in this remarkable acquisition journey. The ages given here are approximations. After all, children are little humans and don't always go by the book. Albert Einstein apparently didn't start to talk until he was about three or four. Equally, a child whose speech is very advanced at the age of two years is no more likely to grow up to be genius than a child who was slower to learn the language.

BABBLING

Infants begin life by gurgling and cooing and usually between five and seven months they start to babble. At this time, they seem to be experimenting with sounds and produce a large number of different ones, many their own creations. In other words, they are not restricted to the sounds that occur in the target language (or languages — remember, the vast majority of children in the world grow up surrounded by more than one language). At this early stage, the sounds produced by infants are similar all round the world — it doesn't matter whether the input language is English, Arabic, Chinese or Japanese. Often they repeat syllables: 'da-da-da-da-da-da', or else they produce a mix of syllables: 'da-da-ku-bi-doy-ma-ma-ma-ka'. At this stage, hearing infants are figuring out

their vocal apparatus and discovering those sounds that are distinctive for their particular language(s). Eventually, the set of babble sounds will narrow to only those sounds these infants hear around them. Intonation patterns are the first to be acquired. Even during this very early period, infants produce the same intonation contours (or changes in pitch) that occur in adult speech. These really are the most deeply anchored of all linguistic features.

Babbling appears to be **innate,** something humans are born with. Hearing children, Deaf children, hearing children of Deaf parents all babble, although the sounds they produce differ. Infants exposed to signing will babble with their hands as well, and over time they will restrict the set of gestures they use. It is clear that infants are born with a knack for cracking linguistic codes. These tiny humans are predisposed to work out the units (sounds or gestures) that are significant in whatever language(s) they are exposed to, and eventually they come to produce these themselves. Of course, even at this early stage they are also experiencing the social aspects of language, and delighted adults are only too willing to engage in "conversation" with a babbling infant, no matter how incoherent the babble is.

Babies 'cry in mother's tongue'

German researchers say babies begin to pick up the nuances of their parents' accents while still in the womb. The researchers studied the cries of 60 healthy babies born to families speaking French and German. The French newborns cried with a rising "accent" while the German babies' cries had a falling inflection.

Writing in the journal *Current Biology*, they say the babies are probably trying to form a bond with their mothers by imitating them. The findings suggest that unborn babies are influenced by the sound of the first language that penetrates the womb. It was already known that foetuses could memorise sounds from the outside world in the last three months of pregnancy and were particularly sensitive to the contour of the melody in both music and human voices. Earlier studies had shown that infants could match vowel sounds presented to them by adult speakers, but only from 12 weeks of age.

Kathleen Wermke from the University of Wurzburg, who led the research, said: "The dramatic finding of this study is that not only are human neonates capable of producing different cry melodies, but they prefer to produce those melody patterns that are typical for the ambient language they have heard during their foetal life. "Contrary to orthodox interpretations, these data support the importance of human infants' crying for seeding language development."

Dr Wermke's team recorded and analysed the cries of 60 healthy newborns when they were three to five days old. Their analysis revealed clear differences in the shape of the infants' cry melodies that corresponded to their mother tongue. They say the babies need only well-co-ordinated respiratory-laryngeal systems to imitate melody contours and not the vocal control that develops later.

Dr Wermke said: "Newborns are highly motivated to imitate their mother's behaviour in order to attract her and hence to foster bonding. Because melody contour may be the only aspect of their mother's speech that newborns are able to imitate, this might explain why we found melody contour imitation at that early age."

Debbie Mills, a reader in developmental cognitive neuroscience at Bangor University, said: "This is really interesting because it suggests that they are producing sounds they have heard in the womb and that means learning and that it is not an innate behaviour.

"Many of the early infant behaviours are almost like reflexes that go away after the first month and then come back later in a different form. It would be interesting to look at these babies after a month and see if their ability to follow the melodic contours of their language is still there."

http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/health/8346058.stm

ONE WORD UTTERANCES

Around 12 to 18 months, infants discover that sounds relate to meaning and they start to use these sounds in an expressive way. Toddlers at this stage begin saying things like 'no' (of course!), 'uh oh' and they make sounds that imitate cars, planes and animals. They also produce single-word utterances, usually consonant-vowel (or CV) in shape (e.g. [ma]). The vowel sound might also be a **diphthong** (a combination of two vowels) like [dai] — it will depend on the language being acquired. Sometimes these words come close to the actual word, but many are very distorted. Often parents hear their child in this stage produce combinations of sounds that closely resemble *mama* or *dada/papa* and elatedly announce that their child has uttered his or her first word. However, it's not always clear that the child has attached any meaning to the "word". Typically, the first meaningful words of any child will be concrete words — everyday objects important to the child such as *bikkie, cat, cup, spoon* and so on. We say "typically" here because children do vary; they are individuals from the start and they do their own thing. They might all acquire language in the same way in the end, but there is considerable variation in the details along the way.

At this stage, children are capable of producing approximately 50 words, but by **overgeneralization** they make maximal use of this limited set. A child might use the word *fly* to refer to specks of dirt and all small insects, *moon* to refer to cakes, rounds shapes in books and the letter "O" — they might even use the expression *bye bye* for leave-taking and greeting. These words will be simplified versions of those found in the target language in terms of their phonology. What linguists have determined is that the inventory of sounds children produce are typically those sounds that turn up most frequently in the world's languages. It is clear, however that children's passive knowledge outstrips their vocal ability. They are capable of distinguishing phonemes long before they can actually produce them and while they might turn out only around 50 words, they are able to understand a lot more. We will have more to say on both the phonological and semantic aspects of acquisition later in this chapter.

Working out what kids mean

As those of you who have experience of young children will know, it can be very difficult figuring out exactly what is going on during this stage. Imagine this scenario. There is a glass of juice on the table and James (aged 16 months) says [du]. This might mean: 'Look, there's juice', 'I want some juice', or even 'Mummy is drinking juice'. But at other times he has also been observed saying [du] for milk in a bottle, bathwater and kitchen taps. He appears to have extended the meaning of [du] to anything that can be drunk, or he might even mean something containing a liquid. It is extremely tricky to assign specific meanings to these single words. Linguists sometimes use the label **holophrastic** (from *holo* 'complete') to capture the fact that these single word utterances appear to be functioning as words, phrases or sentences.

TWO-WORD UTTERANCES

At around 18 to 24 months, children generate an exuberance of new words and they also combine them into two-word utterances. The following are some typical combinations (given here with adult phonology):

Dada chair
Mummy eat
Allgone sock
Mamma big
Bye-bye boat

The first thing to notice here is that the children's utterances contain only **content words** - the nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs with **lexical meaning** (real-world meaning). There are no **function words** and no **function morphemes,** so no syntactic or morphological markers such as *the, in, one, is, -'s, -ed* and so on. Since we are missing the grammatical bits and pieces that help us interpret how these words are related, interpretation will depend on context. The phrase *Dada chair* might express possession ('This is Dada's chair'); it might be a request for action ('put me in Dada's chair') or perhaps a statement of location ('I am in Dada's chair' or 'Dada is sitting in his chair'). But maybe this is attributing too much meaning to these utterances, and really all the child is saying here is: 'I'm talking about Dada and a chair is involved in some way'. However, what research confirms is that these combinations are not random but carefully structured. Location phrases are always second: Object/Person + Location (e.g. *Mamma bed; fly chair*). Action utterances have the agent first: Agent + Action (*Mamma eat*), and where the action affects an entity that entity comes second: Action + Patient (*kick ball*). In other words, the ordering of grammatical **subjects** and **objects** conforms to that found in the adult grammar. However, it is also clear that children are being creative at this time. They are not purely mimicking the utterances they hear around them — these are novel combinations that do not appear in the language they are exposed to.

TELEGRAPHIC STAGE (EARLY MULTIWORD STAGE) AND BEYOND

By this time (around 24 to 30 months), the children have jumped straight from the two-word stage to the multiword stage (no in-between stages). This stage is labeled "telegraphic" because the children sound as if they are reading a telegram. (You won't remember the telegram; an example would be: *back 6 pm* 'I'm getting back at 6 pm'). So although things are looking more sentence-like, function words and morphemes are still for the most part lacking. These days, the closest thing to a telegram might be an SMS text or a tweet; grammatical words are often missing and, if not, they occur in reduced form (e.g. *u* 'you', *cn* 'can', *b* 'be'). The children's utterances have a clear hierarchical structure, but it is not yet that of an adult grammar. For example, they typically form questions by putting the *wh*-question words (such as *what, where* and so on) at the beginning of the sentence (which is correct):

Where Dadi?
What that?

Some time during this stage, the grammatical parts start to make an appearance. The first inflection (or affix that adds grammatical information) to emerge on words is *–ing*, with the plural *–(e)s* ending not far behind; simple prepositions (location words, such as *in* and *on*) also occur at this time. From this period onwards, it probably makes no sense to distinguish any more stages. The children's vocabulary expands rapidly and, as they approach adult pronunciation and grammar, the development is explosive.

2.2 THE EMERGING SUBSYSTEMS

In some respects, children are like little linguistic vacuum cleaners — they suck up vocabulary and repeat versions of adult talk that they are immersed in. This is not to say, however, that language acquisition is simply a matter of imitation. As you've already observed, children are not just copying what they hear around them. Consider aspects of the child's developing subsystems of language. What these reveal is that development at all linguistic levels progresses through clear stages and the steps forward are slow and steady — it takes some time for children to sort out the sounds, the meanings and the sentence patterns of their language(s).

Little vacuum cleaners

ACQUISITION OF PHONOLOGY

In Chapter 5 at the end of this book you will find a full description of the speech sounds of Australian English and other phonological features that we examine here. We advise you to refer to this section when you are reading this section on phonological development in children.

When children acquire sounds they do it in a systematic way. Although they don't use adult phonemes, there are usually clearly identifiable patterns. For example, Nadia (aged 18 months) uses voiced stops at the start of words, and she uses these for both the voiced and unvoiced stops in adult speech. (For details about these sounds, check out "manner" and "place" of articulation in Chapter 5.)

Pat	[bæt]
Tap	[dæp]
Cat	[gæt]
Goat	[goʊt]
Coat	[goʊt]

She also has difficulties with **consonant clusters** (sequences of two or more consonants) and typically leaves one of the consonants out.

Stack	[tæk]
Spill	[pɪl]
Blue	[bu]
Bread	[bɛd]

Other children tackle such clusters differently. Some resort to a single consonant that is neither of the sounds in the cluster — it is a kind of compromise sound that has characteristics of both consonants (for example, the child that says [fɪl] for *spill* substitutes [f] for [sp] — this has the fricative (or hissing) quality of [s] and the bilabial (or lippy) quality of [p]. Other children tackle these difficult clusters differently by inserting a vowel between the consonants, turning *blue* [blu] to [bəlu], for instance.

It's clear that at this stage children's production lags behind their perception; in other words, they may hear the difference between (sequences of) sounds and have adult-like mental representations of them long before they can actually produce them. Nadia, who we mentioned earlier, can perceive the difference between a *back* and a *pack* even though she pronounces them both [bæk]. She will also accurately point to *goats* and *coats* in her picture book, even though she pronounces them the same. Consider the following exchange between an adult and child.

Child: Look at my fis!
Adult: Is this your fis?
Child: No, my fis!
Adult: Your fis?
Child: No!
Adult: Your fish?
Child: Yes, my fis!

What has now come to be known as "the fis phenomenon" comes from an incident described by researchers Jean Berko-Gleason and Roger Brown in 1960. This child is referring to the plastic inflatable fish as [fɪs], but when a parent asks if it is a "fis", the child says "No, my fis". When asked if it is a "fish", child agrees. Clearly, this child can understand a word without being able to pronounce it — the perception of the phonemes comes before the child's ability to produce these phonemes. This mismatch between awareness and production explains why children can get so irritated when people try to imitate their baby pronunciations.

ACQUISITION OF LEXICON AND SEMANTICS

We have already seen that children as early as the one-word stage use their very limited lexicon to cover a wide range of (what seems to adults) quite unrelated objects. This is overgeneralization. Take, for example, the little girl who extends the word [mu] to refer to the moon, half-eaten cakes, bananas and even hockey stick. Consider what features these objects might have in common — think what might have caught the child's attention and cause her to overextend in this way. A waning moon, a fragment of cake, a banana and a hockey stick all share a certain (almost crescent) shape.




Children might also **undergeneralize**; that is they use specific expressions in a much more limited set of contexts than usual. Perhaps the child uses *boy* to refer only to an older brother and no other boys, or *dog* to refer to the family pet and no other dogs. This appears to be less usual than overgeneralization, although it may also be that it is simply not as obvious when a child under utilizes a word in this way.

Once again, production does not necessarily match comprehension in semantic development. The child might use [mu] to refer to all these objects, but correctly identify the moon when called upon — and would certainly reject any adult who described a piece of half-eaten cake as a 'moon'. Children may therefore be overextending words they already know simply in order to communicate. They want to be able to say something about objects whose name they haven't yet discovered, or else they can't remember or can't produce. With time, children will narrow down the application of terms as they learn more and more words.

Children's semantic development is more than simply a labelling exercise or applying meanings to words. As their awareness of objects around them increases and their word store grows, children will also begin to develop an understanding that words are interrelated. By the time they reach school, they will have no trouble grouping words that share meaning relations, for example, a set consisting of names of various kinds of humans, such as *boy, man, woman, child* and so on. Words that share one or more components of meaning in this way are said to belong to the same **semantic field** (also called **semantic domain**). The words just given belong to the semantic field of "human". Just as there are gaps in phonological systems, children will also discover that semantic fields contain gaps.

Identify the semantic fields in the following two examples and find words to fill the gaps (you might have to create your own):

knife	spoon	fork	
cleaver	ladle	?	
chicken	rooster	hen	chick
dog	?	bitch	puppy

ACQUISITION OF GRAMMAR (MORPHOLOGY AND SYNTAX)

Earlier we referred to psycholinguist Jean Berko Gleason in connection with the "fis phenomenon". She is probably best known for having created something that has now been dubbed "the Wug Test" (Berko 1958). Basically, this is a test of children's knowledge of morphology. For this test, one of the activities involved showing very young children a picture of a weird-looking creature which they were told was called a "wug". They were then shown a picture of two of these creatures and asked: "Now in this picture, there are two of them. There are two...." Unanimously, the children contributed the form [wʌgz].

THIS IS A WUG

NOW THERE IS ANOTHER ONE
THERE ARE TWO OF THEM
THERE ARE TWO _____

(The original wugs can't be reproduced but you can see them online.)

This may not seem all that remarkable, but think about it. In English, the rule of plural formation happens to be quite tricky. Consider the plurals of the following words. Hidden in the identical spellings here are three different plural endings. Which one of these endings appears is determined by the nature of the consonant at the end of the word **stem**.

Hat [hæt] versus *hats* [hæts]
Bag [bæg] versus *bags* [bægz]
Cheese [tʃiz] versus *cheeses* [tʃizəz]

Voiceless sounds trigger [s], voiced sounds trigger [z] and sibilants (fricatives with a high frequency hissy quality such as [s], [z], [tʃ] and [ʃ]) trigger [əz]. When confronted by pictures of *wugs* and many other imaginary creatures, the children are able to produce the correct plural endings. Clearly, they do not simply memorize each plural word as they learn it, but they have internalized a rule of plural formation, which they can apply even to words they have never heard before. This is important evidence that children look for patterns in the language and don't simply imitate others.

Jean Berko Gleason also tested other morphological patterns (such as verb tense suffixes), and again children showed that they could come up with the right endings to nonsense words they would never have encountered before. "This is a man who knows how to bing (man standing on ceiling). He is binging. He did the same thing yesterday. Yesterday he....?" And the children obligingly supply *binged*.

In the 1970s, Roger Brown undertook a detailed study of the acquisition of grammar and discovered that children acquire functional words and morphemes in a particular sequence. Here is the typical order for the first ten grammatical features:

1. present progressive (*sing**ing***)
2. preposition *in* and *on* (***in** bed*; ***on** blanket*)
3. plural inflection (*hous**es***)
4. irregular past tense verb forms (*went, broke, brought*)
5. possessive inflection (*Daddy**'s** car*)
6. verb *be* (*is, am, are*)
7. articles (*a, an, the*)
8. past tense inflection (*jumped, goed, breaked, bringed*)
9. regular present tense inflection (*Mamma sing**s***)
10. irregular present tense forms (*has, does*)

If you compare stages (4) and (8), it is tempting to think that children appear to be taking a backwards step. At stage (4) they are producing correct forms, such as *broke*, and then later on they produce forms like *breaked* — what's going on? It may not look like it, but this is progress and it is beautiful evidence that children's speech is rule governed. There is a very good reason why they trot out grammatical irregularities like *broke* and *went* so early on. Think of all the highly irregular forms in English — they are always the common everyday words and children pick them up early because they hear them so frequently. However, at this early stage they are not connecting these verbs with their root forms *break* and *go*, but have them as separate lexical entries. They then acquire the correct rule for forming past tense (add *–ed*), which (in the same spirit as their semantic development) they overgeneralize and apply to all verbs, including the irregular ones. They must then learn that there are exceptions. They reacquire irregular forms like *broke* and *went*, and are now much wiser, having connected these (obviously at an unconscious level) with the basic verbs.

Complex and compound sentences

It is not long after children have gone through the two-word stage that they start to produce complex and compound sentences. A complex sentence involves a clause that is embedded within another clause (the main clause) and is dependent on it; for example, "I gave her my lunch whenever I could" (here the clause "whenever I could" cannot stand on its own). By comparison, a compound sentence is made up of two conjoined independent clauses — one is not subordinate to the other; for example, "I gave her my lunch and she ate it hungrily". Note, you can combine clauses this way either via **coordination** with *and* or by simply jamming the clauses together without any linking word. This is the most straightforward way for children to create sentences made up of more than one clause:

> She put a bandage on my foot; maked it feel better.
> She put a bandage on my foot and maked it feel better.

Children produce complex sentences with what called relative clauses when they are about three years old, although they are without the relative words *who, which* or *that*. Typically, these clauses appear at the end of the sentence, immediately after the noun phrase they modify.

You write some words me know. (= You write some words that I know)

Typically, children do not acquire the full knowledge of this complex construction until they go to school. Relative clauses that appear in the middle of sentences are much more complex to process. Sentences like the following are rare in adult speech and not surprisingly only appear later in the speech acquisition process: "The book that I like got lost".

2.3 CRITICAL LEARNING PERIOD FOR ACQUISITION

Many researchers in the field of first language acquisition argue that there exists in childhood a window of opportunity — or a critical period — during which language must be acquired. This has come to be known as **the critical period hypothesis**. It has been linked to brain development.

At birth, there is relatively little difference between the functioning of the two brain hemispheres, but around the age of two begins the process of lateralization, whereby the right and left hemispheres each take over a dominant role for certain mental functions. The relationship between language and lateralization is an extremely complex one and is still the subject of continuing neurolinguistic research. While the development of this neural one-sidedness does appear to overlap with the main period of time when first language acquisition takes place, this idea of a critical learning period remains a controversial one. Nonetheless, the evidence seems to us compelling — judge for yourselves.

One indication comes from the different patterns of recovery in brain damaged adults and children. Basically, the older the child the worse the recovery — full recovery is seldom achieved if the injury occurs after puberty. However, with very young children, even the total removal of the left hemisphere (where language function tends to be focused) doesn't appear to prevent the reacquisition of language.

Another piece of evidence comes from the so-called "feral children"; these are the tragic cases of children who have grown up socially isolated and without language. Genie was a girl who was locked in an attic in Los Angeles from around two years of age until she was discovered in 1970 at thirteen and a half. Efforts were then made to teach Genie language. Certainly she made great progress in learning vocabulary. However, she never acquired normal grammar, in particular syntax. So while she did acquire some language, and she was an enthusiastic communicator, there always remained serious gaps. The following are examples of the sort of structures Genie produced when forming questions.

Where is tomorrow Mrs L.?
Where is May I have ten pennies?
When is stop spitting?

Of course it's hard to know what conclusions to draw from the experience of someone whose childhood was so traumatic; and Genie may even have had some left-hemisphere brain damage. Yet, as linguists point out, there are many children who have worse cognitive deficits but who are able to acquire near normal syntax. Genie's experience was very different from that of Isabelle, for instance, whose first brush with language did fall within the critical period for language acquisition. She was

discovered in 1937 at the age of six and a half living with her mother, who was deaf and could not speak. Although she had been kept isolated, she had not been maltreated. After two years Isabelle's language use was completely normal for a child of her age. Obviously, she was luckier than Genie because her exposure to a language started early enough.

More evidence comes from 'Chelsea', who was born deaf and grew up language-less (in a caring household, unlike Genie). When her deafness was diagnosed at 31 years of age, she was fitted with hearing aids and she underwent extensive speech training. Like Genie, she never acquired full grammar. All these tragic experiences do lend concrete support to the idea of a critical period for the acquisition of language — at least the acquisition of the grammatical aspects of a language. Recall too that Helen Keller (blind and deaf from an illness at the age of eighteen months) communicated with family members with home signs, until the age of seven when Anne Sullivan taught language to her. Clearly, she was exposed to language in the crucial time period and subsequently developed into an extremely articulate woman.

A third piece of evidence in support of a critical period comes from children with Down syndrome. These children follow the usual pattern of development but at a slower rate. There are all sorts of different experiences here, but it seems that if language development is delayed to beyond puberty then normal linguistic skills are never fully acquired.

A final piece of evidence is something probably some of you will have first-hand experience of — the pain of learning a second language. It doesn't matter how much exposure you get to a second language, if this exposure occurs after childhood, you will probably never sound like a native speaker. Indeed, brain scans now support this experience. Second languages appear to be stored in different parts of the brain, depending on when they are learned. When acquired in adulthood, languages are separated spatially from native languages. However, if the learning experience is during the early language acquisition stage, then both first and second languages tend to be found together in the front cortical areas of the brain. In a moment, we'll be looking at some of the differences in the acquisition process involving first and additional languages.

Critical learning period evidence?

Evidence for a critical period seems compelling:

- the different patterns of recovery in brain damaged adults and children
- feral children (such as Genie)
- children with Down syndrome
- learning a second language

If finches aren't exposed to song before 15 months, they never acquire a normal song. And so it is with humans. Our brain gets set in its way — at least, this is how American psycholinguist Eric Lenneberg describes it (he was the linguist and neurologist who pioneered the idea of a critical period for language development). In humans, if linguistic skills are not acquired during this critical period, then these skills will unfortunately remain underdeveloped.

In summary then, evidence does point to the fact that there is this window of opportunity in our early lives that is set aside for the acquisition of language. In fact, it's most certainly more complicated than this. As the normal patterns of childhood language acquisition suggest, there are different windows for different parts of language. As earlier described, children first acquire intonation and

stress features. Vowels and consonants are acquired during their first three years. The acquisition of grammatical features continues until much later, during the early school years. This is presumably why people can speak a second language flawlessly when it comes to the grammar but still retain a foreign accent — an accent involves those deeply anchored speech habits that we pick up as babies. As for vocabulary — well, that continues to be acquired throughout our lifetime. Remember that Genie's progress in vocabulary was delayed, but in the end impressive. It was the grammar she never mastered.

2.4 THEORIES TO EXPLAIN LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

The question we now need to address is this: how exactly do children go through these different stages of development to eventually end up speaking like adults? There have been a number of different accounts proposed over the years that attempt to explain this, especially how it is that children are able to extract grammar from what they hear around them. The main theories we are concerned with are: behaviourism, innatism and interactionism.

BEHAVIOURISM

This approach is one of the earliest accounts of language acquisition. It argues that children develop language from what they hear around them, and that they learn from imitation, reinforcement and correction. For instance, a child correctly says "bikkie", and the adult smiles and gives the child a biscuit. As a result of this, the child has been positively reinforced, feels rewarded, and language has been enhanced.

However it is quite clear from all we have seen so far that this can't be the whole story (children don't imitate parents in other respects, so why should they here). Here are some actual examples (you've already encountered Nils, Ellen and Paul):

i. George: I want another napple!
ii. Robin: "It's a hippobottomomus".
iii. [Father: "Don't argue"] Paul: "Well, don't arg me then!"
iv. Ellen (crying): "I hurt my twohead!!"
v. [Mother: "Don't throw your weetbix on the floor"] Nils: "there's just one weetbick".
vi. [Mother: "They're called testicles".] Ben: "So what do they test?"
vii. [Mother: "No way"] Daniel: "Yes way!"
viii. Katie: "Pinocchio longed his nose".
ix. Katie: "Hop me on".

The children using these sentences must have come up with them all by themselves — at this age they are unlikely to ever have come across such usage in the target language. All these children are aware of the fact that English words have structure and they are using this knowledge to

come up with expressions that are quite individual. They are also extending rules of grammar to novel contexts.

All children become interestingly creative with language. And while it is important that they are immersed in some form of language from the start, they are not just little mimics. From very early on, children understand and produce strings of words like these ones that would never occur anywhere in the language they hear around them. Yet surprisingly, popular thinking still has it that parents or caregivers are the ones who teach children language.

Examples like the following also make it plain that children do not respond to tuition and correction when they get it. Consider the following exchange between mother and child from a research report written by C. Cazden 1972:

Child: *My teacher holded the baby rabbits and we patted them.*
Mother: *Did you say your teacher held the baby rabbits?*
Child: *Yes.*
Mother: *What did you say she did?*
Child: *She holded the baby rabbits and we patted them.*
Mother: *Did you say she held them tightly?*
Child: *No, she holded them loosely.*

Of course, we've seen plenty of evidence that a child's linguistic awareness often outstrips their production capabilities, so perhaps we can't read too much into such exchanges. Nonetheless, even when the parent explicitly instructs the child, the efforts appear to be futile. The child here is continuing to regularize the past tense, seemingly unaware of the error, even though the parent is providing the correct form each time. Exchanges like these are commonplace in the literature on child language acquisition. It would seem no one is teaching children language – they are somehow discovering it all by themselves.

My teacher holded the baby rabbits

INNATISM

Examples like the ones we've just seen have led some linguists and psychologists to assume that the human mind must be somehow predisposed towards learning a language. According to this position, there is a part of the brain that contains knowledge at birth of what is and what is not a possible language. We are then said to be born with an **innate grammar**, or a special "Language Acquisition Device" (abbreviated LAD). This is kind of like a "blueprint" for language, and it aids children in the task of building a grammar for their language. One of the main pieces of evidence is something that Noam Chomsky describes as "poverty of the stimulus".

Most of the language that a child hears does not actually consist of full grammatical sentences. People are always interrupting themselves or changing their minds halfway through a sentence. As we saw earlier, when we examined pieces of spontaneous conversation, speech contains utterances that simply do not correspond to what we would consider a well-formed sentence of English. So how do young children ever arrive at the correct hypotheses when they have this sort of input to work

with? Also how do children acquire such a systematic knowledge of the structure of their language when the data they are exposed to is so impoverished? Children are capable of producing complex constructions with relative clauses that sit inside the sentence, such as: *The puppy that is eating the bone is hungry,* even though these relative clauses are uncommon in ordinary talk. Certainly, they do not crop up in language that caretakers use with children. In fact, a point that language experts make is that child directed speech is extremely strong evidence that language acquisition has to be innate — otherwise a child would never progress beyond structures such as: 'Look, doggie'. All this supports the idea that the basic design of language is somehow innate.

Children will learn whatever language is spoken around them, even if this is not the language of the biological parents. There is also no evidence that children learn some languages faster than others and this has lead people to assume that the innate grammar is the same for any language; hence we have a universal grammar. This innate grammar is a mental phenomenon, an abstract structure in the brain.

This is a controversial area, however, and not all researchers agree with this position. Psycholinguist Jean Aitchison explains language more in terms of a kind of gigantic puzzle that has to be solved, and children are equipped with precisely the right kind of inborn "puzzle-solving" device. The question then is just how much this processing mechanism is specifically adapted to deal with language only. In other words, is it a specifically linguistic device, or is it tied to more general cognitive knowledge?

This is a difficult question to answer. As Aitchison notes, one way of shedding some light on the issue it is to examine those cases where there is a mismatch between linguistic and nonlinguistic cognitive development. In other words, we should be able to find speakers with language difficulties but with other parts of the intelligence intact. Conversely, we should find people who are impaired but have intact language. In fact, we find both these. Recall the case of Genie, discovered at the age of nearly 14 without language. Because she didn't acquire language until after the crucial time period, her grammatical competence remained deficient; her utterances were very like telegraphic speech.

Genie

However, as Aitchison has noted intelligence tests showed that Genie's conceptual ability far outstripped her linguistic abilities. There are other cases that show the reverse — good language skills alongside intellectual impairments. There are language savants, for example, who show brilliant linguistic skills but are underdeveloped in other mental abilities. All such cases strongly suggest that language and intelligence are independent.

The linguistic savant Christopher is a genius at learning languages (he can read, write, speak, understand and translate more than twenty languages), and yet he cannot button up his own coat. Linguist Professor Neil Smith, who has been working with Christopher since the 1980s wrote the following about his talents: "His drawing ability indicates a severely low IQ of between 40 and 60 (a level hinting at ineducability), yet his English language ability indicates a superior IQ in excess of 120 (a level more than sufficient to enter University). Christopher is a savant, someone with an island of startling talent in a sea of inability". There has been a documentary made about Christopher and you can view it on Youtube:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7vRKdIdg6v0

INTERACTIONISM

The two theories so far have presented the debate as an opposition between "nature" and "nurture". Innatism prioritises "nature" and behaviourism prioritises "nurture".

But this doesn't seem a terribly useful way of explaining things. It would seem that both theories are good at describing and explaining different aspects of language acquisition. But language only develops when children have the opportunity to interact with others. Moreover, there is a clear link between what a child produces and what that child hears because linguistic features that occur frequently in speech are the ones children acquire early on. Conversely, constructions rarely encountered will be acquired late. As Professor Katherine Demuth from Macquarie University puts it: "We use changes in pitch and rhythm when we talk to children, and we emphasize important words. This is what children usually learn and produce first." This exaggerated speech we use with little children is a special register sometimes called "motherese", "parentese" or "child-directed speech", and it is important to language learning.

Nature versus nurture

However, clearly there are also are many aspects of our brains and bodies constructed through our genetic make-up that facilitate language development in various ways. There are complex linguistic constructs that cannot be acquired from the usual language input — so there must be some degree of innateness involved.

Interactionists have a foot in both the "nature" and "nurture" camps. They believe that language development is both biological and social. Children are born with brains that predispose them to the ability to pick up languages, and when they observe people communicating around them, they acquire the desire to communicate. Moreover, it is interaction with those around them that helps them to grow cognitively and linguistically.

Cross-cultural perspective

Despite the linguistic evidence to the contrary, many adults seem to think their involvement is crucial to the linguistic development of their children. Enthusiastic parents can be seen engaging with their children in conversational interaction. They repeat things and they simplify their grammar: "Look a tram! See the tram! There's the tram!". But we gain a proper perspective when we look at other cultures. Stephen Pinker, for example, describes the !Kung San in the Kalahari Desert (! represents a click sound) who do not speak to their children until they have learned to speak back. Despite this, these children learn to speak, just like other children do.

On the other hand, the !Kung San believe that their children have to be drilled to sit, stand, and walk. Parents carefully pile sand around their infants to ensure that the infant will learn how to sit up — and, of course, the fact that their children do eventually sit up is proof to them that this procedure works. So what parent would not engage in this activity? It all seems absurd to us — even the most attentive of today's "helicopter parents" wouldn't dream of training their children to sit up. Equally, our attempts to engage tiny infants in conversation seem

completely absurd to the !Kung San. There are, in fact, many societies where children are not considered viable conversational partners until they can talk back. These parents don't speak to their children at all (except maybe to scold).

We should end this section by pointing out that theories of language acquisition are extremely controversial. We have not been able to go into terribly much detail here, but if you are interested, we recommend you follow up some of the references we've been citing here (see bibliography). What we can conclude at this stage is that:

- Children have to interact with other speakers for their language to develop.
- Children appear to be born with some sort of instinctive ability to solve linguistic puzzles, and they have a natural facility to extract linguistic regularities from what they hear around them.
- All this is helped by general cognitive ability, and to some extent parental / caregiver speech.

Babies come with a language organ and a love of human company

In an article that appeared in *The Conversation*, linguist Annabelle Lukin described how her PhD in linguistics prepared her for motherhood. Here she asked the same thorny questions we've been asking here: Are babies born with grammar hard-wired into their brain? Or is language something bestowed by culture and socialisation? She concludes:

> As helpless and dependent as my baby son was, I knew my little munchkin was biologically prepared to initiate and sustain the interactions through which his beautifully complex human brain could get to know the world outside him, and his place in that world. I knew our conversations would propel him into the rich and extravagant culture around him. And that this culture would reciprocate his curiosity with its many artifacts, including the infinitely creative, collective resource that is human language.

2.5 SECOND LANGUAGE AND ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE LEARNING

Children are linguistic geniuses. They will learn whatever languages are spoken around them, even if they are not the language of the biological parents. Children growing up in a monolingual French community will learn French at the same age that children growing up in a monolingual English environment learn English. A monolingual community is one that uses only one language and children growing up in such a community will usually become native speakers of only one language. From a worldwide perspective, however, such communities are in fact rare — knowing only one language is unusual. If you think about it, there are said to be 196 countries in the world and approximately 7,000 languages that somehow have to fit into these countries (we'll ignore here the difficulty of identifying and classifying countries and languages). So clearly, most children in the world are going to grow up "bilingual" or "multilingual", in other words with an ability to communicate in two or more languages.

What level of ability do you need in order to be described as "bilingual" or "multilingual"? These labels are by no means clear-cut and we could spend the rest of this book discussing them. Since equal command in two languages is rare, we will assume that bi/multilingualism falls along a continuum — from native-like fluency (for example, someone has learned two languages simultaneously from infancy) to a fairly limited ability (for example, someone can read Dutch but can barely speak a word).

Given how central language is to our lives, and given that there are all these languages about, language learning and language teaching are obviously important. The description "second language acquisition" is often used generally to cover any language or languages acquired after the first (or mother tongue) language. However, we prefer to use "additional language acquisition" since this more accurately captures those situations where people acquire competence in three or even more languages.

The acquisition of additional languages presents quite a different and complex range of experiences compared to first language acquisition. For a start, much will depend on the age at which the learning takes place. Some children will acquire a second, perhaps even a third, language under very similar circumstances to the first language. When they are exposed to more than one language from the beginning, this is a case of simultaneous bilingualism or multilingualism. Some of you will be in this very fortunate position. Many people, however, come to additional languages much later in their lives, and they rarely reach native-like proficiency. Recall the discussion of the critical learning period.

Also crucial is the social situation where the learning takes place. Is it in a natural setting (say, a child learning a second language from playmates in the school yard, or an adult migrant learning a second language at work and in daily life), or by means of some sort of instruction (say, an adolescent learning a second language formally at school in a foreign language classroom)? When instruction is involved, we have to consider the learning conditions. For one, there are many different teaching methods out there. The main ones include:

(1) The traditional grammar-translation approach is the time-honoured method of teaching Latin and Greek, involving translation, comprehension tasks and sets of grammatical rules and lists of words to be memorized.
(2) The direct or immersion method, in stark contrast to (1), attempts to turn the classroom into a natural language setting, with use only of the target language.
(3) The audio-lingual method which focuses on everyday speech and includes hours of oral drills in language laboratories.
(4) The communicative approach, where the functional aspects of language are stressed, rather than grammatical forms, and the focus is on the way language is used in everyday situations.

Which method of language learning was your experience in primary school through to Years 7 and 8 — was it one method, or a combination?

These are just four of the hundreds of different methods that have been proposed over the years. How-to manuals go back to at least the 14th century. Take William Caxton's little book *Right good*

lernyng for to lerne shortly frenssh and englyssh of 1483. In this book Caxton outlines how: "Who this booke shall wylle lerene may well enterprise or take on honde marchandises fro one land to another". Clearly, the commercial benefits of foreign language learning were recognized even back then.

Other factors that have an effect on additional language acquisition include the characteristics of the language learners themselves (personality, motivation, attitude, intelligence, aptitude and so on). Are we dealing with an extrovert, a natural chatterbox who doesn't mind making mistakes or even sounding silly, or is the learner nervous and reluctant to make mistakes? There is also the question of metalinguistic awareness (something you're currently acquiring in this subject English Language); in other words, the extent to which the learner has a consciousness of the grammatical, phonological and discourse properties, and so has some control over the linguistic forms produced. Of course, conscious analytical approaches are not a feature of first language learning; so here is a major difference in the acquisition experiences. Moreover, those who have acquired literacy in their first language will use this as a primary aid in acquiring other languages.

Also important to consider in all this is the nature of the additional language(s) being learned. There are really two aspects to this. One is the question of relative difficulty; in other words, much will depend on where the learner is starting from (the mother tongue). Let's assume English is your first language. In this case, it will be far harder to learn a language that isn't closely related — even harder if it's not linguistically related at all. For example, an English speaker would find Irish or Welsh difficult, more difficult than Dutch and German — all four are relatives, but Dutch and German are close relatives to English, being in the same Germanic family. Even harder would be to learn languages from a completely different language family, say one of the Australian Aboriginal languages, a Dravidian language like Tamil, an Amerindian language like Nootka or Navaho and so on. The vocabulary would be very unfamiliar, both in form and in content, and the grammatical structures every unEnglish-looking.

Tamil language

The second aspect has to do with the intrinsic difficulty of the additional language(s) — are some languages harder to learn than others? The problem here is we have to consider complexity at different levels. Take sounds. As you've learned, English has around 44 distinctive sounds. Hawaiian has around 13. One language spoken in Southern Botswana (Khoisan) has around 156 sounds (and these include clicks!). Or take an aspect of grammar, say, the morphology. When it comes to grammatical affixes (the inflections), English has rather few. For instance, English nouns like *frog* only have two forms only (*frog/frogs*) and regular verbs generally come in fours (*quack/s/ed/ing*). In this respect, English would be easier to learn than, say, Italian or Spanish where verbs have many more shapes. Then again, there are languages like Javanese and Japanese that are extremely complex from the point of view of rules of politeness and indirect speech styles. There is no single scale to measure complexity; we can find complexity in one area and simplicity in another. And remember any complexity will also be measured against the characteristics of the first language.

We began this chapter with a quotation from the well-known Melbourne linguist Barry Blake. As he describes, all the many difficulties that face second language learners bring to light the marvel of first language acquisition — children acquire any language or languages with astonishing ease and they do this at an age when they are far too young to attempt any other form of study. This is an unusual situation where tiny toddlers actually learn better than adults!

2.5.1
THE BENEFITS OF ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE LEARNING

For many years, there was a feeling that bilingualism was a bad thing. Adding a considerable cognitive load to children in those vital early years was thought to be damaging to them. In fact, research has not shown this at all. Quite the contrary — there are all sorts of wonderful advantages and all sorts of skills that are enhanced by a bilingual or multilingual experience.

One piece of evidence is in the area of language learning and literacy. As research continues here, so more and more empirical support emerges for literacy interdependence between two (or more) languages — students can transfer cognitive and academic skills acquired in the first language to their second language and thereby enrich their first language experience. Tony Liddicoat describes it this way:

> Learning a new language teaches the learner something about the nature of language and languages, and this is knowledge which needs to be developed by a literate person. [...] Most importantly, it helps one to come to see language as an object that can be talked about, which is a fundamental step in becoming literate. Second language learning is therefore a resource for enhancing literacy, not a problem for acquiring literacy. It forms part of a whole package for learning about language as a part of schooling and provides additional insights into the nature of language that are not available to the monolingual learner. (Liddicoat 2000-01: 12)

When did you first know about nouns, verbs and adjectives — was it when you started learning a second language at school, or in English classes in primary school?

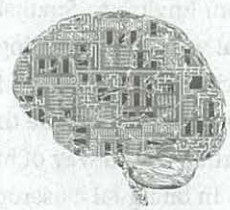
We summarize here what we believe to be the main educational benefits of learning foreign languages:

- **Flexible thinking:** Bilingual children understand better how language works and are better able to differentiate form from content/meaning — something that is crucial to our everyday thinking. This is a good basis for future cognitive development, especially when it comes to flexible thinking.
- **Bilingualism and reading readiness:** (Note, this is not restricted to children growing up bilingually — it also applies to, say, very young children who are participating in a primary school additional language program). When you're exposed to a new language, it teaches you about the nature of language and languages, and as literacy experts show, this is precisely the sort of knowledge that literate people need to develop.
- **Linguistic awareness:** Bilingual children are better able to judge the grammaticality of sentences — they can understand grammatical rules and can detect word boundaries more successfully than monolingual children.

There are also positive benefits to a bilingual upbringing to be found outside the education arena. The phenomenon of globalization, particularly issues to do with trade, security, tourism and business, is making language a very marketable commodity. As just described, from a worldwide perspective "monolingual" communities, where only one language is used, are in fact rare. Most children in the world grow up learning at least two languages. Australia has always had a multilingual

and multicultural population, but it is also a country where English monolingualism has considerable clout — the country is dominated by English. English is the national language and the country's **lingua franca**. English language and English-medium education are among its major industries. Yet, if we are to compete in a world that is increasingly multilingual, we need to be taking advantage of our remarkable linguistic resources.

Languages feed the brain



If you're interested in finding out more about all this we recommended you visit the Language and Society Centre at Monash University. Here you will find links to two lectures that you can download.

In *Why Bilingualism Makes a Difference* (February 2009), Professor Claudia Maria Riehl (from the University of Cologne, Germany) examines new technologies and research demonstrating the cognitive advantages of speaking two languages. She gives impressive looking neuroimages of brain activities showing that bilinguals, especially bilingual children, do have neuronal and cognitive advantages over monolingual speakers (http://arts.monash.edu.au/language-and-society/claudia-lecture-march-09.php).

In *Australia's unrecognized resources boom* (February 2008), Professor Michael Clyne argues that Australia must develop its multilingual potential in order to promote dynamism and innovation. He recommends ways in which Australia can become a vital link nation between Europe, Asia and other parts of the world (http://arts.monash.edu.au/language-and-society/languages-for-australias-future.php).

2.5.2 CODE-SWITCHING

Je suis une Canadienne-française I guess ('I'm a French-Canadian I guess')

Code-switching (sometimes called "language-switching" or "code-shifting") covers situations where bilingual speakers swap back and forth between languages in a single interaction, say between English and another language. It's been described as bilinguals "keeping a foot in both camps". The label is also used more broadly to include bidialectal speakers. So it can refer to the switching of language varieties (even closely related ones), say between the standard and a regional dialect

Code-mixing involves an intermingling of smaller elements of language like single lexical items and morphemes. So a sentence might begin in one language but then incorporate words or even grammatical features of another language. It's been described as a "linguistic cocktail". The changes also appear to be random (in code-switching they are more strategic); however, it is often difficult to draw the line between code-switching and code-mixing.

The phenomenon of code-switching is a normal and natural feature of the conversations between speakers who know the same two (or more) languages, As the name suggests, these speakers move from one language to the other in mid-speech and this can involve isolated words, phrases and occasionally even entire clauses. Here Marta and her sister Lolita are speaking Spanish and English with linguist Ana Celia Zentella in her book *Growing up Bilingual.*

Lolita: Oh, I could stay with Ana?

Marta: — but you could ask *papi* and *mami* to see if you could come down.

Lolita: OK.

Marta: Ana, if I leave her here would you send her upstairs when you leave?

Zentella: I'll tell you exactly when I have to leave, at ten o'clock. *Y son las nueve y cuarto.* ('And it's nine fifteen')

Marta: Lolita, *te voy a dejar con Ana.* ('I'm going to leave you with Ana') Thank you, Ana.

As Zentella explained, "[w]ithin the children's network, English predominated, but code-switching from English to Spanish occurred once every three minutes on average". It is certainly not the case that what we are seeing here is sub-standard language usage. It is a natural bilingual speech practice and simply reflects the fact that these speakers have abilities in more than one language — so why not use them. It might be that certain topics are more appropriate in one language rather than another, or perhaps it is a way of highlighting something.

In bilingual classrooms, teachers can exploit this by switching languages for important concepts or to gain the attention of their students. Researchers are interested in all sorts of aspects of this interaction — when and why speakers choose one language over another, the grammatical patterns involved and also the psycholinguistic processes that take place in the speaker's brain. It is a huge topic and one that has generated a lot of interest from linguists, neurolinguists, psychologists, educators and speech scientists.

The practice of code-switching is akin to the monolingual use of different speaking styles for effect (to express solidarity, social identity and so on). So it's not surprising then that some linguists also use code-switching to accommodate other varieties like registers. Admittedly the meanings and functions of these practices are similar, but we'd rather retain the use 'style-shifting' to cover situations when speakers alternate between the styles of one language, say swapping between nonstandard colloquial forms and those of more formal Standard English. So you could also use this description to include the way pop, rock and folk singers modify their usual pronunciations when they're singing, as in the Iggy Azalea extract we gave earlier.

Given the right conditions (exposure to language being the main one), children inevitably learn to speak. It is different with writing, however. This is a skill that has to be taught. Children learn to write by means of discovery — by actively testing out their own strategies for writing. With encouragement, most children will not hesitate to produce things that they call "writing," even if they have not been taught to spell words or even how to form letters. Children need to be given opportunities to engage in writing activities, especially informal ones, early on — even before regular reading, handwriting, and spelling instruction is begun. While many children start "writing" before they get to preschool, the business of learning how to write, in a formal sense, is the focus of much of the primary school years.

Ava's to do list for Christmas (age 5)

1. Wash her
2. Get redey for the Christmas partee
3. Mace shor the pahtee clods are there
4. Tidy pu
5. Help Lenny
6. Finulle have a rest

ACTIVITIES
AREA OF STUDY 2

BORN TO TALK

1. Working in a group, write down all the baby words you can think of, starting with the ones you used to use when you were learning to talk. Sort the words into semantic categories. What do you observe about the topics that interest young children?

STAGES OF CHILD LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

2. Priscilla Dunstan is an Australian woman who developed a theory that newborn babies have five 'words' or sounds to communicate different needs. While her claims have not been subject to scientific research, her theory gained world-wide attention and seemed to concur with what many parents observed in their own children. Tune in to this clip to hear the theory and listen to examples of babies' cries. Make notes about how she says each 'word' is formed.

   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PgkZf6jVdVg (18 mins)

   Neh hungry.
   Owh Sleepy
   Heh Discomfort
   Eairh Tummy pain
   Eh Burp me

3. What would a child acquiring English use in place of the following words? Explain the reason behind each of your answers.

   brought fish (plural) sat feet knives best caught

4. This website, from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, has a series of videos and transcripts of children aged 1 to 4 interacting with adults.

   http://www.ed.uiuc.edu/courses/edpsy313/mtpa/mtpa.html

   a. Select two segments to view and read the transcripts.
   b. Provide a commentary on what is occurring in the interaction, explaining what features of language development are evident in the each of the children.

5. Below are some examples of inappropriate usage of words by children that have been cited in various linguistic studies.

   a. Examine each group, and formulate a hypothesis as to what the meaning of the child's word might be.
   b. Explain what the child is doing in each case.

- *Bow-wow* to refer to a dog (first referent), a fur piece with glass eyes, a set of cuff-links, a glass thermometer.
- *Tick-tock* to refer to watch (first referent), gas-meter, fire-hose wound on a spool, bath-scale with round dial.
- *Baw* to refer to ball (first referent), apples, grapes, eggs, squash, bell clapper, anything round.
- *Fly* to refer to a fly (first referent), specks of dirt, dust, all small insects, child's toes, crumbs of bread, a toad.
- *Door* to refer to door (first referent), opening box, opening tin, taking limbs off doll.
- *Dog* to refer to dog (first referent), muffler, cat, father's fur coat.
- *Bird* to refer to sparrows (first referent) then to cows, dogs, cats, any animal moving.

6. Describe how the following examples of children's utterances are different from standard utterances and, on the basis of your description, try to identify what they all have in common.

What's that is?	*Did you came home?*
What did you bought?	*The barber cut off his hair off.*
Whose is that is?	*I picked up the ball up.*
I did broke it.	*Could you get me a banana for me?*

7. Look again at these examples from the chapter and develop an explanation for the errors made in each case. What do they reveal about the children's understanding of words?

- George: I want another napple!
- [Father: "Don't argue"] Paul: "Well, don't arg me then!"
- Ellen (crying): "I hurt my twohead!!"
- [Mother: "Don't throw your weetabix on the floor"] Nils: "there's just one weetabick".
- [Mother: "They're called testicles".] Ben: "So what do they test?"
- [Mother: "No way Katie"] Katie: "Yes way!"
- Katie: "Pinocchio longed his nose".
- Katie: "Hop me on".
- Robin: "It's a hippobottomomus".

8. Transcribe into IPA the **vowel** sounds in the following words. (See Chapter 5 for details.)

heap	hit	clot	generous
heard	bread	cutting	phonology
clue	talk	illusion	existence
edge	class	example	revision
huge	the	actualities	strength

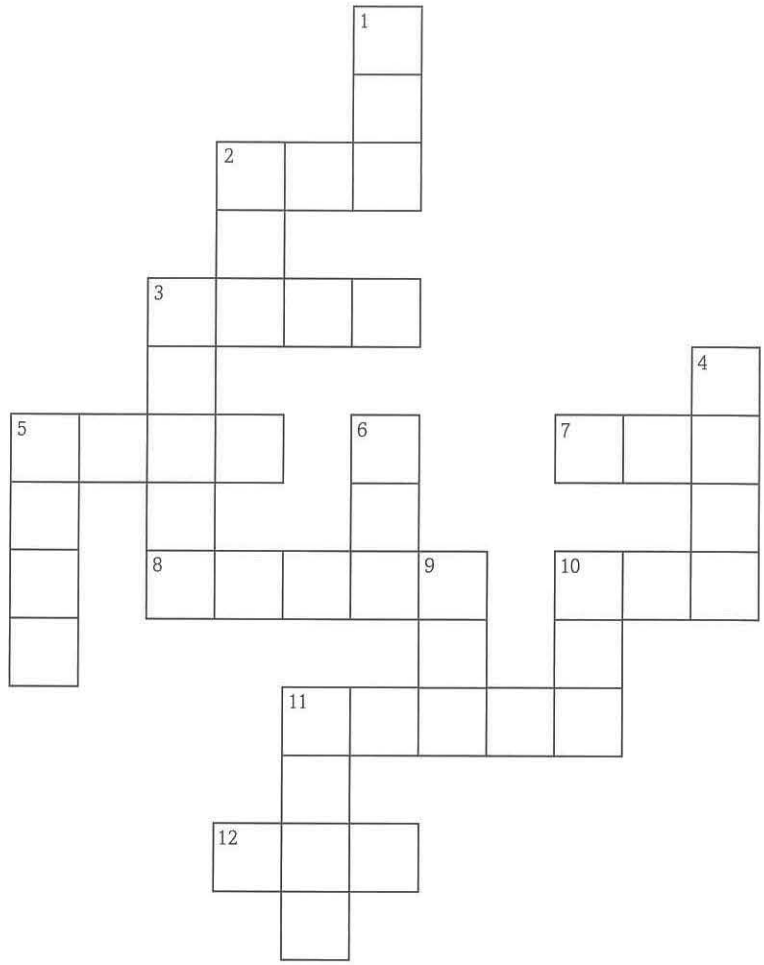
9. Complete the crossword by translating the phonetic symbols into words.

Down:

1. [baɪ] _____
2. [bi] _____
3. [hɜts] _____
4. [tɜn] _____
5. [kad] _____
6. [eə] _____
9. [ti] _____
10. [sæd] _____
11. [bid] _____

Across:

2. [bɔɪ] _____
3. [hɪə] _____
5. [kɜl] _____
7. [ju] _____
8. [ʃɜt] _____
10. [sʌn] _____
11. [bɪəd] _____
12. [meɪ] _____



WORD BANK

air	bee	card	hurts	shirt	turn
bead	boy	curl	may	sun	you
beard	buy	here	sad	tea	

10. Identify which word in each group does not contain the phoneme shown in the box.

1. a) clean
   b) pick [i]
   c) key
   d) peak

2. a) bin
   b) bit [ɪ]
   c) bead
   d) bid

3. a) bell
   b) bed [e]
   c) seed
   d) said

4. a) cat
   b) bat [æ]
   c) bark
   d) crack

OUTCOME TASKS

1. **Essay**
   Describe and comment on the development of language functions in the early stages of language acquisition up to the age of six. In your answer you should comment on the development of the following language functions, giving brief illustrations: describing things, real and imaginary; influencing the behaviour of others; expressing feelings; thinking and problem-solving; taking part in exchanges and conversations.

2. **Case Study**
   Observe the language of three small children (various ages if possible). If permitted, record samples of each child's language (or make notes) and annotate each sample. Summarise your observations about the stage of language development the child has reached, referring to each of the subsystems of language in your analysis.

3. **Analytical Commentary**
   Analyse the following transcripts and write a commentary about each one, demonstrating your understanding of how children acquire language.

Example 1

A four-year old talks about what he wants to be when he grows up.
Adult What do you want to be when you grow up?
Child A dowboy.
Adult So you want to be a dowboy, eh?
Child (*irritated*) No! Not a dowboy, a dowboy!
(Garton and Pratt, 1989)

Example 2

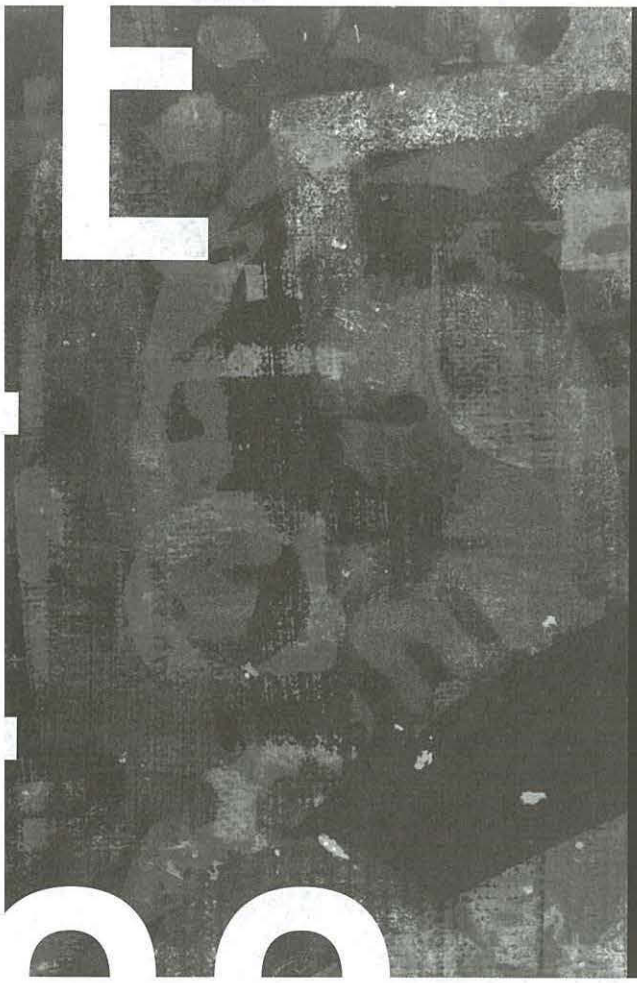
Kate (2 yrs 6 mths) is sitting on the knee of a family friend.
Adult (pointing to one of Kate's feet) What's that?
Kate A footsie
Adult (*pointing to both feet*) What are these?
Kate Two footsies - no, two feetsies, I mean.
(Garton and Pratt, 1989.)

Example 3

Kate (3 yrs 1 mth) is sitting at the table.
Kate Can I have a bit of cheese, please? - "Cheese, please?" - that's a rhyme.
(Garton and Pratt, 1989.)

Example 4

Matthew (2 yrs) watches his mum spoon stewed rhubarb from a saucepan into a bowl.
Matthew Dis rubile looks like biscetti.
(examples from http://www.teachit.co.uk/armoore/lang/acquisition.htm - top)



UNIT 2

LANGUAGE CHANGE

Noun

STABILITY

Preposition

Verb

IN LANGUAGE IS SYNONYMOUS

Adjective

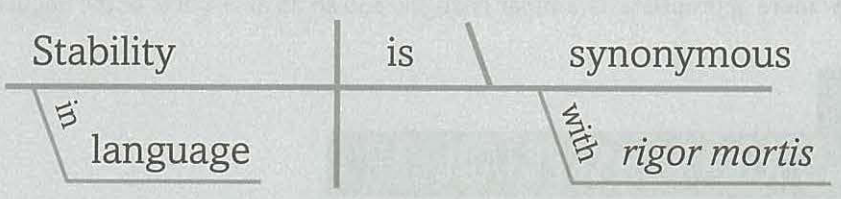
Preposition

WITH *RIGOR MORTIS*

Noun

— Ernest Weekely

SENTENCE DIAGRAM



AREA OF STUDY 1

ENGLISH ACROSS TIME

3.0 LANGUAGE WILL NOT STAND STILL

> The language is changing because that's what a language does. (Oliver Kamm 2015 *Accidence Will Happen*)

Oliver Kamm is right — our language has been changing throughout its lifetime and it continues to change today. Typically, it takes quite some time before any new usage is totally accepted. For example, the construction as appears in the following sentence (taken from the Melbourne magazine *The Big Issue*) is frequent in the speech and writing of many educated Australians; yet many would consider it to be unacceptable, perhaps even ungrammatical.

There'**s** reasons people sleep on the streets.

Traditionally the subject of the sentence is argued to be *reasons*, and since this is a plural noun, it therefore requires a plural verb. According to this thinking, the irregularity then is that the verb form is singular (here bolded). The following is the version that is promoted in many grammar books as being the acceptable construction.

There **are** reasons people sleep on the streets.

But our grammar is changing and the first version is the fallout of widespread changes that have been taking place to English over the centuries. Now, we don't want to overload you with grammatical details at this stage — but basically, there are/is good reasons to consider *there* as the subject of these sentences now, and we would analyse it as a singular pronoun (much like *it*). Hence the singular verb is now more appropriate. Grammar changes, and so do all aspects of the linguistic system.

3.1 CHANGE CAN BE SPECTACULAR

To give you an idea of how extensive the changes to the English language have been in the course of its recorded history, consider the following 10th century "remedy" (or what used to be called a *leechdom*)

for abdominal pain. Underneath the original English text is a literal word-by-word translation, and a loose modern translation follows.

Wiþ	*wambe*	*wærce*	*7*	*rysel*	*wærce*	*þær*	*þu*	*geseo*	*tord*				
against	womb	wark	and	belly	pain	when	thou	seest	turd				
wifel	*on*	*eorþan*	*up*	*weorpan*	*ymbfo*	*hine*	*mid*	*twam*	*handum*	*mid*			
weevil	on	earth	up	throw	catch	him	with	two	hands	with			
his	*geweorpe*	*wafa*	*mid*	*þinum*	*handum*	*swiþe*	*7*	*cweþ*	*þriwa ·*				
his	throwing	wave	with	thy	hands	strongly	and	say	thrice.				
Remedium	*facio*	*ad*	*ventris*	*dolorem ·*									
remedium	facio	ad	ventris	dolorem.									
Weorp	*þonne*	*ofer*	*bæc*	*þone*	*wifel*	*on*	*wege*	*beheald*	*þæt*	*þu*	*ne*	*locige*	*æfter ·*
throw	then	over	back	the	beetle	on	way	take-care	that	you	not	look	after.
þonnet	*monnes*	*wambe*	*wærce*	*oþþe*	*rysel*	*ymbfoc*	*mid*	*þinum*	*handum*	*þa wambe*			
the	man's	womb	pain	or	belly	grasp	with	thy	hands	the womb			
him	*biþ*	*sona*	*sel ·*	*XII*	*monaþ*	*þu*	*meaht*	*swa*	*don*	*after*	*þam*	*wifel*	
him	is	at-once	well.	12	months	thou	have-power	so	to-do	after	the	beetle	

Modern translation: 'For stomach ache and pain in the belly (fat); when you see a dung beetle in the earth throwing up (dung), catch him with your two hands along with his casting up (i.e. dung balls), wave him strongly with your hands, and say three times, "Remedium facio ad ventris dolorem". Then throw the beetle over your back; take care you don't look backwards. When a person's stomach or belly (fat) is in pain, grasp the stomach with your hands, it will soon be well with (the person); for twelve months after the beetle (event) you shall have power so to do'

A dung beetle with a dung ball

The language we see here is the language of King Alfred the Great (849–899). We refer to it now as **Old English** or **Anglo Saxon** (of course then it was just known as English, or rather Englisc). Many generations of speakers and writers have passed since this bellyache cure was first written down and the language is no longer even recognizably English. Over this long period of time, many changes have crept in, to the extent that Old English now looks more like a foreign language — and you would have to be taught it as you would a foreign language. Here are some of the most striking differences:

Graphic differences: Spelling, punctuation, letter shapes, conventions of word division and paragraphing were all very different at this time, although the leechdom as rendered here (for simplicity's sake) has retained only some of the conventions and is very different from the original

manuscript version. The consonant symbol *þ* (called "thorn") was from the old runic alphabet but was later replaced by French inspired *th*. The vowel symbol *æ* (called "ash") came from the Latin script, although its name derives from the runic symbol for the same sound. The scribes of this time used a number of abbreviations, one of which is shown here — the symbol *7* for 'and'. The raised dot indicates a pause (though this doesn't correspond to the modern comma or full-stop); punctuation was otherwise scanty.

Lexical differences: Many of the words here have disappeared without a trace (e.g. *rysel* 'belly', *weorpan* 'throw', *ymbfo* 'catch', *swiþe* 'quickly', *ne* 'not', *biþ* 'is', *wærce* 'pain', *sel* 'well'); some remain but are considered to be archaic (*þu* 'thou' and *þinum* 'thy'). Others have changed meaning (*wiþ* 'against' now means 'alongside'; *wambe* 'abdomen' now means 'uterus'; *sona* 'immediately' now means 'in a little while'; *meaht* 'have power' now means 'possibly will'; *wifel* 'beetle of any kind' is now a 'specific beetle from the Curculionoidea family'.

Phonological differences: The shape of even familiar words has altered significantly. Sounds have disappeared (the [w] in *swa* 'so' and *twa* 'two'; the [b] in *wambe* 'womb'), and many have changed their pronunciation (the *h* in *meaht* 'might' represented a velar fricative that either dropped out or became [f], as in *tough*). Also lost from the system were long consonants (shown here as double letters as in *monnes* 'man's').

Grammatical differences: There is much that is different in the grammar here. Word order in this remedy doesn't follow the fixed Subject-Verb-Object ordering of the modern language, and many found structures no longer exist today. The phrase *ne locige* shows an early negative marker *ne* that is placed before the verb. There are also many examples here of the inflectional endings that have bitten the dust (e.g. pronouns *him, hine*; *þu, þinum*; nouns *twam handum*; definite articles *þone, þa, þam*; verbs *don, locige, biþ*).

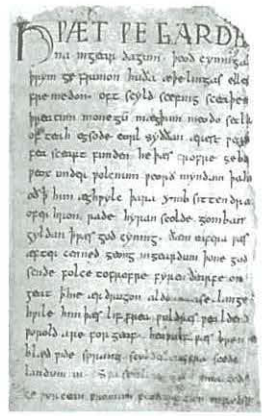
Tolkien was a linguist and Old English was one of the inspirations for his work, especially for the languages he invented such as Elvish.

The Elvish Script

Þþ Þþ

Upper and lower case versions of the thorn symbol

As this text illustrates, the further back you go in time, the stranger the language appears. Let's leave bellyaches for a moment and consider something a little more highbrow; some beautiful literature from this time. Every English speaker has probably heard of Beowulf — it's part of our cultural and linguistic heritage. This is another piece of English from well over one thousand years ago. It's the start of the prologue to the epic poem *Beowulf*. The manuscript dates from around 1000AD, but the language is probably mid 8th century — people would have been reciting, perhaps even singing, Beowulf long before it was written down (but, of course, the earliest manuscripts also may not have survived). You can see again the thorn symbol *þ* mentioned earlier; there is also another symbol *ð* (known as "eth") — both thorn and eth were used for the sounds we now represent with *th* (the voiced and voiceless fricatives symbolized phonetically by [θ] and [ð], respectively).



First page of the Beowulf manuscript

Hwæt! We Gardena in geardagum,
þeodcyninga, þrym gefrunon,
hu ða æþelingas ellen fremedon.
Oft Scyld Scefing sceaþena þreatum,
monegum mægþum, meodosetla ofteah,
egsode eorlas. Syððan ærest wearð
feasceaft funden, he þæs frofre gebad,
weox under wolcnum, weorðmyndum þah,
oðþæt him æghwylc þara ymbsittendra
ofer hronrade hyran scolde,
gomban gyldan. þæt wæs god cyning!

Indeed, we have heard of the glory of the Spear-Danes, kings of the nation in days gone by — how those princes performed deeds of courage. Often Schyld Scefing dragged away the mead benches from bands of foes, from many tribes — struck terror into Heruli. From the time when first he was found destitute (he received consolation for that) he flourished beneath the skies, prospered in honours until every one of those who dwelt around about him across the whale's road had to obey him, pay him tribute. That was a great king!

[Modern translation from Michael Swanton's edition of *Beowulf*]

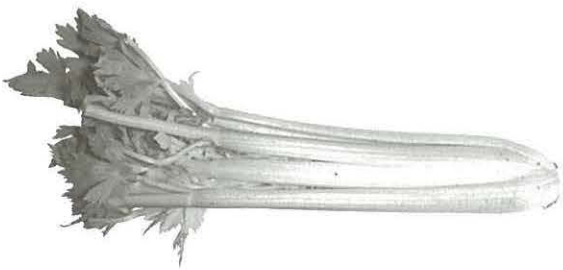
If you read novels from, say, the 18th or 19th centuries (the period we know as Early Modern English), you might be tempted to think that the English language has stopped changing, or at least isn't changing as dramatically. The way the characters speak in a Jane Austen or a Charles Dickens novel, for example, isn't strikingly different, except perhaps in the matter of style. Interestingly, Jane Austen and Charles Dickens could not read with the same ease the works of someone like the great medieval poet Geoffrey Chaucer. We can read literature of more than 300 years ago, but people then couldn't easily read literature of more than 300 years earlier. What we're seeing here is the effect of standardization, something we look at a little later in this book. Changes in the written standard language have certainly slowed down, but out there in ordinary speech things are as usual. New words, new meanings, new grammatical structures and different styles of speech emerge constantly. Languages never stop changing. They can't stop if they are to remain viable and versatile tools for society.

3.2 CHANGE EMERGES FROM VARIATION

For a long time people believed that we couldn't actually observe languages changing. As the linguist Jean Aitchison (1991:32) once put it, people believed that linguistic change was something that snuck up on you so gradually as to be imperceptible — a bit like the opening of a flower. Suddenly the flower is blooming but you never saw the petals actually open. The fact is people just didn't know where to look. Their view of language blinded them to the changes that were happening right under their noses.

People based their descriptions of a language on the fairly careful and formal speech of educated people. They didn't want to look at variation, especially social variation — it was all just too messy and interfered with neat lists and tidy examples. The problem is, if you ignore the messy bits you miss the clues to what's really going on in the language because the key to observing language change is the infinite variation that occurs in everyday speech — the so-called slipshod pronunciations, mistakes in grammar, coinages, new-fangled meanings and so on. These are the basis for change in a language. Sure, most will drop by the wayside, but some will catch on, be used more and more, and will eventually form part of the repertoire of mainstream English.

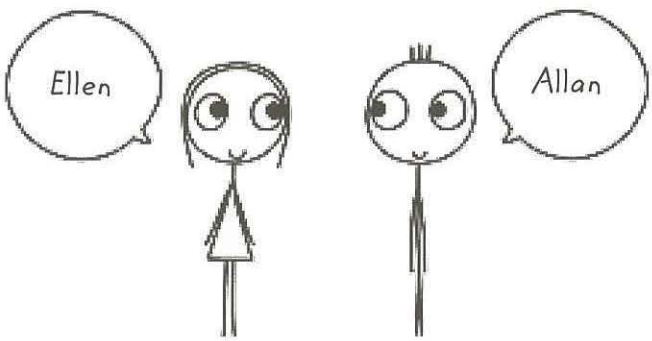
As an example of the way changes sneak into the language consider how you pronounce the words to describe following images.



Do you want celery?

What is your $alary?

In Australian English, the vowels [e] and [æ] are in the process of merging before [l], so that *celery* and *salary* (and other pairs like *Ellen* and *Alan*) become homophones (in other words, they are pronounced the same). This collapsing of these two vowels is often identified as characteristic of speakers from Victoria, especially Melbourne, but it has also been identified in the speech of New Zealanders. This is a modern example of variation that may lead to a significant change in the language.



There are a few interesting points about the nature of language change to be emphasized here:

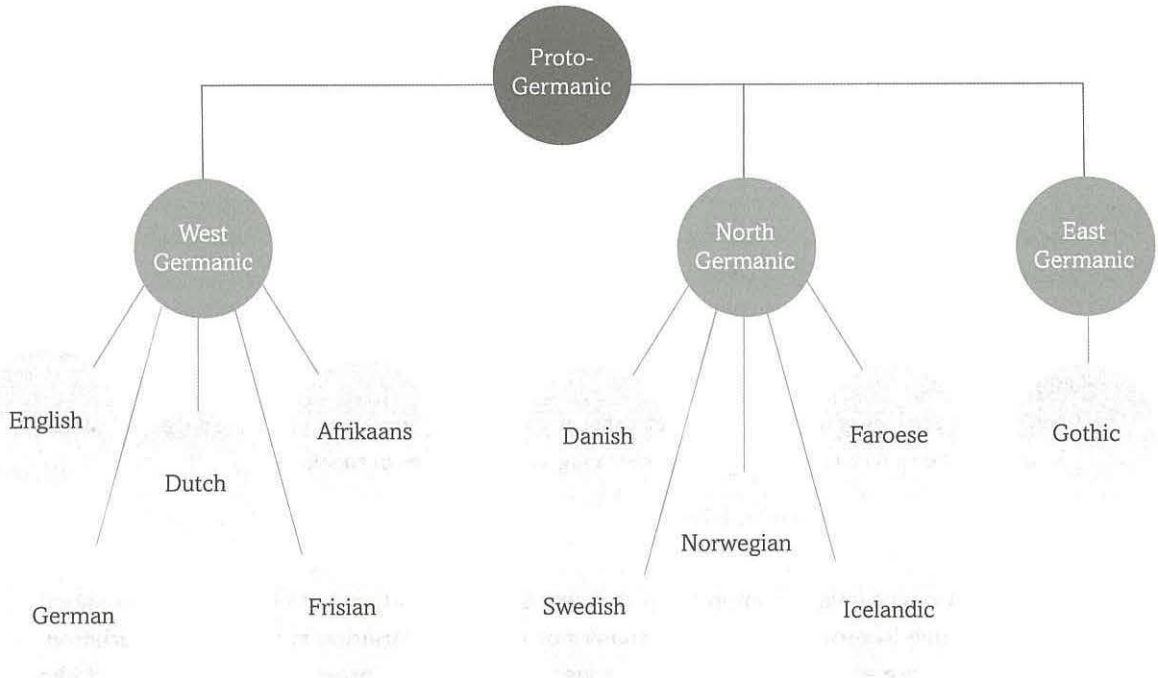
- All languages change, but they don't necessarily change the same way when they're in different geographical areas; hence, different regional dialects might be at different stages in, say, a sound change (or might have different sound changes altogether) and this is what causes variation of accent.
- Linguistic change does not proceed without there first being variation; differences between speakers in the same speech community can indicate that there is a change in progress.
- Change proceeds gradually through the language; for example, a shift in the pronunciation of vowels (say in *celery* and *salary*) slowly spreads through the vocabulary, affecting different groups of words at different times.
- Change also proceeds gradually throughout a speech community; first it may affect the speech of some members of the speech community before spreading to other groups of speakers.

Our discussion might give the impression that any sort of variation in the language is a signal that there is a change in progress. This is actually not so. Some variation is just that — variation. For centuries now there as been a tug of war between two different pronunciations of a word like *swimming* — do you give it the full pronunciation as [swɪmɪŋ] or do you drop the "g" and pronounce it as *swimmin'* [swɪmɪn]. These two different pronunciations have always marked different social groups, although which was considered the prestigious pronunciation fluctuated (once upon a time it was considered desirable to drop your *g*!)

Some variation will help to pinpoint speakers socially or regionally and this sort of variation might continue without ever leading to a long-term change. Take aspects of your own language, especially those vocabulary differences that distinguish you from your parents. It is true, some of these you might well take with you into adulthood. So-called "quotative" *like* seems to be a good candidate here. This is called quotative because the *like* introduces reported speech, even noises and facial expressions ("And I'm like uggghhh!"), but it can also introduce thoughts or attitudes. Some features like these will catch on, but some will remain in youthspeak — that is, if they live to tell the tale. Most slang expressions will not survive. After all, for slang to be slangy it has to be new and startling.

3.3 ENGLISH AND THE INDO-EUROPEAN LANGUAGES

One way we can classify languages is according to genetic relatedness. A language is expected to share properties with languages to which it is related. English is a Germanic language and is related to other Germanic languages such as Dutch or Swedish. If you study the grammars of these languages, you will find that they have a number of features in common (even though English is in many ways an "odd" Germanic language). The mini family tree below shows you how the Germanic languages are related. Note, Gothic is now extinct; all that remains are records of a partial Bible translation from the 4th century. There were other East Germanic languages which have left no linguistic trace.



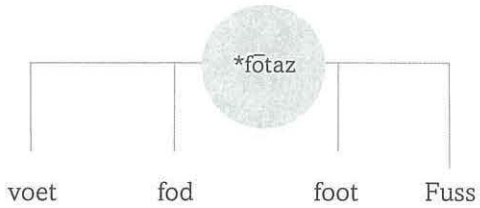
Language change may mean that genetically related languages end up being quite different. English and German are relatives but they have some very different features; for example, their word order patterns. English is basically Subject-Verb-Object and in German verbs either appear in the second position of a clause or right at the end. Old English, on the other hand, was more like German in its word order. Conversely, English and Chinese are both Subject-Verb-Object languages; yet they do not belong to the same genetic group.

Below are the words in Modern Dutch, Swedish, English and German for 'foot', 'dog', 'water, 'heart' and 'knee'. (Note, for the purpose of comparison, we had to use *hound,* the early English word for an ordinary 'dog'; *hound* of course still exists in English but has a narrow more specialized sense.)

Dutch	**Swedish**	**English**	**German**	**Proto-Germanic**
voet	fod	foot	Fuss	*fōtaz
hond	hund	hound	Hund	*hundaz
watar	vatten	water	Wasser	*watar
hart	hjärta	heart	Herz	*hirto
knie	knä	knee	Knie	*kniu

Here we have here a set of words that are not only the same in meaning, but also look awfully similar. In fact, there are hundreds of these sorts of sets, all with striking similarities. How do we account for this? Simple — they are related. Their similarity is due to the fact that they have evolved from the same source and can be traced back to a single parent language, or what is sometimes called proto-language (*proto* means 'original'). If you look back to the Germanic family tree, you'll see that the parent language in this case is called Proto-Germanic. It was spoken sometime before the Christian era, but unfortunately there is no surviving evidence of the language. Perhaps they didn't write things down, or more likely nothing has lived on to tell the tale. But we have a pretty good idea of what the words might have looked like in this parent language and these are shown in the last column of the table. The asterisk indicates that these are theoretical forms. They have been reconstructed via a special linguistic technique.

The ancestral words in Proto-Germanic represent a special relationship that holds between sound and meaning that is carried through to each of the modern Germanic languages of Dutch, Swedish, English and German. You can see on this little tree how the parent word **fōtaz* has sprouted the modern forms.



As we turn back the clock, so we undo the changes that have taken place, and the more similar languages become. Around one thousand years ago Dutch, Swedish, English and German were more like varieties of the same language. See how close the words are when we take earlier versions of these same words from about one thousand years ago. Middle Dutch, however, is not as old as the others. It dates from the only the 12th century, but in this case it's all we've got — very little of original Old Dutch has survived.

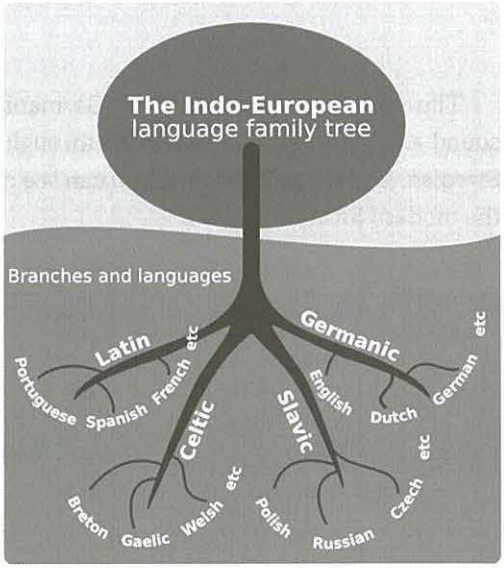
Middle Dutch	Old English	Old Swedish	Old High German	Modern English
voet	fōt	fōtr	fuoz	foot
hont	hund	hundr	hunt	hound
water	wæter	vatn	wazzar	water
herte	heorte	hiarta	herza	heart
cnie	cneo	kne	kneo	knee

The differences between the words are due to the fact of language change. Because there is less time-depth separating these languages, they have had less time to diverge; hence, the more striking similarities in these words. If we were really serious about reconstructing the parent language of Modern English, it would make a lot more sense to work backwards from these earlier forms. Through ordinary processes of language change, a single language can split into dialects, and if the changes continue and are significant enough these dialects can turn into distinct languages. This is what happened to Proto-Germanic — eventually it diverged into Dutch, Swedish, English and German.

The concept of genetic relatedness took off in the 18th century because of the work of Sir William Jones (1746–94). He argued that the classical languages Sanskrit, Ancient Greek and Latin were related and could be traced back to a common language that maybe no longer existed. Jones was arguing for Proto–Indo-European, the parent of most of the languages of Europe, south-western Asia and northern India. Proto–Indo-European is assumed to have been spoken sometime around 3000 BC but has left us no written records — the Proto–Indo-Europeans weren't into writing. But we know it must have existed because of the regular correspondences we find between these languages. In fact scholars have reconstructed Proto–Indo-European forms for those earlier words. Around five thousand years ago we assume that *foot, hound, water, heart* and *knee* would have looked something like this. (Note, that the dash indicates that these are stems only; they would have been followed by some sort of suffix.)

**ped-*
**kuon-*
**wedōr-*
**k'erd-*
**g'enu-*

The work then carried out by European linguists during the 19th century led to the classification of all the Indo-European languages into a sort of family tree. As you see below, all the modern Germanic languages represent the diverse continuation of original Germanic and you can trace the development of English through to modern times.



The Indo-European family tree

3.4 FROM OLD ENGLISH TO MODERN ENGLISH

So how exactly did English and the other Germanic languages evolve from their prehistoric parent, Proto-Indo-European? In other words, what were the conditions that gave rise to the Germanic group of languages? Here is one plausible scenario.

Around the time of 1500 BC one tribe (that was to become the Germanic group of speakers) left the Indo-European homeland. This is assumed to have been somewhere in Northern Europe. No one knows exactly why — perhaps there were disputes, or maybe they just an adventurous bunch of people who liked to travel. As we mentioned earlier, all languages change, but they don't necessarily change the same way when they're in different places. What happened here was the Germanic group developed a number of distinctive characteristics, which then set it apart from the other Indo-European groups.

The most significant of these was a set of phonological changes whereby the original stop consonants [*p, *t, *k] turned into fricative sounds [f, th, x / h] in Germanic. In the following table we have provided the Proto-Indo-European forms alongside the Old English and Modern English.

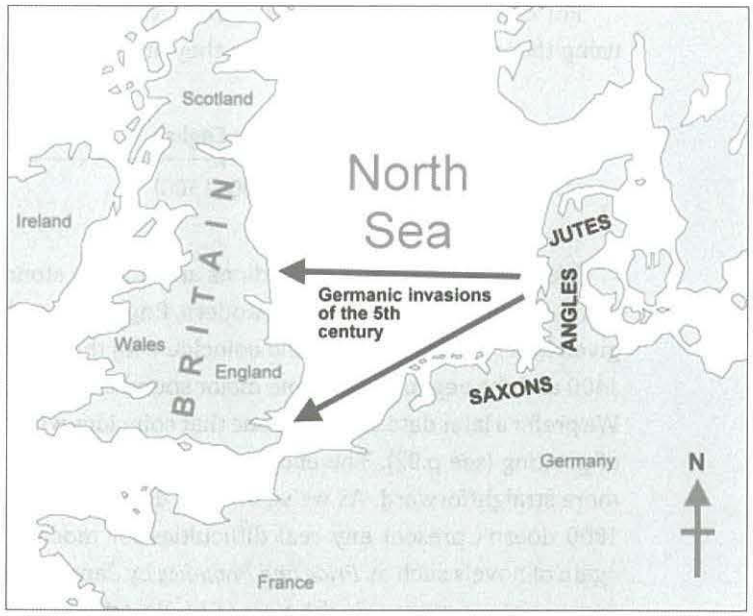
Proto-Indo-European	**Old English**	**Modern English**
*peiskos	fisc	fish
*kun-	hund	hound ['dog']
*þu	þu	thou ['you']

As we suggested above, the magic combination of three factors — time, geographical /social separation and the processes of change — can cause a single language to ultimately split into a number of distinct languages. With time and more and more changes, Germanic eventually split off from Indo-European.

After the split, the number of speakers increased in size. And as the language spread geographically, it changed in different ways in the different parts of Europe, giving the three main branches — North, East and West Germanic. North Germanic is the parent of the modern Scandinavian languages like Norwegian, Swedish and Danish. It's Scandinavian that gives us the earliest evidence of Germanic in the form of inscriptions dating from the 3rd century AD. East Germanic is the parent of Gothic and

its descendent Crimean Gothic (which are both extinct). West Germanic underwent a number of additional splits, eventually sprouting all the modern groupings you saw on the tree.

Clearly, what we now think of as the English language didn't originate in Britain at all. In fact it didn't come into its own until the middle of the 5th century, when it was brought to Britain from the Continent by various Germanic tribes (the Saxons, the Jutes and the infamous Angles who gave their name to the place and its language — England and English). In the centuries that followed, English developed into an independent language, quite distinct from any of its Germanic relatives, which continued to be spoken on the Continent.



Germanic invasions of Britain

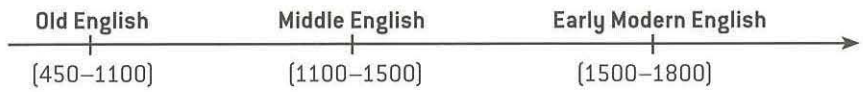
The name England and English beautifully illustrate the sorts of changes we'll be looking at closely:

Old English *Ænglaland* ('the land of the Angles') becomes *England*
Old English *Ænglisc* ('belonging to the Angles') becomes *English*


7th century helmet found in East Anglia

With the exception of a few inscriptions from the 5th and 6th centuries, our earliest evidence of English dates from the 8th century. This is quite late when you think that we have evidence of Greek from the 14th century BC. Most of the surviving texts are later still, from the 10th and 11th centuries. But dating manuscripts can be a tricky business. Even if we know who the authors are (which we usually don't), there's always the possibility that a text we have is in fact a copy of an earlier work that has since been lost. There was a lot of copying going on in those days — originality was not applauded as it is today. Bear in mind that books were nothing like they are today — they were enormous, heavy and prodigiously expensive things, costing (according to one estimate at the time) roughly the equivalent of a ship! Pages were made from animal hides with very elaborate binding and everything of course was written painstakingly by hand. The reading audience was very small, largely confined to the religious educated elite.

For convenience we usually identify various stages in the development of English. We've been using these labels already, but here they are with their approximate dates:



We should stress that these dates aren't set in stone. For example, some argue the start of Early Modern English is earlier than we've given here. They claim it should coincide with the death of Chaucer in 1400 and the beginning of some major sound changes in the language. We prefer a later date, however, one that coincides with the appearance of printing (see p.92). The end of the Early Modern English period is more straightforward. As we've already discussed, the language after 1800 doesn't present any real difficulties for modern readers (think again of novels such as *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen); so it seems appropriate to make this the start of Modern English.

Time machine

What we're really dealing with here is a continuum, and the dates for so-called Old, Middle and Early Modern English are just handy labels for representing the language. If we had the benefit of some sort of time machine, and could arrange a get-together of speakers of English from say the 15th and 16th centuries — so-called Middle English and Early Modern English speakers — the differences wouldn't be any more remarkable than the features that separate your speech from that of your parents or grandparents.

Just again to reinforce this notion of sound correspondences have a look at the following list of Old English words and their modern English equivalents. We've left a few blank. You should be able to work out the modern-day form based on the patterns that emerge from the forms we've already provided. Note that if the original meaning has shifted, we've given you the Old English meaning in brackets. (The dash written above the Old English vowels indicates that the vowel was pronounced long.)

Old English	Modern English	Old English	Modern English
āc	*oak*	*hwæl*	*whale*
hlāf ('bread')	*loaf*	*hwit*	*white*
hlēapan	*(to) leap*	*wīf ('woman')*	*wife*
hnappian	*(to) nap*	*fīf*	*?*
hnecca	*neck*	*hlūd*	*?*
hraw/hreaw	*raw*	*hnoll ('crown of head')*	*?*
hūs	*house*	*hring*	*?*
mūs (also 'muscle')	*mouse*	*lūs*	*?*
dohtor	*daughter*	*hwæt*	*?*
riht	*right*	*hām*	*?*

3.4.1 A MONGREL LANGUAGE

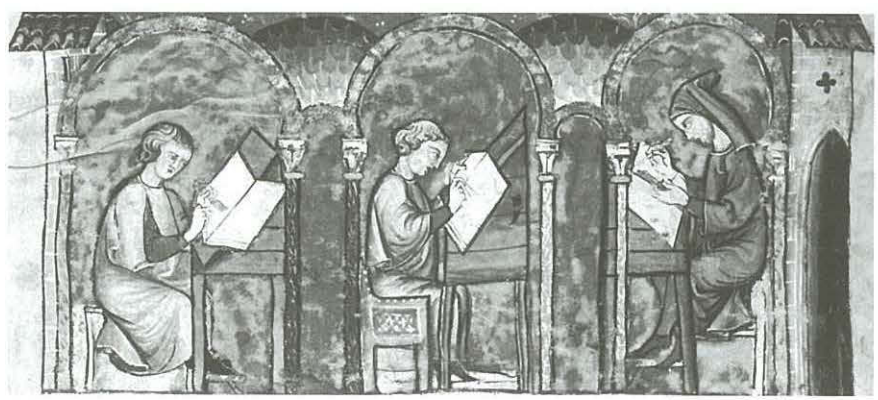
The English we speak today has been altered over the years by contact with groups of settlers or invaders speaking their different languages. The three most important groups to have influenced the development of English are the Celts, the Scandinavians and the French. We'll briefly outline all three contact situations, but focusing on French, since this did most to shape the English language that we know today.

Recall that English didn't originate in Britain and when it arrived in the 5th century it came into contact with various Celtic tribes (the Romans had already left). The Celts seem to have learned the language of their Germanic conquerors thoroughly and the impact of Celtic on English is therefore minimal: only a few items of vocabulary remain and these are largely confined to place names like *Cornwall, Devon, London* and *Winchester* as well as some cultural borrowings like *bannock cakes.* (Note, that we use the term **borrowings** to describe the linguistic forms that are taken over by one language from another; the label doesn't make a lot of sense of course, because the languages never intend to give the items back).

Norsemen (Vikings) made a significant contribution to English

The Scandinavian contact offers a very different story. At various stages during the ninth and the eleventh centuries there were many Scandinavian raids on England. These culminated in 25 years of Danish rule, with large settlements of Scandinavians being established, particularly in the northern and eastern parts of the country, and considerable Scandinavian (or Norse) influence on native English. What is striking about these borrowings is that they involve everyday vocabulary — basic verbs like *die, get, give,* nouns like *husband, kid, egg,* even the pronouns *they, them,* and *their.* These are just a handful of the hundreds that entered the language at this time. Borrowings of this sort suggest two things; namely, the two languages existed side by side with more or less equal prestige, and secondly they were probably mutually intelligible. In fact so close were the languages at that time that it is difficult to assess the true extent of the Scandinavian contribution — it is not always easy to work out what is and what is not borrowed.

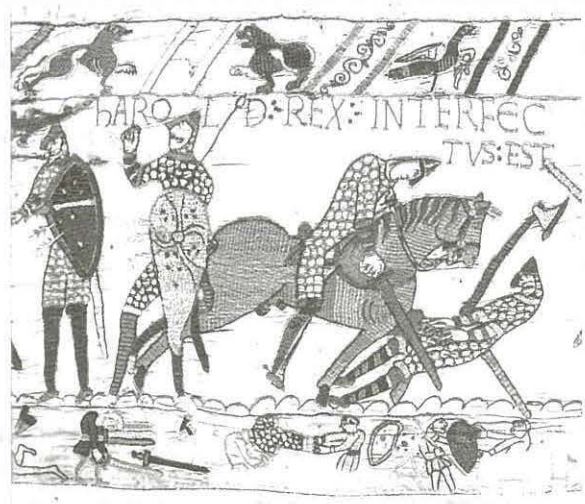
The Norman French invasion by William I (Duke of Normandy) brought the French language into England. William's victory was complete with the defeat of King Harold in 1066 at the Battle of Hastings. Within 10 years all of England was under William's control. William replaced all of the English speakers in high offices with French speaakers. Even the scriptoria of the monasteries were taken over by the Normans. For some 200 years English was well and truly under a French thumb.



An early medieval scriptorium

Here is a summary of the linguistic situation after the arrival of the French:

- French was the native language of an immensely powerful minority of a few thousand, who controlled the political, cultural, ecclesiastical and economic life in England.
- The vast majority who spoke English had no status or influence whatsoever.
- Latin was the written language of the Church and also many secular documents; it was spoken in the Church and in the newly emerging universities.
- Norse continued to be spoken (but not written) in those places of heavy Scandinavian settlement, although it was soon to be assimilated to English.
- Celtic continued beyond the borders of England proper, in Wales and Scotland.
- There would have been considerable bilingualism. The nobility learned a smattering of English to speak to their English underlings, and when some married English-speaking women, this led to bilingual children; many English would also have attempted to learn French to improve their status.



A section of the Bayeux Tapestry showing the Battle of Hastings and the death of Harold

The effect of French on English vocabulary was enormous. During the period some 10,000 French words were adopted (the majority between 1250-1400), and some 75% of these are still in use today. The nature of the borrowed items reflects the prestige that French enjoyed during this time. It was the Normans who controlled the state, the military, cultural and intellectual interests and French words flooded into these areas, sometimes as brand-new additions, sometimes ousting the English expressions, and sometimes existing side by side, but usually later diverging in meaning and style.

It is interesting to speculate what English would have been like if there had been no French invasion — or, indeed, if Harold had ended up beating William. Certainly, a lot of the native English words that were bumped off would have survived; for example, medical practitioners might still be called *leeches* instead of *doctors, physicians, surgeons* (words that came into English via French) and they would be practicing not *medicine* (another French word), but rather *leechcraft* or *lechery* (the original English).

Anglish

Throughout the Modern English period there have been moves to expunge English of linguistic aliens and restore some of the lost English vocabulary. Influential writers like Charles Dickens and Gerard Manley Hopkins through to some of the modern day "conlangers" (or constructed language users) have been obsessed with restoring the "purity" of Anglo-Saxon. Over the years, many have sought to revive lost native vocabulary, creating modern versions like *raintilt* to replace *umbrella; inwit* instead of *conscience,*

oversend instead of *transmit*. Some, like the poet William Barnes, have gone as far as coining new words: *speechcraft* for *grammar, mateword* for *synonym*. But imagine English without its exotics.

British comedian Paul Jennings has a bit of fun with this idea. Here are the opening lines of Hamlet's famous soliloquy, which he has rendered into "Anglish" (the original version is on the right):

To be, or not to be: that is the ask-thing:	To be, or not to be—that is the question:
is't higher-thinking in the brain to bear	Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer.
the slings and arrows of outrageous dooming	The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune
or to take weapons 'gainst a sea of bothers	Or to take arms against a sea of troubles
and by againstwork end them.	And by opposing end them.

The only alien Paul Jennings hasn't replaced here is *outrageous* which comes to us from French. He should have used a good English adjective like *cruel, unkind* or *hurtful*.

Another effect of the influx of these French words was the creation of a system of stylistic levels that has become the earmark of the Modern English lexicon. Just as we saw with the cure for stomach pain, native English words remain the fundamental everyday vocabulary; they are typically shorter, more concrete and stylistically more neutral (sometimes they are the offensive ones). Often groups of synonyms are also distinguished in this way with the basic or practical expressions being English and the French ones being the more elevated or fancy. So, *stink* and *stench* are English, *aroma* and *fragrance* are French; *house* is English, *mansion* is French. Compare French words such as *lingerie, petticoat, negligee* with English *bloomers, drawers* and *girdle* — we have always relied on the French to supply the lexical titillation.

Bloomers were a fashionable outer garment in past times

Here are more examples of the levels of vocabulary that now exist. Where possible we've included Latin equivalents, since they provide another layer of linguistic elegance. As before, concentrate on the stylistic nature of these words — meaning differences aside, the English forms are always more informal, colloquial, perhaps even slang.

English	French	Latin
kingly	royal	regal
hold	sacred	consecrate
ask	question	interrogate
rise	mount	ascend
guts	courage	—
doggy	—	canine

3.5 DEVELOPMENT OF STANDARD ENGLISH

Throughout this chapter we have been making reference to "Standard English" and "standardization" without ever saying exactly what we mean by these concepts. Before we move on to give you some historical background, here are some of the features that make up a standard language:

- A standard language is a variety without a home — anyone can speak it, no matter where they live.
- It is the variety promoted in schools, recorded in dictionaries, style guides and grammar books and used in law courts, government institutions, and the media. For all these reasons, it has a lot more social prestige than other varieties.
- Standard languages are more obvious in writing. All over the world, people write in Standard English fairly uniformly. People speak it too, but because of the nature of speech, there is always more variation.
- Standard languages are varieties involving vocabulary and grammar, but not pronunciation — it can be spoken with any accent.

There is a sense in which standard languages represent a kind of linguistic "best practice" — a set of behaviours that claims to outshine all others. Correctness, precision, purity and elegance are the qualities of the perceived standard. It is the measure of excellence — the "benchmark" against which all other varieties of the language are gauged. Speakers are supposed to acquire the standard rules and those that don't are in danger of being regarded as recalcitrant, lazy and incompetent. They are said to have poor grammar — or worse, no grammar at all.

Standard English is a variety of English that has been artificially created over many years, not by any English Language Academy, but by a network of different groups, including writers of style guides and usage manuals, dictionary makers, editors, teachers, newspaper columnists. Their cleaning-up activities have amassed over the years an arsenal of prescriptive texts that promote and also legitimise a single fixed and approved variety. These dictionaries, grammars and handbooks record, regulate, tidy up and iron out. Their neat lists, elegant definitions and precise rules ignore the diversity and variability that is part and parcel of any language system.

You have perhaps noticed that Standard English is even referred to as "the standard language" not 'the standard dialect'. Since dialects are held to be substandard varieties of a language — varieties not quite up to scratch — the label "standard dialect" would seem a kind of self-contradiction. For many Standard English *is* English. What they assume to be the rules of English grammar are the rules of this one variety — more especially its written form. To some people words do not seem real until they appear in a dictionary. Speakers will often ask whether something they have heard, or even used themselves, is an actual word or not. Use isn't enough to qualify something as language.

3.5.1 CREATING THE STANDARD

During the Old English period, the country was divided into seven kingdoms: Kent, Essex, Wessex, Sussex, East Anglia, Mercia and Northumbria and there were four principal dialects (although dialect differences at this time would have been slight): Kentish, Mercian, Northumbrian, West Saxon.

Probably there would have been more around at that time, but unfortunately this is all we have records for — no other documentation survives.

The dialects of Old English

Out of these Old English divisions there emerged four major dialects during the Middle English period. Northumbrian became the Northern dialect; Mercian became the Midlands dialect (comprising East and West Midland); West Saxon became the Southern dialect (south of the Thames); Kentish retained its name.

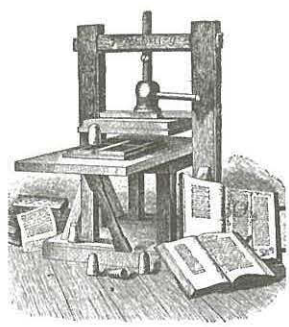
The dialects of Middle English

Most of the manuscripts that have come down to us from the Old English period are in the West Saxon dialect and, not surprisingly, this is the dialect that is the basis of our grammatical descriptions of the language at that time. In fact, it seems that West Saxon came very close to being a kind of literary standard. There was even a bit of standardizing activity going on; for example, traditional West Saxon spelling conventions were gaining ground. Old West Saxon looked ripe for standardization, but this wasn't to be. Basically the process was interrupted by the arrival of the French in 1066 — the Norman Conquest.

As we've just seen, English became subsumed by French for several centuries after this time. The prestige languages were French and also Latin and these were what people typically wrote in. When writers eventually abandoned French and wrote in English again, they wrote in their local variety, using their own home-grown forms and spellings. Quite simply, West Saxon had lost its edge. French scribes ignored traditional English conventions, and spelled the language much as they heard it. They also introduced a number of their own conventions, giving the language quite a new look. But there was no single prestige model that people were under pressure to follow. There were no dictionaries, no grammar books, no spelling books and variation was rampant. People's attitude to English also revealed it was a long way from being standardized. It still wasn't considered respectable enough for serious literature, and writers continued to use Latin for this.

By the late Middle English period, the situation began to change, as the dialect in and around London started to move into centre stage and into the limelight. From the early 1400s, those in the court of King Henry IV began corresponding in English, and much of the business of government at this time was in the King's English. So it is important to emphasize that the "success" of the London dialect was not because of any linguistic advantage it had over the other dialects. When varieties come to dominate in this way, it's never for linguistic reasons. London English piggybacked on a series of geographical, cultural, economic and political episodes. These had the effect of putting it in such a position that standardization was inevitable. Here are some of the main events:

- The emergence of London as a political and commercial centre, as well as the seat of the court and the judiciary, meant that huge amounts of manuscript copying was already coming out of this area.
- The famous poet Chaucer helped give prestige to the London dialect, as did its proximity to the major universities of Oxford and Cambridge.
- London was at the heart of a rich agricultural area and a growing wool trade.
- When William Caxton set up the first printing presses in 1476, he did so in Westminster in London, thus shooting London English even more into prominence. Books could be reproduced at a fraction of their former cost, and in the course of the next 150 years, something like 20,000 publications appeared — all in London English.



Caxton's printing press churned out scores of books and helped spread the written word.

Printer William Caxton (c. 1415–c. March 1492)

If a city other than London had had the same non-linguistic advantages (let's say Manchester or Liverpool), the dialect of that region would have been subject to the same spread. And how different Standard English would be today.

Despite the advent of printing, there was still no identifiable Standard English. For a start, English still lacked the support of reference books like grammars and dictionaries. In other words, it was not yet **codified**. And although printers like Caxton promoted certain usages, spelling and punctuation remained inconsistent for some time yet. Printers in those times had to justify their lines, and variant spellings were extremely handy for this — if they need to make the line a little longer, they might add an extra *e* at the end of the word, or change a skinny letter like *i* to a fat one like *y*. Variable spelling gave them all sorts of tricks.

To give you some idea of the variation that was still around at this time, have a look at some language samples from early writers on the subject of deportment. These appear in etiquette manuals from a collection made by Frederick Furnivall in 1868 and the English in these examples dates from around the 1500s. We've selected the delicate problem of how to pick one's teeth in a genteel fashion — a hot topic in these handbooks. (While you're trying to imagine a society without dictionaries and grammars, you might also try to imagine a society without toothpicks or dental floss. In fact the arrival of the toothpick at the dinner table did roughly coincide with the arrival the first reference works on English — both were welcome developments!)

- *Thi **teth** also thow **pike** nat with no knyf*
- *þy **tethe** be no pikynge, grisynge [=grinding], ne gnastynge [=gnashing]*
- *Noþur at þy mete þy toth þou **pyke***
- *þi **teeþ** also at þe table **picke** with no knyf*
- *Pyke not þi tethe with thy knyfe*
- *Ny at þe mete þy toþe þou pyke*
- ***Pick** not thy **teeth** with thy Knyfe*
- ***Pycke** not thy tethe with thy knyfe nor fynger end*

As you can see, creative spelling continued to thrive. For the two simple words *pick* and *teeth,* we find the following variant spellings — *pyke, pycke, pike, picke, pick* and *tethe, teth, teeþ, teeth.* People didn't even agree on the alphabet. Around this time, the Old English thorn symbol *þ* was in the process of being replaced by *th*, but there was a lot of inconsistency.

Even personal names showed variation. William Shakespeare's signatures are variously: *Shakspere, Shaksper* and *Shakspeare* (none of which we use today).

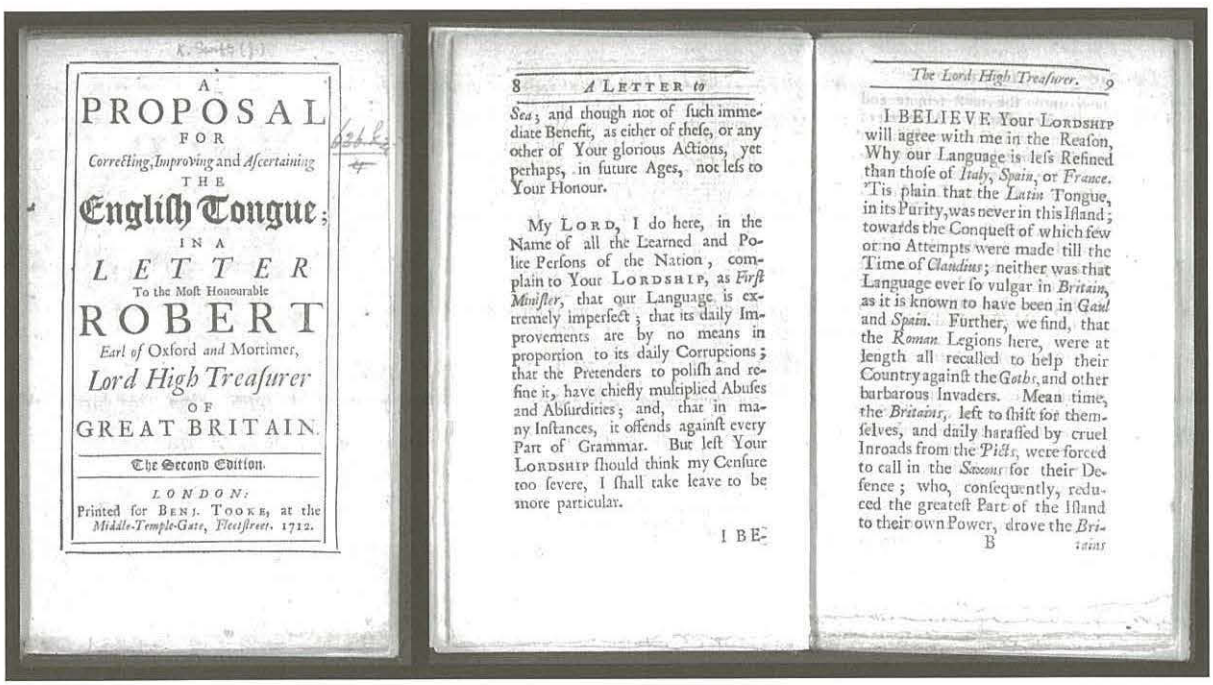
Other versions at the time include: *Shagspere, Shackespere, Shake-speare* and *Shakespeare (and this is the one we use today).*

However, there was evidence that standardization was underway. Suddenly, people were starting to talk about their language in a different (more moralistic and judgemental) fashion. Sure, people had been making judgements about other people's speech for centuries. Observations on regional diversity were commonplace, mostly by way of disparaging comments about rural speech. But at the

beginning of the 16th century there suddenly appeared a real vocabulary of abuse, of the type you find in complaint literature today. On the one hand, there was the right sort of language (described as "pure", "true", "natural") and on the other hand, the wrong kind of language (described as "corrupt", "foul", "false"). These labels hint at the idea of an approved standard — to stray away from it was straying from what was pure and good.

The 18th century was when standardization really took off. This was the era of authoritarianism in language and the prevailing attitude that was around then was clearly expressed by Jonathan Swift in probably what is still the most famous piece of complaint literature in the history of English: *A Proposal for Correcting, Improving, and Ascertaining the English Tongue* (1712).

> My Lord; I do here, in the Name of all the Learned and polite Persons of the Nation, complain to your Lordship, as *first minister*, that our Language is extremely imperfect; that its daily Improvements are by no means in proportion to its daily Corruptions; that the Pretenders to polish and refine it, have chiefly multiplied Abuses and Absurdities, and that, in many instances, it offends against every part of Grammar.



A
PROPOSAL
FOR
Correcting, Improving and *Ascertaining*
THE
English Tongue;
IN A
LETTER
To the Most Honourable
ROBERT
Earl of Oxford *and* Mortimer,
Lord High Treasurer
OF
GREAT BRITAIN.
The Second Edition.
LONDON:
Printed for BENJ. TOOKE, at the *Middle-Temple-Gate, Fleetstreet.* 1712.

8 *A* LETTER *to*

Sea; and though not of such immediate Benefit, as either of these, or any other of Your glorious Actions, yet perhaps, in future Ages, not less to Your Honour.

My LORD, I do here, in the Name of all the Learned and Polite Persons of the Nation, complain to Your LORDSHIP, as *First Minister*, that our Language is extremely imperfect; that its daily Improvements are by no means in proportion to its daily Corruptions; that the Pretenders to polish and refine it, have chiefly multiplied Abuses and Absurdities; and, that in many Instances, it offends against every Part of Grammar. But lest Your LORDSHIP should think my Censure too severe, I shall take leave to be more particular.

I BE-

The Lord High Treasurer. 9

I BELIEVE Your LORDSHIP will agree with me in the Reason, Why our Language is less Refined than those of *Italy*, *Spain*, or *France*. 'Tis plain that the *Latin* Tongue, in its Purity, was never in this Island; towards the Conquest of which few or no Attempts were made till the Time of *Claudius*; neither was that Language ever so vulgar in *Britain*, as it is known to have been in *Gaul* and *Spain*. Further, we find, that the *Roman* Legions here, were at length all recalled to help their Country against the *Goths*, and other barbarous Invaders. Mean time, the *Britains*, left to shift for themselves, and daily harassed by cruel Inroads from the *Picts*, were forced to call in the *Saxons* for their Defence; who, consequently, reduced the greatest Part of the Island to their own Power, drove the *Bri-*

B *tains*

Swift's proposal for correcting, improving, and ascertaining the English tongue: in a letter to the most honourable Robert Earl of Oxford and Mortimer, Lord High Treasurer of Great Britain

Swift was one of the most passionate proponents for some sort of regulating body to be set up to ascertain the English language; in other words, to determine correct usage and settle the language for good. In his words:

> If [the English tongue] were once refined to a certain Standard, perhaps there might be Ways to fix it for ever [...] I see no absolute Necessity why any Language should be perpetually changing.

And 40 years later Samuel Johnson in his *Preface* to his *Dictionary of the English Language* (the first real dictionary) wrote these now famous words:

> I found our speech copious without order, and energetic without rules: wherever I turned my view, there was perplexity to be disentangled, and confusion to be regulated.

Like others of his time Johnson could not help but contrast English with the classical languages such as Greek and Latin. In comparison to these languages of scholarship, English — the language of the street — seemed unregulated and unrefined. But it was an unfair comparison. These classical languages existed purely as written languages, preserved in the formaldehyde of handbooks and dictionaries. They lacked the natural flux and variance of living breathing languages like English — "the boundless chaos of a living speech", as Johnson described it. Against such paragons of linguistic virtue, English compared badly. These views led to an outflow of prescription for what was proper in English. There was usually argy bargy involved since what was correct to one writer was incorrect to another; and a lot of the argument was concerned with what can probably be regarded as stylistic variations.

In his *Elements of Orthoepy* (doctrine of correct pronunciation) of 1784, Robert Nares takes Johnson to task for the wrong stress in words like *finance* (Johnson's recommendations are the accepted patterns today; so *finance*). Johnson also included the word *belly-timber* "food" in his dictionary, a word widely condemned by many at the time for its 'frivolous nature' – clearly it was slang and not everyone approved.

It was during the course of the 18th century that English began to lose those features that made the language so very different from the spelling, punctuation and grammar that we are familiar with today. By the 19th century we find an English that is very recognizable.

3.5.2 THE ENGLISH SPELLING SYSTEM

> In its rise from a motley collection of Germanic tongues crossbred with French and Latin, spiced up by languages the world over and then churned through the lexicographic contortion machine of history, English, already on its way to becoming the lingua franca, had developed a nasty not-so-secret secret: its spelling system was a mess. (Wolman 2008 *Righting the Mother Tongue*)

English spelling has been evolving for over a thousand years, and the complications we encounter today are the consequences of many different linguistic and social events that have taken place over this period. Problems existed from the very beginning. Quite simply the 23-letter Roman alphabet was not adequate for the 35 or so sounds that were distinctive in English at that time. Modifications had to be made. Complications were then introduced by French scribes, who imposed several new spelling conventions — their own of course. With the first printing presses came further complications. Many of the printers were European and they imposed spelling conventions from their own native languages. William Caxton himself introduced Dutch spellings like *gh* in *ghost* and *ghastly*. As earlier discussed, printers also used the flexibility of spelling to solve the tricky problem of justifying lines. Instead of varying word spaces, they could shorten or lengthen words by swapping *i* for *y* or adding an extra letter here and there. When at last spelling settled down there came massive sound changes. The result — thousands of words now spelt as they were pronounced in Chaucer's time. If the printer Caxton had been born later, or if these sound changes had occurred earlier, our spelling would be much closer to pronunciation.

There were also some early attempts to rationalize spelling. Scholars changed *coude* to look like *would, delite* to look like *light* and *rime* to look like *rhythm*. They added *b*s to *debt, subtle* and *doubt* to show their Latin origin. All interesting ideas, to be sure, but ones that hardly make for a consistent spelling system. Moreover, inconsistencies continue to appear with every linguistic alien that comes into the language with an un-English-like spelling (*apartheid, gnu, pyjamas* and thousands and thousands more borrowings).

Over the years English words have tended to lose sounds, but our spelling system often acts as embalming fluid, preserving consonants long after they've disappeared from the spoken language. A good example is the combination *wr*, preserved in words like *wrong* and *written*. When *w* stopped being pronounced here, this left us with a number of homophones; different words pronounced in the same way, such as *write* and *right*. We also lost *w* before *l*, but this happened much earlier, so this time the change was reflected in the spelling of words; for example, *lisp* used once to have a *w* at the beginning.

Make a list of ten other words with silent letters, and using a good etymological dictionary, investigate their origins with respect to pronunciation. Were these silent letters ever pronounced, or were they simply introduced as fancy re-spellings?

So it is from this haphazard evolution that we end up with the spelling system we have. Plagued from the start with an inadequate alphabet, language change, imaginative respellings, borrowed words and spelling conventions, it's surprising that English spelling is as regular as it is. So should we reform it? It's a thorny question generally for speakers — unless they happen to be Dutch. Remarkably, the Dutch seem to cope with serious spelling reforms every few years. Everywhere else people remain vociferously opposed. We might love to whinge about English spelling, but reforming it is another question. Perhaps it's simply because people associate being able to spell with being educated. Spellings such as *you* as *yu* or *tongue* as *tung* make a whole lot of sense, but are just too strange to the eye. And, of course, writers make use of precisely these sorts of conventions to show a character is uneducated.

Yet the simple fact remains: English spelling is neither totally consistent nor globally standardised. There is certainly scope for some sensible reforming to take place. Not wholesale change, though. This is out of the question. Imagine revising the entire corpus of English writing from the past several hundred years. Besides, which system would you chose? Many people argue that a regular correspondence between the spoken and written word is important. The problem is that such a correspondence is doomed to break down. Once upon a time we had something along these lines and look what happened — massive shifts in vowels and consonants that had a profound effect on the relationship between sound and symbol. And then there's the thorny issue of whose accent would be the basis of this new-look spelling.

But how bad is our spelling system really? If you look at it closely, it does in fact have a lot going for it. It's not simply a rotten letter-to-sound system full of inconsistencies. One positive feature, for instance, is that it's grammatically representative. In groups of words like *sign—signal* and *electric—electricity—electrician* the relationship between each of the words is preserved despite the different pronunciations. Our spelling is one that preserves the shape of words and this has advantages. For one, it's impervious to change, and it doesn't favour any one dialect.

In short, ours is a system that combines something that is phonetically representative and grammatically sound. Sure, it's not optimal. Fourteen different ways of spelling [ʃ] is hardly ideal.

But it's not as bad as people like to make out. Reports that *foolish* can be spelled 613, 975 different ways are clearly over the top. In fact, over eighty percent of words are spelt according to regular patterns. So wholesale change is not what we want. But certainly modest adjustments could be made without any major upheaval. We could get rid of horrors like *haemorrhage and diarrhoea* (The USA has already done that). We could also promote more regular spellings wherever they're already familiar as alternative spellings. To introduce the *-or* spelling across the board (for words like color and favor) would be a painless reform, especially since it doesn't affect terribly many words. A few sensible reforms like these would help tidy up the system considerably.

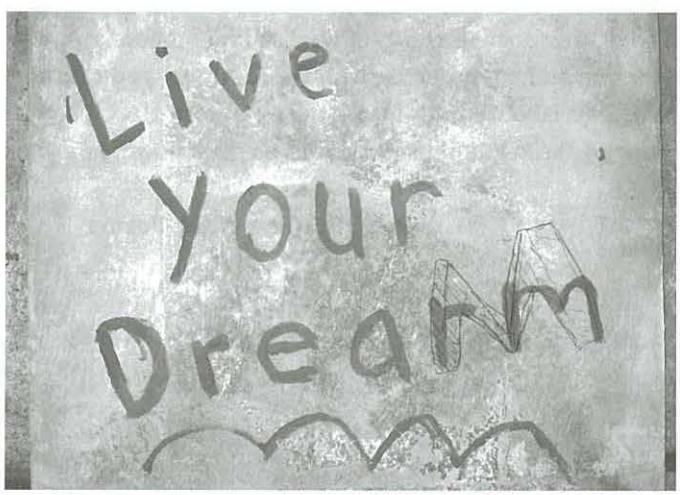
"Two countries separated by the same language"

Current British English spellings follow, for the most part, those of Samuel Johnson's dictionary of 1755, whereas many American English spellings follow Noah Webster's dictionary of 1828. Webster was a strong proponent of spelling reform. He had in his sights superfluous and silent letters such as the *u* in words like *colour.* In fact Samuel Johnson also dropped *u* in *actor, doctor, inspector* and *exterior* but not *interiour*, so he wasn't consistent. Webster rejected *-ise* and American spelling now generally accepts only *-ize* endings. British usage actually accepts both *-ize* and the more French-looking *-ise,* which is probably why people (wrongly) have come to see *-ize* as American. In fact *-ize* spelling is preferred by some authoritative British sources, including the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

There's no doubt that Webster wanted an American standard, and he saw spelling reform as a way of making his mark. He actually once said: "a difference between the English orthography and the American…is an object of vast political consequence". These days of course spelling is just as hot a topic, perhaps even more so because of the legacy of Johnson and Webster.

So where do you think Australian English should sit in this debate?

It's doubtful whether forms (as sensible as they might be) like *filosofy* will ever catch on. Whenever spelling reform boards start pushing for these sorts of changes, reactions are immediately hostile. Psychologists are unlikely to ever agree to spell their profession *sikology*. You can only go so far with simplified spellings!



Our English spelling legacy

3.6 CHANGE OCCURS ACROSS THE SYSTEM

All through this chapter we've been emphasizing that change affects all the major linguistic subsystems — phonological, lexical (including word loss, addition and semantic shift) and syntactic. We'll focus on the processes associated with each of these in turn, starting with sound change.

3.6.1 PHONOLOGICAL CHANGE — LOSS, ADDITION AND MODIFICATION

We need to begin with some of the processes that happen in ordinary connected speech, since these are what drive long-term shifts in pronunciation.

In Chapter 1 we described the seamlessness of speech. Take the sentence *Did you have a good weekend.* If we were to articulate this sound by sound and word by word, we would transcribe it the following way: [dɪd ju hæv ʌ gʊd wik ɛnd]. This is the way Mr Slow (of the Mr Men characters) might say it, but it's hardly the reality of normal rapid speech — our conversations would be truly tedious if it were. When we speak, we don't make one sound and then move on to the next sound in the word, then the next, until we reach the end of the word. We also don't pause at word boundaries, but speak in groups of words. Our spoken language is a (semi)unbroken stream of sounds and words, and this can cause the shape of words to change, sometimes dramatically. Below we discuss some of the usual processes found in connected speech; and as you'll see it's these fast speech phenomena that can give rise to changes in the phonology of a language.

ELISION

In everyday rapid speech, sounds are left out. Unstressed vowels are often deleted, as in *int(e)resting* [ɪntrɛstɪŋ]/ [ɪntrəstɪŋ], and *scen(e)ry* [sinri]. Consonants can also disappear, as in *libr(ar)y* [laibri]. As we saw earlier, the function words of English (the pronouns, auxiliary verbs, prepositions, conjunctions and determiners) are particularly prone to **vowel reduction** (and sometimes consonant reduction as well). The labels strong form and weak forms are used to describe the two distinct ways of pronouncing these grammatical words, as the following examples illustrate:

	Strong Forms	**Weak Forms**
was	[wɒz]	[wəz]
there	[ðɛə]	[ðə]
and	[ænd]	[ən, n]
the	[ði]	[ðə]

ə

The schwa vowel [ə] might be an insignificant-sounding little vowel, but it is an extremely important feature of our language's accentual pattern. And it's been this way for at least as long as English has been recorded. Because of the confused spelling of unstressed vowels in Old English writing we know that schwa has been crucial to the heartbeat of English for a long time, and produces a rhythm very different from the rhythm of languages like French or Italian, where the syllables are spaced out at a fairly even beat. As some have described it, theirs is a kind of rat-a-tat-a-tat rhythm. But in English you typically find intervening reduced vowels. These vowels borrow time from the preceding full vowels, and this produces the more uneven beat that is characteristic of English. If you say *Dad's firm flat feet*, all you hear is full vowels. This is the rat-a-tata-tat effect. Compare this example to something like *father's feet are firm and flat*. In this example, every other vowel is reduced to schwa. It's the tum-tee-tum-tee-tum rhythm of typical English.

Linguists have described language as a kind of huge expression compacting machine. Over time consonants, vowels and even whole syllables can disappear. Two spectacular examples of this kind of reduction are our modern words *lord* and *lady*. In the 10th century *lord* was *hlaefweard* 'guardian/keeper of the bread' and *lady* was *hlaefdige* 'kneader of the bread (a servant was known as the *hlafæta* 'bread-eater'). These words are almost fragments of what they once were.

hlæfweard (loaf-ward) > hlaford > lavord > lord

hlæfdige (loaf-kneader)> lafedige > lavedi > lady

This shows the importance of bread in those early days — it also illustrates how the meanings of expressions erode over time.

Yod-dropping

Since the 17th century English speakers have been dropping the sound called "yod" (this is the [j] consonant at the beginning of *yes*). American English has dropped most yods, British English speakers have lost the least yods and the Englishes "downunder" lie somewhere in the middle. We say *tune* [tjun] and *new* [nju] with yod, but *suit* [sut] and *nude* [nud] without. But there's a lot of variation too, as well as age differences. Yod-dropping is more advanced among the younger generations. Read the following words out loud and take a note of whether or not your pronunciation includes [j] (also see if you can find a pattern in the words that drop the yod).

assume, new, askew, crew, nude, blue, superb, Susan, huge, Hugh, mute, pew, abuse, argue, lewd, issue, beautiful, dew, tune, stew, suit, tutorial, enthusiasm, nude, cute, tissue, clue, cue, rule, few, flute, overdue, fuel, presume, dune, duty.

INSERTION

The opposite process to sound loss is sound addition; in other words, segments appear where they previously didn't exist. This is considerably less common than loss, however. For example, you might well have encountered non-standard pronunciations like "ath-e-lete" [æθəlit] for *athlete*, "fillum" [fɪləm] for "film" and "umbarella" [ʌmbərɛlʌ] for *umbrella*.

The reason sounds are shoved into words in this way is to make them easier to say. When vowels are involved it usually means there are difficult clusters of consonants involving [lm, θl, br] – there is often a liquid sound. One way of making them more pronouncable is by adding a vowel to break them up. You could also of course drop one of the consonants and that's the path we took with clusters like [gn] and [kn] – instead of dropping the [g] and [k] we could have stuck a vowel in – "genaw" for *gnaw* "genash" for *gnash*.)

Consonants can get added too. This is often 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). Now, if you raise the soft palate too soon, you will automatically insert a little [b] and the word comes out as *fambly*. We associate examples like *fambly* with children, but the [b] in perfectly standard *tremble* and *humble* were added in precisely the same way (compare *tremulous* and *humility* which don't show the added consonant). And while *fambly* isn't yet respectable, today's non-standard language can become tomorrow's standard — so this is one to watch.

ASSIMILATION

As well as loss and addition, sounds can be modified in various ways. Basically sounds will change depending on the company they keep — this is called **assimilation**. If you have a look at the description of consonants at the back of this book, you will see that we describe consonants according to three parameters: voiced or voiceless, place of articulation and manner of articulation. When sounds assimilate, they change to become more like other sounds according to one or more of these parameters. For example, say the word *handbag* in a sentence and you most probably will have said something that sounded more like *hambag*. What happens here is that the [d] of *hand* drops off and the [n] becomes bilabial [m] in anticipation of the following bilabial [b]. Our nasals are notorious for doing this sort of thing.

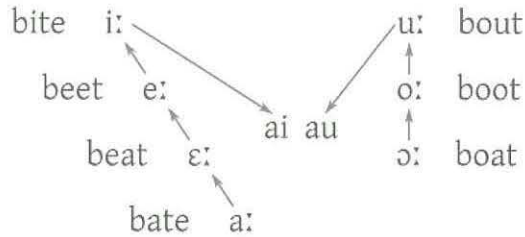
Assimilation of voicing is also common. Look what often happens to voiceless consonants between vowels in words like *latter*. Think about it — your vocal folds are vibrating for the vowel sounds, and it's much easier not to shut off the voicing for the intervening consonant. Hence, we pronounce the [t] of *latter* as if it were a *d* — almost like *ladder*. 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.

SYMMETRY OF CHANGE

We've looked at some of the processes that affect the pronunciation of words. We now turn our attention to changes that have lead to some sort of alteration in the actual sound system of English. Something to observe in this regard is the symmetry of these changes.

One of the most spectacular examples is something that has been dubbed "The Great English Vowel Shift". If you place a hot peppermint in the middle of your tongue and slowly pronounce the words *bite, beet, beat, boat, boot* and *bate*, notice where your tongue is positioned each time you pronounce the vowel sounds (this is where the peppermint comes in – it makes you more aware what your tongue is doing).

To understand what we mean by higher tongue position, say [a:] (keep the peppermint on your tongue). You should notice you've flattened your tongue, as you would if a doctor was looking down your throat. Now say [i:] and you should feel your tongue raise towards the hard palate. Keep saying both vowels and you should feel your tongue rapidly move up and down. The following is a summary of the changes that took place.



Some time between the life of Geoffrey Chaucer (1300s) and William Shakespeare (1600s), the seven long vowels of English moved up one notch in height; in other words, they all progressively came to be made with a higher tongue position.

It's not clear why vowels shifts like this one occur. However, one thing is certain, vowel systems are remarkably symmetrical, and many changes occur to ensure that this symmetry is either maintained or enhanced. What seems to happen in shifts of this nature is that one vowel for some reason moves and this sets off a kind of chain reaction, with the rest of the vowels all shifting in solidarity. Linguist Jean Aitchison has likened it to what occurred during the Mad Hatter's Tea Party — when the Mad Hatter decided to move one place on, this meant that everyone else at the party had to move along one place, too. The problem here is that because the changes happened so early, it's difficult to determine which vowel was the Mad Hatter!

3.6.2
LEXICAL CHANGE — WORD ADDITION AND LOSS

Vocabulary is particularly unstable and dictionary makers constantly have to redraw the admission and exclusion boundaries for marginal vocabulary items. It is almost impossible for their printed dictionaries to keep up with the changeable nature of vocabulary. Words are constantly altering their appearance, their nature, their behaviour — and they have to. How else could they convey the wealth of concepts that we want to express?

The Internet, particularly social media, is a trigger for huge numbers of **neologisms** (new words) to be created, and it is also the reason that they are taken up so quickly — perhaps in a matter of hours, they have worldwide visibility. *Twitterholic, twaddiction, celebritweet, twitterati* are just some of the *tweologisms* that Twitter has spawned — when will they appear in our dictionaries? Once it could take years and years for a new expressions to appear in print, and to then be picked up by lexicographers and placed in some dictionary. But the Internet gives them cachet, a new respectability, and new creations are entering dictionaries faster than ever before.

There are a number of ways we can expand our vocabulary. We can, of course, pinch expressions (or **borrow**) from other languages, and we've already seen what an enthusiastic "borrower" English is (e.g. many Japanese expressions have become household words, such as *manga* and *anime*). The following are some of the processes we have for creating new words.

Commonization — names (brand names, place names and personal names) can enter the language as new words (e.g. *blunnies* 'ankle length working boot with elastic sides' comes from the brand name Blundstones).

Acronyms — words can also be formed from the initials of other words (e.g. *figjam* 'fuck I'm great just ask me').

Initialisms — words can also be formed from the initials of other words but they're not pronouncable words like acronyms, such as *ICYMI* '(in case you missed it).

Compounding — the combination of two or more free morphemes is a very important word formation process; these new words, can be written separately, solid or with hyphen (e.g *bro hug* 'man hug', *humblebrag* 'an ostensibly modest statement whose purpose is to draw attention to something'; *live-tweet* 'comment on Twitter about an event while it is happening').

Shortening — people love to shorten words (*gorge* from *gorgeous* and *cray* from *crazy*), but really interesting is when the long and short part company and take on different meanings (e.g. the verb *to dox* created from the plural of the shortened form of *document* but means 'search for and publish private or identifying information about someone on the Internet, usually with malicious intent').

Affixation — the most important means we have of coming up with new words in English involves the addition of bound morphemes (e.g. *funster* 'joy seeker').

Blends — new words can also be formed from the contraction of two (or more) existing words (e.g. *mansplain* '(of a man) to explain (something) to someone in a manner regarded as condescending')

As most of these neologisms show, there is a lot of fun and word play involved; something like *Tim Tam slam* 'using a Tim Tam biscuit as a straw' makes effective use of poetic devices like rhyme and alliteration.

Word of the year 2013

In 2013, the Oxford Dictionaries announced the Australian creation *selfie,* 'a photograph that one has taken of oneself, usually with a smartphone and shared via social media', as their international Word of the Year. Research conducted by the Oxford lexicographers showed that the frequency of the word *selfie* had increased by 17,000% since the same time in the previous year. Its success is also evident in the the creation of new blended forms such as *helfie* (a picture of one's hair), *belfie* (a picture of one's posterior); *welfie* (workout selfie) and *drelfie* (drunken selfie).

Image made from memegenerator.com

Also interesting for word formation is something called **collocation** — the common co-occurrence of particular words. Sometimes individual words will only collocate with certain other words. For instance, the adjectives *sour, rancid* and *rotten* can all have the meaning 'off, bad', but there are restrictions: *rotten eggs, sour milk, rancid butter* (try mixing the adjectives up and they don't sound quite right – they don't collocate). When words routinely co-occur they can end up being reanalysed as single units (e.g. *doncha* from *don't you* and *sup* from *what's up*).

We all get excited about new words, but spare a thought for those dead and dying words — words that as you read this book are quietly dropping by the wayside. Most of the time we just don't notice this. Dictionary editors of course have to be more aware. They need to make decisions all the time as to whether they classify a word as an **archaism** or even whether they'll bother to include it at all. It's a difficult decision. Words may no longer be relevant for modern speakers; yet of course we need to know them when we're reading texts of the past. Works of literature work a bit like artificial life support systems for words on the way out.

Take the example of the word *merry*. Of course, in and around the festive season the greeting *Merry Christmas* is all around, but how often do you hear the word *merry* other than at this time of the year? When was the last time you described someone as merry? There are a few words that come close to it in meaning, but they themselves are verging on the archaic. Certainly they're no longer part of our active vocabulary — few people these days use *mirthful, blithe, jocund, jovial, joyous* and *joyful*. It's conceivable that *merry* will disappear altogether, preserved only in a handful of fixed expressions such as *to go one's merry way, the more the merrier* and don't forget *Robin Hood and his merry men*. And, of course, it will also live on in the seasonal greeting *Merry Christmas*, an expression that's been around in this form since the 1500s.

3.6.3 CHANGES IN SEMANTICS

Meaning is probably the most slippery of all aspects of the language. At any one time, words can hold multiple different senses. Together with all the associated baggage that arises from our personalities and prejudices, these slip and slide around over time as language evolves and adapts. Words and expressions, more than any other aspect of language, are linked to the life and culture of speakers and this can take them on some extraordinary semantic journeys. These journeys are always interesting because they reveal changing values and attitudes. The fact that *idiot* goes back to an earlier meaning 'private person' gives us a glimpse into a society where keeping to yourself was probably sneered at.

Rorter has a particularly Australian story to tell. Its root goes back to slang *rorty* with the meaning of 'jolly, lively' — occasionally even 'amorous' if *those right-down rorty gals* from the 1800s are anything to go by. People could once *have a rorty time of it*, and *to do the rorty* meant 'to enjoy oneself'.

The shift of meaning from *rort* 'wild party' to 'act of fraud' is Australian. It first showed up in the early 1900s and now has the dubious honour of appearing in the International Tax Glossary as "a term used in Australia to denote a deliberate and blatant use of an opportunity in an improper, if not entirely technically illegal manner". Australian English has a number of expressions where deceitful, fraudulent senses have proved to be the stronger (especially in early criminal slang).

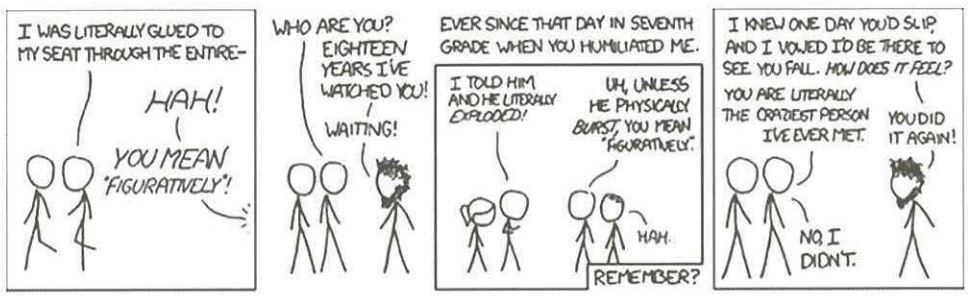
Semantic changes have been classified into various types. The classification falls along two axes. First, words can change in sense; that is, what we understand as the actual "meaning" of a word. Changes here are of three basic types: **broadening**, **narrowing** and **shift**. Second, words can change 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**.

Broadening refers to the expansion of contexts in which a word can appear; for example, Australian English *bludger* meaning 'scrounger, someone who lives off the efforts of others', used to refer specifically to those living off the earnings of a prostitute (a prostitute's pimp). Commonization is a special case of broadening; it occurs when proper names are taken over to refer to the general class of a phenomenon (*blockout, boogie board, dumpster, playdough, portaloo, stackhat, superglue, velcro, walkman* and *whipper snipper*) are examples of brand names that are now used for all types of items in the category.

Narrowing is when a word comes to mean only a part of what it originally meant; it is more common than broadening; for example *drink* is in the process of narrowing to 'alcoholic beverage' (as evidence in the well publicized *Drink Driving Campaign*).

Shift entails the total alteration of the contexts, so a word comes to mean something completely different from what it once meant; for example, *dag* has made a spectacular shift from the backside of a Derbyshire sheep to the current day Australian *dag* 'unfashionable person'.

Through our beliefs, prejudices and experiences, words take on emotive overtones which themselves are subject to change. Words can acquire favourable associations as well as pejorative associations.



Elevation occurs two ways. First, unpleasant overtones can gradually erode away. Intensifying expressions, such as *awesome* (originally referring to divinely inspired error), are particularly prone to this. Second, words can take on favourable overtones; for example, *politician* was originally a thoroughly sinister word referring to 'a shrewd nasty schemer' but has now elevated considerably (though recent times has seen it take another turn for the worse).

Deterioration is much more usual than elevation — words are much more likely to acquire negative associations. Words to do with chance are particularly prone to this; for example, the expression *put the mozz on something* comes from Hebrew *mazzal* meaning 'luck' but in the Australian version ('put a jinx on it') the meaning has shifted to 'bad luck' (compare *to luck out* which is in the process of shifting in this way).

3.6.4 CHANGES IN SYNTAX

We have just seen that English has undergone some remarkable changes in its sounds, vocabulary and meaning. It has also changed considerably the way it signals grammatical information.

Take the example of word order. Old English of 1000 years ago showed considerably more flexibility in its word order than modern English. All logically possible arrangements of subject, verb and object appeared during that time, although the basic word order is usually taken to be verb-final. The history of English has seen a gradual shift towards verb-second word order of Modern English. Competition between the patterns continued through the transition from Old English to Middle English, ending with the eventual triumph of verb-second.

Another striking theme running through the story of English is the unrelenting erosion of grammatical endings (or inflections). The *-er* and *-est* on adjectives belong to the tiny group of seven survivors. It's conceivable all will disappear with time. More than likely phrases like *more tasty* and *more big* will eventually evict *tastier* and *bigger* just as *more beautiful* evicted *beautifuller.*

Possessive *-s*, past *-ed*, plural *-s* and *-ly* on adverbs are also endangered. But it is an uncertain business trying to predict linguistic change.

In Modern English the grammatical information previously signalled by the inflections is now signalled via word order or function words like prepositions (e.g. *to, for, by*). In basic clauses the subject appears before the verb; the object typically follows. For example, in *The farmer takes a wife* versus *A wife takes the farmer* it is the order which tells us who is taking who/whom (*whom* shows a now near-dead inflection).

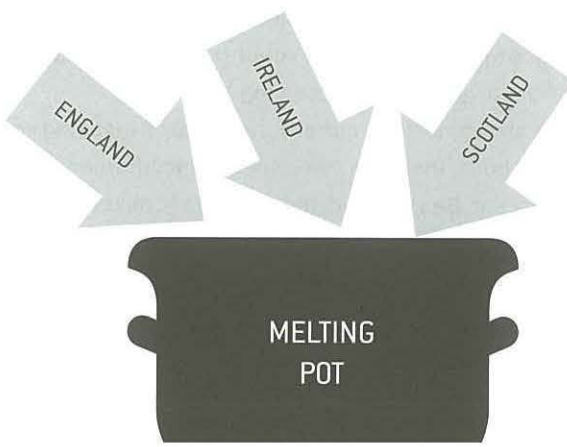
3.7 ENGLISH "DOWNUNDER"

The arrival of the first English speakers in Australia coincides with the arrival of Captain Cook in 1770 and the establishment in 1788 of the first British penal colony in Sydney. Isolated coastal settlements then sprang up in other parts of the country. The first arrivals were largely prisoners, prison officers and their families. Non-convicts, or free settlers as they were known, didn't really reach significant numbers until the middle of the following century. The table below gives an idea of the population mix in New South Wales based on the census taken in the early 19th century (figures taken from Yallop 2003: 131).

Population of New South Wales (taken from 1828 census)

Convicts	15,668
Ex-convicts (pardoned or freed)	7,530
Adults born free	3,503
Adults arrived free	4,121
Children under 12	5,780

Convicts came from all over the British Isles, with the majority from cities. The names of these cities, however, were not always reliable clues to a convict's origins, since many had been tried away from home. According to birthplace records of around 20,000 convicts transported to New South Wales (1817–40), the majority originated in "the heartland of England" (over-represented were the counties of Middlesex and Warwickshire) and also eastern Ireland (with around a quarter coming from Dublin alone). The speech of the convicts and free immigrants would have reflected the regional diversity at this time and 'the linguistic melting pot' is a common metaphor used to describe urban settlements like Sydney and Melbourne during these early times. The original mix was largely made up of varieties from southeast England, Ireland and Scotland (in order of strength of input), with a particularly hefty dollop of London English.



Some have argued that London English alone provides the basis for the main features of Australian English, with other influences like the Irish and Scottish appearing later. While there is no doubt that Australian English, and Australasian Englishes generally, closely resemble London English both in features of accent and social distribution, most linguists now refute the single origin theory. More recently, accepted wisdom explains the evolution of postcolonial dialects like Australian English through a kind of dialect mixing – when the contact dialects from the British Isles came together in those early years, the blending and levelling out of features produced a new compromise dialect with the features of transported south-eastern British English figuring prominently.

Ship English

This levelling process would have begun on the journey out to Australia. Bear in mind that the First Fleet left Spithead, outside Portsmouth, on 13 May 1787 (with almost one and a half thousand people crowded onto eleven small ships), and it wasn't until 18 January 1788 that one of the smaller and faster of these ships, the *Supply*, finally arrived in Botany Bay – so ample time for some form of rudimentary linguistic levelling to take place. Admittedly, subsequent journeys became shorter, but the distances were always startling – Australia was a long way away. Unfortunately, we will never be able to get a full picture of 'Ship English' and know the extent of this levelling.

Australian English remains, a remarkably uniform variety, especially so given the size of the continent. This unity is predictable from the original dialect mixing and levelling but it also would have been aided by the transience of settlers in those early years. 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 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.

Is there a distinct form of Victorian English?

Linguists would probably say no and point to the geographical uniformity of English across Australia. However, it is to be expected that regional differences will become increasingly more obvious. All it requires are those three ingredients we mentioned earlier — 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 highlight 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 currently looks to be inspiring some of the richest regional diversity. Between city and bush, there are some significant differences in terms of vocabulary, and with respect to broadness of accent. Bear in mind, too, that ethnic mixes are now adding a vibrant new socially relevant aspect to Australian English. In cities such as Melbourne and Sydney, the Italian and Greek communities are of particular interest because of their size and also because they have been in

these places for some time. Ethnicity is clearly a crucial part of social identity and is something that people want to demonstrate through their use of language. Even though Australian English has incorporated little from Aboriginal languages, varieties of Aboriginal English provide an interesting dimension to the "Extraterritorial Englishes" in the Antipodes.

English Language Academy

3.8 ATTITUDES TO CHANGE

> Language change is not a disease, any more than adolescence, or autumn are illness.
> Jean Aitchison *Language Change: Progress or Decay?*

For most speakers, change is ok (it might even be interesting), as long as it takes place well and truly in the past. Most people seem fascinated by the origins of words and the stories behind the structures in their language, but they experience a real squeamishness for any change that is happening in their lifetime. Typically, it's seen as change for the worse — an indication that the language is going to the dogs.

But what about younger speakers of English today — those who have grown up with variation and change as facts of linguistic life? Are their attitudes about some of the recent changes to Aussie lingo any different? Discuss how young people today keep up with changes to the language and consider how influential they are in creating new words and grammar. Provide some examples of your own.

People often describe certain expressions as getting up their noses, getting under their skin, getting on their nerves or wick, turning their stomach, sticking in their throat, making their hair curl or flesh creep or blood run cold. 'The word *haitch* makes me feel like I'm covered in fire ants', explains Jo of Perth, Western Australia. Here's what Elly has written about *data* with a singular verb:

> 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.

So what's really going on when speakers object to words and word usage in this way? Well, for a start people don't like change. Many of us experience a kind of nostalgia for things of the past — the feeling that what's on offer today is not quite up to scratch. People's linguistic pet hates also have deep social underpinnings. When the new verb *to contact* first appeared on the scene, it smacked of pretentious jargon and it was described as a "lubricious barbarism". In the same way, *to podium* and

to medal are new and they seem a bit self-important. So when people grumble about these neologisms like these, they're not rejecting them outright. It's just that they probably don't want to be identified with the kind of people who use this sort of language. And they justify their views by describing this language as not "proper English".

All this is a good example of the **prescriptive approach** to language — it's an approach that tells you how you ought to speak (as opposed to the **descriptive approach** which is more interested in observing how people use language). Prescriptive grammar books comprise a hodge-podge of *do's* and *don'ts* about sentence structure, word meaning and word usage. Much like etiquette books, which outline rules of polite behaviour, rules like the following outline the "best" sort of language.

- Do not use *podium* as a verb.
- Do not use *penultimate* to mean 'the very best'.
- Do not use *data* as a singular noun.
- Do not end a sentence with *but*.
- Do not use more than one negative in a sentence.
- Do not say *like* or *you know*.
- Do not say *absolutely* when *yes* will do.

For centuries people have complained about the state of the language. In 1653 the grammarian John Wallis complained bitterly about the use of the word *chicken* as a singular noun. Jonathan Swift railed against contemporary shortenings like *mob* from the Latin phrase *mobile vulgus* and *pants* from *pantaloons*, blaming them on the "loose morals" of the day. Of course, the social significance of these forms is lost to us today, and the objections now seem puzzling and trivial.

Here in Australia there is no shortage of these arbiters of linguistic goodness. Language commentary is rampant in traditional formats, such as newspaper columns, letters to the editor, talkback radio (even whole books are dedicated to exposing linguistic horrors). And now in the relatively informal arena of social media, discourse on language is just as common — and at times even more ferocious given the relative anonymity of the net.

Flux and variance are natural and inevitable features of any language. Human societies are always changing and language is an aspect of society. Imagine, if the great medieval poet Geoffrey Chaucer had somehow chanced upon the one of the novels of, say, Charles Dickens some 500 years later. He would have been shocked at the changes that had taken place in the language — changes which we now see as part of the richness and versatility of English. Mind you, this does point to one clear drawback to language change. Wonderful literature, like that of Chaucer, can become difficult, even lost to us, and *Beowulf* was a startling illustration of this. The language of Charles Dickens falls within the Early Modern English period. Books of Dickens appear on many school literature lists. And yet, how much are we missing? The meanings of many of his words have altered. We need to know that *regard* had a far stronger sense of affection, *sensible* meant "having the power of perception" and when people *lounged* in Dickens' day they "strolled". Shakespeare's works are older and pose even more challenges. We have to know, for instance, that when Juliet says of Romeo 'In truth ... I am too fond' (Act 2, Scene 2 of *Romeo and Juliet*), she doesn't mean she is devotedly attached to him, but that she is being overly foolish. It is not surprising that some writers have been determined to stop the English language from changing. They are fearful they will lose a reading audience. However,

stop the language, or 'fix it forever' (as Jonathan Swift put it in 1712), and we also stop the kind of imaginative manipulation and creativity that we marvel at so much in the work of someone like Swift or Shakespeare.

3.8.1 TECHNOLOGY AND THE FUTURE OF ENGLISH

What might the future hold for English in this era of technology? Looking back, we have to consider the effects of several generations of television viewing; it started with radio, of course, but it was TV that really brought different parts of the English-speaking world into the average home. Varieties that would never have been heard, even in the first half of last century, were suddenly in everyone's living room. Speech was being set free, this time by audio and video devices.

Now, with the advent of e-communication, we have actually reached a stage which in many ways is reminiscent of the situation in medieval times; in other words, before prescription and before standardization — the time when people wrote as they spoke. Chatting online is like chatting on the telephone or even face-to-face. Writers don't typically go through the sort of drafting processes and layers of editorial intervention that reinforce the written standard. Instead we find the sort of far-reaching variation that existed before standardization and before there was any autonomous prose style. Regional and social variation is rampant on the net; there is even idiolectal variation, where people use punctuation, spellings and abbreviations to reflect their personality. It has been noted that people using Twitter sometimes reveal characteristics of their accent or dialect in the spelling of words, eg, "tawk" for talk — and the interesting thing here is that this spelling returns to a 17th century spelling (it shows that people in the 1600s were starting to drop their Ls). Johnson's 'boundless chaos of a living speech' has broken through the lines and now appears in writing, just as it did in the manuscripts of Middle English and earlier. Features of natural speech raised no eyebrows then — and they raise no eyebrows now, at least not in e-communication. Getting used to seeing forms like *gonna* represented in writing undermines the standard and must inevitably speed up the acceptance of new grammar, as it will the acceptance of new phonological forms ('gubment' *government*) and new lexical items (*nomophobia* "fear of being separated from one's mobile phone").

New technology continues to emerge, enabling other languages to be translated into English with the click of a mouse or the touch of a finger. There are apps and programs that enable users to write in their own language and translate their work into English without having much (or any) knowledge of the target language. Less successful to date is spoken word translation. You can see this in the transcripts that accompany Youtube clips, or on internet programs such as Skype, where the 'translation' is frequently nothing more than gobbledegook. But it is still early days and there is scope for further development ahead. How such technology will impact on the dominance of English is yet to be discovered.

Some have predicted that Mandarin Chinese will come to dominate the global linguistic stage; certainly there are more speakers of Mandarin in the world than there are speakers of English. In some countries, such as India and Nigeria, there are now many varieties of English spoken, and, according to Dr Ganesh Devy (India), there is a move away from writing to an "entirely digital medium for communication and knowledge acquisition". He, among others, predicts that there will be a new form of Standard English that continues to facilitate global communication but that has strong local variations.

Language change does not occur at a constant rate. The history of English shows that there are times of speeding up and there are times of slowing down. When reading and writing in English became educational necessities, this started to affect the language, by way of delaying, perhaps even reversing, some processes of change. These days, however, speech is breaking away from the literary standard and its prescriptive ethos. Globalization, informalization and the electronic revolution mean that informal, nonstandard, unedited English is going public and audiences are now much more receptive. Writing no longer has the same hold on our minds. Moreover, with English having now established itself in almost every corner of the globe, we see the increasing influence of the newer varieties and the diminishing authority of the so-called "native speakers". Changes that have been lurking in the wings now have a greater chance of taking hold. We live in very interesting linguistic times.

A French businessman, Jean-Paul Nerrière, coined the term Globish (a blend of *global* and *English*) in 1995 after observing the patterns of English used by non-native English speakers when they communicated with each other at international conferences. It seemed that these non-native English speakers were finding it easier to do business with one another than with actual native speakers and he gave the name Globish to the kind of English they were using. Linguist Deborah Cameron describes it as a "'decaffeinated' version without complexity or cultural baggage".

Nerrière predicts that Globish is a neutral form of English that will eliminate the advantages that have for so long been enjoyed by native speakers. And in his book *Globish: How the English Language Became the World's Language,* Robert McCrum also argues for Globish as a universal lingua franca. Investigate Globish and say whether or not you think it could ever be a genuinely neutral medium for cross-cultural communication.

ACTIVITIES
AREA OF STUDY 1

CHANGE CAN BE SPECTACULAR

1. The British Library has an audio recording of *Beowulf* at this site: http://www.bl.uk/learning/langlit/changlang/activities/lang/beowulf/beowulfpage1.html

   a. Listen to the audio and underline any words in the extract (reproduced below) that sound (or look) familiar.

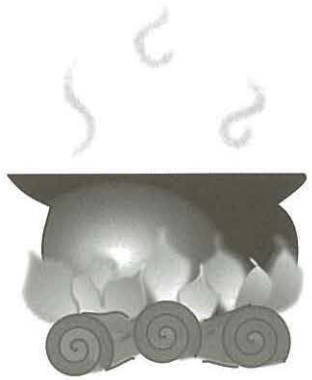
Beowulf and Grendel's Mother (Lines 1357-1382)

Original text	*Modern translation*
Hie dygel lond warigeað, wulfhleoþu, windige næssas, frecne fengelad, ðær fyrgenstream under næssa genipu niþer gewiteð, flod under foldan. Nis þæt feor heonon milgemearces þæt se mere standeð; ofer þæm hongiað hrinde bearwas, wudu wyrtum fæst wæter oferhelmað.	They inhabit the secret land, the retreat of wolves, windy cliffs, and dangerous fen paths, where a mountain stream goes down under the misty bluffs, the flood running downward under the earth. It is not that far in miles from here, that the mere stands; over it hang woods covered with frost, the wood fast of roots covers the water.
þær mæg nihta gehwæm niðwundor seon, fyr on flode. No þæs frod leofað gumena bearna, þæt þone grund wite; ðeah þe hæðstapa hundum geswenced, heorot hornum trum, holtwudu sece, feorran geflymed, ær he feorh seleð, aldor on ofre, ær he in wille hafelan hydan. Nis þæt heoru stow! þonon yðgeblond up astigeð won to wolcnum, þonne wind styreþ, lað gewidru, oðþæt lyft drysmaþ, roderas reotað.	There each night a fearful wonder, fire on the water, is seen. There is no man alive who knows the bottom of that mere. If the heathstalker, harassed by the hounds, the stag with strong horns who seeks the forest, had been put to flight from afar, would sooner sell his life forever rather than enter the mere to save his head--that is not a pleasant place. From it surging waters upwards arise, dark to the clouds, whenever wind stirs hostile weather, until the sky weeps.
Nu is se ræd gelang eft æt þe anum. Eard git ne const, frecne stowe, ðær þu findan miht felasinnigne secg; sec gif þu dyrre. Ic þe þa fæhðe feo leanige, ealdgestreonum, swa ic ær dyde, wundnum golde, gyf þu on weg cymest.	Now help is dependent again on you. The dwelling still isn't known, that dangerous place where you might find the sinful one; seek if you dare! I'll give you that battle-fee of ancient treasures, twisted gold, if you return.

b. On page 3 of the British Library site you'll find some of the words that are similar to modern English highlighted in the text. See how many you managed to get right just from listening and looking at the text.

c. Why is Beowulf an important text for the study of the development of English?

CHANGE EMERGES FROM VARIATION



2. Examine the following Anglo Saxon remedy for hair loss. It comes from one of the great 10th century medical treatises from this time (what were known as *leechdoms* — as you can see here the word *leech* was the expression for "physician" long before it came to refer to the blood-sucking acquatic worm). Because the language is so difficult, we have supplied here both a word-for-word translation (or **gloss**) and a freer translation.

Gif	*mannes*	*feax*	*fealle*	*[....]*
if	mann's	hair	falls	[....]

Wiþ	*þon*	*gif*	*man*	*calu*	*sie*	*Plinuis*	*se*	*micla*	*læce*
against	that	if	one	bald	is	Pliny	the	great	physician

segþ	*þisne*	*læcdom:*	*Genim*	*deade*	*beon*	*gebærne*	*to*	*ahsan*	*7*
says	this	leechdom:	take	dead	bees	burn	to	ashes	and

linsæd	*æc*	*do*	*ele*	*to*	*on*	*þæt*	*seoþe*	*swiþe*	*lange*	*ofer*
linseed	also	do	oil	to	on	that	boil	very	long	over

gledum	*aseoh*	*þonne*	*[....]*	*smire*	*mid*	*æfter*	*baþe*
coals	strain	then	[...]	smear	with	after	bath

"If a man's hair falls out [...] In the event one is bald, Pliny the great physician gives this treatment: Take dead bees, burn to ashes and also linseed, add oil to that, cook for a very long time over coals [....] anoint with it after a bath"

a. Make a list of words which have only changed slightly. These would be words which have only a spelling change which might reflect a different pronunciation.
b. Make a list of words which are very different.
c. Compare your lists with those made by others in your class and note the words you agree on and those you disagree about.
d. Discuss why some words might have remained relatively stable while others might have changed completely.

3. Find the original meanings of these words by consulting an etymological dictionary.

stethoscope
photography
camera
civilisation
bicycle
formula (in the sense of a set of ingredients)
biology
taxonomy
centigrade
Jurassic
Antipodes

4. Look up the meanings of these words to determine their origins. Some are bolded where they apear in a phrase or clause.

beastly
deuced if I know
omnibus
capital!
very **civil** (of you)
confound you!
damnable cheek
perambulator
luncheon
pray come in
you **rotter**
spiffing
dial a phone number
we had a **jolly** good time

ENGLISH AND THE INDO-EUROPEAN LANGUAGES

5. Here's a Middle English remedy (14th century) also for hair loss.

Whanne	*a*	*mannes*	*heeris*	*falliþ*	*awei*
when	a	man's	hair	falls	away

so	*in*	*vnkyndeli*	*tyme*	*as*	*þe*	*while*	*he*	*is*	*young*
so	in	unkindly	time	as	the	while	he	is	young

þan	*make*	*him*	*a*	*baþ*	*&*	*anoynte*	*him*	*wiþ*	*chamomile*
then	make	him	a	bath	and	anoint	him	with	chamomile

and	*wiþ*	*bittir*	*almondis*	*&*	*wiþ*	*oile*	*maad*	*þerof*
and	with	bitter	almonds	and	with	oil	made	therefrom

Translation into modern English: "When a man's hair falls out in such an unkindly time as when he is young, then make him a bath and anoint him with chamomile and with bitter almonds and with oil made from that"

a. Create a table like the one below.
b. Write down the words that appear in both remedies and their modern English translations.
c. What do you notice about the changes that have occurred from Old English words to the Middle English words and to the modern version?

Here's nice treatment! A cold running sitz bath at six in the morning. A bandage on the head and snow on the ground.

Old English	Middle English	Modern English
feax	heeris	hair
ele	oile	oil

6. Create a digital representation of the Indo-European language family. Include images and, if possible, hyperlinks to examples (written or spoken) of each one.

7. Watch the TED-Ed talk "How languages evolve", where Alex Gendler explains how linguists group languages into language families, demonstrating how these linguistic trees give us crucial insights into the past. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iWDKsHm6gTA

FROM EARLY TO MODERN ENGLISH

8. Read the two recipes below.

a. Write down all the words that are unusual.
b. Using an etymological dictionary, identify which words are French in origin and which are from Old English.
c. Label each one according to whether:

- The meaning has changed dramatically
- The word is used only in special contexts
- The word is no longer used at all

d. Discuss with a partner what the reasons might be for each change.

i. Recipe for Conynggys in grauey.

Conynggys in grauey schul be sodyn & hakkyd in gobettys; and grynd gyngyer, galingale & canel, & temper it vp wyþ god almand mylk & boyle it. & nym macys and clowys and kest þeryn, & þe conynggis also, & salt hym & serue it forþe.

ii. Recipe for Haddocke in Cyuee.

Shall be yopened & ywasshe clene & ysode & yrosted on a gridel; grind peper & saffron, bred and ale mynce oynons, fri hem in ale [this is probably an error it should be oile 'oil', not ale], and do therto, and salt: boille hit, do thyn haddok in plateres, and the ciuey aboue, and ghif forth.

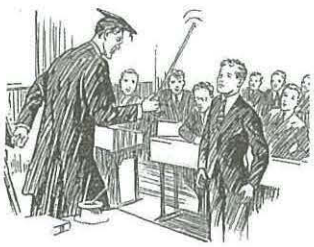
DEVELOPMENT OF STANDARD ENGLISH

9. Develop a time line showing the key events in the development of English over the centuries. Your time line could be an illustrated text, an electronic text, or in some other format.

10. Watch the episode of the TV show *Blackadder* called *Ink and Incapability*. It is the second episode of series three.

a. Discuss the problems experienced by Samuel Johnson in his quest to write the first dictionary of English.
b. What are the issues for Blackadder and his cohorts when faced with the prospect of reproducing Johnson's dictionary?

11. Investigate the creation of grammar schools in Britain, particularly their role in promoting the idea of a 'correct' form of English.



Grammar school classroom

ENGLISH SPELLING SYSTEM

12. Read the poem about spelling.

a. Rewrite it in Standard English.
b. Identify the patterns of pronunciation and spelling that this activity reveals.
c. Which sounds can be represented in multiple ways?

I have a spelling checker,
It came with my PC.
It plane lee marks four my revue
Miss steaks aye can knot sea.

Eye ran this poem threw it,
Your sure reel glad two no.
Its vary polished in it's weigh.
My checker tolled me sew.

A checker is a bless sing,
It freeze yew lodes of thyme.
It helps me right awl stiles two reed,
And aides me when eye rime.

Each frays come posed up on my screen
Eye trussed too bee a joule.
The checker pours o'er every word
To cheque sum spelling rule.

Bee fore a veiling checker's
Hour spelling mite decline,
And if we're lacks oar have a laps,
We wood bee maid too wine.

Butt now bee cause my spelling
Is checked with such grate flare,
Their are know fault's with in my cite,
Of nun eye am a wear.

Now spelling does knot phase me,
It does knot bring a tier.
My pay purrs awl due glad den
With wrapped word's fare as hear.

To rite with care is quite a feet
Of witch won should bee proud,
And wee mussed dew the best wee can,
Sew flaw's are knot aloud.

Sow ewe can sea why aye dew prays
Such soft wear four pea seas,
And why eye brake in two averse
Buy righting want too pleas.

CHANGE ACROSS THE SUBSYSTEMS

13. Identify the process by which each lexical item has entered the English language (borrowing, compounding, commonisation, shortening, neologism).

futon
kangaroo
Google
smorgasbord
moccasin
exam
flu
brunch
cappuccino
muffin-top
fax
telemarketing

14. Determine what kind of semantic change has taken place – broadening, narrowing, elevation, deterioration, shift, changing connotation.

corpse	a)The body of a man or of an animal; a (living) body; a person b) The dead body of a man (or formerly any animal)
crafty	a) Strong, powerful, mighty. b) Skilful, dexterous, clever, ingenious especially: Skilled in or marked by underhandedness, deviousness, or deception.
journey	a) A day b) A day's travel; the distance travelled in a day or a specified number of days. c) A 'spell' or continued course of going or travelling, having its beginning and end in place or time, and thus viewed as a distinct whole; a march, ride, drive
starve	a) To die (Said of a person or animal) b) To die of hunger; to perish or be in process of perishing from lack or insufficiency of food; to suffer extreme poverty and want;
thing	a) A meeting, assembly, *esp.* a deliberative or judicial assembly, a court, a council b) A matter brought before a court of law; a legal process; a charge brought, a suit or cause pleaded before a court. c) That with which one is concerned (in action, speech, or thought); an affair, business, concern, matter, subject
arrive	a) To come to shore or into port; to land b) To come to the end of a journey, to a destination, or to some definite place
broadcast	a) To scatter (seed, etc.) abroad with the hand b) To scatter or disseminate widely c) To disseminate (any audible or visible matter) from a radio or television transmitting station to the receiving sets of listeners and viewers
voyage	a) An act of travelling (or transit), a journey (or passage), by which one goes from one place to another b) A journey by sea or water from one place to another (usually to some distant place or country);
sophisticated	a) Mixed with some foreign substance; adulterated; not pure or genuine b) experienced, worldly-wise, refined, cultured

15. For each example, decide whether the result of the semantic shift is narrowing, deterioration, broadening, changing connotation.

a. OE **wif** 'a woman' > Modern English **wife** 'a married woman'
b. **nuke** 'to destroy with nuclear weapons' > **nuke** 'to destroy in any manner' (eg. Buffy nuked her Porsche last night.)
c. ME **marshall** 'groom for horses (literally 'horse slave')' > Modern English **marshall** 'high ranking officer'
d. OE **steorfan** 'to die (of any cause)' > Modern English **starve** 'to die from hunger'
e. Middle English **vilein** 'feudal serf, farmer' > Modern English **villain** 'a wicked or evil person'
f. OE **bouchier** 'one who slaughters goats' > Modern English **butcher** 'one who slaughters animals'
g. Middle English **girle** 'child' > Modern English **girl** 'female child'

h. **lyric** 'poem to be sun with a lyre' > **lyric** 'any poem to be sung'
i. **lewd** 'of the laity (i.e. non-church)' > **lewd** 'indecent'
j. OE **mete** 'any food' > Modern English **meat** 'animal flesh'

ENGLISH "DOWNUNDER"

16. Australian Voices, a project of the Department of Linguistics at Macquarie University in NSW, provides a wealth of samples of Australian accents.

a. Go to http://clas.mq.edu.au/australian-voices/australian-voices and explore the section called "History and Accent Change".
b. Listen to some of the sound clips and read the timeline of accent change.
c. Prepare a talk for your school assemply in which you outline how Australian English developed from the time of European settlement.

17. Make a recording of your own or a friend's voice telling a story, similar to those found in 'In the Past' at the Australian Voices website. Write a brief explanation of the language features in the monologue, highlighting the particular features of pronunciation, lexicon and syntax.

18. Interview a person from an older generation than yourself – a grandparent, friend of the family, neighbour – about the slang language that person used when young. Look these words and phrases up in a dictionary such as the Maquarie and note down the ones that are still there, and those that have become obsolete. Explain why some have remained in use and some have not.

ATTITUDES TO CHANGE

19. Complaints about declining standards and changes in language go back a very long way.

a. Read this extract about the linguistic crimes allegedly committed by poets and try to identify its origins.
b. What linguistic clues are there to help you decipher the period of this text?

"These Gentlemen, although they could not be insensible how much our Language was already overstocked with Monosyllables; yet, to save Time and Pains, introduced that barbarous Custom of abbreviating Words, to fit them to the Measure of their Verses; and this they have frequently done, so very injudiciously, as to form such harsh unharmonious Sounds, that none but a Northern Ear could endure", Well, indeed. "They have joined the most obdurate Consonants without one intervening Vowel, only to shorten a Syllable … What does Your Lordship think of the Words, Drudg'd, Disturb'd, Rebuk't, Fledg'd, and a thousand others, every where to be met in Prose as well as Verse? Where, by leaving out a Vowel to save a Syllable, we form so jarring a Sound, and so difficult to utter, that I have often wondred how it could ever obtain."

c. To find out more about this comment go to http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2010/aug/19/english-language-british-library-books

20. "Back to the Future grammar" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DXIZoaD8NBg

Watch this episode of *Big Bang Theory*. What is the problem the friends have with "verb tense"?

21. Here is a selection of letters and blogs on the topic of the misuse of language. Identify which subsystem each complaint refers to.

i. Brodie Harper's all over the shop inflections make Nine's weather segment a little less boring. For standard inflections, you can watch Seven's David Brown, who always gets excited when there's a mean cold front on the way.

ii. On Seven's News on Sunday, Rebecca Maddern mispronounced Arkansas as 'Ark-an-sus'. One assumes those who work in televeision journalism have a good understanding of tricky foreign place names. Perhaps in future those who write the autocues should spell difficlut place names phonetically to avoid presenters looking silly.

iii. Seven rugby union commentator Gordon Bray's use of the words 'hero', 'courage' and 'Anzac spirit' are totally in appropriate. Those who do heroic deeds, such as our soldiers in Afhanistan, are the only ones who merit such descriptions. It is offensive to use them to describe sportsmen whose lives are hardly under threat.

iv. I can accept the evolution of English but am irritated daily by the sheer silliness of what I hear. Present tense being used to describe past events, and the words "I'm like" in place of "I said or I thought". eg. "I'm driving down the road yesterday and I'm like, what's with all this traffic?" Then there's the trend to say more than necessary in the hope of sounding clever - a young waiter's question to my wife and me recently -"What were you guys looking for in terms of food?" I needed a moment to translate.

v. Can someone please tell our television announcers that 'drawing' is not pronounced as 'draw-ring?

vi. Readers should establish a website where abuses and misuses of language could be brought to the attention of the High Court of Public Opinion.

vii. Can someone please give George Calombaris a thesaurus? If I hear 'byooootiful' from him one more time I'm going to regurgitate my ragu.

viii. Has anyone noticed the disappearance of 't', its replacement with 'd'. The most effective advocate of this change is our Prime Minister, Julia Gillard. Is this a middle-class drawl, like the upper class 'g' dropping of the previous couple of centuries (huntin, shootin, fishin)

ix. Will somebody throw a bucket of cold water over that breathy lady who does the voice-over work for Ten? She smoulders through each promo as though it was a commercial for Viagra.

x. Ok, I'll join the pedants for a moment and add that I can't bear the 'Aussie What' as in 'He's much better than WHAT I am.' Why do they do that? What's the point of it? Just leave it out - it saves time and effort.

xi. I am a year 9 high school student and my education has equiped me with an excellent vocabulary for my self expression. My favourite words are excellent, gross, totally, so, like, exactly, like, absolutely, diss, positively, like and like. When ever I try to communicate with my mum she just reckons that I'm speaking a load of glossolalia. My reply is usually, "What the hell is glossolalia?"

22. Read this extract from a newspaper story about how one publisher is making changes to the language of a popular children's series of books by Enid Blyton, first published in the 1940s, called *The Famous Five*.

a. Discuss the issue of changing old-fashioned terms, such as those named in the article.
b. Decide whether you think this is a good idea or not.
c. Give reasons for your viewpoint.

Farewell to the awful swotters, dirty tinkers and jolly japes; Enid Blyton's language is being dragged out of the 1940s by her publisher in an attempt to give her books greater appeal for today's children.

Hodder is "sensitively and carefully" revising Blyton's text after research with children and parents showed that the author's old-fashioned language and dated expressions were preventing young readers from enjoying the stories.

The narrative of the novels will remain the same, but expressions such as "Mercy me!" have been changed to "Oh no!", "fellow" to "old man" and "It's all very peculiar" to "It's all very strange".

The intention, said Hodder, is to make the text "timeless" rather than 21st-century, with no modern slang or references to mobile phones introduced. "The actual stories remain the same -- there's no change to the plot whatsoever," said Anne McNeil, publishing director of Hodder Children's Books. "Children who read [the Famous Five books] need to be able to easily understand the characterisations and to get into the plots. If the text is revised [they're] more likely to be able to engage with them."

Other changes include "housemistress" becoming "teacher", "awful swotter" becoming "bookworm", "mother and father" becoming "mum and dad", "school tunic" becoming "uniform" and Dick's comment that, "She must be jolly lonely all by herself" being changed to, "She must get lonely all by herself."

McNeil said references to a "tinker" have been changed to "traveller". "Enid Blyton wouldn't have meant that tinker pejoratively. It's a description of a person, in order to place the character. So 'dirty tinker' has become traveller."

TECHNOLOGY AND THE FUTURE OF ENGLISH

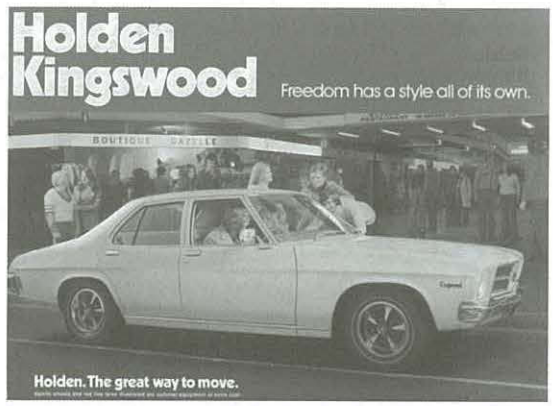
23. Brainstorm a list of translation and spoken text technologies that are available, eg, Siri, Google Translate.

a. Investigate how two of these programs work, what their limitations are and what are the benefits.
b. How have language users responded to them? There is plenty of commentary about these programs online, especially in newspapers and technology magazines.
c. Write up your notes.
d. Conclude with a response to the following question: "What impact might machine translation technology have on the use and spread of English in the future?"

OUTCOME TASKS

1. **Folio of annotated texts**
   Select 3 Australian texts covering different periods (early 1900s, 1950s and 2010s) eg, advertisements for Holden cars OR 3 excerpts from Australian literary texts OR 3 newspaper reports about football.

   a. Annotate each text, identifying features from each of the subsystems.
   b. In an analytical report, summarise your observations of the changes in linguistic features and advertising styles over time.



2. **Investigative report**
   a. Survey around 12 - 15 people about their pet peeves – lexical, phonological, grammatical.
   b. Develop a few questions with some examples of controversial language and ask each interviewee to rate their level of annoyance at each one. Some suggestions appear below, but you should add some more.
   c. Prepare a report on your findings about attitudes to these aspects of language in contemporary Australia. Choose your own format, (eg, graphs with explanatory notes, an illustrated talk, a written report).

film → filum
you → youse
ask → aks
vulnerable → vunerable
known → knowan
nothing → nothingk
aitch → haitch
secretary → secatry
Australia → Austraya
should have → should of
a big ask → I know it's a big ask, but could you do it?

as mean as ⟶ He wouldn't lend you any money; he's as mean as.
funnest ⟶ I had the funnest time!
like ⟶ It's like totally excellent.
memo ⟶ meemo

3. **Essay**

Imagine you are a linguist who appeared on a radio talkback show talking about the process of change in language over time. A listener has sent you this email after the show:

> "Thank you for your comments on language. To communicate clearly, we must abide by the rules of grammar and meaning. A living, growing language is quite different from a language that is misused."

What is your response? Prepare a reply in writing that can be presented in a format of your choice (eg, email, blog post, script for a recording of the next radio episode).

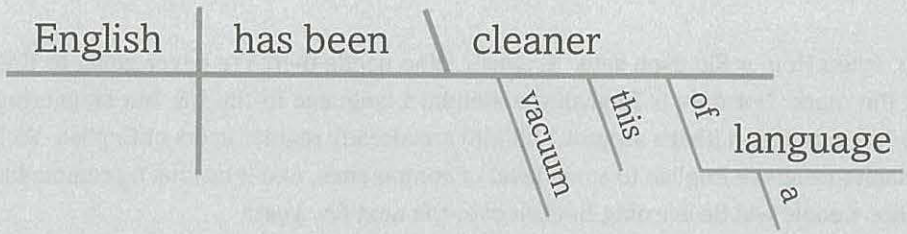
Noun *Verb*

ENGLISH HAS BEEN THIS VACUUM CLEANER OF A LANGUAGE

Verb *Pronoun* *Noun* *Noun* *Preposition* *Article* *Noun*

— David Crystal

SENTENCE DIAGRAM



AREA OF STUDY 2

ENGLISHES IN CONTACT

4.0 INTRODUCTION TO WORLD ENGLISH

Imagine the linguistic situation at the time when exploration southwards established the first English-speaking settlers in the Australia. Towards the end of the 18th century, the population of the British Isles is assumed to have been approximately 15 million. Around one third of the people spoke their own Celtic languages and little or no English. Those who spoke English often spoke, not the standard language, but their own dialects – and linguistic differences at this time could be striking. Compare that with the English-speaking community today. No longer are we simply looking at a group of people bound together because they live close by and speak the same language. Worldwide opportunities involving trade, international travel, satellite broadcasting, the internet, world press, world stock markets and multinational corporations have changed the concept of the English speech community beyond recognition.

The world is now totally global in its orientation — the worldwide spread of communication networks and media, the internationalism of products and consumerism, massive flows of people (including tourists, refugees and migrants), sporting events, even the recognition that environmental issues must now be addressed globally. Never before have we seen so many people from different language backgrounds wanting and needing to chat to each other.

It is not uncommon for schools these days to have partner schools around the globe and to even share actual class time. Discuss the advantages of linking up classrooms in this way. If your school participates in such a program, describe the personal benefits to you.

So, when Homer Simpson says "English? Who needs that? I'm never going to England!" he is way off the mark. Not only is English the standard language in the US, but staggering numbers of the world's population (that's around 7 billion) are already regular users of English. Well over one billion inhabitants speak English to some level of competence, and it has been predicted that a further two billion people will be learning English over the next few years.

When varieties come to dominate in this way, it has nothing to do with any inherent linguistic superiority. How English got to this position is a geographical and historical accident. English just

happened to have been dealt a lucky hand of cards. One of its trumps was that during the course of the 18th and 19th centuries Britain had become the world's leading industrial and trading nation. It was British political imperialism during the 19th century that sent the language trotting around the globe and the legacy of this is still felt today. Even when the pink bits on the map (signalling the Empire) started to disappear from the map, many of the newly independent nations (especially those in Africa and the Pacific) ended up choosing English as an official or semi official language. For one, it was a handy lingua franca (or common language) for those nations with populations of different linguistic backgrounds. However, these populations were also quick to recognise that the global success of English made it a crucial language for their continued wellbeing. But this success comes at a cost, as we'll see later.

The 20th century saw the USA take over from Britain as the leading nation. English then had yet another winning card up its sleeve — the fact that the USA and Canada was also English-speaking. This was its final trump. The USA is now the driving force behind globalisation, and the economic and cultural strength of this new superpower has secured the position of English and spread its influence even further afield.

There are now just so many incentives for people to take up English. Here are just some of them:

- In the areas of science and technology, business, communication and education, knowledge is increasingly created and disseminated in English. As linguist Finex Ndlovou has pointed out, in Africa (one of the most linguistically diverse continents) almost every country has English as the medium of instruction for higher education. This is also true of advanced courses in many non-Anglo countries in Asia and in Europe. Moreover, academics who don't read English will have greater difficulty accessing the latest research, and those who don't publish their work in English are disadvantaged as their work may not be widely read.
- English has become the language of economic development. Businesses are now global and they tend to adopt English as their lingua franca; this promotes a local need for training in English. Call centres operate globally, and in English. In many places, English qualifications have become a necessity, and even where no such requirement exists, there is a perception that English will provide access to jobs. English is also the language of e-money. If you're buying and selling on-line or if you just want to chat on the internet, you need a common language.

Call centres

- People are travelling more and accelerating the need for a common language. In the major tourist destinations, English has a key role as a lingua franca. People travel for a host of other reasons (meetings, conferences, sporting events, official gatherings) and these events are typically mediated through the use of English as an additional language. In international relations, English has always been an important player and it now has an official or working role in all major international organisations such as UNESCO, the World Bank, and WHO.
- The advent of new technologies has helped to promote English as the language of the cinema and popular culture. When sound was added to movies in the late 1920s, the English language started to dominate the world of the motion picture and this continues to be the case. It also dominates the popular music scene today, and this has spread the language further around the globe.

The dominance of English in popular music is a hot topic, especially for a big event such as the Eurovision Song Contest, which attracts millions of viewers worldwide (including more than two million in Australia in 2015). Critics observe that countries perform in English and that the winning entry is rarely a non-English song. Linguist Lauren Gawne writes in her blog *Superlinguo*: "as someone who is aware of the limitations that come with being a monolingual English speaker, I know that international platforms like Eurovision are a great opportunity to promote cross-linguistic curiosity as well as cross-cultural communication"

- International safety has also secured the position of English as a world language. You have probably noticed that English appears alongside local languages on safety instructions on international transport systems, information about emergency procedures in hotels and public places, and directions to major locations. English has long been the international language of the sea ("Seaspeak"). The language of international air traffic control ("Airspeak"), which emerged after the Second World War, has English as the international language of aviation.
- English has become an important medium for the press and the advertising industry. English language newspapers are now produced for the global market — *International Herald-Tribune, Huffington Post* and *International Guardian*. English language programs like the BBC World Service are being broadcast globally; the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union uses only English as an official language. All over the world English is used to sell, particularly of course American products. Italian has a single verb that sums up the era: *cocacolonizzare* 'cocacolonize'. (As a blend of *coca cola* and *colonize*, the pun works well in English, too.)

In many respects, the global takeover by English began as early as 450 years ago with the expansion of the language towards Wales and Scotland. Since that time, English has been bulldozing its way around the globe to become the language of the world and now even the language of space and cyberspace. Of course, the success of English is good news for English speakers, but you must also bear in mind that one of the effects of the worldwide movement of English, and its use as an international language, is widespread linguistic destruction. We are referring here to the death, or near death, of so many languages in those places where English has taken root. As we go on to discuss later in this chapter, local languages are disappearing at an alarming rate as a direct result of global bulldozers such as English.

4.1 ENGLISHES GALORE

The global spread of English beyond the secure confines of its mother tongue countries has resulted in extraordinary diversity in the form of hybrids, dialects, nativized varieties, pidgins and creoles, all influenced by the many different environments and languages it has come in contact with. It is no longer adequate to designate English as a single language when it now touches almost every linguistic area in the world. So English has a new plural form — *Englishes*. Indeed, over the years all sorts of new labels have appeared to cover the important varieties that have sprung up as a consequence of this global expansion of English. They include *International English, Modern Englishes, New Englishes, Other Englishes*, and some blended labels, too, such as *Japlish, Singlish, Anglikaans* and even *Globish*.

Tom McArthur has identified five different categories that help us better understand this linguistic labelling:

1. Location: this relates to the geographical setting of a speech community (African English, American English, Asian English, Australian English, British English, Irish English, London English, Chinese English, New Zealand English, and so on).
2. Ethnicity: in this case varieties are associated with different ethnic groups (Bengali English, Aboriginal English, Maori English, and so on).
3. Occupation: this involves ways of speaking English that are associated with specific jobs or activities such as commerce, technology, business, education and social life (airline English, bureaucratic English, legal English, medical English, public school English, business English, and so on).
4. Location and occupation: varieties are associated with combinations of location and activity (usually official or formal); also included are the many labels with "standard" in them; (*American legal English, Australian medical English, Standard Canadian English*, and so on).
5. Contact: here labels designate hybrid varieties of English influenced by local linguistic ecologies (*Franglish or Franglais* (French and English), *Hinglish* (Hindi and English), *Chinglish* (Chinese and English), *Anglikaans* (Afrikaans and English), and so on.)

Another language label you will frequently encounter is *World English*. Note that this label has nothing to do with numbers of first language speakers (Hindi, Spanish and Mandarin Chinese have already outstripped English in terms of native speaker numbers). *World English* refers to English as a global means of communication. So it designates the (more or less) standard global variety we find, and at the same time covers the hundreds of different varieties of English that have since sprung up because so many people from so many different countries and cultures now communicate with each other in English. Since these varieties are structurally and functionally so distinctive, you will also encounter the plural version *World Englishes*.

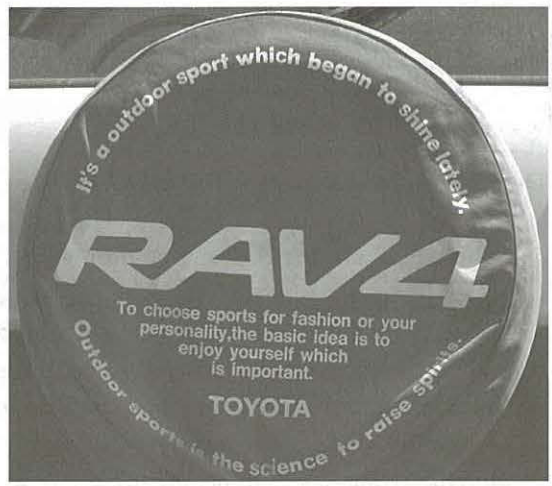
Blended English

Translated instruction manuals are a wonderful source of illustrations of blended English; for example, the empty noodle packet (which reads "Choiceness Grocery Nation Affirmation" on the back) has the following instructions:

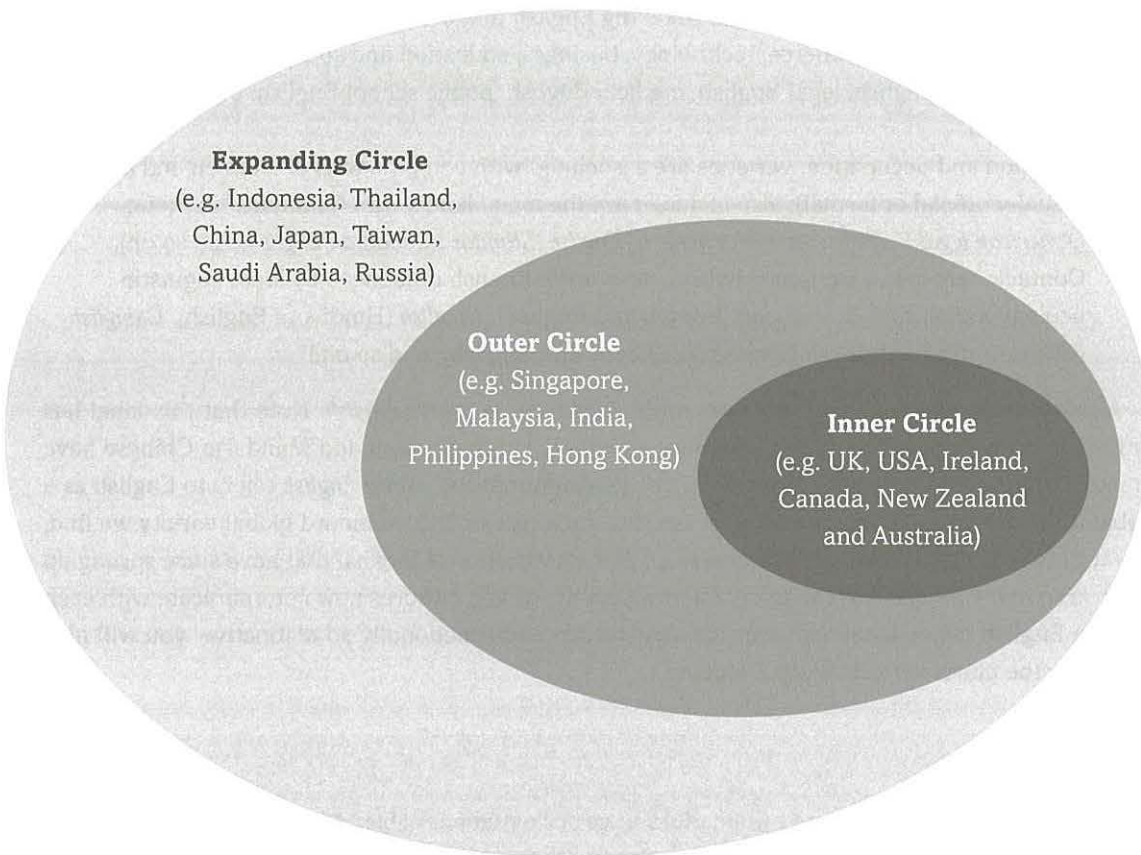
We are the first company of our country to obtain the GMP & ISO 9002 of the dried noodles. It is non-fried and never adding any preservatives. The quality is health and satisfaction. You can set your mind at ease, because we can safeguard your expenditure.

The blurb on the package of "four magic laundry balls", explains how these balls work by "turning with laundries, prevent to twisting of each laundries and striking the dirty parts on laundries" — apparently it all makes for "great efficient washing".

So why use English here? Well, the reason is simple. English sells. It has to do with the practicalities of a global lingua franca to be sure, but probably even more it has to do with power — cultural power and above all economic power. Simply putting an English message on a product apparently makes it somehow more appealing or more exciting. It doesn't even have to make sense.



Braj Kachru, a scholar of global Englishes, was the one who really pioneered the idea of World English(es). He originally discussed the different users of English in terms of three concentric circles. The following is a diagram showing his model including the names of some of the countries in each category.



World Englishes — Kachru's Circles

These circles reflect the historical spread of English from Britain. They also capture the current sociolinguistic status of English within each region, the functions of English in these places, as well as the way it is spread and learned in the different cultural settings.

The "inner circle" is where we users of Australian English are positioned. These are the countries where English is spoken as a Native Language (or ENL).

The "outer circle" refers to the regular users of English as a Second Language (or ESL). The English in these settings stems originally from colonial times and it continues to play an important role in government, the courts, education, the media and other public domains. Depending on the country, English may be one of the official languages, it may be recognized as an official second language or it may have no official status.

The "expanding circle" refers to the huge and steadily growing numbers of consumers of English, who frequently use it as their international language, both in work and in play — the so-called speakers of English as a Foreign Language (or EFL). Unlike the outer circle, English is taught here as a foreign language and does not have its roots in colonization, nor does it have any official status in these countries. The number of users of English here has been estimated as more than a billion, but it's hard to be accurate since the demand for English is growing so rapidly.

Check around your class and identify which circle each person associates with. Is there more than one circle in some students' families?

Figures are also hard to approximate because we are potentially dealing with such a wide range of abilities, from fully competent speakers to those millions of semi-speakers with just a smattering of English; for example, the foreign pop group which composes and records in English and even those in the audience who sing the lyrics of these songs but otherwise speak little English. These people may not have full command of English, but the fact that they speak it at all is significant for what it tells us about the status of English in the world today.

The circles have never been as clearly defined as these descriptions suggest. In places like Malaysia and South Africa, for instance, the sociolinguistic situation is complex, involving both second and foreign language features. Moreover, the situation around the world is becoming even more complex. Everything points to greater variety and the increasing influence of the newer varieties of English, as well as the diminishing authority of native speakers. Non-native speakers outnumber native speakers three to one. Even the distinction "native speaker" versus 'non-native speaker' now seems inappropriate, given that English is commonly spoken as a second first language. Clearly, this sort of representation cannot capture the complexity of the linguistic ecosystem today; yet it is still helpful in distinguishing some of the different historical and sociolinguistic factors involved in identifying where English is spoken and by whom.

Something that these circles don't capture terribly well is the use of English in a multilingual context — and not only globally (in international communication), but also locally where there are speakers of different linguistic backgrounds. Estimates are that more than 80% of communication in English is now between non-native speakers of the language with English as a lingua franca; in other words, the more usual contexts where English is being used does not involve natives speakers but rather people from diverse linguistic, cultural and national backgrounds.

"Native speakers just get in the way"

Non-native speakers of English are increasingly playing a major role in not just the spread of English but also the global teaching of the language. Both "native" and "non-native" speakers have to be skilled (linguistically and culturally) when it comes to communicating with each other effectively in an international (or even local) context. As you might imagine, all this is having significant repercussions for how English is being taught. The question is — which sort of English is the most appropriate for this multicultural and multilingual setting. Since most interaction is now between non-native speakers, inner circle linguistic and cultural norms (once taken for granted) may not be the most appropriate. If you are teaching English in say Vietnam, are British, American, or even Australian textbooks what you want — and are native teachers the most suitable? Probably not. As someone once put it, "native speakers just get in the way".

English is now central to many language ecologies that aren't necessarily Anglo in outlook and consequently varieties have emerged that can be strikingly different. In the next sections, we give you a small taste of the remarkable range of features that occur in these Englishes worldwide. Differences occur at all linguistic levels (phonetic, morphological, semantic, syntactic and sociolinguistic levels). However, we will be focusing mainly on the structural hub of these languages; specifically, those grammatical features that are so different from the standard.

4.2 NEW ENGLISHES

English is now the official or co-official language in more than 75 countries; they include places with colonial associations with Britain or the USA, as well as those without these traditional links. In many cases, the varieties in these regions have such distinct grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation and conventions of use that they are labelled New Englishes. Since they are not usually the first language of the people who speak them, they often receive the labels L2 (second language) or ESL (English as a Second Language). Examples include Singapore English, Malaysian English and Hong Kong English. Often these L2 speakers use a local variety of English (e.g. Singlish) but may also be fluent in other varieties of English that are more global in outlook. The rise of these new varieties has been a major motivation for establishing the status of English as an international language. New Englishes are acquiring speakers at such a rate that they have now outstripped the Native Englishes in numbers of speakers and they will have a significant role to play in shaping the future world standard.

It is difficult to get across to you the extraordinary diversity that exists in these languages. You are already very aware that speakers from different regions, from different social classes, of different ages, of different occupations, of different gender identification, of different sexual orientation all talk differently. And they talk differently in different contexts, too — an informal chat, an interview, a lecture and so on. In the case of the new varieties of English, the diversity is the richest, especially in those countries where English has established a strong non-native presence. Two factors are involved: (1) the influence of local vernacular languages (which may or may not be the first language of speakers) (2) contact with English (particularly for urban groups, a growing force of influence).

What you will find is that speakers typically move along a kind of continuum, adjusting their speech as appropriate. They can speak something very close to Standard English in everything but accent right through to varieties that are not mutually intelligible with the standard.

4.2.1 THE EXAMPLE OF INDIAN ENGLISH

Indian English is one of these so-called New Englishes even though English has been in India since as early as 1600 (with the establishment of the East India Company). Here it encountered a range of Indic, Dravidian, Munda and Tibeto-Burman languages, and this did much to shape the linguistic varieties that emerged. By the time India had received its independence from Britain in 1947, English was firmly entrenched. Today it enjoys associate official status and continues to play an important role in government, the courts, higher education, the media and other public domains.

There are a number of linguistic factors that contribute to the "Indianisation" of English. For one, Indian English shows quite distinct characteristics in its sound system, including unaspirated voiceless stops /p t k/ and a series of retroflex consonants (sounds made with the tip of the tongue curled away from the alveolar ridge) in place of the usual alveolar sounds that you're more familiar with. In addition, Indian English differs strikingly from other varieties of English with respect to stress, intonation and rhythm. As you might imagine, there are considerable vocabulary differences, too, in the form of substantial lexical borrowings from Indian languages (e.g. *durzi* 'tailor'), English archaisms (e.g. *tiffin* 'lunch' from English *tiff* 'to sip, drink'), as well as the large numbers of hybrid forms (e.g. *janta meals* from *janta* 'the people').

Standard Indian English differs little in its core grammar from the mainstream standards, but the vernacular variety has some markedly distinctive features of grammar. Here are two with actual examples to illustrate:

1. A common feature of New Englishes generally is variation in the use of articles. This is not the random dropping or inserting of *a* or *the*; there is a system but we have not the space to explore it here. For example, *Let's go to city; Women can prove to be a great help to the humanity.*

2. English dialects don't necessarily see eye to eye as to whether nouns are viewed as something that can be counted (like *word* or *school*), or whether they're interpreted as a quantity of some material (like *bread* or *rice*). In short, what is a count noun in one variety may be a mass noun in another and vice versa. Indian English has examples of non-count nouns used as count nouns. For example, *furnitures, apparels, deadwoods, equipments.* (Note, count nouns like *biscuit* used as non-count nouns are less usual.)

Variation in articles

Put the following sentences into Standard English and describe how they differ from the standard.

You must be knowing him.
You are going home soon, isn't it?
Is clear that he will not come.
Alone you came.
These people I telephoned yesterday only.
Do you know where is he going?

In the 1960s, the Indian writer K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar had the following to say about Indian English as a literary language:

> Indian writing in English is but one of the voices in which India speaks. It is a new voice, no doubt, but it is as much Indian as others. The point is controversial, and is reflected in controversies in other parts of the world, where the growth of the English language is perceived as a threat as well as a blessing. There is no doubt, however, about the emerging structural identity of Indian English, or about the growth of a recognised body of Indian English literature.

As he described here, the global growth of English is not always viewed as a blessing. For a start, the expansion of English is often at the expense of one or more local indigenous languages. However, even when it is not threatening existing local languages, the presence of English can generate antagonism. In India the role of English in relation to Hindi (the official language) and other regional languages is a source of tension and conflict. At the time K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar was writing this book, there were the bitter conflicts over the roles of English, Hindi and regional languages in the national language policy and this gave rise to the "three language formula". What this policy endorsed was the official use of either English or a local state language, which in the north is generally Hindi and in the south a regional language.

One of the facets of the conflict has been that nationalistic movements have wanted to reject English as an official language, because of its associations with colonial history — the idea is that the basis of an independent government is a national language and that language should not be the one of the former colonizers. But just how much has English been "Indianised" to become a distinct national voice and how much is it still the language of the former British Empire? This question has resulted in vigorous arguments in recent years.

Ghandi, writing back in 1908, beautifully captures the negative aspects of the dilemma:

> To give millions a knowledge of English is to enslave them ... Is it not a painful thing that, if I want to go to a court of justice, I must employ the English language as a medium; that, when I became a Barrister, I may not speak my mother-tongue, and that someone else should have to translate to me from my own language? Is this not absolutely absurd? Is this not a sign of slavery?

In this book *Global English,* Crystal describes a famous incident that happened in India some years ago, involving a street protest in support of Hindi. The banners were largely in Hindi, but there was one very prominent banner that read "Death to English". The event was filmed on world television and of course it was this banner that reached more people around the globe than any of the others. You can see the quandary facing the people here. Write your message in English and you compromise your identity, but you do connect with a worldwide audience.

As an interesting aside, you could compare the predicament of English in earlier times. Even into the 18th century, Latin was a kind of learned lingua franca and by writing *Principia Mathematica* (1687) and *Arithmetica Universalis* (1707) in Latin rather than English, Isaac Newton was able to reach a wider audience.

4.3 OTHER ENGLISHES — PIDGINS AND CREOLES

We now move to some of the typical features of the new contact varieties of English known as pidgins and creoles (the so-called Other Englishes). However, before we examine these varieties, we need to say something about how they come about.

Generally speaking, pidgins are a type of makeshift language that springs up when speakers of different linguistic backgrounds come into contact and need to talk. In the formation of a pidgin, there are always two (or more) languages that are involved, although the pidgin takes one language, usually the socially dominant one, as its point of origin for the lexicon. This language contributes most of the vocabulary, though significant features of the grammar are likely to derive from other sources. Traditionally, people thought of these languages as simply debased forms of English, and they used derogatory labels like "broken English" to refer to them. Pidgins clearly have their own grammars and are not 'broken' Englishes however they do differ from a natural language in a number of respects:

- Pidgins aren't anybody's first language but are used when speakers venture outside their usual speech community.
- Because they are used in limited contexts, pidgins lack the range of stylistic variation characteristic of other language varieties.
- Pidgins make do with reduced vocabularies and require far less complex and flexible structures (English-based pidgins are syntactically and morphology much simpler than the variety of English on which they are based).

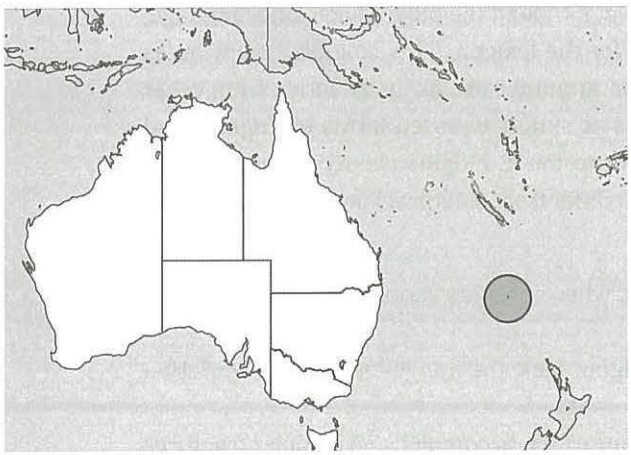
Typically, a pidgin is short-lived. Speakers often abandon it in favour of the source language, or if the contact ceases, the pidgin will simply die. However, if the situation stabilizes, and the contact continues between speech communities, the makeshift pidgin metamorphoses into a fully-fledged and dynamic language. Because the language must now serve its speakers in all kinds of settings and circumstances, the changes are typically rapid, especially in vocabulary and grammar. These creole varieties cluster in three main areas — the Caribbean, West Africa and the West Pacific. They include Bislama (Vanuatu), Krio (Sierra Leone), Tok Pisin (Papua New Guinea), Gullah (spoken by African Americans in Florida and the Sea Islands in Georgia), Costa Rican Creole, Jamaican Creole and Kriol (northern parts of Australia).

In theory, it is straightforward to say when a pidgin ends and a creole begins. As soon as children in a community are brought up speaking the pidgin as their first language, it becomes a creole. Accordingly, a creole is simply a nativised pidgin. The linguistic reality, however, is another matter — linguistically it is impossible to say where the boundary lies. Even before a pidgin becomes somebody's first language, it can develop a highly elaborated structure (close to that of a creole), if it is used for a number of different purposes. For this reason, some linguists avoid the labels "pidgin" and "creole" and refer to these varieties straightforwardly as "contact languages".

The label 'variety of English' might strike you as problematic, especially at the vernacular end of

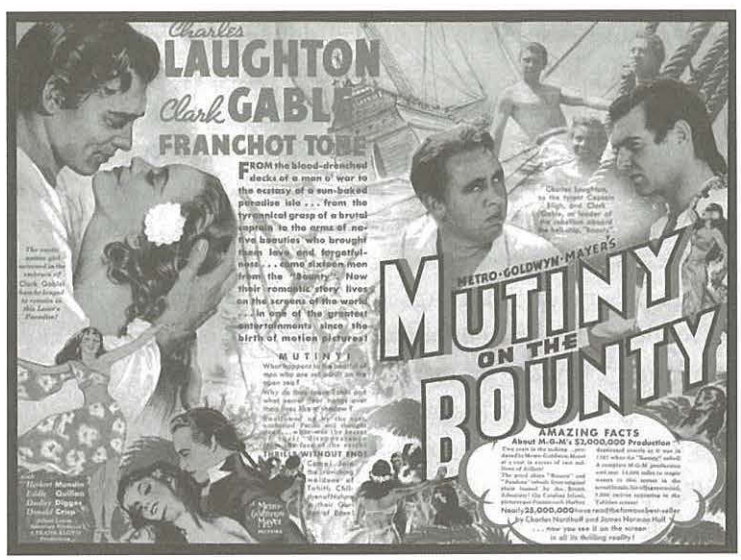
the standard-creole continuum. The very 'unEnglish-looking' structures that characterize creoles, as well as their unique development (as contact languages resulting from pidgins), set them apart. There is also the question of the lack of mutual comprehension — creoles have their own distinctive grammars, and when spoken by fluent speakers are not mutually intelligible with Standard English. The speakers themselves would never call their language a kind of English, either. Nonetheless, these contact languages share vocabulary and grammatical features that align them with the English of the international community. All can be said to have some sort of historical connection to the group of continental Germanic dialects that ended up in the British Isles sometime in the 5th century AD and for this reason we have included them in this chapter.

4.3.1
ENGLISH ON NORFOLK ISLAND — A REMARKABLE CONTACT LANGUAGE



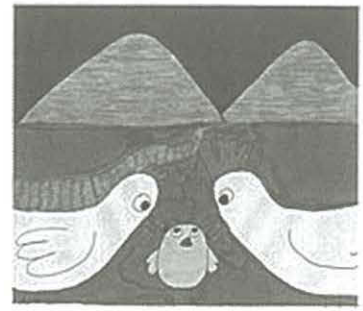
Norfolk Island is a small Australian territory that sits in South Pacific Ocean somewhere between Australia (1,700 kms to the west) and New Zealand (1,100 kms to the south) — you can see it in the circle you see on the map on the left. This is the home to one of the most interesting examples of a contact language, a language known variously as Pitcairnese, Norfolkese, Norfolk Island English, Norf'k and Norfuk (which is the name we'll use here).

Norfolk Island is the only Australian territory where a language other than English shares official status with English. The language Norfuk represents the linguistic outcome of contact between the British English of the *Bounty* mutineers and Tahitian. Some of you have probably heard about the infamous mutiny on the *Bounty* that occurred in the south Pacific, on 28 April 1789. A bunch of disgruntled crewmen, led by Acting Lieutenant Fletcher Christian, seized control of the Royal Navy ship from their captain, Lieutenant William Bligh. After setting Bligh and 18 loyalists adrift, the mutineers settled either on Tahiti or Pitcairn Island, and the settlement on Norfolk Island came later. The history of Norfuk is a long, complicated but gripping tale, and one that has been told and retold in articles, books and many movies (going back to 1916).



Poster from the film *Mutiny on the Bounty* (1935)

There are around 1800 Norfolk Islanders, approximately half of whom are descended from the Bounty mutineers and their Tahitian wives — this makes for one fascinating speech community. And it is a remarkable example of a contact language since we know precisely the number of speakers who originally settled on Pitcairn in 1790, the places of origin of these speakers, and even their names.



For an illustration of the language we recommend you visit the website for the Research Unit for Multilingualism and Cross-Cultural Communication at Melbourne University (http://rumaccc.unimelb.edu.au/other-language-readers) where you will find a version of *Chicken Little Goes for a Walk* rendered into Norfuk: *Iwi Faul Gu Work.*

Here is an example:

Si daa faul. Daas Iwi Faul's madha. Iwi Faul's madha worken bae-kwads en forwads korlen Iwi Faul bat Iwi Faul nor se hoem.

Look, there's a chicken. That's Chicken Little's mother. Chicken Little's mother is walking back and forth calling for Chicken Little, but Chicken Little still hasn't turned up.

There is much that is interesting about this language. One area is the pronouns. Here are just the subject and object pronouns — you can see that the system is already more complex than that of Standard English:

	Subject	Object
Singular		
1st	*Ai*	*mii*
2nd	*yu*	*yuu*
3rd	*hi*	*hem*
	shi	*her*
	—	*et*
Dual ('two')		
1st	*himii*	*himii*
	milenhem	*milenhem*
	miienher	*miienher*
2nd	*yutuu*	*yutuu*
3rd	*demtuu*	*demtuu*
Plural ('three of more')		
1st	*wi*	*aklan*
2nd	*yorlyi*	*yorlyi*
3rd	*dem*	*dem*

Three interesting things to note:

1. Under certain conditions, the subject form can appear as an object and visa versa.

Ai	*gwen*	*kliin*	*ap*	
I	go	clean	up	
'I'm going to wash the dishes'				

Mii	*d'*	*wan*	*kuk*	*et*
Me	the	one	cook	it
'I am the one who cooked it'				

Giv	*wan*	***I***	*cup*	*ar*	*tea*
give	one	I	cup	of	tea
'Give me a cup of tea'					

2. The form *aklan* is a puzzling form; it once meant 'the general run of people', but now means 'we'. Its origin is a topic of hot debate, and you find discussion of it and other interesting Norfuk words on the official website for the island http://www.norfolkonlinenews.com/Norfolk-words.html.

3. The third example above illustrates another curious grammatical feature involving word order. Look at the unusual placement of the object pronoun (which appears between 'one' and 'cup'). Here's another example:

Haes	*wan*	*yu*	*buk*	*baut*	*Norfuk.*
here's	one	you	book	about	Norfolk
'Here's a book about Norfolk for you'					

Despite such intriguingly different structures, the language remains under-researched. Though we know a lot about the historical and sociological conditions that gave rise to this off-spring of English, little is known about the language itself. There is still no comprehensive account of its grammar — and time is running out. Norfuk is a disappearing language.

Other English-based contact languages in the area are the Pacific creoles that had their roots in earlier Melanesian Pidgin; for example Bislama (Vanuatu), Pijin (Solomon Islands) and Tok Pisin (Papua New Guinea). Because of their common origin, these varieties share a number of characteristics but as you might predict, they are now growing more apart and differences are emerging, especially because of contact with native languages in the region. Many speakers also know a local variety of Standard English and switch regularly between this and their creole.

To give you an idea, here are the first few lines from the Tok Pisin version of the three little pigs story *Tripela liklik pik*.

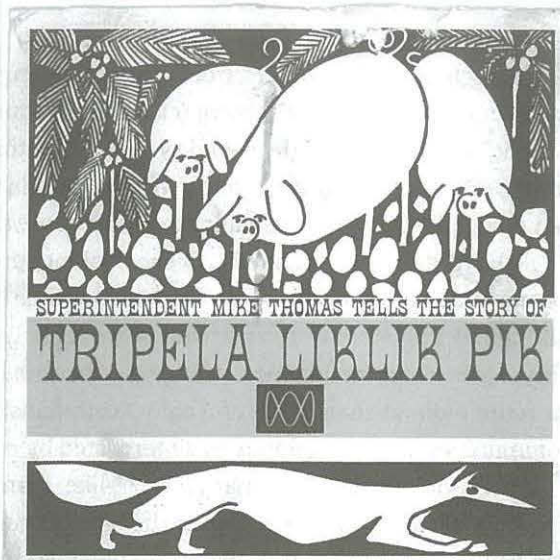
Bipo tru, tripela liklik pik ol i stap long bush. Ol i no gat haus na ol i laikim wokim haus.

I gat wanpela wail dok em i stap long dispela haus. Em i bikpela bikpela na em i laikim kaikai pik. Em i save kilim plenti pik long bus na em i save kaikai ol.

'Long ago (lit. before true), three little pigs lived in the bush. They had no house and they wanted to build houses(s). There was a wild dog living in this bush. He was very big and he liked to eat pig. He knew how to kill lots of pigs in the bush and he knew how to eat them'

You can listen to the audio of this story:
http://www.abc.net.au/local/stories/2007/09/18/2036578.htm

When you see creoles like this one written down it is tempting to think of them as simple forms of English. But remember they are really different languages with quite different grammars, and when spoken among fluent creole speakers they are mutually unintelligible with Standard English. Symbolically too, it's important to emphasize their linguistic distinctiveness. As languages in their own right, as distinct from English, creoles such as these have become an important means of signalling their speakers' cultural and social identity.



4.3.2 AUSTRALIAN CREOLES AND ABORIGINAL ENGLISH

Not long after the arrival of the Europeans in Australia, there appeared pidgin varieties. These 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 influences from other pidgins and creoles brought into Australia from the outside.

Aboriginal English is an **ethnolect**; in other words, a variety that identifies its speakers by their ethnicity and usually influenced by their L1 (first language). It grew out of this original contact situation and is now maintained in Indigenous Australian communities across Australia. The interaction between Aboriginal English and creoles is complex; it is reminiscent of the diversity we've already seen in places where English has come into contact with other languages. Varieties range from something that is virtually identical to Standard Australian English in everything but accent through to pure creole that is so remote from Standard Australian English as to be mutually unintelligible. Midway between these two polar extremes is an array of speech varieties. Generally speakers are able to move along the continuum and they alter their speech to suit the situation and audience.

In his description of the linguistic variation within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander speech communities, Malcolm (2004a: 668) examines the educational implications, especially the need for a better integration of these Englishes into school learning.

> 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.

Aboriginal English differs from Australian English at all linguistic levels. In accent, there is a continuum 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 and familiar-looking English words can have quite different meanings (e.g. *sorry business* 'ceremony associated with death'); some early English words are maintained (*gammon* 'joking, pretending', 18th century slang). The opportunities for misunderstandings are considerable [see Sharifian (2008) on the different meanings of *sorry* in Aboriginal English and mainstream Australian English]. Miscommunication also arises from the differences in communication strategies. Aboriginal speakers' strategies for eliciting information are far more indirect than those of Anglo-Australians; silence also has an important role in Aboriginal communities and is frequently misinterpreted by outsiders (Eades 1994, 2000).

Aboriginal English has many creole-like grammatical features, though you will find a lot of variation between speakers. One of the most distinctive features is a marker on the verb *-em* or *–im*; it indicates that the verb is transitive (in other words, an object follows). This is a feature you will also find in the Pacific creoles mentioned above (try to find it in the *Three Little Pigs* extract).

We	*see**im***	*buffalo*	*got*	*big*	*horn*
we	see-transitive	buffalo	with	big	horn

'We saw a buffalo with big horns'

NEW MIXED LANGUAGES IN AUSTRALIA

In many communities, the linguistic situation is even more complicated that what we have been describing here. In a paper called *Language landscapes of children in remote Australia*, linguist Jane Simpson outlines the complex multilingualism of Indigenous communities in rural parts of the country. She focuses on four communities in the north but emphasizes that their linguistic situation is replicated all around the nation. Here's what she says about how people talk to children and how children are talking back to them in these speech communities:

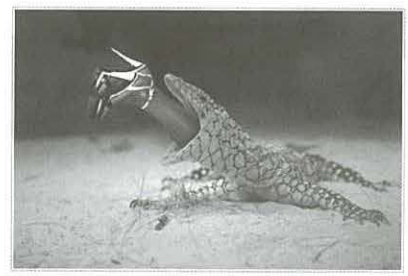
> Traditional languages are spoken by some people, but at the same time new languages are being developed based on the interaction of traditional languages, English and an English-based creole. These new languages vary along a continuum. At one end, the way of talking is close to the way many people in rural Australia talk. At the other end are mixed languages, in which the structure of the new language contains words and features of several languages. In the middle of the range are varieties of an English-based creole.

The mixed languages referred to here were probably created via code-switching an English-based creole with a traditional language. As you might recall from the discussion of code-switching in Chapter 2 this is where bilingual speakers swap back and forth between languages in a single interaction.

One of the examples Jane Simpson provides involves a mother-child conversation in a mixed language called Gurindji Kriol. Spoken in Kalkaringi in the Northern Territory, this language has developed from Gurindji (the traditional Australian Aboriginal language of the Gurindji people) and Kriol (an Australian creole). As you can see here, it has auxiliaries from Kriol, nouns and verbs from the two languages, and uses both prepositions and case suffixes.

Mother:	*dat guana garra kom gedim yu baitim yu-mob*	That goanna's gonna come and get you and bite you all
	i garra kom ***rarraj*** *dijei* ***nyawa kankula****.*	It'll come running this way this one above
	i garra baitim yu-mob binij.	It'll really bite you all.
Child:	*i-l be* ***katurl*** *im inti Mam?*	It'll really bite won't it Mum?
Mother:	*hmm yu-rra* ***katurl*** *im.*	Hmm you'll bite it.
Child:	*ai-rra katim* ***nyanawu*** *knife-****jawung****.*	I'll cut this thing with my knife.

See how the mother and child freely switch between the Gurindji and Kriol words (e.g. the verbs for "biting", *katurl* and *baitim*, respectively). Notice, too, the Gurindji case-ending (meaning "with") on the English word *knife* (e.g. *knife-jawung*).



Striking variation in the traditional Englishes

It's important to remember that exotic-looking grammar doesn't only exist in the new varieties of English. There are also examples of strikingly different non-standard Native Englishes around the world.

Some of these varieties have very different pronoun systems. Take the traditional dialects of the southwest of England (and also their descendents in Newfoundland in Canada) – they must have one of the most perplexing features for speakers of Standard English. This is a construction dubbed "pronoun exchange". It is similar to the situation we described for Norfuk. Here the subject pronouns appear in object position (or other positions needing the non-subject form), and the object pronouns can appear in subject position. So it's the reverse of the order you would expect. Here are some examples:

Give it to he, not they — her don't need it.
Us don' think naught about things like that.
You remember he?
He never interfered with I.

Write these sentences in Standard English and take a note of when you make changes to the pronouns.

4.3.3 SUMMING UP SO FAR

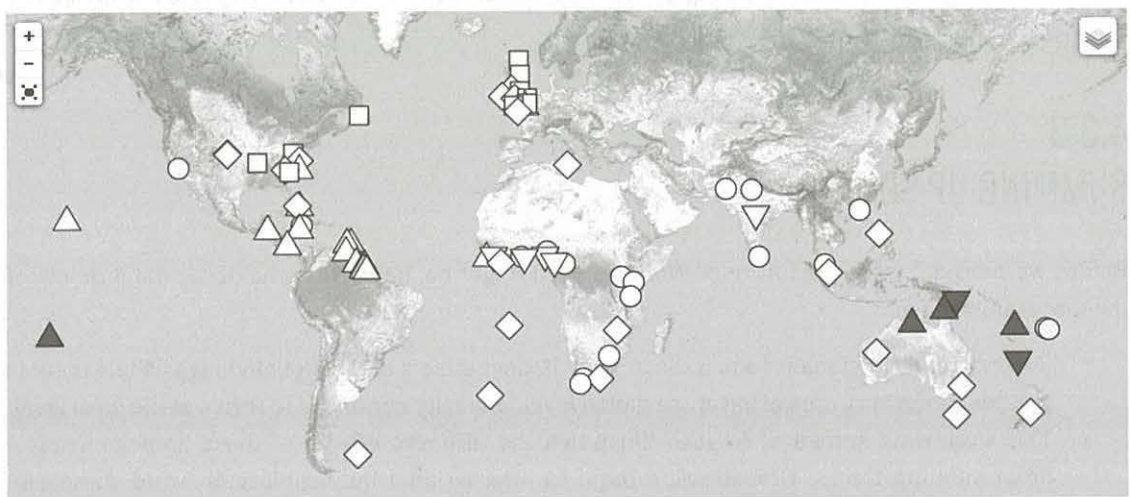
Before we consider what the future of World English might be, here are some of the main points of the discussion so far.

- Recent trends in globalization indicate two distinct effects of the global village. While there is greater conformity appearing at the global level, diversity continues to thrive at the local level.
- The worldwide spread of English illustrates the different effects of these homogenizing / differentiating forces. Globalization requires international intelligibility (a world standard). The preservation of national identity, however, fosters diversity (distinctive Englishes).

- Speakers who are traditionally associated with English (L1 speakers) are speakers of English as a Native Language (ENL). Native Englishes include British English, Scottish English, American English, New Zealand English and Australian English.
- Speakers of the New Englishes (L2 speakers) are regular users of English as a Second Language (ESL). Included here are Singapore English, Malaysian English, Indian English, Nigerian English and Hong Kong English.
- Speakers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) include the growing numbers of people who speak English as a foreign language. They belong to an expanding circle of nations such as China, Egypt, Japan, Indonesia, Thailand, Saudi Arabia and Taiwan. This is a rapidly growing group and potentially covers a range of abilities — from fully competent speakers to those with a smattering of English.
- The label Other Englishes refers to English-based pidgin and creole varieties around the world. These varieties aren't degenerate forms of "broken" English. They have their own distinctive linguistic features and styles and are the result of English in contact with other languages.
- The vast majority of native English speakers around the world differ most in terms of phonology — features of accent are what most obviously distinguish these varieties. Nonetheless, when we take into account the full gamut of variation, it is clear that some remarkable diversity also exists in English structure. We have only been able to give you a taste here.

Visit the electronic World Atlas of Varieties of English, known as eWAVE (http://ewave-atlas.org). This is an interactive database on grammatical variation in around fifty varieties of English across eight Anglophone world regions (Africa, Asia, Australia, British Isles, Caribbean, North America, Pacific, and the South Atlantic). This includes traditional dialects, contact Englishes, second-language Englishes, as well as 26 English-based Pidgins and Creoles.

For example, in Aboriginal creole you find pronoun forms for "we" that distinguishes between something called "inclusive" (which include the person addressed) and "exclusive" (which exclude the person addressed): *afla* (inclusive, i.e. 'we, including you') versus *mifela* (exclusive, i.e. 'we, not including you'). Imagine someone says to you "We're going now" — you don't know whether you're included in the "we" or not — *afla* would make that clear. The map on eWAVE indicates that the feature only shows up in around 12% of the varieties, even though, as you can imagine, it's a handy feature.



The Global Distribution of Inclusive/Exclusive Pronouns (see website for key)

4.4 LANGUAGE AS A LENS

A language is linked to the culture of its speakers in obvious ways. In Chapter 1 we described it is a mirror, using Guy Deutscher's image of how language reflects the everyday cultural and social traits of speakers. Traditionally, work in the area of language, mind and culture has also concentrated on the notion that differences between languages in their vocabulary or in their grammatical structure actually influence patterns of thought. This is the idea of language as a lens.

Linguists have since identified two versions of the proposition that language influences the way we think. The weaker version of the hypothesis is known as the principle of **linguistic relativity**. This version states that lexical and grammatical differences between languages are associated with differences in the way that speakers of these languages think. The idea is that your language predisposes you to a particular line of thinking. The stronger version of the hypothesis, the principle of **linguistic determinism,** goes much further and asserts that language actually works as a kind of filter on reality; in other words, people who speak different languages must have different worldviews.

However, there is no evidence for this extreme view. English might have no equivalent words for German *gemütlich* ('pleasant', 'comfortable', 'cosy'), but this doesn't stop us from learning the German word, or in fact borrowing it into English, which has happened, at least with the noun form (*Gemütlichkeit*). If you think about it, languages don't differ as to what they can express (otherwise translators would be out of a job). But it is certainly true that they do differ as to what they express more easily and also what they have to express. Conventions that we think of as so necessary and so reasonable are often not the conventions of other languages. And these differences do sensitize speakers to certain aspects of the world.

The pronouns of English and its relatives offer a simple illustration of this. Whereas English just has *you*, German distinguishes between *du* informal and *Sie* formal (similar distinctions exist in French and Italian). Which pronoun speakers choose then determines the grammatical form of the verb. It's an obligatory distinction that speakers of German cannot ignore. Every time they need a "you" pronoun they must make sometimes agonising decisions as to which one to use. These speakers must pay special attention to their relationship to the person being addressed; they must always think about factors to do with the status and solidarity relations between themselves and this person they are speaking to. It is reasonable to assume that German speakers would be attuned to the social details of their audience such as age, sex, status, degree of familiarity, much more than, say, English speakers who don't have to make this tricky distinction. And just imagine what it must be like for speakers of languages like Japanese or Javanese, where politeness phenomena of this kind are even more pervasive.

Examples like this one are easy to find and they do suggest that features of a language can affect the thought patterns of its speakers, or at least make speakers more receptive to certain aspects in the world around them.

THE GREAT ESKIMO VOCABULARY HOAX?

Back in the 1880s, anthropologist Franz Boas, studying communities in northern Canada, claimed that the Inuit peoples had dozens, possibly hundreds, of different words for snow. This appeared to have some validity, given that in the icy far north parts of the world, such as in Scandinavia and Russia, snow is omnipresent, and many scientists thought that it made sense for there to be a much more extensive vocabulary for the various types of snow in these language communities. However, the claim has long been disputed by linguists, and it has become something of an urban myth. As with many aspects of language, though, it is not at all straightforward. In fact, it all depends on how one defines "word". In the case of Eskimo languages, there exists a base word to which many morphemes are affixed in order to distinguish between different types of snow and ice. Recent studies have concluded that in one dialect, Yupik, there are around forty "words" for snow, while the Sami people, who inhabit the far northern reaches of Scandinavia and Russia, have over one hundred and eighty words related to snow and ice. Some examples include:

qanik	snow falling
aputi	snow on the ground
ainu	slushy ice by the sea
aniu	snow used to make water
pukak	crystalline snow on the ground

WORLDVIEW IN TEXTS

The way in which individuals and groups see their world is reflected in the texts of their society. Texts depict and represent worldviews; they are influenced by the social, cultural, economic and political contexts in which they are created. Think, for example, of the textbooks that were used in Australian schools in the early 1900s.

> A great crowd of natives, who were singing their war song, and were painted and armed as if for battle. They were a hideous sight. Some had their ribs, arms, and thighs painted white; others were daubed with red and yellow ochre, and all were smeared with grease...they brandished their spears, uttered savage yells, and worked themselves into a state of fury. From "The Faithful Kooragee", *Pleasant Hours Reader* 1906

Entries such as these, written from an Anglo-European perspective, are unlikely to be found in primary school readers now. They portrayed Aboriginal people as "fierce savages" or as "noble, faithful servants", stereotypes that were disrespectful and that ignored individuality. Changing social norms and ideologies, and the language used to express these ideas, have meant that such subjective and inaccurate views are no longer tolerated in school textbooks. Indeed, texts written by and about Indigenous Australians are far more relevant and readily able to be accessed in contemporary times.

The study of texts, and the language and ideas therein, provides a window to how speakers (and readers) think about and use language to express their worldviews.

In summary, language represents a vast repository of conventional understandings and cultural tradition that reflects the speakers' view of the world — but at the same time it also goes to shape and reinforce that worldview. Language can never be a neutral and transparent means of representing reality — it always gets in the way. But we don't want to go overboard with the notion that language

controls our view of reality. There is no evidence for the strong position (in other words, for linguistic determinism) — the idea that language and its structures limit and determine human knowledge or thought. After all, it is possible to speak about anything in any language, which presumably wouldn't be the case if we strictly followed this line of thinking. Languages don't differ as to what they can express — they only differ with respect to what they express more easily. And while this might influence our way of seeing things, it doesn't determine it. We have here a pair of tinted spectacles that probably do predispose us towards acting and thinking in one way or another, but most certainly do not control our thoughts and behaviour patterns.

Bear in mind how closely entwined language and culture is when you go on to read in the next section about the disappearance of languages worldwide. How would it be to lose something that is so central to what makes you tick?

4.5 LANGUAGE SHIFT, MAINTENANCE AND RECLAMATION

The world languages are disappearing and at a distressing rate — American Indian, Celtic, Austronesian and Australian Aboriginal languages, to name just a few. **Language endangerment** and what is known as **language maintenance** represent the most urgent challenges confronting the field of Linguistics. Many linguists are now involved in some way in fieldwork, language documentation and language revival. Even in those places where local languages appear healthy, the high status of English suggests their survival is precarious. UNESCO identifies language survival as a high priority. According to recent estimates, this century will see more than half of the world's languages disappear. English is not entirely to blame. The spread of other dominant languages like German, French, Spanish, and also non-Indo-European languages like Mandarin Chinese and Indonesian, has also been at the expense of many local languages. Nonetheless, we have to point out that English language dominance has the highest rate of destruction of endangered languages out of all those dominant languages.

The carnage is very apparent here in Australia. The effect of English on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages has been devastating. Before English-speakers settled in Australia, the country was remarkably diverse linguistically. The following shows the approximate numbers of Aboriginal dialects, languages and language families at the time of earliest European contact.

Aboriginal Language families	26–29
Aboriginal Languages	200–250
Aboriginal Dialects	500–700

For Indigenous communities, this contact has brought about wholesale extinction of many languages. As the following table shows, 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 five languages have fallen out of this category in the last ten 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.

Findings from the National Indigenous Language Survey

Language status	2005	2014	Change
Languages still spoken	145	120	25 languages (a drop of 17%)
Severely endangered	110	100	10 languages (drop of 9%)
Spoken by all ages	18	13	5 languages (drop of 28%)

Jane Simpson's 2007 paper (mentioned earlier) also examines the implications of government policy towards Indigenous Australians in terms of **language shift**; this paper is available on-line and can also be found http://blogs.usyd.edu.au/elac/, a site devoted to endangered languages and cultures of Australasia and the Pacific.

There are language communities all over the world crying out for support to help maintain their language in the face of probable extinction. Linguists need to know what factors promote language survival and what factors detract from them in order to determine how best to assist communities to document and maintain their traditional languages. Over and over again, we see language spread leading to language shift and then language death. In Australia and in New Zealand vigorous efforts are now being made to reverse this trend. In New Zealand, the establishment of the *Te Kohanga Reo* ("language nests" for children) and *Kura Kaupapa Maori* (Maori language medium schools) have had promising initial results for the individuals in these programs and they are being used as models for revival or revitalising movements in other places in the world. Time will tell just how successful such programs are in reversing the overall trend toward language death. Unfortunately, it's too late for the thousands of languages that have already disappeared.

In a recent book entitled *Dying Words*, Australian linguist Nick Evans shows that language death is much more extreme than other kinds of loss of biodiversity. Crucial parts of peoples' social and cultural identity are vanishing; for linguists, important linguistic systems are disappearing forever. And who knows what else might be disappearing with those dying words and constructions? Wisdom unique to these linguistic communities becomes extinct with their languages. This might involve knowledge connected, say, with flora and fauna — knowledge that might well contain important scientific and medical information. Nick's book also opens our eyes to other aspects of what we really do lose when a language dies. His focus is very much on, as he puts it, the "looming collapse of human ways of knowing", going beyond the languages themselves to take in evidence from psychology, poetics and even music.

Earlier we discussed the relationship between language and cognition, exploring the complex link between different ways of speaking and different ways of viewing the world (captured by the Czech proverb 'For each language you know, you are a new person'). As stated, the way we talk sensitizes

us to certain aspects of the world around us. Or as Nick puts: "Language differences act ... as the cookie-cutter shaping the categories we use from the dough of experience. They guide our attention to different facets of reality".

In an interview with Maria Zijlstra for ABC Radio's *Lingua Franca*, Nick Evans gives an illustration from the Australian language Kayardild and its attention to compass direction.

> [...] I had to put Pat Gabori, who I begin the book with, into a plane. He was an old man and he was blind. He went blind before he ever saw a car, so he didn't quite understand how you move and sit in seats and so on, and I had to negotiate with him to get him into a small plane. The right thing to say to him was '*Rayinmunkiriliija*' which is, 'Enter the plane arse-backwards from the south.' To enter 'arse-backwards from the south', that's a single word in Kayardild. So the language is just shot through with instructions like this, and to speak it you...can't speak Kayardild until you go through the mental rewiring process of deciding to pay attention to space at every point. Speakers, especially if they're boy scouts or orienteers or something, they might know how to do that at particular times, but to live among people where everyone is aware of that at every moment, that's an entirely different experience.

There is extraordinary linguistic diversity still existing in the world, diversity that goes well beyond the structural aspects of language. We are referring here to the worldview of the speakers of those thousands of languages remaining in the world — what their grammars make them pay attention to and the different ways they end up allocating and organizing reality. There is a lot that disappears with the sounds, meanings and grammar of those dying languages.

4.6 FUTURE OF ENGLISH

What might the future hold for English? Well, as speakers of English we probably shouldn't be too complacent about the future. After all, no one in the Middle Ages could ever have predicted the death of Latin. Indeed, a comparison with Latin is instructive in at least two respects.

First, Latin existed for over 2,500 years — that's at least a thousand years longer than English so far. During this time, it had considerable influence as the mother tongue for speakers of the Western Roman Empire. When the Empire dissolved, it continued as the language of scholarship, religion, diplomacy and culture. Earlier we saw illustrations of how Latin was the learned lingua franca for Western Europe until into the 17th century.

Secondly, people talk about Latin as a dead language. Certainly languages can die — perhaps the speakers are killed (as in the case of Tasmanian Aboriginal languages) or perhaps they simply give up (or are forced to give up) speaking the language in favour of another (as in the case of many other Australian languages). However, Latin didn't die but it evolved into the Romance languages we have today. Alongside the Classical Latin of the late Roman Empire (this was a kind of Standard Latin), there were vernacular (or colloquial) varieties of Latin that were spoken in various parts of Europe. As we discussed earlier when we were looking at the development of English, over time and with

physical separation regional varieties can develop independently to the point where they become different languages rather than varieties of the same language. These colloquial Latins then evolved into modern-day languages like French, Italian, Catalan and Spanish.

There are two competing pressures on our globe-trotting language — precisely the same pressures that were on the Latin language. World English (as the global standard) binds members of the international community together; yet individual nations are continuing to assert their identity via their own distinctive Englishes — just as different speakers in different parts of the Roman Empire continued to speak their own distinctive "vulgar" Latins. So is Standard English an endangered species? Could it disappear off the face of the earth, just as Classical Latin did? Sure, there has been plenty of opposition to English. France, for example, continues to issue laws banning its use. There have been plenty of anti-English moves in other parts of the world, too — but with little effect. For the moment, it's difficult to imagine a serious rival to English. The future of English as the language of the global village looks well secured, at least for the time being.

In some countries, efforts to halt a slide in language standards and to prevent the infiltration of English into the lingua franca gain momentum from time to time. In 2014, China's media watchdog issued a regulation banning all audio, TV programs and commercials from using "nonstandard expressions of Chinese," singling out words and phrases from the Internet for special attention. It has been observed, however, that to attain purity in the Chinese language, it would be necessary for the population to learn how to read, write and speak in classical Chinese, because contemporary Chinese is rife with foreign elements, including for example, seventy percent of social sciences terms that have been borrowed from Japanese.

Is there a danger that the different Englishes will eventually break up into separate languages in the same way the colloquial Latins did? Certainly, when left to their own devices, these different Englishes will continue to diverge even more dramatically and to develop more individual character – perhaps ceasing to be mutually intelligible with Standard English (this has already happened in some instances). But times have changed, and we are not isolated as speakers were during the Middle Ages. People from all round the globe now regularly communicate with each other, and the fallout of this constant contact is increasing universal bidialectism or tridialectalism; in other words, an ability to use two or three dialects of English. For many speakers of English, this is already reality. For example, they can be native speakers of a non-standard regional dialect and have learnt the national standard as a second variety in school. Those participating in an international culture will be able to shift from their local dialect or national standard to an international standard.

The future of English is undoubtedly a promising one. The global success of English means exciting diversity for the language, too. However, never forget that this triumph of English comes at considerable cost.

4.6.1 CHANGES TO STANDARD ENGLISH

> No one nation can any longer be said to 'own' English, and no one nation's anxieties over local norms of usage will make much impact in a world where diverse regional standards are the norm, and where the Internet provides these varieties with new levels of public display. A new intellectual sociolinguistic climate is slowly but surely being formed [...] (Crystal 2006 *English World-wide*)

As we pointed out in Chapter 3, you are able to read and understand the novels of Jane Austen (a writer of the Early Modern English period), but someone in Jane Austen's day would have read only with great difficulty the writing of medieval English, say the works of the poet Geoffrey Chaucer, from the 14th century. With standardization and the powerful authority of writing, the normal processes of linguistic change were slowed down, in some cases even reversed. However, this influence is now waning. These days, everything is pointing to greater variety, less standardization, the increasing influence of the newer varieties of English and the diminishing authority of native speakers.

"I cannot speak well enough to be unintelligible."
— Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey* (c. 1798–99)

"Ye knowe ek that in forme of speche is change"
—Geoffrey Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde* (c. 1385)

It is obvious that developments in the 21st century are doing much to challenge the authority of Standard English. Standards are hard to maintain for a language that has established itself in almost every corner of the globe. With non-native speakers now outnumbering native speakers and with most of Word English interaction being between non-native speakers of English, speakers now need to develop linguistic competence that is effective and appropriate for members of many different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. For example, native speaker norms for forming requests and refusals and compliments may not be appropriate in these intercultural settings. Institutions involved in language teaching and learning are now beginning to recognise that learners have to understand their own culture and also reflect on its relationship with the culture of others.

We described how a significant pressure on the standard is coming from computer-mediated communication. This format is also giving nonmainstream languages a new visibility. The Internet might have begun life as an Anglophone phenomenon, but as David Graddol has pointed out, it "has rapidly become a multilingual affair". With the net now widely used for social networking and informal communication (e.g. conversations between family and friends), minority languages are gaining a new written function and identity. This is also true of the newer varieties of English, whose written forms were once confined to conventional creative literature.

As you saw in earlier chapters, any language change represents a complex network of different influences, involving the interaction of typological, functional, phonological, socio-cultural, psychological and external contact factors, and we'd need another book to do justice to this topic. We also saw earlier that predicting change is always tricky. We can take note of what we imagine to be changes underway, but we can never be sure they will run their full course.

There is always the human wild-card factor, too. As Crystal described it in his piece *Into the twenty-first century*: "Fashions count, in language, as anywhere else". He goes on to suggest that, as the numbers of mother-tongue speakers further decline, so we may well see linguistic fashions being started by second-language, foreign-language and creole and pidgin speakers (e.g. rap lyrics show 'street language' features that come from ethnolectal varieties such as African American Vernacular English). Consider features such as lack of number agreement (*the teacher/teachers shout*), variation in the count/non-count distinction (*staffs, furnitures, equipments*), auxiliary *be* ellipsis (*She crying a lot*), habitual *be* (*he be sick*) and also very 'unEnglish-looking' structures like nominal/adjectival reduplication (*different-different things*) and *say*-based clause linkers (*Dat mean say* … 'That means that …'). All these features reflect natural processes of change and may well become part of some local standard, first in speech and later in writing. With increasing international contacts, it is conceivable that any one of these will one day slip out of the national and into the international arena to become part of a Standard English spoken all around the world.

ACTIVITIES
AREA OF STUDY 2

WORLD ENGLISH

1. Create your own digital representation of the circles of English, with updated numbers of speakers in each circle and links to information about two of the countries in each circle.

2. "Why should I learn another language when everyone else speaks English?" In the case of Eurovision it does indeed feel like everyone else does speak English. Out of 60 Eurovision contests, half of them will have been won by songs in the English language. English, is seems, is the language of Europop. *Extract from Fernando Rosell-Aguilar, The Conversation May 2015.*

   Write a linguist's response to this opinion in the form of a comment to be posted on the website where the original article appeared.

3. Investigate the language policies of one of these countries: Malaysia, South Africa, Kenya, France, China, Singapore, Belgium, Croatia. Answer these questions:

   a. What are the official policies about the use of English and/or the first language of the country in public (e.g. the media), official (e,g. schools) and informal (e.g. private interactions or online) situations?
   b. What reasons are given for the government's language policy?
   c. Is English permitted, encouraged or mandated in any of these contexts? For what reasons?
   d. Provide some examples of language that the policy seeks to eradicate or encourage.
   e. Are there any provisions for "community languages" in the country?
   f. What attitudes are there amongst the local population to their government's language policies?
   g. Prepare a report on your findings, addressing the topic: "What are the implications of the global spread of English on countries where it is not the first or official language?"

4. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) represents a group of ten nations: Myanmar (or Burma), Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. ASEAN is characterised by cultural and linguistic diversity, with more than one thousand languages being spoken within its territory. ASEAN official policy is that 'the working language of ASEAN shall be English'. This contrasts strikingly with the European Union, where there are twenty-three official languages.

   a. Discuss the implications of ASEAN's policy that promotes a linguistic monopoly for English.
   b. What are some of the advantages and disadvantages of this approach to English as a lingua franca?
   c. What does this policy reveal about the view of ASEAN policy makers about the English language?

NEW ENGLISHES

5. Find out about these blended Englishes from different regions of the world.

a. How established are they?
b. Provide examples of each – lexical, syntactic, semantic.
c. In which of Kachru's Circles would you locate each one?
d. Are the labels below considered derogatory or are they acceptable to the speakers of these varieties?

Tinglish Japlish Taglish Hinglish Chinglish Anglikaans Spanglish Korenglish

6. The following sentences illustrate some of the typical characteristics of Indian English. State how the grammatical features of each sentence differ from those of Standard English.

i. Do not throw litters (rubbish) on the street.
ii. What do you want to eat? Meat is there, vegetables are there, bread is there
iii. I am here since two o'clock.
iv. When you will arrive, please visit me.
v. She was having many sarees
vi. Yesterday's lecture has lasted three hours.
vii. Who you have come to see?
viii. I asked him where does he work.
ix. You are going home soon, isn't it?
x. I want that you should leave.

7. Below is a transcript of a conversation between a police suspect and his friend, as recorded by police in Singapore. It shows that Singlish has a number of distinctive characteristics. These include:

Singlish sign

- Verbs often not marked for past tense.
- Verbs missing agreement with subject (person and number).
- Missing auxiliary verbs; also missing copular verb to be.
- Use of already with either the basic verb or the past tense to mark completed actions.
- Plurals missing from nouns.
- No inversion of subject and verb after a question word.
- Frequent use of particles; for example, *lah*. Depending on tone and length, *lah* can indicate (1) that something is self evident; (2) impatience; (3) emphasis (e.g. strong objection); (4) completed action.
- Different word order; e.g. position of adverbs.
- Frequent repetition of words for emphasis / intensity.
- The adjective "blur" means 'very vague'.

a. Rewrite this extract into Standard Australian English.
b. Using linguistic metalanguage, discuss the changes necessary to complete this task.

Teo	(sigh) Something very big has ... happened.
Yap	What thing happen? I know at my client's place, know?
Teo	... Uh, I'm now under investigation.
Yap	Why you are now under investigation?
Teo	Yeah by ... CPIB.
Yap	Why?
Teo	I just got the news.
Yap	What news?
Teo	I don't know what, I don't know what case. Just ... just now around four o'clock, I was being called up.
Yap	Call up by who?
Teo	Okay. One of my, one of my CIO lah.
Yap	Who's your, who's your CIO?
Teo	Don't ask who lah! Why you ask ask ask?
Yap	You so fierce for what?
Teo	I'm not fierce okay. I'm very blur now okay! I'm very messy now!
Yap	Okay, okay, okay, okay.
Teo	So just now he asked me to rush back home first and clear all the stuff in my house lah, what ... what ... ever police thing that I got bring back home, the notes and so on lah. So he asked me to clear all this sort of thing lah ...
Yap	But you don't know why they investigate you or whatever shit?
Teo	I don't know who the hell is the one who go and lodge the case with them or whatever lah.
Yap	You left your house already, now you are outside?
Teo	Yes! I have done all the thing, burn all the thing ready. Can we don't talk on the phone because I'm ... I know how they work, you see? They might tap on the tape, the phone and so on. I don't know if they have tap the phone yet.

8. In several varieties of English, including African American Vernacular English, forms of the verb *be* can be omitted from some sentences. In addition, African American Vernacular English sometimes uses an unchanging (invariant) form of *be:* e.g. *I be, he be, they be.* The following sentences illustrate the omitted and the invariant *be.* Read these sentences and answer the five questions following them.

Examples of 'omitted be'
Daddy say it dangerous over there
He kind of like a snake
His name Willie
My uncle works for the city; he a trashman
Woodbine, Georgia, it close to Jacksonville

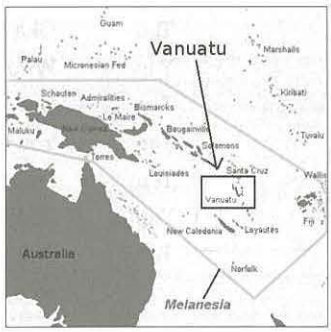
Examples of 'invariant be'
Sometime he be on the ground
I wear my coat sometime when I be at home
Six or seven, that's when I be at home
Sometime she be wanting somebody to hold her
They got a free medical clinic down there where Grady doctors be at

i) Which kind of *be* is used to refer to a permanent condition?
ii) Which kind of *be* is used to refer to a condition that is intermittent?
iii) How do the following sentences differ in meaning?
   a) They in Macon
   b) They be in Macon

iv) Why might each of the following sentences be thought odd?
   a) He be my brother
   b) Sometime he funny

v) How is African American Vernacular English more specific than other varieties in talking about the time of an event?

OTHER ENGLISHES



9. Bislama is a creole language, one of the official languages of Vanuatu. It is the first language of many of the "Urban ni-Vanuatu" (those who live in Port Vila and Luganville), and the second language of the rest of the country's residents. "Yumi, Yumi, Yumi", the Vanuatu national anthem, is in Bislama. More than 95% of Bislama words are of English origin; the remainder combine a few dozen words from French, as well as some vocabulary inherited from various languages of Vanuatu, essentially limited to flora and fauna terminology.

The extract below is from an account of a family's Christmas celebration in Vanuatu.

a. Read the Bislama version aloud with a partner (the IPA transcription may assist you).
b. Annotate the extract showing patterns of language, eg, '*mi-*' as a prefix denoting reference to oneself.
c. What does this text reflect about the culture and values of this language community?

Bislama orthography	**Phonemic transcription**	**Back-translation into English**
Lastaem long namba twentifaev long Krismas, mifala i godaon long Tetel Bei.	las taim lo namba twendifaef lo krismas mifala godaun lo daun lo tetel bei	Before on the twenty-fifth at Christmas, we went down to Turtle Bay.
Be long moning finis, mifala ol boe wetem ol man, mifala i slip we slip let.	be lo moniŋ finis mifala ol boi wetem ol man mifala i slip we slip let	But in the morning, we youths and the men slept really late.
Be ol mama wetem ol sista, ol woman, olgeta evriwan oli hadwok oli preperem kakae.	be ol mama wetem ol sista ol woman olgeta evriwan oli hatwok oli preperem kakai	But the mothers and sisters, the women, all worked hard to prepare the food.
Oli putum kakae long ston.	oli putum kakai lo ston	They put the food in the earth oven.
Oli kuk mo oli mekem evri samting.	oli kuk mo oli mekem evri samtiŋ	They cooked and made everything.

Go, mifala i odarem wan trak i kam.	go, mifala odarem wan trak i kam	OK, we had ordered a car to come.
Mifala i go daun nomo.	mifala go daun nomo	We just went to town.

10. Tok Pisin, also known as Melanesian Pidgin English, is the most commonly spoken language in Papua New Guinea and surrounding islands. A blend of English, German and local roots, the language is increasingly becoming more of a creole in some places, as native dialects continue to die out.

The following conversation in Tok Pisin illustrates some typical creole features. Read through this text and note down the non-standard grammatical features you find here. (From Dutton 1985:5)

Tok Pisin	**English translation**
Mi planim kon	**I'm planting corn**
Sapoti i wok long gaden.	Sapoti is working in the garden.
Heni i kamap na em i tok.	Heni comes up to them and says:
H: *E, Sapoti, yu wokim wanem?*	Hey, Sapoti, what are you doing?
S.: *Mi planim kon.*	I'm planting corn.
H: *Yu planim kaukau tu?*	Are you planting sweet potatoes too
Si: *Nogat. Bihain.*	No. Later.
H: *Orait inap mi halivim yu.*	All right. Can I help?
S: *Gutpela. Yumitupela wok wantaim!*	Great. Let's work together!

11. Here are two versions of The Lord's Prayer, a widely used Christian prayer.

a. Compare the English translation with the original Tok Pisin.
b. Create a translation of the Hawaiian Pidgin English version.
c. Note the differences in word order, lexicon, morphology and phonology in both pidgin versions.
d. Discuss the insights you gain to the worldview of these language users from their interpretation of The Lord's Prayer.

Tok Pisin

Papa bilong mipela, yu stap long heven,
Mekim nem bilong yu i kmap holi.
Mekim Kingdom bilong yu i kam.
Strongim mipela long bihainam laik bilong yu long graun olseam ol i bihainim long heven tu.
Nau yu ken givim mipela kaikai inap long dispela de.
Na yu lusim ol rong bilong mipela,
olsem mipela i lusim ol rong ol man i mekim long mipela.
Na yu no bringim mipela long traim,
tasol tekewe mipela long samting nogut.
Kingdom na strong na biknem i bilong yu tasol oltaim.
Tru.

English translation of Tok Pisin

Father of us, who stops in heaven.
Make your name come up holy.
Make your Kingdom come.
Make us strong in following your likes on ground and also following all of them in heaven too.
Now give us bread enough this day.
Now lose them all wrongs of ours,
And also we will lose them all wrongs that all men make on us.
Don't bring upon us trials,
And take away from us something no good.
Kingdom and strength and big name are yours all times.
Amen.

Hawaiian Pidgin English (from *Da Jesus Book*)

God, you our Fadda, you stay inside da sky.
We like all da peopo know fo shua how you stay,
An dat you stay good an spesho,
An we like dem give you plenny respeck.
We like you come King fo everybody now.
We like everybody make jalike you like,
Ova hea inside da world,
Jalike da angel guys up inside da sky make jalike you like.
Give us da food we need fo today an every day.
Hemmo our shame, an let us go
Fo all da kine bad stuff we do to you,
Jalike us guys let da odda guys go awready,
And we no stay huhu wit dem
Fo all da kine bad stuff dey do to us.
No let us get chance fo do bad kine stuff,
But take us outa dea, so da Bad Guy no can hurt us.
Cuz you our King.
You get da real power,
An you stay awesome foeva.
Dass it!

LANGUAGE AS A LENS

12. Go to the Australian Government website and read the summary of the evolution of Australian children's literature and complete the tasks below: http://www.australia.gov.au/about-australia/australian-story/austn-childrens-books

a. Match the sentence beginnings in column 1 with the endings in column 2.
b. Explain how the worldview of Australian life and literature for children changed between 1700 and 2000

Date	Event
Before 1700	The first edition of Aboriginal Dreaming stories was published, modified for a European audience by an Anglo author.
From 1800	*Legendary Tales of Australian Aborigines* by David Unaipon was published in his own name, having previously been printed without any acknowledgement to the Indigenous author.
In 1841	*Land of the Rainbow Snake, Aboriginal Children's Stories and Songs from Western Arnhem Land* was published, having been translated from the Guwinggu language.
In 1894	Children's literature was not distinguished as a separate category.
In 1896	The first book written for Australian children was published, continuing an instructive approach to children's literature.
In 1979	Australian children were considered to be like British children and the books they read reflected and taugh British customs and contexts.
In 2001	*Seven Little Australians* presented characteristics of naughtiness, youthfulness and optimism in Australian literature.

13. The use of the term "death cult" by Australian government ministers to refer to the Islamic State (also known as ISIL, ISIS and Daesh) has been condemned for creating a negative and fearful perception amongst the population about Islam more generally. Critics of the Australian government's approach point out that other world leaders, such as American President Barak Obama, maintain that the group is neither Islamic nor a legitimate state. They refrain from inciting fear in the public by choosing more moderate and accurate language for discussing the issue.

a. Discuss how, from a linguistic perspective, the term "death cult" provides speakers with a way of expressing their views on this topic.
b. Explain why some people object to the use of this term, addressing aspects such as lexicon, semantics and discourse.

14. In a program on SBS called "Talking Language", Aboriginal actor Ernie Dingo talks about what it means to him to speak in his own language, Arrernte. Watch this episode and answer the questions that follow. http://www.sbs.com.au/ondemand/video/340985411671/Talking-Language-M-K-Turner?query=Ernie%20Dingo

a. Where is Attitjere located?
b. What do the whitefellas call this land? Why?
c. What do the blackfellas call this land?
d. Are there many speakers of Arrernte left?
e. Why does Ernie Dingo use the term of address "Aunty"?
f. Ernie says: "(Shorty) Boss of this place. Welcome me to country." What is non-standard about these utterances?
g. What do only the speakers of Arrernte know about waterholes?
h. Note how Shorty code-switches from Arrernte to English. What concepts or words trigger this code switching? Give examples.
i. Shorty says: "This your home now". What is the belief or custom about country encoded in this statement?

j. Explain what Ernie learns about the shrub from Aunty MK.
k. What would happen to the knowledge about bush medicine if there were no more speakers of Arrernte?
l. At Bradshaw school, what is Aunty's role?
m. What is finger talk? Give an example and explain why it might be used by the Indigenous people of this area.
n. Why are the parents at Bradshaw reluctant to allow the children to learn Arrernte?
o. How does Aunty describe the role of language in creating her identity?

LANGUAGE RECLAMATION, SHIFT, MAINTENANCE

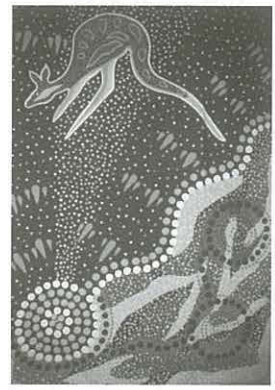
15. Here are some Aboriginal words commonly used in Standard Australian English.

a. Tick the ones you are familiar with and/or use.
b. Identify the words you knew were of Aboriginal origin.
c. Do you have different meanings for any of these words?
d. What does this brief list suggest about the presence of Indigenous languages in Standard Australian English?

Aboriginal English	**Standard English**
country	land, home
deadly	fantastic, great, awesome
mob	family, kin, group of people
lingo	Aboriginal language
Sorry Business	ceremony and rituals associated with the death of a loved one
gammon	pretending, kidding, joking
shame	embarrass, humiliate
tidda	girl female friend, best friend, peer
sista/sister girl	female friend, cousin, peer
brotha/brother boy	male friend, cousin, peer
dubbay, dub	girlfriend, female partner
gubba	non-Aboriginal person
duri (doori)	sex
charge-up, charge	drink alcohol
shame, shamejob	that's embarrassing
gunjies	police
mish	mission
moola	money

Source: http://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/language/aboriginal-words-in-australian-english#ixzz3illYlghg

16. Discuss how projects such as the ones described below might assist in preserving Indigenous languages.



i. On May 5, 2007, the first complete edition of the Bible in the Kriol language was officially launched at Katherine in the Northern Territory. The Kriol Baibul is a joint project of The Bible Society, Lutheran Bible Translators, The Church Missionary Society, the Anglican church, the Australian Society of Indigenous Languages and Wycliffe Bible Translators.

ii. Thornbury Primary School in Victoria's northern suburbs runs a language program where all students learn Woiwurrung, the language of the Wurundjeri people.

17. Visit the site of *Dust Echoes*, a project supported by the national Australian broadcaster, ABC. http://www.abc.net.au/dustechoes/

As the site explains: "Dust Echoes is one way that we are bringing everyone back to the same campfire; black and white. We are telling our stories to you in a way you can understand, to help you see, hear and know. And we are telling these stories to ourselves, so that we will always remember, with pride, who we are."

a. Listen to some of the stories.
b. Discuss the Aboriginal worldviews about issues such as creation, family and relationships, reconciliation and "proper behaviour" presented in these interpretations of Indigenous stories.
c. Note down features of language that are important in conveying these perceptions of the world, eg, recurring words, words that have no English equivalent.

18. Investigate one of the programs established in Australia to ensure that Indigenous languages are preserved. Present your findings as a website, poster, or essay. Some projects include:

i. The Kaurna language project in South Australia http://www.adelaide.edu.au/kwp/index/
ii. The Aboriginal languages project in NSW http://www.curriculumsupport.education.nsw.gov.au/secondary/languages/languages/aboriginal/index.htm
iii. The National Indigenous Languages Survey Report 2005 http://www.arts.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/35637/nils-report-2005.pdf.
iv. The Living Archive of Indigenous Languages http://www.cdu.edu.au/laal/

19. The National Geographic project, Enduring Voices, is documenting the fate of the world's endangered languages. http://travel.nationalgeographic.com/travel/enduring-voices/

Visit the website and complete the following tasks:

a. Click on the "Language Hotspots" map and choose four Hotspots (one at severe risk, one at high risk, one at medium risk, one at low risk).
b. Describe the geographical location of each language.
c. What has caused them to be endangered?
d. What are the future prospects for each one?
e. Summarise your findings in four paragraphs.

FUTURE OF ENGLISH

20. Find out what is happening to some of these dialects of English.

Cajun Lincolnshire New York Yola Cockney Scots

a. Write a paragraph about each one.
b. Explain what the implications of their loss or preservation are for English as a global language.

21. A series of short presentations by David Crystal on the topic of culture, identity and the future of English can be found at this site: http://englishagenda.britishcouncil.org/seminars/future-global-english-coping-culture?utm_source=EnglishAgenda+YouTube&utm_medium=Video+/+YouTube&utm_campaign=EnglishAgenda+YouTube

VIEWING QUESTIONS FOR PART 1

a. At the time of this lecture, how many speakers of English were estimated to exist in the world?
b. How are New Englishes defined by Crystal?
c. Why did the notion of English as a homogenous, standardised, single variety begin to disappear?
d. What are the two driving forces behind the globalisation of English?
e. Why is local identity important for understanding the status of English now?
f. How does the analogy of baseball and cricket illustrate the concept of mutual intelligibility?
g. What is the point Crystal makes about how eggs are served in America?
h. How does he define "culture"?

VIEWING GUIDE FOR PART 2

i. Note four examples of British English that Crystal cites as "language that does not travel".
j. Why is this the case?
k. What are cultural assumptions in language?
l. Why is knowledge of these underlying meanings important for effective communication?
m. Explain the meaning of the story Crystal tells about a "robot" in South Africa.
n. Why was the Heineken advertising campaign so successful?
o. How did it become an example of linguistic creativity and language spread?
p. What conclusion does Crystal draw about knowledge of grammar, spelling and punctuation and linguistic intelligibility?

22. Here are a list of "localised" or idiomatic phrases in English.

- Come down in the last shower.
- Spit the dummy
- Put the hard word on
- Done like a dinner
- Barbeque stopper
- Miserable as a bandicoot
- Hit the sack
- Twist someone's arm
- Face the music
- Look a million dollars

a. Which idioms are Australian, which are American, and which are used by both groups of speakers?
b. Discuss what cultural knowledge is required in order to understand their meanings.
c. How does cultural awareness assist or inhibit communication in English?
d. Will cultural distinctions such as these diminish over time, as English is used more and more as the medium of communication across the globe? (Consider the precedent of how relative newcomers, such as American English and Australian English, became accepted and understood by other English speakers.)

23. In Germany, a number of English words have been coined, reportedly because it is "cool" to use English. Here are a few examples:

- Handy – mobile phone
- Oldtimer – vintage car
- Mobbing – bullying
- Smoking – a dinner suit or tuxedo
- Messie – hoarder
- Tramp – hitchhike
- Pullunder – vest worn over a shirt, under a jacket

a. Identify the word class for each of the above.
b. Are these words likely to become commonly used by English speakers around the world?
c. How does this example illustrate some of the issues surrounding culture and local variation in the Englishes across the globe?

24. Many students from overseas (international students) apply to study in Australia. Research the English language requirements for students wishing to study at universities in Australia.

a. Does the information available on government websites (e.g. Department of Immigration) differ from the information given on individual university websites?
b. What is IELTS?
c. What is considered to be a minimum level of proficiency for entry to universities in Australia?
d. What advantages and disadvantages are there for students who study and obtain qualifications at English-speaking universities?
e. What impact does the marketing of tertiary study for non-English speakers have on the status of English globally?

OUTCOME TASKS

1. **Essay**
Write an essay on the following topic. In your essay, refer to the stimulus material and include examples from your reading journal.

"The spread of English is a serious problem for the rest of the world; it means that millions of people are disadvantaged and they are losing their culture and identity."

Stimulus material I–III

i. To give millions a knowledge of English is to enslave them ... Is it not a painful thing that, if I want to go to a court of justice, I must employ the English language as a medium; that, when I became a Barrister, I may not speak my mother-tongue, and that someone else should have to translate to me from my own language? Is this not absolutely absurd? Is this not a sign of slavery? *Ghandi, 1908*

ii. Indian writing in English is but one of the voices in which India speaks. It is a new voice, no doubt, but it is as much Indian as others. The point is controversial, and is reflected in controversies in other parts of the world, where the growth of the English language is perceived as a threat as well as a blessing. There is no doubt, however, about the emerging structural identity of Indian English, or about the growth of a recognised body of Indian English literature. *K. R. S. Iyengar, 1962*

iii. Jean-Paul Nerrière believes that "Globish" will not only improve global communications, but will also limit the spread of English. Many French people are horrified when English words like *hot dog* and *jumbo jet* infiltrate their beloved French language. *Edward Cornish, 2011*

2. **Investigative report**
   a. Select one of the pidgins or creoles from the list below.
   b. Complete an investigation into the development of this language, covering items i-viii.
   c. Present your findings in a format of your choice, e.g. multimedia presentation, pamphlet, website.

   Include:

   i. background information about the original language of the country where the pidgin or creole is spoken;
   ii. why English was first introduced;
   iii. which variety of English (British, American, etc) led to the development of the pidgin or creole;
   iv. the main features of the pidgin or creole, with examples from all the subsystems of language (phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, discourse);
   v. an extract from a story or song or prayer or similar text to illustrate these features;
   vi. how the language has impacted on the culture of this country or region (e.g. numbers of speakers, development of language specific services or facilities such as radio programs, bilingual signs);
   vii. a discussion about the likely future of the pidgin or creole;
   viii. a bibliography of resources you have used.

Languages for study – choose one:

Australia
1. Roper River Kriol
2. Kimberley Kriol
3. Torres Strait Is Creole
4. Yarrie Lingo

Asia, West Indies, Pacific
5. Hawaiian Creole
6. Jamaican Creole
7. China Coast Pidgin
8. Bislama

New Guinea
9. Tok Pisin

Africa
10. Sierra Leone Krio
11. Ghanian Pidgin English
12. Nigerian Pidgin English

North America
13. Inuktitut – English Pidgin
14. Chinook Jargon
15. Gullah

3. Short answer questions
   a. Explain the process by which pidgins and creoles are created. Provide examples. *3 marks*
   b. Discuss some of the attitudes to these varieties amongst speakers of Standard English. *3 marks*
   c. Discuss the difference between the terms 'asylum seeker' and 'illegal immigrant'. 2 marks
   d. Explain how the choice of one term rather than the other term might reflect worldviews of the users. *2 marks*
   e. Explain how three social events or developments have contributed to the need for a global language since 1945. *6 marks*
   f. What are 'New Englishes' and why do they continue to expand? Provide examples. 4 marks
   g. Read the exchange between speakers in a German delicatessen, in the box below, and refer to it when you answer the question: how does code-switching mark an individual's identity and help establish group membership? *4 marks*

Shop assistant:	Can I help you?
Customer:	Yes, I'd like some of that sliced meat, the Leberkäse. (*German meatloaf*)
Shop assistant:	Natürlich. Wieviel? (*Of course. How much?)*

   h. Read the extract from "Indigenous languages won't survive if kids are learning only English" and answer the questions that follow.

In fact, there's a broad consensus that Indigenous students need to be taught English to fully participate in society. Most people also agree Indigenous languages need to be preserved. But there's a great deal of confusion about how to go about this. This stems from confusion about how to address the language needs of children.

Let's begin with children who come to an Australian school speaking an Indigenous language or Cantonese or Arabic or a language of Somalia or… These children need to learn English as a subject – they need to learn English grammar, pronunciation, and to expand their English vocabulary. Otherwise they're cut off from the goods and services of mainstream society. Everyone agrees on this: Indigenous parents, immigrant parents and teachers alike. Where they disagree is how this should be done.

There's the el cheapo sink-or-swim approach – we chuck the kids into an English-only classroom where they don't understand a word of what is being said, and then we expect them to learn to speak English by immersion. This may work in classes where almost all the classmates speak English and the child's parents can provide support at home. But it doesn't work in classrooms where the classmates don't speak English, and where parents can't read or write English. If a child can't understand what a teacher is saying about arithmetic, then they won't learn the basics of arithmetic. Children become bored with not understanding what is happening in the classroom, and lose confidence in their ability to join in mainstream society.

There's a better approach – where children are taught in English, but where from the start teachers do teach them English as a subject in a systematic way, building up their confidence in speaking, reading and writing English. This will result in delays in understanding subjects such as arithmetic and science, until children have mastered enough English to understand what the teacher is saying. But at least it gives them a chance to learn English well.

In both these approaches, the home language is sometimes taught as a subject for perhaps 30 minutes a week. This doesn't help children understand what is happening in the classroom, but it may give them a sense that the language is valued. However, to do this properly, a staged curriculum is needed, where children build on what they have learned, and enhance their knowledge. There aren't the materials to do this in many communities, and so children may endure a lot of repetition of the same low-level material on plants, animals and artefacts. This may lead them to think that their home language is a restricted language, not something that they can use on Facebook, or something to use to talk about rockets, asteroids etc.

In both these approaches, the home language is sometimes taught as a subject for perhaps 30 minutes a week. This doesn't help children understand what is happening in the classroom, but it may give them a sense that the language is valued. However, to do this properly, a staged curriculum is needed, where children build on what they have learned, and enhance their knowledge. There aren't the materials to do this in many communities, and so children may endure a lot of repetition of the same low-level material on plants, animals and artefacts. This may lead them to think that their home language is a restricted language, not something that they can use on Facebook, or something to use to talk about rockets, asteroids etc.

Then there's the best practice approach – where the home language is used as the medium of instruction in the classroom at the start. Children begin school with teachers who can explain what's happening in the classroom in their home language. These teachers can teach children English in a systematic way, building up their confidence in speaking, reading and writing English grammatically.

They can explain the fascinating and complicated ideas of maths and science in a language that children can understand, until they have mastered enough English for a switch of language of instruction to English. This is ideal.

English-only schooling as practised in most Australian Indigenous communities is destructive - it reduces children's ability to learn English, to learn other subjects, to learn about the verbal arts of their own societies. It reduces opportunities to enrich their first languages through discussing new ideas in those languages. In the long-term, it reduces the chances that the next generation of Indigenous children will be bilingual in Indigenous languages and English. And in that way English-only schooling reduces the chances that Indigenous languages will survive much longer.

The full article by Jane Simpson, Australian National University, was published in *The Conversation*, 21.8.14

i. What arguments support the idea that learning English should be the right of Indigenous children? *3 marks*
ii. Why is the ability to use English seen as important in Australian society? *3 marks*
iii. Briefly explain the three different approaches to teaching Indigenous children described in the article. *3 marks*
iv. What are the advantages of children learning in their first language? *3 marks*
v. Discuss how this article contributes to your understanding of language preservation, worldview and culture. *4 marks*

Total marks: 40

Noun

WORDS CAN GIVE EVERYBODY WINGS

Auxilliary Verb

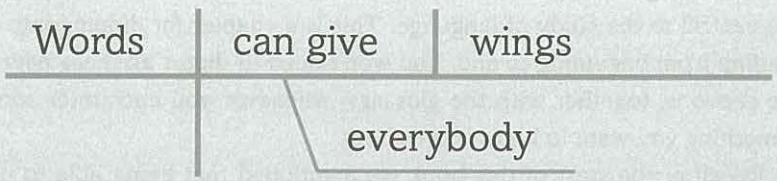
Verb

Pronoun

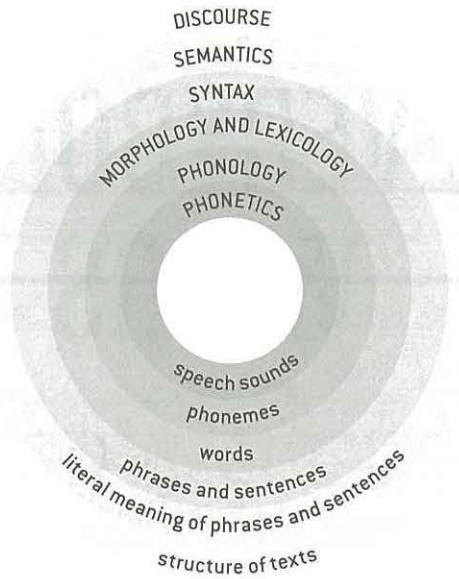
Noun

— Aristophanes, 414 BC,
The Birds

SENTENCE DIAGRAM



5.0 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.

5.1 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 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.

The Duchess and Alice, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*

Shop sign, Christchurch, New Zealand

5.1.1 VOWELS AND CONSONANTS

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.

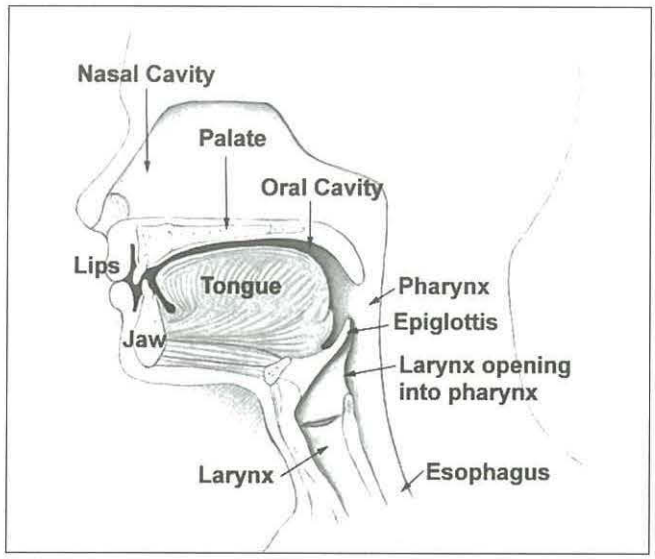
The symbols we use for English consonants and vowels are given below. But in any variety such as Australian English there are many variants reflecting differences in age, social background, sex, region — even individual identity. Many of you will pronounce the word *dress* so that it rhymes with *crass*, 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
g	**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	p			t			k	
voiced	b			d			g	
Nasal	m			n			ŋ	
Fricative								h
voiceless		f	θ	s	ʃ			
voiced		v	ð	z	ʒ			
Affricate								
voiceless					tʃ			
voiced					dʒ			
Lateral				l				
Approximant	w			r		j		

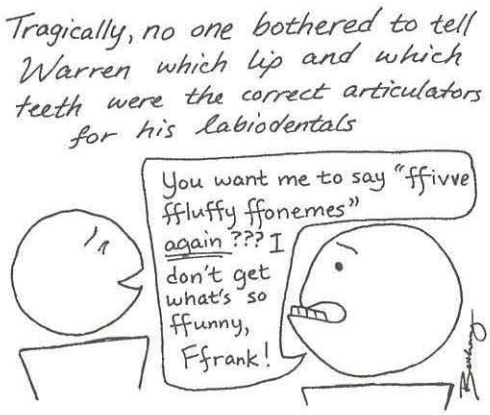


PLACES OF ARTICULATION

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 ***p**ill, **b**ill* ([p], [b] = bilabial closure); ***t**ill, **d**ill* (alveolar closure); and ***k**ill, **g**ill* ([k], [g] = 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: ***m**ill* (bilabial closure), ***n**ill* (alveolar closure) and at the end of the word *ra**ng*** ([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: ***f**ine, **v**ine* (labiodental); ***th**in, **th**en* ([θ], [ð] = dental), ***s**oon, **z**oom* ([s], [z] = alveolar); and *ra**sh**, rou**ge*** ([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 ***ch**um* 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: ***ch**in, **g**in* ([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 ***l**ovely **l**emon **l**iniment* — 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 ***y**es* (palatal), ***w**est* (lips are rounded and there is a narrowing in the velar region), and ***r**est* (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	b**ee**n	aɪ	b**uy**
ɪ	b**i**n	eɪ	b**ay**
ɛ (e)	b**e**t	ɔɪ	b**oy**
æ	b**a**t	aʊ	b**ough**
ə	**a**bout	oʊ	b**ow**
ɜ	b**ur**n	ɪə	b**eer**
a	b**ar**n	eə	b**ear**
ʌ	b**u**s	ʊə	p**oo**r, t**our*** [see below]
ɒ	b**o**ss		
ɔ	b**ough**t		
ʊ	b**oo**k		
u	b**oo**t		

*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.)

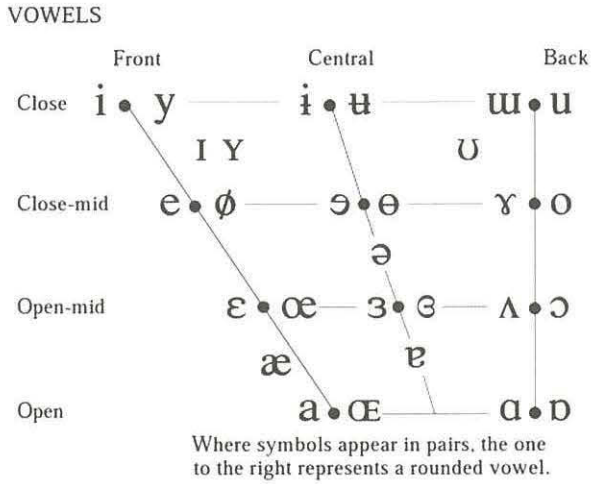
We can describe the vowel in *he* as a high vowel and that in *ha* as a low vowel. Now say the vowel sound in *he* followed by the vowel in *who* and feel your tongue move back in your mouth as you say the second vowel. In both vowels the tongue is close to the top of the vocal tract, but in the first 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.



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]

5.1.2
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/

5.2 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.

5.2.1
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.*

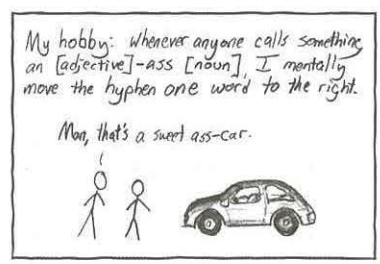
In contrast to these grammatical morphemes, English has quite a lot of derivational morphemes that attach themselves to words in order to make (or derive) other words. For instance, you could take a word (adjective) like *pure* and create another adjective *impure* or a noun *impurity*.

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*?

[krœn] + [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.

5.3 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.

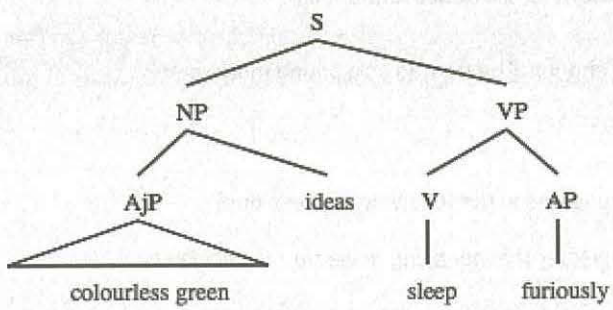
NOUNS AND NOUN PHRASES

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.

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*).

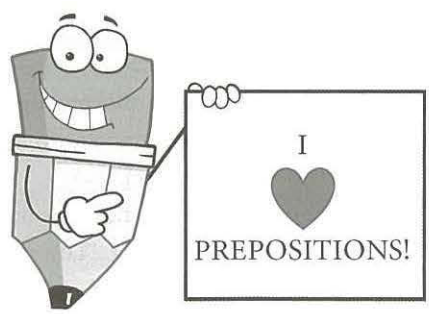
Some adverbs are gradable and therefore take the same range of dependents as adjectives (for example, degree adverbs like *too, very*): 'He behaved rather badly'. However, adjectives take a much wider range of dependents than adverbs.

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')

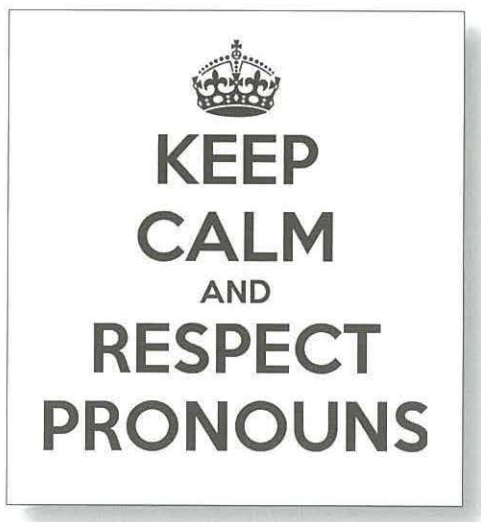
With the exception of a tiny handful of prepositions (e.g. *near, nearer, nearest the fireplace)*, there is nothing in the way of morphology; in other words, they don't change their shape.

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)

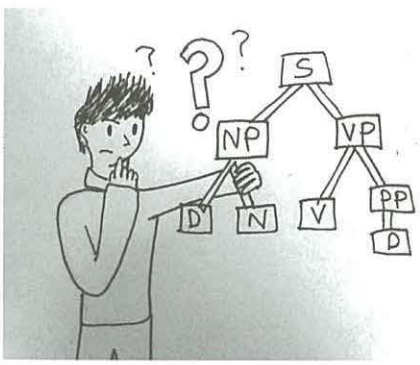
INTERJECTIONS

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!

5.4 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

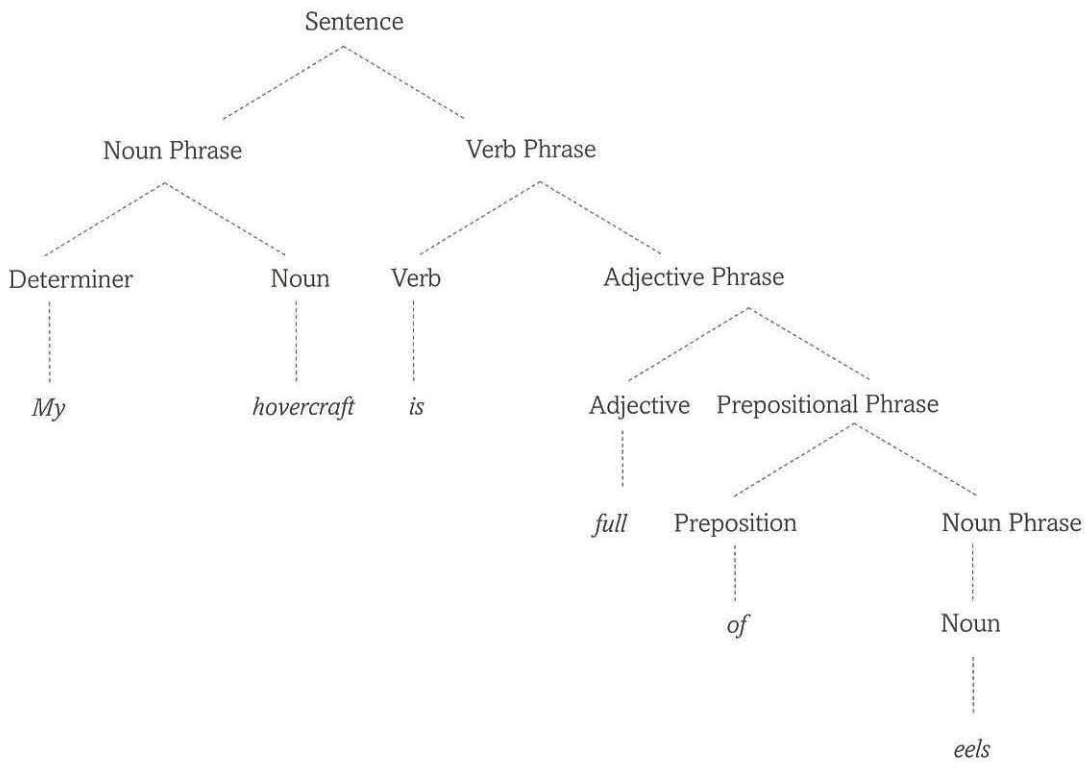
It is in fact quite clear that native speakers feel that, in English, a sentence is not just a plain sequence of words. They can divide sentences into groups of words that seem to belong together more closely than others. To begin, consider the sentence below:

'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

5.4.1
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*]

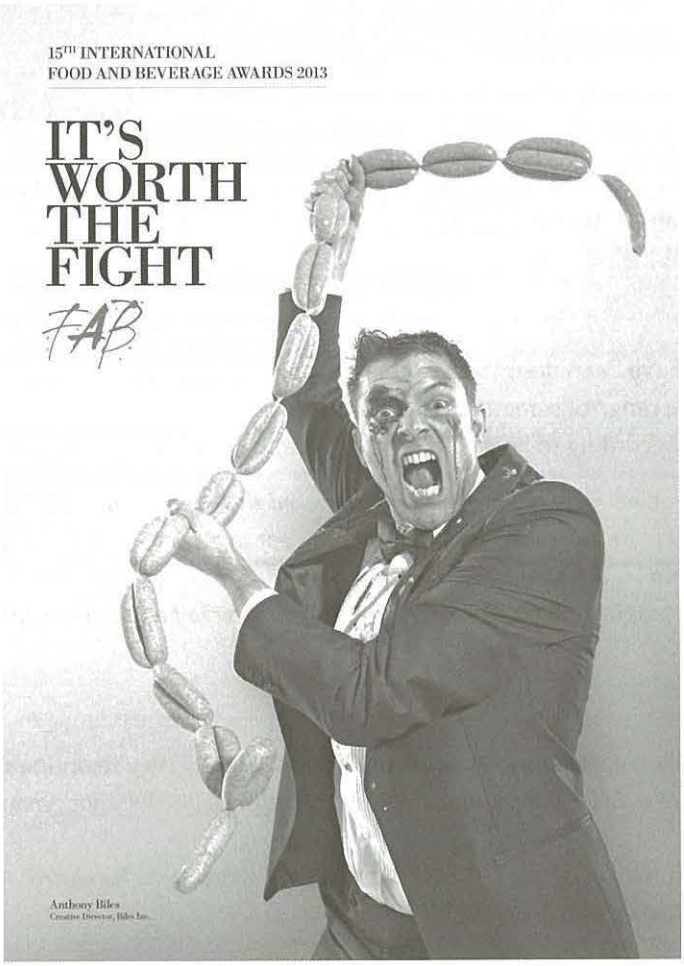
subject **object** **adverbial**

[*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.

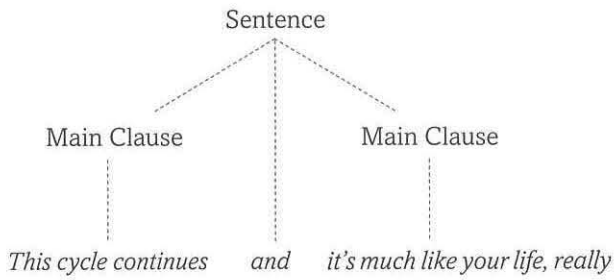
The verb in this sentence is built around *thought.* This main clause verb takes a subject, *I* and an adverbial expression (a clause) *when I got older,* as well as an object (a clause) *that I dealt with my chest hair fetish.* Note that the main clause is the whole sentence, not just *I thought.* Such 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

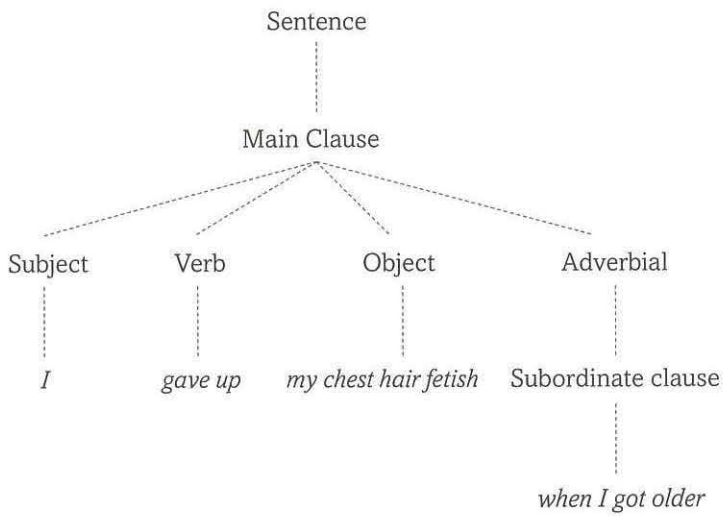
The following (rather rough) tree diagrams are perhaps helpful in indicating the difference between these two types of clause linkage:

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.

5.4.3
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 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.

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.

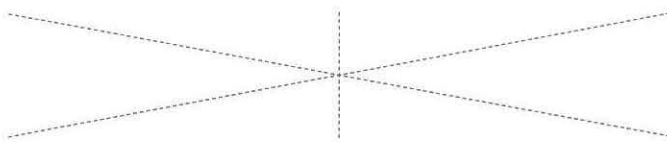
Expert ship builders	*built*	*my hovercraft*
Subject	Verb	Object
Agent		Patient

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.

Subject of active clause	Verb	Object of active clause
Expert ship builders	*built*	*my hovercraft*

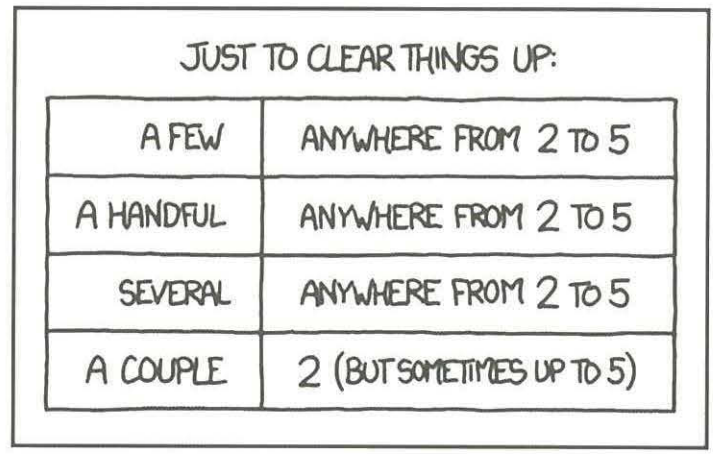


Subject of passive	*be*+past participle of verb	(*by* object)
My hovercraft	*was built*	*by expert ship buiders*

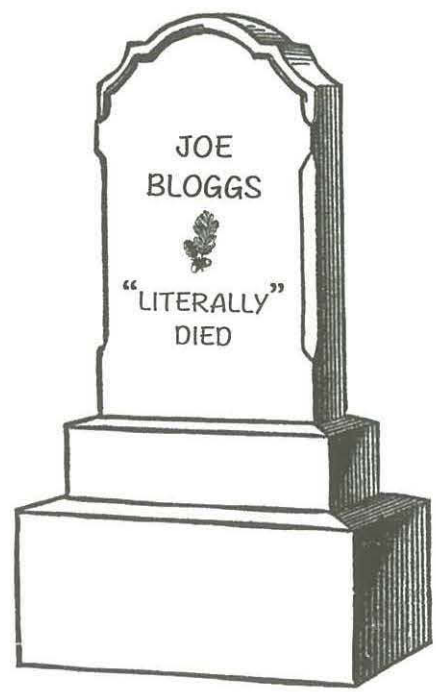
5.5 SEMANTICS

> 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!



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 characteristic way of pronouncing a language or variety that is identified with national, regional, social or ethnic background. This is sometimes confused with 'dialect', but it is possible to speak Standard English with an Australian, Queensland, older generation, working class accent.

Acronym (*Versus* initialism)
Words formed from the initials of other words (from the Greek words *acro-* 'tip, point' and *onym* 'name'); for example, *laser* from 'light amplification by stimulated emission of radiation'. Acronyms have to be pronounceable like other ordinary words in the language and words that are pronounced as strings of letter names such as PDQ 'pretty damn quick' are abbreviations (or initialism).

Adjective
A word class that typically refers to qualities or states and can occur as a modifier in noun phrases (*a tall person*) and a complement in verb phrases (*that person is tall*). 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 eventually collapsed; Eventually he collapsed; He collapsed eventually.*

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.)

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.

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.

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.

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*.

Auxiliaries
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*.

Backformation
A process of word formation whereby an affix (real or imagined) is removed from another word; e.g. *to verse* to compete against < *versus*.

Behaviourism
An approach to language acquisition that argues children develop language from what they hear around them, and that they learn from imitation, reinforcement and correction.

Bilingualism and multilingualism
Refer to the regular use more than one language; worldwide, the majority of speakers are either bilingual (competent in two languages) or multilingual (competent in more than two languages).

Blending
A word formation process resulting from the fusion of two or more elements; e.g. *to bagonize* 'to wait anxiously at the baggage carousel for luggage to arrive'.

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.

Broadening
A type of semantic change whereby the contexts in which a word can appear are expanded; e.g. *grog* 'mixture of water and rum' > *grog* 'alcohol'.

Cataphoric reference
Refers forward to another expression that follows it; e.g. *If you want it, you can take my book.*

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.

Codify (codification)
To compile a systematic account of a language by providing dictionaries, style guides and grammars.

Cognate
Words historically derived from the same source; e.g. English *father* and German *Vater* are cognates.

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.

Commonization
Where names extend from a specific case to become a household word; e.g. *to google* 'to use any search engine to seek on-line information' (from the name *Google*).

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 sentence (*See* simple sentence)

Compound sentence (*See* simple sentence)

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*).

Conjunction
A word class with the function of linking words and other constructions; e.g. *and, but* (co-ordinators) and *because, unless* (subordinators).

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.

Constituent
Any functional unit of a grammatical construction.

Content (or lexical) word
Has independent or real world meaning, as might occur in a dictionary; e.g. *book, crossword.*
See also morpheme.

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.

Contraction
Refers to the process whereby forms that are phonologically reduced attach to adjacent forms; e.g. *don't.*

Conversion
A way of forming new words by simply changing the function of a word; e.g. *Has table 13 been beveraged* shows the creation of a new verb *to beverage* from a noun *beverage.*

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).

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.

Critical period / learning hypothesis
The hypothesis that there is a defined time span within which a first language must be acquired.

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.

Denotation (*See* connotation)

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.

Deterioration (*See* Elevation)

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. [ai] 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*).

Domain
A sphere of activity, concern, interest or field; for example, home, work, school, the law, government, and so on are all domains.

EFL (English as a Foreign Language) speakers
Include the growing numbers of people speaking English as a foreign language. They belong to an "expanding circle" of nations such as China, Egypt, Japan, Indonesia, Thailand, Saudi Arabia and Taiwan. Here English has no special status.

Elevation (*Versus* deterioration)
A semantic shift whereby words change their emotive overtones. They can acquire favourable associations (= elevation) and pejorative associations (= deterioration). Elevation occurs two ways: (1) unpleasant overtones erode away; e.g. *terribly* 'in a terrible manner' > 'very'; (2) words take on favourable overtones; e.g. *image* 'representation of person/thing' > 'cultivated favourable public reputation'. Deterioration is more usual; e.g. *accident* 'a chance event' > 'chance misfortune'.

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?*

English as a native Language (ENL)
The variety of English spoken by people who are traditionally associated with English; i.e. the language is acquired as a first language (or mother tongue) or as a second first language. Native Englishes include British English, Scottish English, American English, New Zealand English and Australian English.

English as a second language (ESL)
The use of English by speakers with different native languages. Included here are speakers of so-called New Englishes that belong to the "outer circle" of countries where English has a special status, often as one of the official languages, or as an official second language. Included here are Singapore English, Malaysian English, Indian English, Nigerian English and Hong Kong English. Instruction for these English-language learners is referred to as **English as an additional language** (EAL).

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 history of words (their forms and meanings) and word origins; not to be confused with entomology (the study of insects).

Expletive
Exclamation or oath, especially one that is profane, vulgar or obscene; e.g. *Shit!*.

Field
Refers to what is going on: the nature of the activity performed and the topic discussed by the text.

Flap
A consonant produced by the rapid contact between two organs of articulation; e.g. the almost d-like quality of [t] in the middle of *latter* (as pronounced in rapid informal speech).

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.

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
Refers to the role that language plays in communication (e.g. to express beliefs or attitudes) or in particular social situations (e.g. sporting, religious).

Function (or grammatical) word (*Versus* content word)
Has a purely grammatical meaning; its role is to express the relationships between content words; e.g. *the, a. See* also morpheme.

General Australian
The accent characterizing most Australians which lies between Cultivated and Broad on the sociolectal continuum. *See also* accent.

Gender (grammatical)
Organization of words into different classes identified by labels such as 'masculine', 'feminine' and 'neuter'.

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.

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.

Homophone
Words with a different origin and meaning but with the same pronunciation. They may or may spelled alike; e.g. *soul* 'spirit' and *sole* 'underside of the foot'.

Idiom
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'.

Imperatives (*See* sentence type)

Implicature
Anything that is inferred from an utterance; for instance, if you were to say *Some cakes were eaten* this implies that not all the cakes were eaten (this is an implicature).

Indo-European language family
a family comprising several hundred languages spoken in most of Europe and in parts of Southwest, Central and South Asia.

Inference
The additional information assumed by hearers/readers in order to make a connection between what has been said/written and was is meant. Note that speakers/writers imply and hearers/readers infer.

Inflectional affixes (*See* derivational affixes)

Innatism
An approach to language acquisition that assumes the human mind is predisposed towards learning a language; humans are said to be born with an innate grammar, or a special "Language Acquisition Device".

Insertion
The addition of sounds where they previously didn't exist; e.g. *film* [fɪləm].

Interactionism
An approach to language acquisition that assumes language development is both biological and social. Children are born with brains that predispose them to the ability to pick up languages, but it is interaction with those around them that helps them to grow cognitively and linguistically.

Interjection
Minor word class involving words that have emotional meaning. Such words stand by themselves outside the clause; e.g. *Doh!*.

International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)
A standard system of phonetic notation (based on the Latin alphabet) to represent the sounds of spoken language.

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 contrastive use of voice pitch in speech.

Intransitive verb
Cannot take an object (the action or event does not transfer from one entity to another); e.g. *he died.*

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; for example, *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.

Language acquisition
Is the process by which humans acquire the capacity to understand language and to produce and use words and sentences in order to communicate.

Language Acquisition Device
Assumes children are born with an innate mental faculty that enables them to construct and internalize the grammar of their native language on the basis of the limited linguistic input they receive.

Language maintenance
Refers to the situation in which speakers of continue to use their native language from generation to generation even though a new more powerful language is also available to them.

Language reclamation
Refers to the attempt to halt or reverse the decline of a language or to revive (or revitalize) an extinct one.

Language shift
Occurs when speakers abandon one language in favour of another.

Lateralization
The process whereby the right and left hemispheres of the brain each take over a dominant role for certain mental functions.

Lexical
Pertaining to words (vocabulary).

Lexicology
The study of the vocabulary of languages.

Lingua franca
A common language used between speakers of different linguistic backgrounds.

Linguistic relativity (*Versus* linguistic determinism)
Describes the relationship between language and thought. There are two versions. The strong form claims that language determines the way we perceive and organise the world (= linguistic determinism); the weak form claims that language simply influences our thinking (= linguistic relativity).

Loudness
Relates to the intensity of sounds; also known as **Volume**.

Manner of Articulation
The process of articulation used in the production of sounds.

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.

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.*

Metathesis
Switching in the sequencing of sounds; e.g. *ask* for *ask*.

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*. Some morphemes must attach themselves to other morphemes (= bound) and some can stand alone (= free).

Morphology
The study of word structure, especially in terms of morphemes.

Narrowing
A type of semantic change whereby the contexts in which a word can appear are reduced; i.e. words mean only a part of what they originally meant; e.g. *liquor* 'liquid' > 'alcoholic beverage'.

Neologism
A newly coined word.

New Englishes
New varieties of English that have emerged around the world as official or co-official languages; e.g. Singapore English.

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*).

Obsolescence
The gradual loss of a linguistic item; e.g. the forgotten lexicon of carving, as in *to frush* a chicken and *to culpon* a trout.

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*).

Other Englishes
Refer to contact varieties such as English-based pidgins and creoles around the world. They are not degenerate forms of 'broken' English but have their own distinctive linguistic features and styles.

Overgeneralization
Where children extend word meanings or grammatical rules beyond their normal use; e.g. [mu] 'moon, half-eaten cakes, bananas'; *goed* instead of *went* (the regular past tense ending is applied to irregular verbs).

Paralinguistics
Refers to those features of speech that are marginal to language, including aspects of 'body language' such as stance, gesture and gaze.

Parts of speech (*See* Word classes)

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.*

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.

Phrases
Clusters of words that form a grammatical unit but are smaller than clauses; e.g. *my hovercraft; full of eels.*

Place of articulation
The articulatory point in the vocal tract where sounds are produced.

Phonology
The study of sound systems of language.

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).

Prescriptivism (*Versus* descriptivism)
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.

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

Prosody
Used in phonetics and phonology to refer to the characteristics of pitch, rhythm, tempo, loudness (= prosodic features).

Proto-Language
The ancestral language of related languages that can be reconstructed by via the comparative method; e.g. Proto-Germanic is a hypothetical language that is the parent of English and German.

Raising
Change to a vowel that is made towards the top of the mouth.

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.

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*).

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
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 (or domain) of wine.

Semantics
The study of linguistic meaning.

Sentence fragment
Phrase or clause that is not a complete grammatical sentence, although it is punctuated and capitalized as if they were; e.g. *Good luck!.*

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

Setting
The non-linguistic situation in which interaction takes place.

Shortening
A word formation process that produces abbreviated versions of longer words; e.g. *loony (< lunatic).*

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*).

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.

Shift
A semantic change that entails the total alteration of contexts; i.e. a word comes to mean something completely different; e.g. *spell* 'a period of work' > 'a period of rest from work'.

Sociolect
A variety used by people of a particular type of socioeconomic status or educational background (High(er) sociolect, low(er) sociolect.)

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.

Standardization
Refers to the development of a common standard from among a range of dialects.

Stem (*See* root)

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. *The man 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 are 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 because I liked it* and *Here's the book that I recommended.*

Suffix (see affix and affixation)

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.

Tag
An element attached to the end of an utterance, such as *eh? ok?* or an interrogative tag, *is it?* or *doesn't it?*

Tempo
The speed at which we talk (also known as timing).

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.

Tenor
Refers to the interpersonal relationship between interlocutors, including relative power or status and degree of intimacy.

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).

Turns (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.

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 situational uses of a language, such as legal or formal varieties, but it would be more appropriate to call these registers.

Verb
A word class that is traditionally defined as 'a doing (or action) word' (though many verbs like *be* wouldn't fit this description). Most morphological complexity in English is associated with the verb; a verb will change its shape depending on person, number and tense.

Vocalization
Articulating a consonant such as [l] as if it were a vowel.

Voicing
The result of vocal cord vibration; e.g. voiced consonants include [b], [g] and [v].

Volume (*See* Loudness)

Vowel reduction
Relates to the weakening of vowels when words are unstressed; e.g. the reduction of vowels to schwa in grammatical words like *was* ([wɒz] strong form versus [wəz] weak form). *See* also schwa.

Word class
Set of words showing the same grammatical properties. Traditionally, eight classes have been identified for English (verbs, nouns, adjectives, adverbs, pronouns, prepositions, conjunctions and interjections) and two others have since been added; namely, determiners and auxiliaries.

Word loss / Word Addition
Refers to two fundamental aspects of lexical change — how new words are born and how they die.

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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.

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"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

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