2012 Assessment Report

VICTORIAN CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT AUTHORITY

2012   English Language GA 3: Examination

GENERAL COMMENTS

The 2012 English Language examination consisted of three sections. Section A had six questions worth a total of 15 marks. Section B, an analytical commentary, had one question worth a total of 30 marks. Students could choose one of three essay topics in Section C, which was worth 30 marks. There were two texts for analysis in Section A and one text in Section B. The transcript in Section B contained 107 intonation units, a similar amount to past years.

This was the first examination for the revised *VCE English Language Study Design*.

Section A was generally completed well, although Questions 2, 3 and 4 proved difficult for some students. Questions 5 and 6 required students to identify linguistic features using metalanguage; however, it was apparent, in some answers, that students did not follow these instructions. Question 6 required a focus on Text 2, not Text 1. Students are encouraged to practise responses for questions similar to those found in Section A.

The task for Section B required an analytical commentary. Students responded to this new task very well and the quality of responses for Section B was high. Students addressed the task with purpose and confidence. It was evident that a number of different approaches to this task had been taught, but all responses were assessed holistically according to the published criteria. Students are encouraged to view the examination criteria for this section. Students who analysed the text in a sophisticated, accurate and fluent manner, while also ensuring metalanguage was used, scored highly.

Section C contained three essay topics. Students appeared to manage their time well, with few unable to complete their essay. Most selected Question 8 or 9. It was common for students to write at length and to clearly reference the stimulus material. It was evident that many students had learnt examples from contemporary Australian society, and many of these examples were relevant and interesting. However, the structure of essay responses was disappointing – particularly the structure of paragraphs – as topic sentences, cohesion and discussion were sometimes neglected because students focused on describing examples and scenarios relevant to the topic. There were few references to linguistic texts or the work of linguists and lexicographers as the focus appeared to be on evidence drawn from the media; a balance needs to be struck between the two when providing evidence. The more able students remained focused on the topic throughout their response and linked their paragraphs to create cohesion and coherence.

Advice to students

- This study requires a sound knowledge of grammar; students should be able to identify and comment on the use of parts of speech (word classes) and other elements of grammar.
- Students are reminded to apply the knowledge learnt in Unit 3 to essay writing. The features of formal, written texts need to be used.
- In Section B students are encouraged to link features of discourse and stylistic features to social purpose, register and context.
- Students are reminded that, while it is not directly assessed, handwriting must be legible in order for assessors to award marks.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

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

Section A – Short-answer questions

This section consisted of Text 1 – an extract from the Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre (VTAC) online handbook and Text 2 – an extract from the Victorian Government website 'Youth Central'. The first text contained formal language features and the second text was more informal.

Question 1

Marks	0	1	Average
%	13	87	**0.9**

The text was written in a highly formal register.

Question 2

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	52	18	30	**0.8**

The example of the passive voice was in line 6, 'Full investigations will be conducted into the submission of unauthorised applications'. This is an example of an agentless passive as there is no indication of who will carry out the investigations. By concealing the agent or subject, the tone becomes more authoritative and formal. Distance is created between the reader and the text.

Students needed to explain how the use of the passive created formality.

Question 3

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	51	18	31	**0.8**

The modal verbs in this text conveyed a range of moods about the likelihood of an event taking place. Students could have selected 'must', 'may' and 'will' as examples of modal verbs used in the text.
- 'Must' indicates obligation or necessity. For example, line 3, 'you must read…'
- 'May' indicates something is possible. For example, line 29, '…may lawfully require'.
- 'Will' implies intent. For example, line 4–5, 'Persons…will be liable'.

A large proportion of students did not score any marks for this question. It is important for students to learn the grammar associated with the study. A number of students found it difficult to comment on the function of the modal verb without referring to the modal verb again. For example, 'will indicates that something will happen'.

Question 4

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	43	22	35	**0.9**

The verbs are in the present tense ('I declare', 'I authorise', 'I understand') because of the legalistic nature of the document. By referring to the current time, the text is making the reader aware of their obligations in committing themselves to the terms and conditions for now and the future.

Following is an example of a high-scoring response.

The predominant verb tense is the present tense, seen in the first person singular verbs such as 'I authorise' (lines 12, 15 and 16) and 'I understand' (lines 22, 30 and 33). These assist in the purpose of binding the reader to their word as they are acknowledging these things at present, at the time they are reading it.

Question 5

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	17	22	30	19	12	**1.9**

Lexical choices contributing to the formal register of the text included
- use of legal jargon
- nominalisation
- repetition of verbs
- use of noun phrases, using proper nouns, subsequently referred to by acronyms.

Students were asked to use appropriate metalanguage in this response. The use of terms like 'long words' or 'polysyllabic words' were not sufficient when explaining a formal register.

Following is an example of a high-scoring response.

This text involves many instances of complex lexemes of Latinate origin such as 'liable' (line 5) and 'omissions' (line 11) which contribute to the text's formality. There are also examples of nominalisation for example 'submission' (line 6) which are typical of formal texts. Proper noun phrases, for example 'Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations' (line 23) contribute to the text's formality by lending a sense of power and authority. Finally, modal auxiliary verbs in the present tense such as 'must' (line 3) and 'will' (line 10) lend the text a formal tone by outlining formal duties and responsibilities.

Question 6

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	6	20	35	25	14	**2.2**

The second text is more casual and informal than the first. Its purpose is to advise students how to proceed once they have their results.

Linguistic features contributing to the informal register included

- discourse particles 'okay' and 'so'
- the use of the pronoun 'you' creates a link to the reader and personalises the text
- contractions 'don't' and 'it's'
- colloquial expressions and lexicon 'news isn't so great' and 'you're not alone'.

The focus of this question was on Text 2 rather than Text 1, as some students seemed to assume. It was important to discuss features within that text rather than features not present in the text.

Following is an example of a high-scoring response.

The main purpose of text two is to provide informational support and comfort for students receiving VTAC offers, as well as building a rapport with them. In this way the text is a lot more personal than text one, with constant use of the personal pronoun 'you' (lines 2-5). Furthermore, the use of the exclamative sentence type (line 1) in text two helps reduce the formality compared with text one which contains mostly declarative sentences. This sentence type also helps the author build a rapport with his readers by reducing social distance, hence supporting that function of the text. The discourse particle 'okay' (line 2) also reduces the formality of the text by imitating spoken language, thus helping to build rapport with the audience. This feature is not seen in text one, being a more formal text which seeks to depersonalise itself not completely but as much as possible to create an authoritative tone, establishing themselves as an important body which must be obeyed.

Section B – Task

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	Average
%	2	1	1	2	4	6	9	11	15	16	13	9	6	4	2	0	**8.3**

The context of the conversation was two women conversing on a Melbourne train. It is apparent the two women know each other and that both have an interest in dogs. The social purpose involves an informal conversation between friends and the register is informal. The conversation is unscripted and spontaneous, and so contains non-fluency features such as false starts, overlaps and repetition. Margaret is the dominant partner in the conversation and Joan is supportive of this. Joan supports the conversation with backchanneling. Joan asks most of the questions, which allows Margaret to continue to hold the floor. There is shared laughter on numerous occasions; this is a feature that was very apparent in the text and reflected the shared intimacy and relaxed nature of the text. Both women used crescendo or loud voice for dramatic effect when they were relaying dramatic moments in the story.

- Students are encouraged to structure their responses and use paragraphs.
- Students should not restrict their responses to one part of the text; some students did not refer to the conversation about mascara and analysed lines 1–82 but not lines 83–107.
- Students should be aware of the appropriate features to discuss; prosodics, topic management, turn-taking and non-fluency features should have been key areas of focus and discussion. While discussion of coherence through inference was reasonably appropriate, the main focus of the analysis was not cohesion and coherence.
- The less able students who used the subsystems of language as a structure for analysis were sometimes limited in what they could discuss.
- The length of a response is not necessarily related to the quality of the response. Some students weakened their answers because comments towards the end of their responses were irrelevant, repeated or not analytical. It is not a requirement to fill the answer book, but conversely, writing one-and-a-half pages of analysis is usually not sufficient for a high-scoring response.
- Weaker students failed to engage with the text in a detailed manner. These students listed stylistic and discourse features but did not connect these features to the social purpose, register and context of the discourse.
- Most students did not use subheadings. The use of subheadings would have added structure to some responses.

Following is an example of a high-scoring response. This student successfully connected the language features used to the relationship of the interlocutors and their social purpose. Detailed references with line numbers and examples were provided and the analysis was strong. However, the paragraph on lexis weakened the response as it was not consistently good, and the student missed the opportunity to analyse non-fluency features and turn-taking in more depth later on in

the analysis. There was little analysis of Joan's comments on mascara. The context of the conversation needed to be acknowledged, although it was impossible to speculate how the train journey affected the conversation. The final paragraph on register served as a conclusion.

The function of this relaxed conversation is primarily to provide information regarding Margaret's dog and Joan's dog as can be seen by the declarative sentences referring to them, 'She got out of the water alright by herself,' (4) and 'Patch went one way around a pole,' (64). The secondary function of this text is to develop and improve the friendship as can be seen by the use of laughter, '@@@@' (24) and minimal responses urging speakers to continue speaking, '[hmm]' (56). Due to the fact that the relationship between the two is friendly, the register becomes quite informal, illustrated by the use of overlapping, '[Yeah]' (11). The audience is simply Margaret and Joan as they make no effort to elaborate that Bella, Scuffy and Patch are dogs to another person, 'Bella nearly drowned in the Yarra on Saturday.'

The prosodics used in this text as well as other non-fluency features such as repeats, are used as they show interest in what the other interlocutor is saying as well as making what they are saying more interesting. This occurs in line 2 when Joan indicates shock after just learning that Margaret's dog had nearly drowned on Saturday, '<F Oh no F> (.)' (2). This indicates worry and concern and demonstrates that she has been listening to what Margaret has been saying. Margaret uses crescendoing intonation further on in the text to make what she is saying more interesting for Joan, '<CRE Look at this/ woohoo, let's go. CRE>' (21-23). This also functions to reflect an informal register as it shows that Margaret is comfortable enough to use intonation that gets progressively louder and faster. The pair both emphasise certain parts of their speech to show importance of the particular word or phrase in the sentence. For instance Margaret emphasises the word 'else' in 'but everyone else got scratched in the process' (6). This is also used to demonstrate humour which elicits an extremely informal register and further establishes the relationship between the two as friendly. Laughter immediately follows this, '@@@' (7) again, an indicator of the informal register and relationship between the two as well as the secondary function to develop friendship.

The lexis used in this shows the primary function to detail information of the interlocutors dogs and the things that have happened regarding them. This can be seen through the common referral to each dogs name, 'Scruffy' (13), 'Bella' (59) and 'Patch' (64). The use of non-standard lexemes such as 'Nup' (37) and 'dumb-dumb' (57) represent an informal register as it is not the type of language used in a formal register. The use of dog related lexemes manages to indicate the semantic field of dogs, 'terrier' (35), 'walking him' (42) and 'Maltese Shih tzu and King Charles' (33) which is instrumental in creating coherence. When the lexicon changes to a semantic field of mascara, the primary function is changed to J informing M of the type of mascara she bought, 'it was gluggy \' (92) and her disappointment with it, 'I wanted to take it back.' (100). Despite the change of primary function, the secondary function of developing the friendship stays the same as can be seen by the laughter, '[@@@@@@@] (95).

The discourse features of this text reflect both the register and the relationship between the two interlocutors. This is achieved through overlapping, minimal responses and topic management. Overlapping is seen throughout the text as it shows the fact that formal conversational strategies and customs are not needed due to the fact that they are friendly with each other. Such as in line 105, when Margaret interrupts with, '[Yeah, that was four dollars].' This is not seen as rude in this context as both Margaret and Joan are friends and don't mind if the other interlocutor interrupts their turn to add extra information. This helps to further establish the fact that this conversation is very informal as overlapping is considered very improper in formal registers. Minimal responses are a polite form of overlapping as they show interest towards the speaker. In this case Joan indicates her interest in the fact that Margaret's dog Bella is well behaved by saying, '[hmm]' (56). This shows a friendly relationship between participants as they are interested in what the other is saying. The topic management of this text is mainly controlled by Margaret as she starts by saying, 'Bella nearly drowned in the Yarra on Saturday.' (1) Further on, Joan changes the topic to Margaret's other dog, Scruffy, by asking, 'So how ol – (.) how big's scruffy' (31). Then the conversation progresses, Joan then changes the topic to mascara by stating, 'I can't find my mascara,' (84). The shared nature of the topic management indicates that one friend does not feel superior to the other and that they have a friendly relationship.

The register of this text is maintained as quite informal through the use of prosodics, non-standard lexicon and overlapping. Similarly, the friendly relationship between the two interlocutors is also shown by the variation on prosodics, the lexicon and various discourse features such as overlapping, minimal responses and topic management. Finally, the two functions of the text are shown by the varying lexicon as well as the use of prosodics and discourse features.

Following is an example of a high-scoring response. The student successfully identified and commented on features of language that showed the close relationship of the interlocutors while also showing an excellent understanding of register. The analysis was confident and detailed. Topic management and turn-taking were explored in an assured manner, and the paragraph on the phatic nature of the conversation again reinforced understanding of the relationship and purpose of the conversation. Certainly, the use of prosodics could have been analysed in more depth, but it is not always possible to cover every feature of the text in the time allocated. The comment on Grice's maxims did not reflect the requirements of the study design and students are not expected to comment on this.

This text is a highly informal phatic speech shared between two interlocutors, Margaret (M) and Joan (J). As such the situational context of this speech is set in a very public and open domain where the primary purpose of M and J's speech is to build rapport

and induce familiarity. This conversation is highly informal evidenced through a range of stylistic features, but remains to be very co-operative and smooth in nature. This text conforms well to its spoken mode.

Evidently seen through the discourse, M and J share a myriad of turn taking and topic management procedures to facilitate a smooth conversation. J often poses interrogatives like, 'Does Scruffy swim?' (line1) to maintain the fluidity of the conversation. J also poses interrogatives so that M may have more context to elaborate on, as she displays in line 3 'was she all right?' As such J demonstrates her role as a supportive speaker as she constantly assists M to hold and maintain the floor. J also uses minimal responses to show that she is still listening and to indicate to M that M still has the floor, exemplified in 'Uh huh' (line 15). M on the other hand does not display her role as a topic manager but manages to hold the floor the longest. As J poses interrogatives, M is compelled to answer with detail as she wishes to maintain a fluid conversation. Hence M's utterances are generally lengthier and more dense seen in lines 45-47 'John had yesterday off ...after her.' By complying to the maxims of relevance, manner and quantity, M signposts to J that she, too, is a co-operative speaker. Interestingly, J initiates their topic changes as she uses crescendo in line 64 to notify M that she has the floor and wishes to hold it, which she does by applying rising intonation at the end of lines 65 'way/' and line 66 'lead/'. Seen through the range of co-operative turn-taking and topic management strategies M and J display a very fluid conversation.

The phatic purposes of this text are clearly reflected through the palette of stylistic features. Shared laughter in lines 23 and 24 show fondness by expressing mutual taste in humour, as they both find the joyous phrase 'woohoo' amusing. The use of discourse particles like 'yeah?' in line 17 show J's interest in M's dog Scruffy and wishes M to elaborate more on Scruffy's incident. This is particularly effective as M's discourse is centralised around the dogs, indicating that M is very fond and they are very dear to her, and by J showing interest in M's dog, J is able to make herself more appealing as both a friend and an easy going talker. The use of descriptive informal lexis also show intimacy as lexemes like 'gluggy' (line 92), 'crap' (line 102) and 'lemon' (line 98) foster a shared acknowledgement of a relaxed and colloquial atmosphere, where attitudes towards language are lax. Also, the way how J describes her mascara as being a very slovenly and cheap product, 'it only cost 4 dollars' (line 56), demonstrates J's frustration with the poorness of quality as she tries to seek reassurance or perhaps sympathy with J's predicament. Which M quickly responds and comforts her through shared laughter, lines 95-96 and consolidation 'Yeah, it was worth a try.' (line 107). The use of inference is a salient factor on how M and J build rapport. In line 45 M begins her utterance by mentioning John, which J acknowledges and indicates awareness through her minimal responses in line 48. The fact that J and M can draw upon outside knowledge and mutually comprehend each other shows that M and J are not strangers but were predisposed as friends before the conversation took place. As such, through the range of stylistic features the text supports its phatic purposes.

This conversation can evidently be seen as a text that conforms well to its spoken mode. The use of pauses in line 85 '...I bought it...' show that J is currently in the process of thinking of her next utterance which exemplifies that this text is highly spontaneous. The evidence of a false start in line 31 'so how ol-..', demonstrated by J also shows that the conversation is in no way scripted and is coming from sheer emotion and interest. The use of prosodics like elongation of word sounds are also typical spoken like features as M attempts to emphasise the clumsiness of her dogs in line 62.

Indeed, though the plethora of turn taking strategies, stylistic features and informal phatic communication markers, M and J display a very fond and close relationship, one that is very devoted to their dogs.

Section C – Essay

Question chosen	none	8	9	10
%	1	51	45	3

Questions 8–10

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	Average
%	1	0	1	2	4	6	10	13	15	15	11	9	6	4	2	1	**8.3**

Successful students
- identified the focus of the topic
- provided a sophisticated analysis of the linguistic issues
- used linguistic terms appropriately
- used language appropriately and accurately
- identified and discussed relevant, contemporary examples
- demonstrated a strong grasp of language use.

Question 8
Relevant topics included (but were not limited to)
- Use of Australian accent in creating an identity
- How American language has affected Australian identity

- The use of shibboleths and regionalisms in creating an identity within Australia
- Ethnolects
- Australian slang and its use in creating a distinct identity.

The essay's focus was on how 'language and identity are inextricably linked'. However, a number of students responded by writing on Australian language features without connecting these features to identity. The importance of planning a response, with a clear focus on the topic, cannot be understated. It was also evident that a number of students who provided many examples, particularly examples taken from the media, did not link these examples to the topic particularly well; instead of producing a logical thread running through the response, a series of seemingly unconnected examples, paraphrased from the media, were tenuously connected, often within the same paragraph.

Few students recognised that some people, in an attempt to change an identity, may code switch or accommodate their use of language depending on audience. Our language may reflect one identity at the office and another identity at the football, for example.

There was good discussion on how Australian men and women use language to create identities. Students' knowledge of linguistic features was sound and the range of examples was good.

Following is an example of a high-scoring response. In many ways it is typical of a number of responses because of the topics chosen for discussion. This student tried hard to connect language used to identity. It has a clear structure, provides contemporary examples and makes use of metalanguage. However, the paragraph on ethnolects would have benefited from further examples. Equally, the paragraph on the use of the broad accent to forge an identity, while interesting, needed further examples to support the writer's contention.

Throughout history language has always held multiple functions and has shown great flexibility in adapting to the needs of the people. It has allowed for individuals to establish their identities and foster relationships with others on the basis of this, whether it be on an individual or national scale. Slang is one of the means by which such an identity can be created, whilst ethnolects too are able to reflect identity, due to Australia's multicultural nature. In addition different accents, such as Broad Australian English can also forge unity and this language will inevitably assist in creating an identity as well.

Slang is one of the means by which an identity can be formed, through the mutual trends of a group. It is a purely lexical field of an ephemeral nature, which helps establish those who are in the group and those who are not. These inclusive and exclusive functions serve to unite its users who have lexical features in common. One such example is the use of 'cray cray', which was said in Big Brother in Australia in 2012. This is a reduplication and shortening of the lexeme 'crazy', and slang like this appeals to younger demographics in Australia. Furthermore, Australian identity too can be formed in slang, through use of diminutives, where lexemes are shortened to one syllable and a suffix of –ie, -o or –y is inserted. Recent examples of this include 'devo' (devastated) said by Andy Allen (Masterchef 2012) and 'smoko' (smoking) which appeared on ABC Grandstand radio through the first cricket test of this summer in Australia. As the diminutive is uniquely Australian, our propensity to use it enhances our national sense of identity, so that we may understand phrases like, 'Bay 13 is the possie at the 'G where yobbos piff tinnies and go home in the back of a divvy van.' (Stimulus B); which requires a knowledge and understanding of contemporary Australian slang. In this way, slang has the power to write groups and build identity, in a similar way to ethnolects.

Australia's long history of multiculturalism has seen a rise in the use of ethnolects, a means by which identity can be conveyed. Many borrowings have come from different cultures, with foods in particular being the best reflection of this. On the popular morning drive time show 'Hughsy and Kate', Dave Hughes asked Kate Longbrooke if 'she was up for some yum cha.' This shows the influence other cultures are having in Australia, and this builds our identity as a nation which values the numerous cultures that preside in it. Furthermore, phonological features can unite different ethnic groups in Australia. For instance, in Singaporean English (SpAE) there is a deletion of the voiceless glottal fricative /h/ phoneme, where the Standard Australian English [wɪð] becomes the SpAE equivalent [wɪt]. A speech feature like this, especially by smaller ethnic groups in Australia can aid in building solidarity between them, and hence, an identity. Therefore ethnolects are another means by which language can display a person's identity.

Broad Australian English (BAE) is a language variety unique to Australia which plays a role in establishing a national identity. It is representative of some of the values aspired to in Australia, a carefree, easy-going and classless society which is down to earth and friendly. This may be conveyed in a number of ways, with non-standard syntax such as double negatives (I didn't do nothing!) and plural forms (youse) being indicative of these characteristics with a 'no worries' nature that Australians call their own. In an interview with the Australian professional footballer Lance Franklin in June, his accent was characteristic of BAE, showing evidence of voicing in his pronunciation [fori:] as opposed to the Standard Australian English [foti:]. This shows that despite his high socio-economic status, he wished to convey his identity as that of one who is masculine, tough and down to earth, as many footballers do, but also show the classless nature of Australian society, as he has chosen to identify with those who are predominantly from a lower socio-economic status than himself. Therefore, BAE has a clear influence on the formation of a national identity.

With different varieties of language, different aspects of our identity can be conveyed. Slang can foster solidarity to build solidarity within people, ranging from an individual to a national level. Furthermore, ethnolects and multiculturalism have had a clear impact on identities in Australia, shared both by Australians and people of other cultures. In terms of national identity, Broad Australian English facilitates the formation of mutual identity on the basis of the characteristics and values we aspire to as a nation. Overall, though, there is an inexplicable link between language and identity that is portrayed in the many facets of daily life in Australia.

Question 9
Responses to this question required careful planning so the topic could be fully addressed. Relevant topics included (but were not limited to)
- How texting and Twitter encourage language creativity
- The creation of neologisms and new expressions
- The efficiency of high-speed communication
- How high-speed communication can be inclusive
- The impact on the accuracy of grammar and vocabulary development
- How appropriateness allows a range of language varieties to be used effectively.

Students appeared to have little difficulty in writing about the features and characteristics of high-speed communication. Many were cognisant with the acronyms, abbreviations and slang used in this mode of communication. Students were able to provide good reasons as to why high-speed communication is useful and why it is here to stay.

However, few students addressed the essay topic fully. A detailed examination of attitudes associated with high-speed communication was required and this should have been a key element in any response. The more able students explained the positions of descriptivists and prescriptivists, and realised there are those who embrace this technology and those who are wary of it due to linguistic reasons. Many students were successful in providing reasons why high-speed communication was a good addition to our 'wardrobe' of language choices and in commenting on the positive attitudes stemming from such innovation. However, students often failed to provide convincing and plausible reasons as to why prescriptivists would view such language as being 'that evil shortcut lingo' (Stimulus a.). Few students referred to the need for rules and stability in language, and many students did not explore how some high-speed communication technologies restrict our use of language due to character limits. There are many publicised examples of text messages failing to communicate the correct meaning due to errors in predictive texting or through the misinterpretation of texts.

Following is an example of a high-scoring response. This student was aware of how context plays an important part in deciding whether communication is appropriate or not. Quotations were blended into the response reasonably well, and it was apparent the student had knowledge of the topic and had read about the topic. However, more examples would have added to this text. While the paragraph on the Calgary research was very interesting, other reasons for supporting a prescriptivist position could have been included as support.

In linguistics there exists two ways of describing people's opinions about language change and use. These opinions are said to be either of prescriptivist or descriptivist nature. Some are all for language change and understand the requirement for a span of different language varieties to exist, others prescribe to their perceived 'correctness' in language and may enforce this upon others if highly prescriptive in their approach to language. Their views towards the language of high-speed communication is one of distrust and unacceptance, with the belief being that contractions, abbreviations and reduced syntactical structures are having a negative impact on the language of society. The descriptivists believe that language is tailored to a context, accepting that the language of these technologies exists for a reason.

High-speed communications exist for that exact purpose, to allow interlocutors to quickly share and discuss ideas and emotion. These technologies are a dramatic improvement in the speed of delivery of content in comparison to the postal mail delivery systems of yesteryear. With the increase in speed comes an increase in the speed of the language used, and contractions and ellipsis become frequent in this variety. These new language contractions first appeared when Morse code was used by the nation in the early 1900s. This system of simplified telephone communication resulted in many articles and other lexis being contracted in much the same way that texting or instant messaging has done to the language of today. These contractions of language to create fast and simplified syntax exist for one reason, 'to adapt language to suit the demands of diverse settings.' (David Crystal). Stephen Fry also highlighted this point earlier this year in a You Tube clip. He said 'You wear a suit for an interview, and you dress your language to suit also.' (Language Animation). These two public descriptivist socio-linguists present this one attitude toward language in Australia and around the globe. That is, these language changes exist for purely one reason, to allow language to best achieve the purpose of its function. In this case the purpose is to allow high-speed communication through the aid of new technologies on our language is both understood and widely welcomed by most.

Contrastingly, the other approach to the changes these technologies has upon our language in Australia is the prescriptivist approach. Discussed as 'The prophets of doom' by Katie Cincotta, she articulates that 'The prophets of doom say technology is killing the English language.' The prophet's views are that these changes are not an evolution, but a massacre. Their beliefs in Australian society are that 'all that shortcut lingo spawned on mobile phones, instant messaging and chat forums is slaughtering our vocabulary and savaging our sentences.' However, recent studies by a Calgary University student have shown that these prescriptivists may have some relevant scientific data to support their views. In 2010, the research presented showed that the range of vocabulary of the subjects, frequent users of text messaging, had been seriously limited as a result of their technology. This research showed that perhaps our language is losing some of its depth and flair, in favour of speed, ease and success of communication. However, 'the language as a whole will not decline.' (Crystal), and these losses in the complexity and breadth of our vocabulary is purely out of desire to achieve a new social purpose. Now we favour speed rather than style in our language, with most seeing it as a tool to allow communication rather than a tool for art or poetry.

High-speed communications are here to stay, there's no doubting that. These technologies have brought about a change to the language chosen by society, having an effect on all of the subsystems of the language of Australia. The Calgary research showed that the lexicon and its depth was being significantly reduced as a result of new technologies and the simplified syntax of the Morse code systems has also introduced itself to new communication technologies. These changes have all been brought about by one purpose, indeed all language change occurs for this purpose, 'to adapt language to suit the demands' and 'to dress your language in the same manner as you yourself.' Prescriptivist attitudes show that these changes and deviations from overt prestige are not welcomed, but descriptivists prefer this new covert prestige as it favours the ability to be social and increases the effectiveness of their communication. 'There is no disaster pending.' (Crystal), and as Felicity Cox said in The Sound of Aus documentary, '200 years is nothing, in a way, Australian English's journey has just begun.' In the text messaging all we are seeing is 'language in evolution' (Crystal) through all subsystems, but mostly lexicon and syntax, in order to meet the new function of our language; using it as a tool for fast communications.

Question 10
Relevant topics included (but were not limited to)
- The use of corporate-speak in government and politics, sport, advertising, the business world and the food industry
- The use of corporate-speak to obfuscate
- The use of corporate-speak to enhance a position
- The use of euphemisms
- Plain English.

Few students attempted this question. A detailed knowledge of corporate-speak was required. High-scoring students showed evidence of wide reading and knowledge of texts on the subject. Weaker students relied heavily on the prompts and introduced few examples of their own. Few students suggested that corporate-speak has not infiltrated every domain of public discourse or suggested that attempts are made to make public discourse clear and universally understood; instead they suggested that corporate-speak was widespread and pervasive.

Following is an example of a high-scoring response. This student provided interesting and topical examples from a range of fields. The second and third paragraphs were particularly strong, with the discussion on clothing and smartphone advertising being evidence of perceptive understanding. The student was not always accurate in phrasing or in the use of the conventions of language; punctuation, phrasing and spelling all required attention. The first body paragraph on doublespeak and the military was not linked to corporate-speak and a more explicit connection needed to be made. Students are reminded to always engage with the topic.

The language of politicians, bureaucrats and professional experts serves a variety of important roles in formal and private domains. However, due to its tactfulness of manipulation and concealment of facts, corporate speak has found its way to the public discourse. Politicians and key military figures employ doublespeak to conceal the harsh realities of war and violence when announcing to the public recent movements and actions. Members of the business and managerial realm draw upon political language to shift responsibility from their actions by skirting around the blunt truth. The world of consumerism and marketing has also facilitated the complexities of jargon and specialised lexis to influence the actions of the consumers.

In the political and military arena, politicians and other key military leaders mask the horrors of war and conceal the truth by addressing the public through doublespeak. In order to upkeep their reputation as credible and righteous leaders, authorative figures use lexemes like 'diluted' and 'screened' instead of 'tortured' or 'forced to confess'. This is done for both the good of the speaker, as it shifts responsibility from their statements and lessen guilt to an extent, and the audience, as it allows information to be conveyed in a way so as to reinforce social harmony. So when the public is announced that the 'detainees were merely screened and diluted' an air of solidarity and justice sweeps through the audience. Lexis with particularly positive connotations are used as it sounds more clinical, decisive, anti-septic and to an extent unobjectionable. Doublespeak essentially allows the speaker to conceal the raw truth in sheathed corporate language, as it is enveloped with depleted emotionless words. Further, the removal of personel, without legal affirmation, to a place where they may be tortured in labelled as 'extraordinary rendition'. The lexeme rendition is deliberately used as it echoes notions of power and proper exercise of authority, as found in the famous

Caesarean saying, 'Render unto Caesar for which it is Caesers'. Such emotionless verbless lexemes are used in the pursuit of de-humanising the speakers language which buries all human emotion. As the raw, shear form will cause public outrage and reflect badly off the speaker. Indeed the language of the military and politics have penetrated the public arena as it allows 'the unpleasent sound tolerable and attractive' as William Lutz concludes.

Corporate language has also found its way into the managerial and work realm, where employers circumlocute around the actual event by conjuring up sentences made from an endless fund of clichés and ready-made phrases. Employers aim to shift responsibility of their statements by saying that 'management wanting to curtail redundancies in the human resources area' instead of saying 'you're fired', and those who become unemployed are referred to as 'no longer viable members of the workforce'. The use of such depleted prose where all elegance and gravity is simply blunted, creates a vagueness and an incongruity of the event undertaken, in this case, the firing of employees. As such this denies freedom of thought and ideas as it completely blocks connection to the victim's heart and mind which prevents them from comprehending the ideas presented, let alone find an argument against the statements read. Employers and other key authoratative figures also draw upon euphemistic language to aid their misdirection from the truth. So, instead of saying 'you're being let go', employers may tell their employees that 'we are making you available to the industry' or that 'we are letting you achieve your KPI's by providing new opportunities'. The lexemes 'available' and 'KPI' manipulate the employee to believe that something better awaits them and that being 'fired' is a good thing, when in reality it is not. Euphemistic language essentially deflects the unfortunate truth to a more optimistic future, dampening the bluntness of the statement through obfuscation and of the truth. Political and management speak is used in the public domain to maintain the face of the employer and shift responsibility.

In the commercial world, jargon is often used by companies to manipulate and heighten the merits of a particular product, regardless of it's effects in reality. This is primarily done to influence and, in a way, control the actions and thoughts of the populace. The clothing industry employs specialised lexis like 'hyper-ventilation', 'polar-thematic' and 'tri-climate' to give a perception that this product has been tried and tested in rugged outdoor environments and is highly reliable. By inducing a heightened credibility to their products, the clothing industry is able to entice their customers into buying their goods. Similarly seen in the field of electronics, upon the release of a smartphone, a litany of jargon was embedded in their advertisements. Highly pre-modified noun phrases like 'amorphous metal case display' was highly effective, as well as abbreviations like 'AMOLEAD' and neologism compounds 'dual care CPU', in gaining the positive appeal from the audience. The application of sophisticated lexis, pertaining to the semantic field of electronics, persuaded the audience into believing the phone's 'cutting edge' technology and value, when in reality most smart phones ran on similar technologies. The cosmetics industry also used jargon to full effect with lexemes of Greek and Latinate roots, 'non-comodogenic' and 'hyper- allergenic' were used to enhance the credibility and scientific basis of the product. Language almost exclusively used by scientists and researchers is intentionally used as the strong connotations of 'prestige and academics' help create an aura of magnifence, manipulating the customer to believe that this is a better and necessary purchase. Indeed, advertisers have introduced jargon to the public discourse in order to influence the activities of the populace to their own benefit, as William Lutz supports 'the slovenliness of our language makes it easier to have foolish thoughts'.

Corporate language has very much spread its roots in all areas of public discourse. Whether it be in public addressal of military and government actions, the subtle discrepancies in the management and work area or the everyday market where consumers face the complexities of jargon on many consumerist items. As such corporate language has indeed broken into the public domain.