VICTORIAN CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT AUTHORITY

2003   **English Language GA 3: Written examination**

GENERAL COMMENTS

In 2003, the third year of this study, 1157 students presented for the examination and this represents an increase of over 22 per cent on the candidature in 2002 (944). It was pleasing to observe an increase in students' knowledge of socio-linguistics as prescribed in the English Language Study Design, and their use of metalanguage to describe and analyse. This reflects the increasing knowledge and confidence of teachers and students.

The examination was designed to build on the knowledge established in previous years. Examples of increased demands included the expectation that terms such as 'modal auxiliary', and 'active and passive voice' would be understood by most students and that they would have an adequate repertoire of linguistic knowledge to call upon in analysing texts. Questions requiring knowledge of specific terms not used in previous examinations were not allocated a disproportionate number of marks.

The short-answer questions in Sections 1 and 2 progressed in complexity, reflecting the commonly understood hierarchy in the cognitive domain, that is, identification, selection, and description, leading to explanation, analysis and comparison. The earlier questions on the texts required students to identify and describe features that would be useful to them in dealing with the later questions, those demanding the higher cognitive processes of analysis and comparison.

The essay questions in Section 3 operate in the higher cognitive domain of analysis of question, synthesis of knowledge and evaluation of issues. It follows that the best discriminators of student performance continue to be the extended short-answer questions and the essay, which require the higher cognitive processes of analysis and comparison, and synthesis and evaluation, respectively.

General advice

- Emphasise the importance of knowledge and use of metalanguage in all parts of the examination, the short-answer questions <u>and</u> the essay.
- Ensure that students have practice in identifying lexical, syntactic and discoursal structures in a wide range of texts; by emphasising the importance of the use of the tools of discourse analysis rather than general intuitive commentary.
- Provide guidance in, and opportunities to practise, writing answers (in text analysis) that succinctly incorporate examples from the text and line numbers.
- Take note of the mark allocation for each question as a guide to the appropriate length of answers and help students manage their time in the examination so that they can give appropriate time and attention to the essay section.
- Teach essay writing skills, showing students ways of integrating knowledge gained from all the coursework; use a range of topics requiring expository and argumentative modes; help students incorporate linguistic evidence to support a contention; and provide students with examples of the register expected in an essay written for academic purposes.
- Encourage students to organise their classroom notes and research findings so that they build up a body of knowledge to draw on when responding to essay topics.
- Warn students of the dangers of reproducing a prepared essay written on a topic from a previous examination.
- Advise students to leave a line between their answers to each question, and start a new page for each section; a large number of students do not 'set out' their examination paper clearly, allowing one answer to merge with the next and not labelling questions clearly.
- School course advisors need to be aware that the English Language Study requires literacy levels that are comparable to the other core English studies.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

The following information includes a summary of what was expected in each question and a sample of a student response. All student sample answers provided received high marks.

Section 1

This section required short answers to two written texts, including a final question requiring comparison of the two. Students were advised that the number of marks allotted to each question should be used as a guide to the length and detail expected in the answer. Many students gave over-long answers to questions that required simple identification and location of examples. A lengthy expository paragraph response to a question with a maximum score of two or three marks could get no more than a brief response which gave, for example, a sentence stem introducing the examples asked for (as in the student sample provided for Question 2).

In Sections 1 and 2 most questions asked for line numbers. The repetition of this instruction is deliberate; it ensures the accuracy of the identified language feature and helps to educate students in the conventions of discourse analysis. A small number of students provided line numbers but no examples and no marks could be given in such cases.

Text 1

Text 1 was a page from an Internet site for the Longwood Cricket Club. The page outlined the rules for tennis attire for members playing tennis at the club. The site was replicated for the examination paper, and thus the linguistic features (including some minor lexical errors) were retained. An advantage of the use of such a text is the familiarity of such texts to students. This text thus had the advantage of familiarity, authenticity and universality.

Question 1

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	0	5	95	**1.94**

This question required simple identification of the purpose and audience. For purpose, to regulate, to inform (or referential), or to instruct were accepted. For audience, members of the Club, potential members or members' guests were accepted.

Student sample:
> The purpose of this text is to inform members of the dress rules of the club. The audience is anyone who plays tennis at the club, particularly members.

Question 2

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	8	5	11	17	59	**3.13**

It was expected that identification of four proper nouns/names would be straightforward. Some students, however, thought that a capital letter alone designated a noun as 'proper' and chose any words that were capitalised even those that were not proper nouns, but merely started a sentence.

Student sample:
> Four proper nouns include:
> Board of Governors — line 1
> Pro Shop — line 15
> Club Manager — line 17
> Longwood — line 1.

Question 3

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	28	29	43	**1.14**

This question built on the knowledge required for Questions 1 and 2. Most students who recognised the regulatory purpose of the text and who had identified the proper names/nouns were able to state that these words gave authority to the rules, and formality to the club as an institution, with its membership, ruling bodies and rituals.

Student sample:
> The use of proper nouns supports the purpose of instructing because they signify importance and authority. For example, "Longwood" names the club, showing pride in its image, and "Club Manager" depicts the manager as having high status.

Question 4

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	58	4	9	3	26	**1.35**

Few students knew the term 'modal auxiliary'. Auxiliaries, as parts of speech, belong to the Area of Study 1 in Unit 3, Language description. Most students who correctly identified 'must' and 'may' were also able to explain the difference in tone of each, 'must' having a higher degree of obligation, suggesting an 'order', while 'may' allows some concession, suggesting rather than ordering. Some students also related the use of modal auxiliaries to the regulative purpose of the text as a whole.

Student sample:
> The two modal auxiliaries are 'must' as in 'tennis shoes must be predominantly white' (line 9), and 'may', in 'Hats may have a logo' (line 14). The tone of 'must' is serious; it offers no choice and reflects the instructional function of the text. On the other hand, 'may' is less serious, offering the reader other options regarding what they can wear.

Question 5

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	58	10	32	**0.73**

The conversion of passive voice to active proved difficult. It was thought that informing students that the implied agent of the verb was the 'Board of Governors' might have assisted them in the task, but this proved not to be the case. A number of responses were sentences in the active voice, but were not a transformation of the given sentence such as 'Guests comply with the club rules'.

Student sample:

> The Board of Governors expects members to see that their guests comply with the Club Rules.

Text 2

This text was a piece about the fashions worn by tennis player Anna Kournikova in BabbleOn, a segment in the Lifestyle section of the *Sunday Age* during the summer of 2003.

Question 6

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	2	5	28	65	**2.55**

Students were comfortable (and obviously familiar) with identifying purpose and audience. This question was worth three marks and the plural word purposes was deliberately chosen to encourage students to find, for the maximum marks, two purposes and one audience. Many students found more than two purposes and more than one audience. For full marks, students could give, for purpose, any two of to entertain, to amuse, to inform, to promote, or to persuade/advertise. Acceptable audiences included readers of light entertainment media, tennis fans, or simply, as many suggested, readers of *The Age*.

Student sample:

> The purposes of text 2 are to entertain and to inform (even advertise). The target audience is readers of this section of the newspaper, particularly those who are fans of Anna Kournikova.

Question 7

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	23	23	29	25	**1.55**

This demanded identification only, one mark for each example. Students were given four figurative language features (onomatopoeia, alliteration, pun, and idiom) and asked to identify in the text one example of any three of these.

Examples of onomatopoeia included: ploc-back-and-forth; grunters. Examples of alliteration included racquets and rubber balls, pretty plocker's and racks are rendered. Examples of idiom included: could pull a crowd; watch paint dry; Yes indeedy.

Pun appeared to be the most difficult term for students, although there were three examples in the text: Court Chic (play on the words 'chic' meaning 'stylish', and 'chick', idiom for 'young woman'); BabbleOn-speak (play on the word Babylon with its reference to 'tower of' and many languages, and the word 'babble' to suggest nonsensical speech); and Kournikova Chic (again the words 'chic' and 'chick').

Question 8

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	32	22	46	**1.13**

The question asked students to identify one example of the use of the hyphen in creative word formation. Examples in the text were: spun-gold hair; plock-back-and-forth; adidas-speak; BabbleOn-speak; V-plunge; and baby-blue. The question was not one on punctuation, but on creative word formation. It was surprising that a number of students selected the em dashes in the clause 'and, what she's got — huh — but spun-gold hair …' (The em dash plays no part in word formation, but commonly has a parenthetical, syntactical function). Students who successfully located an example were able to build on the knowledge they demonstrated in Question 7, choosing to explain the onomatopoeic effect of plock-back-and-forth, for example, or to show how joining spun with gold enhances the effect of the tennis player's hair and implies preciousness, wealth.

Student sample:

> 'Adidas-speak' (line 12) uses a hyphen to create a new word by associating the noun 'adidas' and the verb 'speak'. The neologism animates the brand name 'adidas' giving it a new position as a variety of language.

Question 9

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	5	3	18	29	45	**3.06**

There were a number of examples in the text of words and groups of words in parenthesis (in brackets). Students were asked to select two different uses of parenthesis. One use is for comments given as an aside, a characteristic of informal spoken language, as in (and, what she's got — huh — but spun gold hair, dazzling smile, legs up to there …), and (Read: 'very noice skirt and top' in BabbleOn-Speak). The other use of parenthesis in the text is the common one of giving additional information without interrupting the grammar of the text, as in (January 2003).The example (pictured) also has a deictic function.

For full marks students needed to choose two different uses, rather than two examples of the same.

Student sample:
> The parenthesis used in line 5–6 serves the function of expressing the writer's opinion in an aside, showing an ironical jealousy of Kournikova. Alternatively, in line 15, the parenthesis has been used simply to add information, without interrupting the flow, reminding the reader that 'next month' is in fact January 2003.

Question 10

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	17	17	24	20	22	**2.13**

Previous questions on this text should have encouraged students to notice its 'speech-like' qualities. Assessors expected students to identify features such as: use of idiom and colloquial expressions; phonetically rendered spelling; the 'asides' in parenthesis; contractions; and sentence fragments. There is also the sense of a shared context between writer and audience, in (Read: 'very noice skirt and top' in BabbleOn-Speak) and the imaginary 'other voice' suggested in (and, what she's got— huh— but spun gold hair, dazzling smile, legs up to there …). The question asked for simple identification, and therefore four examples scored 4 marks. However, assessors were generous to responses that identified fewer examples, but embellished them with sensible explanations.

Student sample:
> Text 2 uses many linguistic features that are common to spoken language. Simple sentences, (Lines 4, 8) are short and reflect the spontaneity of speech. The informal mood created by 1st person pronouns ('I' in line 7) and 2nd person pronouns ('you' in line 8) is typical of speech. Colloquial expressions such as 'quick smart' (line 22) and 'pretty slip of a lass' (line 5), and the expression of the writer's own opinion (usually in parenthesis) in lines 5, 6 and 18 are all features of spoken language.

Question 11

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	30	18	24	19	9	**1.59**

This question proved to be difficult. Students were asked to identify three different sentence structures in the text. Sentence structures (not types) include: simple, compound, complex or compound-complex. There were examples of each of these in the text. The sentence fragment (Yes indeedy) was also accepted.

Many students chose to identify sentence types, (that is, declarative, interrogative, imperative and exclamation). This was a harder task as there was not the choice, although it could be argued that there is an implied interrogative in (and, what's she got — huh …) and an implied imperative in Fanciers of … should telephone.

Assessors gave marks for sentence structures and sentence types, even when there was a mixture of both categories. However, the distinction between sentence structures and types should be made in teaching this part of the study. Such syntactical knowledge is basic to the study design and teachers need to continue to pay attention to it.

Example:
> Three sentence structures are:
> Simple as in 'She just does' (line 8); compound as in 'Which is why legions of ardent fans … sell by the squillion' (lines 9–11) and complex as in 'It will be popped into … shop racks soon after' (lines 13–16).

Question 12

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	11	5	19	19	21	11	14	**3.20**

Students were familiar with the term 'tone' in relation to written texts. However, a lack of understanding of the term did not necessarily result in a low mark. In identifying the linguistic features that contributed to the difference between the two texts, students did in fact explicate difference in tone. The term 'register' would have been acceptable, but few students used this. Assessors maintain flexibility in awarding marks, giving credit for a student's insight and observation. Students could discuss in some detail at least two linguistic features that differed, or provide briefer

comments about more than two features. The words linguistic features were deliberately used in the question to allow for identification and discussion of semantic and/or syntactic features. There were many examples of both to support the description of the tone of Text 1 as regulatory, dispassionate, formal, with distance between writer and reader, and the description of the tone of Text 2 as playful, jokey, conversational, with an assumed intimacy between writer and reader.

Student sample:

> Generally, Text 1 has a more serious and obligatory tone. It is formal and impersonal. It uses declarative and imperative sentences and modal auxiliaries ('must' and 'may') to state rules, and proper nouns (such as 'Board of Governors') to give authority to the message. The use of the passive voice creates objectivity and distance. Text 2, on the other hand, although it also has a referential purpose, is more informal. It uses personal pronouns and colloquialisms such as 'indeedy', 'sucks' and quick smart'. It has expressive qualifiers ('dazzling smile') and hyperbole ('squillion') to create a less serious tone. This engages the reader and creates a more intimate relationship.

Section 2

Section 2 presented a transcript of a conversation between an insurance claims consultant and a customer/claimant. The text presented a common commercial transaction (car insurance claims) and should not have privileged any section of the candidature.

The transcript used the same transcription conventions as in last year's examination, and a key was provided.

Question 13

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	7	4	17	23	49	**3.03**

Any two of the following examples of the following prosodic features of Carol's speech in lines 24 to 34 were required for 2 marks: lengthening of vowel sounds to give emphasis; increase in volume; rising pitch; intake of breath; and crescendo. For the other 2 marks students needed to suggest that Carol was anxious to tell her story, to describe the incident in detail. She was becoming frustrated at evidence that Jason was not listening, that he was intent on asking the set questions.

Student sample:

> Two prosodic features of Carol's speech are forte and crescendo. The forte in line 28 reveals that she is becoming a bit agitated by what she sees as the incompetent questions asked by the consultant (who keeps referring to it as an accident). The crescendo in line 34 shows that Carol is now very angry as Jason continues to ask silly questions without listening to what she is saying.

Question 14

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	3	3	35	38	21	**2.71**

This question required students to identify the speaker who is controlling the topic between the given lines, and to give supporting examples. Selecting Jason scored 1 mark, with other marks being awarded for at least two well explained examples such as: overlapping utterances; interrogatives (the questions being consistent with the insurance company protocols); and the reiteration of facts and information. Many students used the term adjacency pairs, with Jason asking questions to which Carol must respond. Carol's non-fluency features (fillers, repairs, pauses) are in contrast to Jason's fluency, and are further evidence that Jason is controlling the topic.

Student sample:

> Jason, the consultant, is controlling the topic. There are examples of overlapping (lines 17, 18) and Jason interrupts (line 11, 16) and asks the questions. Adjacency pairs (18 and 19, 25 and 26) force Carol to give him the information he wants, rather than give the details she wants to give.

Question 15

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	12	17	71	**1.59**

In response to this question requiring an explanation of the way Jason's purposes changes at line 40, students were expected to suggest that Jason, in response to Carol's question about what happens next, moves from asking questions to get information, to giving information about company procedures. There is a marked shift in sentence structure (interrogative to declarative), with the response to Carol's question. Jason's 'What happens is this' is, in relation to the thematic structure, an example of information fronting.

Student sample:

> Before line 40, Jason's purpose is transactional, to get information needed to process the claim. At line 40 his purpose changes to informative and he begins to tell Carol what will happen.

Question 16

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	12	14	24	20	17	6	7	**2.63**

This question proved challenging for students, and was a good discriminator. Most responses gave evidence of Jason's control of the conversation (as had already been partly asked for in Question 14), by citing predominantly discourse features, for example Jason's questions, formulaic greetings and conclusions. The question, however, required discussion of the domain of the interaction, that is, insurance claims. Both lexical and discourse features needed to be identified, but not necessarily given equal attention. For lexical features associated with car insurance industry, assessors expected students to identify jargon/technical terms such as policy number, excess payment, location of accident, vehicle, assessed and accredited repairs. Lexical items associated with the tenor of customer relations were Madam, Client Consultant. The discourse features associated with the domain included the formulaic greetings and conclusions, interruptions and overlaps related to getting specific information required for the claim. A few students commented on Jason's use of terminal pitch and final tones, even when asking questions, when those questions were related to getting the required information about the claim.

Student sample:
> The lexical choices reveal that Jason is more familiar with the domain of this interaction. Throughout the entire text, he uses words relating to the semantic field of car insurance, for example, 'assessment', 'policy number', assessor' and 'repairer'. In addition to these lexical features, the opening of the discourse shows routine and formulaic language. His interruptions are also part of the routine. For example, he asks for policy number (7), date (23) and time of the accident (21).

Question 17

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	12	11	27	27	23	**2.38**

This question on the opening and closing of the telephone conversation required comments on both the opening and the closing sequences, and students who discussed one (usually the opening) could get no more than two marks. The pressure of time may have been a factor in those responses that were scrappy attempts, as the question was not considered to be particularly difficult. More successful responses noted the adjacency pairs in both opening and closing sequences, describing the way in which the opening conventions serve to greet the other person and to identify the speaker. Jason's purpose here is to identify the company, give his name for further transaction and show his intention to do business. Carol's purpose is also to identify herself and to obtain service. In the closing sequence Jason's purpose is to close the transaction, reaffirm the goodwill of the company and to offer further assistance to ensure good customer relations. Carol's purpose is also to close the transaction in a positive and pleasant way, although she is less sure and there is the sense that Jason has 'dismissed' her. A small number of responses observed that the closure of the conversation was signalled by Jason's 'Now … I think that's all in order' in line 71.

Student sample:
> The purposes of introducing themselves is expressed in the opening lines (1–3), with the standard "good morning". Jason introduces himself and the company in a formulaic way, and Carol gives her name and then moves to her 'problem', her reason for calling. When both speakers are satisfied that the interaction is finished (maxim of quantity), they end the conversation with conventional "goodbye". Jason's ending sequence also reminds the caller of the company name and perhaps persuades the caller to continue using the Smartinsure company. On the other hand Carol's ending reflects that her purpose of getting her problem fixed has been achieved.

Section 3

Section 3 required a sustained expository response to assess knowledge of Areas of Study 1 and 2 in Unit 3, Outcomes 1, 2 and in particular, Outcome 3. These outcomes are:

- analysis of different varieties of language and language use and a range of attitudes towards them
- identification and analysis of the ways in which language features are used in social interaction
- investigation and description of how language reflects personal, social and cultural understanding and constructs a sense of identity.

The topics were based on these outcomes. They demanded knowledge over and above a general (or layperson's) knowledge of Australian culture as demonstrated in language use.

The essay was worth 40 per cent of the total score for the examination. Students who did not attempt the essay or who had insufficient time to make little more than a beginning put their total mark in jeopardy.

The criteria for assessing this section, and the expected qualities of the most successful answers, are set out below:

Knowledge of the relevant content
- approach shows understanding of the topic and its complexities
- the content is accurate, relevant and well chosen for the topic and discussion
- there is evidence of breadth of knowledge, both general and specific
- apt specific examples are used to illustrate general points.

Clear and effective organisation
- effective introduction leads to a discussion or argument
- points related to the position stated in introduction are picked up and expanded on in the essay
- paragraph structure supports the discussion or argument
- conclusion sums up well and may even direct the reader to further thought.

Control of the conventions of English language to support meaning
- vocabulary is apt and varied
- syntax is appropriate and varied
- spelling and punctuation are accurate
- logical connectives (however, therefore, further, on the other hand, although) are used appropriately to support discussion.

In addition to the above criteria, the very good essays stand out for their style, their elegance and/or wit, their appropriateness of tone, and the sense of the writer's voice.

Three topics were provided from which students chose one. There was a pleasing improvement on previous years' essay responses. In particular an increase in students' use of metalanguage to support discussion of language issues.

Analysis of the difficulty levels of essay topics is always difficult. The mean score for Question 18 was the lowest of the three. Of the three topics, it was the least likely to allow any 'massaging' of a prepared essay on a topic from a previous examination. It also allowed many students simply to list lots of examples of 'politically correct language' without putting the development of political correctness into any historical or cultural context. Question 19, however, which gained the highest mean, allowed students to demonstrate detailed knowledge of the forces for change, even when they did not take sufficient account of the pressures to maintain traditional forms. Such responses could still score in the middle range, and this may explain the higher mean score. The relative popularity of each topic was Topic 1 (34 per cent), Topic 2 (28 per cent) and Topic 3 (36 per cent), with just under 3 per cent of students not attempting any topic.

Some less successful responses demonstrated an inability to use appropriate language and tone for writing in an examination context. Question 18 provided most of these examples, where students overused colloquial language and assumed a hectoring tone.

The student examples provided below represent scores in the 25–30 (out of 30) range. They should be read with the awareness that this is writing produced in examination conditions, with considerable time restraints. Assessors looked to reward qualities and gave the highest scores to the best that they read.

Question 18 (Average mark 14.98/Available marks 30)
Relevant content included explanation of political correctness and its place in the development of Australian culture and values. Some responses successfully attempted to cover all the fields mentioned in the topic, but some good responses explored fewer fields in differing levels of detail. Examples of language use were essential to provide evidence of knowledge.

Middle range responses acknowledged the relationship between politically correct language and social justice, but did not discuss the changes in social taboos and the effects of these on language, and vice versa. Very few sophisticated responses showed how some people use political correctness as a tool for manipulating society's views and values in 'politically incorrect' ways.

Student sample
> In Australia, we see ourselves as a classless society that values equality and our multicultural heritage. In recent years such beliefs have led to the rapid rise of 'political correctness' and the use of non discriminatory terms across all social groups and cultures. Today it is a common perception that discriminatory language is no longer tolerated in society and by the wider community. With such perceptions, the uses of political correct language within society have increased significantly in relation to talking and writing about sex, ethnicity, lifestyle, sexuality, disability and the aged. In fact some might even say PC has gone far beyond its original intentions.

With the introduction of the sexual discrimination Act in the 1980's, there has been a rapid rise in the use of non gender specific language. Many traditionally gender orientated professions have in turn adopted non gender specific terms. 'Flight attendants' for example now replace the term 'air steward' or 'air stewardess' while 'principal' is frequently being used in lieu of the term 'headmaster'. This has mainly been the result of changing roles of females within our society from the traditional housewife to skilled professionals. In fact political correctness in our society has extended even to words such as 'herstory' for 'history' and the more bizzare 'womon' for 'women' in an attempt for females to be completely detached from their male counterparts.

Likewise political correctness has extended to the aged. A recent article in 'The Age' newspaper publication urged the elderly to 'fight back against ageism'. A senior citizen is now said to be 'sixty years young' rather than old, and derogatory terms like 'hag' and 'silly old moo' have been called to be removed from our language. So much so that one author has stated that 'ageism' is the new taboo!

Political correctness has also prevented discriminatory language towards the disabled. The rise of the suffix 'challenged' has resulted in euphemisms such as 'mentally challenged' and 'mobility challenged'. In fact some go beyond this and use the suffix for other domains too, such as 'musically challenged' for one.

With the introduction of the Racial Vilification Act, discriminatory language towards certain races, such as 'wogs' and 'ching chongs' have become increasingly taboo. We no longer describe individuals by the colour of their skin, as the distinction between 'White' and 'Black' have become socially inacceptable. In America for example people of a black origin are referred to as 'African-Americans', and with race becoming increasingly taboo in Australia as well, we could expect something similar soon. Today political propaganda such as 'Two wongs don't make a white' that was popular in the past is no longer acceptable in our society, especially with the continual push for a multicultural society.

Politically correct language has became increasingly common in our modern society and will continue to rise with the people's increasing tolerance to other social groups, cultures and lifestyles. While derogatory language still exists, it is becoming increasingly taboo, and those who use it would be expected to be excluded by the rest of society. At the end of the day, the language we choose to use reflects greatly our social values and attitudes, and politically correct language is a reflection of the tolerance for equality we have in the Australian Society. (542 words)

Question 19 (16.61/30)
For many students, this topic appeared to invite a prepared answer on language change, and they produced an essay on the causes of changes in Australian English, such as effects of technology, mass media (particularly related to American culture) and several generations of immigration. Only the most successful responses saw the tension in the topic between forces for change and the pressures to maintain traditional forms. There are examples of language maintenance in both written and spoken modes, but written language predominates, particularly in formal contexts such as academia, the law, religion, rituals and ceremony. The forces for language maintenance include the need to record information and events in universally understood forms (education, the law, processes of government, academic research) and the need to conserve cultural values (through religion, public events and ceremonies). There was no assumed 'correct' position on this proposition, but assessors did want to see both parts of the topic acknowledged.

The following essay, though comparatively short, was one of the few that demonstrated understanding of the importance of the written mode in maintaining language forms.

> There is little doubt that in modern day society, language has pressures and forces acting from all directions, some to change how language is used, and others to try and maintain the traditional forms. In this linguistic tug-of-war, certain aspects of language are more prone to change than others, and this is proportional to the pressures that exist upon them.
>
> The mode of language most prone to change is spoken language. The pressures which exist upon spoken language include the pressures of traditionalist schools and older folk who try to influence the fashions of the language of the day. This often results in a change, particularly in younger generations, of people rebelling against archaic spoken language in the predominantly non-frozen style which is spoken language.
>
> Another huge pressure which affects spoken language is television. It is from this source that the fashions of the day are defined. Also, Americanisation occurs across the English speaking world through television, which also helps to distort and bend the traditional norms of spoken English. Within the spoken mode, the forces for change clearly dominate.
>
> However, within the written mode, the combination of the forces yields a different result. The forces mentioned before of television, fashion and modern lifestyles are rarely discussed in writing. Therefore frozen styles such as letters, documents, and biblical texts have not changed over many years.
>
> The forces for change in the writing mode have rather caused a type of expansion in the number of text types and domains within which writing is used. 'Computer jargon' and 'car jargon' are both examples of the expanded domain selection we have observed, while emails and SMS messages are the new text types with

informed registers. Change is occurring in written language, but it is more an expansion rather than a particular form being made redundant.

The forces for change and the forces for maintaining English are clearly not in equilibrium in the modern world. However, language changes in some modes more than others, and both modes change in different ways and they are moulded by different forces. (344 words*)*

Question 20 (16.39/30)
This topic required a discussion of the effects that relationships between people, social roles and the situation have on people's language. It was not a question on language change. The prompt statement was linked to the question ('How are these variations demonstrated …?') and should have guided students in their approach to 'variations in language'. The principle of appropriateness would have been useful in discussing variations in individuals' language use, but few students included this.

Relevant content included: the way groups share language (for example, jargon, and language used to include or exclude); the effects of power relationships and status on people's language; the capacity for people to adapt language to the context, purpose and audience.

The following sample is an introduction to an excellent response to this topic.
> In Australian society, language is dictated by the social situation an individual is in. Not only does an individual's own use of language (idiolect) change from situation to situation, but whole groups vary in their use of language due to cultural factors. Thus groups differ in dialect and ethnolect, and individuals differ in their capacity to alter their language according to different situations and the roles they may be in at a given time.
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> Individuals usually play a number of roles. For example, a student in a school is a student to the teachers, a friend to other students and a son or daughter to their parents. They may also work part time and be an employee. Their language will change in all these situations. For example, a student would tend to use formal language when speaking to a teacher ('yes sir', 'no thank you'), while with their friends they would use teen jargon ('seeya', 'nuh', 'awesome') and short cuts and omissions in conversation because they share meanings.