VICTORIAN CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT AUTHORITY

2005   English Language GA 3: Written examination

GENERAL COMMENTS

The 2005 English Language examination proved to be an excellent opportunity for many students to demonstrate their extensive knowledge of the subject, and most students attempted the majority of the questions. Overall, the standard of responses was higher than in previous years, as can be seen in the breakdown of scores for each question. All sections of the paper addressed all areas of study, as stated in the instructions on the examination booklet.

The inclusion of a single text in both Section 1 and Section 2 reduced the time needed for reading and allowed for greater integration of the sections within the paper. The final question in Section 2 invited students to compare the two texts and to make links between the two different language modes.

Section 3 of the 2005 paper offered a choice of three essay questions. Students were instructed to refer to the stimulus material and to at least two of the subsystems in their responses; a very pleasing number followed these directions. Overall, students displayed a good knowledge of metalanguage and provided a range of examples. There were relatively few prepared essays in evidence.

Students should be aware of the following points when preparing for the examination.
- Any text types may be presented for analysis, including fiction, literary works, electronic pieces, bureaucratic papers, advertisements and other types of texts. The skills of linguistic analysis apply to all such texts in the examination.
- Each section of the paper can potentially test all areas of study; therefore, students should be encouraged to acknowledge the integrated nature of linguistic analysis rather than responding to trigger words (for example, the term 'voice' does not always refer to 'active/passive').
- Students must read the questions carefully and not simply see the question they want to see or respond to only part of the question.
- The use of metalanguage is essential in all parts of the examination including the essay, where students frequently relied on description rather than linguistic analysis. All answers should include use of metalanguage terms.
- Students must provide a line number and an example when instructed, which ensures that the focus of their response is clear to the assessor and allows marks to be awarded. A line number alone is not specific enough. Marks can not be given unless the example and its location are both clearly indicated.
- Evidence of wide reading shown in the essays distinguished high quality responses from those which drew only on stimulus material or textbook examples.
- Stimulus material for essay topics provides guidance for students to engage with the topic. Students must ensure that they draw on such stimulus material in their responses.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION
Note: Student responses reproduced herein have not been corrected for grammar, spelling or factual information.
The following information includes a summary of what was expected in each question and some samples of student responses. All the student examples given below received high marks.

Section 1
The text selected for analysis in this section was an extract from a novel in which a mother and son discuss the son's plans for going out. It was a good example of how dialogue is represented in fiction and provided an excellent point of comparison with the authentic dialogue in Section 2. Questions in Section 1 drew on all areas of study and introduced a range of metalanguage terms through the multiple-choice questions. The predominant topics were the construction of identity through language choice and the features of scripted spoken language.

Question 1

Marks	0	1	Average
%	8	92	0.9

B. slang

Question 2

Marks	0	1	Average
%	36	64	**0.7**

C. diminutive

Question 3

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	15	45	40	**1.3**

Students were required to name two examples from two different subsystems that illustrated Ryan's identity as Australian. A few students did not identify the subsystems or did not provide examples from two different subsystems. Possible answers included:

Semantics
- the semantic field of football: *take a mark* (line 39)
- the semantic field of horse racing: *pay out on them* (line 37)

Morphological/lexical subsystems
- diminutive: *oldies* (line 4), *Macca* (line 53), *Macca's* (lines 29, 30, 31)
- shortening: *Sar* (line 36)
- colloquialism: *I figure* (line 2), *fossils* (line 54), *1 reckon* (line 49)
- slang: *Jeez* (line 8)

Question 4

Marks	0	1	Average
%	14	86	**0.9**

A. overstatement

Question 5

Marks	0	1	Average
%	12	88	**0.9**

A. metaphor

Question 6

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	10	4	16	19	51	**3.0**

The two previous questions led into this question. For full marks students needed to give two examples and explain the effect of the use of these examples of figurative language. Possible answers included:
- the semantic field of crime: *homicide detectives not half as aggressive* (line 28), *taking swabs for forensic evidence* (line 32)
- the semantic field of law: *lawyers* (line 9), *she's on to me* (line 35)
- metaphor: *bull terrier* (line 14), *growls* (line 15), *fossils* (line 54)
- diminutive: *oldies* (line 4)
- overstatement: *can't remember what it's like to still be alive* (lines 54–55).

Ryan's language choices create the effect of Mum being determined, suspicious, tenacious – an out of touch, prying parent.

Student response
- *Lines 14 & 15 'Mum's the bull terrier….and growls at you'*
- *Line 28 'There's homicide detectives not half as aggressive'*
This figurative language helps the reader understand that his mother is strong-willed and has a firm resolve with her answers. These overstatements and metaphors ensure the readers realise how clever and firm his mother is and that she can't be tricked.

Question 7

Marks	0	1	Average
%	23	77	**0.8**

B. idiom

Question 8

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	43	11	20	14	12	**1.4**

This question was not well handled and proved to be a good discriminator. Many students did not understand the term 'ellipsis' or else could identify an example but not explain its effect. A small number of students saw the term 'voice' and immediately wrote about active and passive voice. Monologue and dialogue are both included in the Study Design and are thus examinable. Some students identified the use of contractions in the texts rather than ellipsis (the omission of a part of a sentence). Possible answers included:

Ellipsis in monologue

- [I can't wait to] *Live my own life* (line 51)
- *There's homicide detectives not half as aggressive* [as my mother] (line 28)
- [We're meeting] *Out the back of Macca's place* (line 29)
- *And Macca* [is going to be there tonight] (line 53)
- [Macca and Tiffany Dellarossi are] *The two people I most need to make an impression with* (lines 53–54)
- [You] *Try explaining that to fossils who can't remember what it is like to still be alive* (lines 54–55)

Ellipsis in conversation

- *Out* (line 12)
- *I'm just catching up with some of the guys* [out the back of Macca's place] (line 26)

The effect is that in conversation Ryan uses ellipsis to be vague and evasive, whilst in monologue he uses it to be dramatic and to reflect his thought process.

Student response

- *'Out the back of Macca's place' line 29 in conversation*
It makes the communication short as he is intending to not completely tell his mother where he is going. Ellipsis enables him to skip over this information and be less precise.

- *'Live my own life' line 57 in monologue*
Emphasis is placed on the first word 'live' as this is what is important to him; it reflects his thinking, where he is at.

Question 9

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	15	15	20	49	**2.1**

The maxim of relevance is flouted by Ryan to try to change the topic, evade the question and convince his mother that he should be allowed to go out. Most students were able to answer this question efficiently and avoided listing all the maxims and finding examples to illustrate each one.

Student response

Ryan is flouting the maxim of relevance. He does not stay relevant to the question as he is trying to direct the conversation to a new topic about his homework. He does this purposefully to avoid responding to his mother's question and to try to get permission to go out.

Question 10

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	42	36	22	**0.8**

Many students correctly identified one example but struggled to find two. There were four examples acceptable for this question:

- *belligerence* (line 18*)*
- *only* (line 21)
- *whine in my voice* (lines 23–24)
- *mutter* (line 48).

Question 11

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	7	12	81	**1.8**

Most students answered this question correctly, indicating that they knew the metalanguage term and could explain the meaning of the statement.

Student response
> *Mum really means that it is too late to go out and that Ryan isn't allowed to go out but she couches it in less direct language.*

Question 12

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	41	21	17	20	**1.2**

Many students clearly knew that the feature used by Mum was repetition of Ryan's words, but they did not identify it by the correct linguistic term. Mum picks up Ryan's words and reflects them back to him. The effect is to manage the topic and control the conversation, not allowing Ryan to sidetrack it.

Student response
> *These pairs of utterances all use repetition. The mother uses this to rebut every comment made by Ryan. By repeating Ryan's words she shows that she has an answer for every statement that Ryan makes and she forces him to stay on the topic.*

Question 13

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
%	31	19	19	16	10	5	**1.7**

The nature of the relationship between Mum and Ryan was one of close social distance, with Mum in a position of authority. Students needed to set out their answers clearly to avoid becoming tangled in their examples and to avoid doubling up or repetition. Possible examples and explanations included:
- register reflects close social distance including the everyday language of the family and Ryan's use of teenspeak and informal language. For example, *catching up with some of the guys* (line 26); *out the back of Macca's place* (lines 29 and 30); *we just want to hang out* (line 33)
- lexical choice is informal and this reflects close social distance. For example, slang – *guys* (lines 26, 27 and 33); *hang out* (line 33); *suck* (line 48); diminutive – *Macca's* (lines 29, 30 and 31)
- syntax: interrogatives are used by Mum – *Where are you going?* (lines 1 and 25); *Where is out?* (line 16); *Which guys and where are you meeting up?* (line 27). The imperative is used by Mum – *Pick those up* (line 45). These features are direct and lack any politeness markers, which create social distance and reflect Mum's position of authority. Mum's repetition of phrases or clauses used by Ryan (lines 18–19 and 20–21) also indicates her position of authority
- discourse: adjacent pairs of question and answer format (lines 1 and 6; 11–12; 18–19; 25–26; 27 and 29; 30–31 and 32–33) in this context reflect close social distance; topic loop: Mum keeps returning to the topic of asking Ryan where exactly he is going (lines 1, 11, 16, 25, 27, 30–31) which indicates close social distance and Mum's position of authority; discourse particles: *Look* (line 32), *Great* (line 42) reflect close social distance.

This was a very challenging question and only a few students managed to achieve full marks. The first part of the question asked students to describe the nature of the relationship between Mum and Ryan and unfortunately many students missed this part, which then made it difficult for them to relate the features and examples to the relationship.

Student response
> *There is a close relationship and one of understanding between them.*
> - *Register – there is an informal register through the use of colloquial expressions 'stuff it' (56) and vocatives 'old man' (26).*
> - *Lexical choice – 'the guys' (26) is informal and portrays a shared understanding between the pair as his mother obviously knows some of his mates.*
> - *Syntax – the interrogatives used by the mother 'where are you going?' (25) and the declarative answers by Ryan 'I'm just…guys' (26) show that she is in control and has the power in this relationship.*
> - *Discourse – he speaks to his mother differently to how he is feeling 'I can't wait to get out of this house'(51) showing he has respect for his mother and doesn't want to say more hurtful things.*

Section 2

The text in this section was a transcript of an authentic conversation between a mother and her son. It was chosen because of the similarities of context and participants with Text 1 and because it clearly demonstrated the difference between scripted and unscripted dialogue. This text provided students with the opportunity to demonstrate their

knowledge of the features of spoken text, how identity is constructed through language choices and the subsystems of language.

Question 14

Marks	0	1	Average
%	25	75	**0.8**

This question and Question 15 required students to do more than simply apply a one word label; in thinking about the context of the text, students should have been able to give a specific explanation about the purposes of Gary and Mum in the conversation.

Student response

Mum's purpose is persuasive: to get her son Gary to think through how realistic his plans are for putting a new engine in his car.

Question 15

Marks	0	1	Average
%	22	78	**0.8**

Student response

Gary's purpose is phatic: to tell his mother his plans for putting a new engine in his car.

Question 16

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	6	5	14	29	47	**3.1**

This question required students to think carefully about the language choices made by the two participants and to explain how those choices reflected their identities or achieved their purposes. Gary is clearly more than simply someone who knows about cars; he is a car enthusiast, a petrol head, a fanatic about his car. Mum, on the other hand, uses car jargon to engage with Gary and to lessen the social distance so that she can get her point across; that is, so that she can achieve her purpose in the conversation. There were numerous examples of jargon from which to draw examples, including:

- Gary's use of jargon: *Nissan RG/RP thirty turbo engine* (lines 1, 2, 5, 7, 9, 11); *reco* (line 29); *mags* (line 46); *kill switches* (line 59); *lockstuds* (line 63); *wipe it off* (line 67); *write it off* (line 74); *wheelies* (line 90)
- Mum's use of jargon: *a reconditioned engine* (line 30); *mags* (line 61); *wipe it off* (line 66); *leadfoot* (line 81); *wheelies* (line 86).

Student response

Jargon reflects his identity as a car lover by being able to refer to car parts by their technical terms, eg, 'lockstuds' (63). This reflects his identity as a competent car owner.

She uses similar jargon to create the impression of serious opposition to the idea. She needs to know the jargon, eg, 'reconditioned' (30) in order to successfully oppose him and propose new options.

Question 17

Marks	0	1	Average
%	29	71	**0.7**

B. pronoun

Question 18

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	4	7	36	23	31	**2.7**

Most students could identify that Gary's use of 'you' referred to anyone or everyone, while Mum referred to Gary when she used 'you'. For full marks the difference needed to be explained; Mum maintains the focus on Gary to get him to think through his plans, while Gary tries to show that everyone is doing this and uses this to justify his actions and deflect the focus from himself.

Student response

Gary's use of 'you' generally refers to anyone who can have something done to their car, i.e., get an engine fitted. He uses this as an example of how normal it is. Mum's use of 'you' refers to Gary and focuses on his current situation.

Question 19

Marks	0	1	Average
%	32	68	**0.7**

B. to signal thinking time

Question 20

Marks	0	1	Average
%	12	88	**0.9**

C. to signal awareness of, but not agreement with, the previous intonation unit

Question 21

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	7	12	29	21	31	**2.6**

Gary signals that he hears what his mother is saying but he does not agree with her; he is non-committal. Mum signals frustration; she hears what he says but doesn't accept it.

Student response:
> Gary's use of 'yeah' indicates his unwillingness to accept his mother's previous statements or disagreements. He uses 'yeah' to return the topic to his favoured view, i.e., buying the engine, ignoring his mother's valid points to the contrary. Mum's statement indicates her frustration in trying to convince her son. She is fed up with being given a quick and short reply to her valid issues and concerns about what insurance costs (line 52), stealing (line 61), etc.

Question 22

Marks	0	1	Average
%	10	90	**0.9**

C. *I would find out ^first.* (line 21)

Question 23

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	14	19	24	42	**2.0**

For full marks the explanation needed to show that Mum uses declarative and interrogative sentence types to try to get Gary to reconsider his plans for the car. She wants to get him to reflect on his plans and make the decision by himself rather than her making the decision for him or telling him what to do.
- declarative: *I would find out first.* (line 21)
- interrogative: *But I mean why spend a ^grand on an engine Gary?* (line 25)

Most students answered this question well and many were awarded full marks. However, some students did not show clearly which was the interrogative sentence and which was the declarative sentence because they did not list the example and the line number. Providing the line number also ensures that students do not choose incorrect examples from another part of the text.

Student response:
> Mum uses these sentence types to support her function/purpose of dissuading Gary from buying the engine. 'I would find out first' (declarative line 21) suggests Gary is being hasty in his eagerness to purchase the engine without seeing if it will fit. 'But I mean why spend a grand on an engine Gary?' (line 25) –- this interrogative suggests the engine is too expensive and proposes a cheaper option be considered.

Question 24

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	29	19	20	17	15	**1.7**

There were numerous conversational strategies that could be listed to show that Mum is in control of the topic. These included:
- sentence type/adjacency pair: use of interrogatives (lines 11, 25, 66, 80, 87 and 100) that are directing the conversation; use of declaratives that are reminding Gary about something and/or expressing Mum's opinion and seeking a response from Gary (lines 15, 21, 31, 48–49 ,52, 57, 61–62 and 68)
- jargon: *a reconditioned engine* (line 30); *mags* (line 61); *wipe it off* (line 66); *leadfoot* (line 81); *wheelies* (line 86) are used to engage Gary so that Mum can keep him talking and get her point across

- the pronoun 'you' (of which there are many examples): by referring specifically to Gary, Mum keeps the focus on Gary and his behaviour
- use of 'Gary' (lines 25, 57, 64): same as the use of the pronoun 'you' – to direct the conversation
- topic loop (lines 20–21, 25, 30–31, 56–57, 65–66, 68 and 98–100): Mum keeps returning to the issue of spending $1000 on an engine and considering various aspects of it
- use of sarcasm (lines 89 and 92): puts Gary on the back foot and Mum stays in control of the conversation
- minimal responses (lines 6, 73 and 77): signal that Mum is listening/hearing, although not agreeing with Gary. The result is that Mum continues to be in control and Gary continues to try to justify his plans to his mother
- use of repetition (lines 51–52 and 88–89): to turn Gary's words back on him and control the direction of the conversation.

Most of the previous questions (Questions 16–23) led students into this one.

Student response

Mum controls the topic in this conversation. She uses interrogatives such as 'What happens if you have an accident?' (line 65) to make Gary's evidence unstable; she mimics his jargon to accommodate Gary within her conversation, e.g. 'mags' (line 61); and mum also overlaps her son's utterances to get the floor, as with '...<u>ah</u>' (line 79) followed by '<u>you're</u> going to...' (line 80).

Question 25

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	Average
%	21	9	14	13	19	24	**2.7**

This question provided students with an opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of the different features of spontaneous and scripted dialogue. There were many examples to choose from and the better students showed real engagement with the texts and were able to write with confidence about the differences. It was not sufficient to repeat the word 'spontaneous' from the question in offering an explanation about the difference between the two texts. The explanation needed to show that spontaneous speech is unplanned, less orderly and implies shared knowledge; that meaning is created and conveyed through prosodic features.

A list of possible examples is shown below, indicating the wealth of evidence that students could draw from in their answer.

- false starts: lines 7, 10, 86, 70 and 71
- self-correction: lines 2 and 30
- pause fillers: *um* (lines 7, 44 and 79), *er* (line 30), *ah* (lines 49 and 79)
- truncated words: lines 2, 30, 70 and 71
- truncated intonation units: many examples
- simultaneous speech: many examples
- reductions: *'er* (line 4), *coz* (lines 26 and 87), *'em* (lines 40, 41 and 42), *wanna* (line 56), *gonna* (lines 45, 46, 51, 59 and 63), *gettin'* (line 45), *'n* (line 66), *doin'* (line 96)
- lengthened syllables: many examples
- rising or falling intonation: many examples
- pauses: many examples
- accented syllables: many examples

Student response:

25a.
- *overlap (lines 14/15) 'You can get it' 'not necessarily'*
- *lengthened vowel sounds (line 46) 'ma=gs on it'*
- *truncation (line 2) 'a – a RG twe- RG thirty...'*

25b.
These features show the spontaneous nature of unplanned and fast paced everyday conversation as a joint construction. Speakers may encroach on or steal the floor from another interlocutor (lines 14/15), they may use prosodic features such as lengthened vowel sounds to create emphasis or allow thinking time to formulate the next utterance. Truncation and reformulation frequently occur as speakers lose track of what they are saying and seek to repair mistakes.

Section 3

Question chosen	0	1	2	3
%	2	9	48	41

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	Average
%	3	3	5	7	8	8	10	10	12	10	7	6	5	4	3	1	**7.1**

Students were required to select one of the essay topics and provide an extended expository response. Stimulus material that exemplified aspects of the topic was provided and many students made good use of the examples in their essays. Students were also directed to discuss at least two subsystems in their responses.

Too many answers focussed on just one part of the question, demonstrating the need for students to develop strategies for ensuring that all parts of the topic are covered in their responses. When using quotations, students should carefully select memorised quotations to fit the topic rather than finishing with a flourish that bears no relationship to the preceding discussion. In general, students made insightful observations about their culture and the language varieties within it.

Question 26
This topic was the least popular of the three but produced some good responses. Students were required to discuss aspects of public discourse (that is, the language used by politicians, business leaders and government officials) and to discuss how such language functions in society to create a sense of authority and to sustain power relationships.

Good responses engaged with current situations such as the 'children overboard' affair, the war in Iraq and the industrial relations legislation and drew examples of language from these issues. A small number of students misinterpreted the term 'public language' to mean the way people talk in public, such as on the train or in the shops.

Some suggested examples from each of the subsystems are listed below.
- morphology: neologisms: 'post 9/11', 'un-Australian'; compound words such as 'non-core'
- lexicology: jargon words and phrases: 'negative impact', 'stakeholders'; technical words: 'weapons of mass destruction'; doublespeak: 'exit strategy', 'people management'; use of adverbs to hedge: 'basically', 'possibly'
- syntax: compound-complex sentence structure; nominalisations; passive voice
- semantics: ambiguity: 'emotional intelligence'; cliches: 'competitive advantage', 'outcomes-based'; collocations: 'collateral damage', 'window'
- discourse: elevated, formal register: 'at the end of the day'; words become phrases: 'now' = 'at this point'

The linguistic features of public language are used to exercise power and authority by:
- creating the perception that the user is expert
- discouraging questions or critique
- creating confusion and uncertainty in the reader because of obscurity, causing reader/listener not to question
- hiding the truth
- complicating meaning
- promoting blind acceptance and obedience.

The following student response discusses a number of aspects of public language and refers to several of the subsystems. It provides examples, particularly using the stimulus material for analysis, to support the broader points being made. This essay is 620 words (approximately three and a half handwritten pages).

Language has long been an all pervasive feature of our everyday lives. One of the greatest influences stems from the language used in media and public circles. Such language can be shifted according to context, audience and purpose to produce a sense of power, authority and superiority over one group by another group or individual. In some cases, language in the media can be used to obscure meaning, include or exclude certain people, induce humour and lessen the emphasis on some issues. This can be achieved through use of doublespeak, jargon and syntactical features.

Doublespeak has long been used by the media to obscure and de-emphasise certain news items. In the wake of terrorist attacks and war, certain lexical items have changed so as to lessen the impact of the event, eg, 'shell shock' was changed to 'combat fatigue' but has now been changed to 'post traumatic stress disorder' thus removing any reference to war what so ever. This has been used by many politicians and the media to lessen the image of the brutality of war. Governments maintain their authority through influencing public opinion in a positive manner. Euphemisms are a linguistic tool used to make a situation appear more optimistic. The Australian Government uses both euphemisms and their opposites, dysphemisms, to describe their actions during the war on terror. Our troops are referred to as 'boys', 'brave' and 'launching bold assaults', whereas opposition troops are referred to as 'brainwashed', 'cowardly' and 'launching sneak attacks'.

Other features of doublespeak invoke deliberate ambiguities, using features such as syntax and lexicon. Passives and nominalisations are commonly used, for example 'the destruction of the city occurred in May' uses the nominalised form of the verb 'destroy' and does not state the agent or perpetrator. In this way sentence constructions can be manipulated to intentionally hide or make unclear certain information.

Language is often used as a tool to create a sense of authority (and possibly humour). In the given example 'mode of self-preservation' the footballer uses the term to make himself sound important to listeners. Such use of formal lexical items may be viewed as creating a large social distance, however the context suggests that the utterance may also have been used to induce some humour as such a phrase is uncommon for a footballer's idiolect.

Politicians and experts in various fields will commonly use jargon and technical language to create a sense of superiority and to create the feeling that the 'hoi polloi' is subordinate to their own groups. Words like 'stakeholders', 'non-core promises' and 'queue jumpers' are difficult to understand and have many connotations. Jargon can also be used to manipulate the public into accepting what the politicians say because they are 'just like us'. For example, John Howard in his latest press conference said 'the recent alterations in the workplace relations legislation will greatly benefit the rights of fellow workers'. 'Fellow workers' is used to suggest that there is no distinction between him and ordinary, average workers of Australia, so that his policies are good for him and for everyone.

In example 2 'the inquiry...' Don Watson quotes complex syntax used to confuse readers. It makes readers feel uncomfortable and excluded due to the formality of the text. Syntactic features such as the one illustrated above can be used in ways to create varying degrees of formality. Public language uses complex and compound-complex sentences and highly complex end-weight structures which make the language incomprehensible.

Through the use of doublespeak, jargon and complex syntactical structures the media and public figures are able to construct authority and superiority and to obscure truth. The ordinary public is made to feel alienated or stupid so that they don't question what is being said.

Question 27

This topic was very popular and some of the responses showed a lively and pertinent engagement with 21st century Australian English. A significant downfall for many students was to write an essay about the history of Australian English, with little or no reference to the current millennium.

This topic elicited the highest number of pre-prepared essays, although in general there were far fewer than in previous years. Prepared essays are very easy to identify as they do not respond sufficiently to the topic and they thus attract few if any marks. Many students also lost marks because they did not discuss the second part of the question, namely, the reactions (attitudes) elicited by the changes.

Some suggested examples from each of the subsystems are listed below.
- phonology: rising intonation; shift from 'broad' to 'general' accent; lowering /e/: Jessica = Jassica; American or rap/hip hop pronunciation
- morphology: spread of diminutives to new words: lippie, trannie; creation of affixes: 'e-' as in 'e-English'
- lexicology: hip hop/rap words; Americanisms; creation of new Australianisms
- syntax: changes or losses in punctuation: apostrophes, ellipsis
- semantics: change in idiom; use of Americanisms
- discourse: yeah–no phenomenon; 'like' phenomenon

Attitudes to the changes include:
- concern about degeneration and loss of standards
- worry that it results in declining literacy standards; for example, the federal government inquiry into literacy and the claim that young people entering the workforce or tertiary institutions are not able to read or write properly
- the new language appeals to many, especially adolescents, especially via text messaging
- dropping of Australianisms as they are thought to be daggy and out of date; for example, the language used by Steve Irwin
- avoidance of many Americanisms
- Bragg says it is evidence of growing confidence as a nation.

When discussing how Australian English changes to reflect the evolving identity of Australians, students were required to give specific examples, such as:
- Australian culture is represented globally by personalities such as the 'Neighbours' cast and other soapie stars, movie stars like Nicole Kidman and Princess Mary Donaldson (of Denmark), which creates diversity in identity rather than stereotyping Australians as Crocodile Dundee types

- American companies have been forced to Australianise the language of their products, such as Starbucks Coffee not releasing its dictionary here due to perceived antipathy from Australians to the Americanisms contained in it
- young people identify with popular culture, which mainly emanates from America.

The following student response is well-grounded in the 21st century and discusses both lexicon and phonology. Many examples are provided (including some from the stimulus material) and the evolving nature of Australian language and identity are noted. The essay is approximately 675 words (approximately four handwritten pages).

The twenty-first century – an era for change. While the Australian identity, its values, desires and image, continues to evolve so does its language, a vernacular filled with technological and new-age jargon. Our desire for world relations continues to increase, heightening the influence of Americanisms on our language. Despite these recent changes, the Australian identity of egalitarianism and individuality is still valued, as Australians become more confident in themselves and their language.

Ever since the release of the computer, launched in 1951, the world, including Australia, has incorporated a new variety of lexical items into the language. As our desire to be included in the technological age grew so did our lexicon, incorporating new lexis (modem, motherboard, computer), acronyms (CD ROM, DVD) and even allowing current lexis to undertake new connotations (mouse, hacker, cookies). New lexis increases the range of possible thought and it is because of this that changes were embraced rather than denied. These lexemes allowed Australians' world connections through the internet and involvement in world issues, a desire which is a part of the Australian identity.

As our involvement in world issues rose with the twentieth century, so did our involvement with America. America, one of the world's greatest powers, influences our language, adding its own typical lexis to replace traditional Australianisms. For example, 'guy' replaces 'bloke', 'cookies' replaces 'biscuit', 'Sprite' is used to mean all lemonades. Australian rhyming slang has also been affected, with typical slang 'dead horse' for 'tomato sauce' reducing in common utterance with the introduction of 'ketchup'. Americanisms also affect our syntax, with the American tendency to dispense with prepositions. A common example is 'protest the war' instead of 'protest against the war'.

Many of these changes, reflecting the American influence on our language and identity, have been looked down upon by purists and prescriptivists. Despite fears that the traditional Australian identity associated with its traditional lexicon ('bugger', 'fair dinkum', 'knockers') is losing value in society, descriptivists have argued that we are merely borrowing American terms and not their way of culture. Jane Lambert agrees, claiming that 'Australians always make a choice of what part of American culture they adopt'.

As Australia is moving forward into the 21st century it is becoming more apparent that we are a culture that is proud of our vernacular. Despite lexical changes our phonology, or at least the typical broad accent associated with Australia, has not been forgotten. Instead of adopting the rhotic emphasis on /r/ that Americans are characterised by ('bareb' instead of 'barb' and 'artitoode' instead of 'attitude') Australians are still encompassed by a nasal whine, sometimes known as 'Strine'. We tend to sound a /d/ ('bewdy', 'foody'), we tend to drop /g/ ('goin') and are prone to assimilation, pronouncing 'Australian' as 'Austrayan'. Once before the image of Australian ocker held no prestige. Although this still holds true in many situations, this image of our heritage plays an important role in our identity as its popularity slowly evolves. Australia is a nation proud of our language, a value which is reflected through our conscious selection of traditional lexis. As changes arise and our values shift towards the modern era, we have become increasingly aware of more traditional aspects of our lexicon. Bragg also agrees by commenting that Australians 'now sound the world over like a people unselfconsciously proud and totally confident in the way they talk'. This confidence is observed in the Herald Sun in October 2005 as 'Crown Prince Bazza' celebrates the birth of his son, the 'kingaroo'. The comic features the newborn prince uttering 'G'day sport'. Diminutive forms 'Bazza', typical Australian greeting 'G'day' help construct and maintain our identity as unique and apart from other nations.

Australian English is evolving and will continue to do so as we progress into the twenty–first century. These changes reflect our identity, our values and desires to play on the world stage. It is because of such change, however that our attitudes towards the more traditional aspects of our language are heightened to help maintain and reflect the uniqueness of Australian English.

Question 28
This topic was almost as popular as Question 27, and many students made use of the stimulus material for examples. Many of the responses dealt only superficially with the linguistic aspects of the topic, merely describing some of the features and providing a list of examples rather than analysing the nature and impact of the variety.

Some suggested examples from each of the subsystems are listed below.
- phonology: representation of sounds: 'mwa'
- morphology/lexicology: SMS word formation: 'msg' = 'message', 'plz' = 'please' (shortenings [through deletion and substitution]), 'frm' = 'from' (delete vowels), 'wil' = 'will' (delete doubled consonant), 'rember' = 'remember' (delete of syllable), 'l8' = 'late', 'gr8' = 'great', '2' = 'to', '4' = 'for' (number for sequence of sounds/word), 'c' = 'see', 'u' = 'you', 'y' = 'why' (single letter for word), 'dis' = 'this', 'd' = 'the', 'da' = 'the' (single consonant), 'walkt' = 'walked' (single consonant 't' for past tense morpheme 'ed'); abbreviations: 'lol'

= 'laugh out loud', 'btw' = 'by the way', 'wtg' = 'way to go'; combinations of above: 'c u l8r' = 'see you later', 'sekc' = 'sexy', 'A3' = 'anywhere, anytime, any place'
- syntax: shortened structures using ellipsis
- semantics: use of slang and colloquialisms
- discourse: many features of spoken language not yet in written form; lack of punctuation

The language of SMS is a valid and important variety of Australian English because:
- it is the opposite of decay in the English language – an emergence of a new variety: 'eEnglish' or 'electronic English'
- it is important, as major users are between 15 and 25 (according to a Telstra survey)
- it is globally a huge industry and reflects community use and attitudes
- it is another variety that is appropriate in a particular context (see the Butler quotation)
- users show the ability to distinguish between appropriate contexts
- it is appropriate in informal circumstances; for example, between friends
- also used as a formal means of communication; for example, VCE results can be received by SMS
- the constraints/nature of the technology invites creativity in language use (see the Blair quotation)
- it requires skill and mastery
- it is a shortened form, to facilitate speed and fit on the screen of a phone
- it has its own distinctive grammatical features and vocabulary
- it is used as a marker of group membership/identity
- it is a type of 'techno-jargon'
- the nature of the technology puts a new emphasis on the written word
- it gets students to use written English as a primary communication tool
- students are honing their writing skills through the use of email, electronic bulletin boards, chat rooms and text messaging
- language is always changing, always adapting; for example, archaic words and discourse styles are dropped
- if enough people come to use 'eEnglish' it will eventually become an established variety of English.

This student response picks up on a range of aspects of SMS language and refers to a number of the points listed above. It also addresses the issues of validity and creativity, providing examples and covering several of the subsystems of language. It is 882 words (approximately four handwritten pages).

The phenomenon of SMS language has become a vital tool in Australian society. This particular language is a variety on its own nowadays, often being referred to as 'e-language'. With technological advancements, this language has forced the technologically able to be creative. This language is very flexible as it caters for everyone as it has little boundaries. This is a fantastic tool for descriptivists as it indicates the evolution of language at a new level. For prescriptivists, this language is certainly 'invalid' as it is 'incorrect' in many ways, as it tests the boundaries of language. This e-language is used everywhere, from SMS (with its 160 character limit), internet (chatrooms, emails etc), and it has even integrated itself into mainstream society as artists and songwriters are embracing this phenomenon (e.g. 'U got it bad' – Usher). It can be seen that this language has definitely impacted all the subsystems of language, making it a remarkable tool to use.

Not only is e-language useful but it encourages the illiterate to be literate with its 'no rules' philosophy. People who cannot spell are able to spell phonetically with e-language and this is not taboo; in fact it is quite appropriate and acceptable. With only 160 characters for a standard SMS text message 'CU den' is much more economical that 'see you then', given that the average SMS is $0.25. This phonetic spelling is promising as it saves money and time. Lexical items are also constantly altered as the creative minds of individuals play with morphology. A lot o f the time, vowels are omitted in a word, eg., 'wld' = would and the only letters left available are enough to infer what is intended. An example 'thx' illustrates the phonological and morphological alterations because everyone now knows that as 'thanks/thank you'. This displays that this language is important as it allows for creative minds and it encourages use of technology.

Along with morphology, lexicology is also affected with SMS language. As this variety is now recognised in its own right, people are able to develop standards through frequent usage. The now archaic 'lol' (laugh out loud) and 'brb' (be right back) are often used in certain contexts. These abbreviations will continue to develop as people become more and more comfortable with creating new terms to cater for their idiosyncratic needs. This is great for e-language because any person can be an individual with this language as it is so flexible and welcoming of new creations and neologisms, e.g., 'podcast' (blend of iPod and broadcasting). This is very typical of slang and jargon but it is often to include people and enhance group solidarity rather than exclude people as a means of discrimination. This is what makes SMS language so diverse and unique.

It is often a concern that children will be disadvantaged by emulating and learning this language but it can actually be advantageous. E-language teaches children to be open-minded. It is of course a much 'lazier' language but if children learn the rules of spelling and grammar before they are introduced to e-language, their linguistic skills will be much richer and more cultured. In terms of syntax, as SMS language is a spoken conversation in a written form, ellipsis is often utilised as the other

party is often aware of the associated inferences, e.g. 'cya' (I will see you later). This is why this variety is often compared with spoken conversation. Punctuation is used sparingly; it is of course there to replace the prosodic features but it is no doubt used less than in written speech. In terms of punctuation, it is only used when necessary e.g. to indicate a pause ('I like this.') or even uncertainty ('I dunno…'). The differences of usage are very little but just as effective. These features make it valid as many of the standard features of language are not forgotten but they are evolving just as society is.

The representation of emotion and tone is adamant in e-language. The creation of emoticons is the perfect tool for this. Emoticons are visual representations of emotion; they are often punctuation teamed with letters to create little visual stimuli for the other party. :- = smiling; :@ = angry. More and more of these are created by people and they reflect the true nature of creative language use. Tone is also very hard to portray in written language. Capitalisations are a standard way of representing yelling, e.g. 'STOP IT!!!'. This indicates a very demanding tone coupled with rage, as the exclamation marks connote. That is why punctuation and capitalisation are very important when it comes to semantics. Emoticons also aid in this area. These features illustrate the importance of this variety as they reflect the playful nature of users.

E-language will not disappear any time soon. It is the new 'slanguage' (quote Kate Burridge) and it will stay in fashion for a long time. This language will not escape people's vernacular because the media and technology is embracing it with open arms and as slaves to pop culture, society is also doing so. People love being creative as it is fun, and e-language has no barriers. SMS-ing costs money, e-language saves time, effectively saving money. This is why this variety is not only valid but important as an Australian English variety.