2013   English Language GA 3: Examination

GENERAL COMMENTS

The 2013 English Language examination consisted of three sections. Section A had five questions and was 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 was one text in Section A and one text in Section B. Text 1, in Section A, was a monologue consisting of 87 intonation units. Text 2, in Section B, was an advertisement consisting of 26 lines of text.

Section A was completed reasonably well, but it did expose some gaps in students' knowledge. It was evident that some students were not confident in identifying or discussing parts of speech. Also, Question 4 highlighted the need to revise information flow and the use of front focus, as two thirds of all students were not awarded any marks for this question. Question 5, worth four marks, exposed some gaps in students' knowledge. Few students addressed all elements of the question correctly.

The task for Section B required an analytical commentary. Assessors were generally impressed by the quality of responses, and it was evident most students had practised this task. Students performed slightly better in this section than in Section C. Metalanguage was used well and stylistic features were often identified accurately. The more successful students linked the features of the text to social purpose, register and context.

Section C contained three essay topics. Question 7 was the most popular essay, followed by Question 8 and Question 9. Students usually wrote at length and referred to stimulus material. There was evidence of wider reading, references to linguists and lexicographers, as well as a range of contemporary examples. Students should be reminded to link their paragraphs and ensure these are cohesive. Thoughtful planning and careful reading of the question and stimulus materials will ensure the commentary and evidence chosen for a response is wholly relevant. When writing, students should address the topic and resist the temptation to write as much as they can on what they have revised, whether it is relevant or not.

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 as prescribed in the study design.
- The careful reading of a question, or essay topic, is crucial if a student is to attain high marks.
- It is possible to challenge the proposition of an essay topic, when appropriate.
- The practice of leaving substantial spaces when writing should be discouraged. This occurred in responses to Section A and Section B, presumably so more writing could be added by the student. Students are expected to plan their responses, and to write coherently and cohesively, so no significant spaces should be left between paragraphs.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

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

This report provides sample answers or an indication of what the answers may have included. Unless otherwise stated, these are not intended to be exemplary or complete responses.

The statistics in this report may be subject to rounding errors resulting in a total less than 100%.

Section A – Short-answer questions

This section consisted of Text 1 – a prepared speech, by the Governor-General, on the awarding of a Victoria Cross to an Australian soldier. The speech was formal in register.

Question 1

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	16	18	33	33	**1.9**

Pronouns used included 'we' (for example, lines 14 and 15) and 'you' (for example, lines 9 and 12). The pronoun 'we' is inclusive and used to signify not just the people in the room, but all Australians, thereby creating an inclusive effect and cementing national identity. The pronoun 'you' is used to directly address the Corporal and acknowledge the significance of his deeds.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

> *Quentin Bryce makes frequent use of the plural first person pronoun 'we' as in the 'the values we share and cherish' (lines 15 and 16) to show that she is speaking personally and patriotically as part of a large collective group of all Australians. The use of the second person pronoun 'you' as in 'we are here for you' (18) singles out the corporal as an exceptional individual, as part of the social purpose of the text is to honour the corporal, as such recognising his contribution on behalf of the entire nation.*

Question 2

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	6	13	38	43	**2.2**

Prosodic features in the section of speech between lines 50 and 69 included
- stress used to emphasise key words or phrases, so the audience is drawn to the importance of these terms
- intonation in the form of rising intonation is used to show that a speaker is continuing to speak and that her utterance is not complete. Rising intonation is also used for listing
- volume and tempo are used in the form of louder and slower utterances to focus the audience on the determination of the Corporal
- pauses were used throughout the section. Longer pauses were used for dramatic effect and to show the audience that the following utterance would be significant.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

> *In lines 56-59 the speaker uses the rising pitch at the end of speech fragments to signify that she hasn't finished speaking yet but gives the audience time to think and reflect on each part of what she is saying, placing emphasis on each component of the 'confronting and powerful' (52-53) citation. In lines 67-69, the speaker places emphatic stress on alternating words in 'but until the job was done', which signals to the audience where she wants them to focus on, as well as providing a poetic rhythm to the expression, to help keep the attention of the audience and place emphasis on the whole statement.*

Question 3

Marks	0	1	2	3	Average
%	11	26	39	24	**1.8**

The lexical choices used included
- adjectives to describe the valour and bravery of the Corporal. For example, line 75, 'precious'
- repetition of lexemes to emphasise an action. For example, lines 62–64 'again, again and again'
- lexemes with positive connotations that put a positive light on what had been done. For example, line 78 'endurance and gallantry'
- verbs to show the audience what was done by the Corporal and to help them imagine the scene that had occurred. For example, lines 57–58 'thinking' and 'running'.

Metalanguage was required to explain how the Governor-General used lexical choices to construct an image of the Corporal. Students who did not use metalanguage were unable to score full marks for this question. A number of students could not correctly identify parts of speech.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

Ms Bryce uses the lexemes 'shepherding and leading' (line 60) to describe Corporal Keighran's responsible and authoritative personality because 'shepherding' carries connotations of protection and guidance, showing that the Corporal was a leading figure on the battlefield. She also uses the abstract nouns 'compassion, endurance and gallantry' (lines 77-78) to bring out attributes the Corporal has displayed, showing that he is a man of great character and substance.

Question 4

Marks	0	1	2	Average
%	66	9	25	**0.6**

The discourse strategy is front focus. The purpose of the ceremony is to award a medal, and so the medal is given prominence at the start of the utterance.

Many students did not score any marks for this question. It is important for students to study information flow, and how and why information is organised within texts.

Question 5

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	22	20	28	17	13	**1.8**

Discourse features relevant to context and register of the speech included
* typical closings for such a speech, where the medal is bestowed at the end of the ceremony
* use of long pauses for dramatic effect (lines 84 and 86)
* use of formal language to set the tone for an official ceremony (lines 81–84)
* use of proper nouns to establish a context and significance to the events that occurred (line 10).

This was a challenging question as students were required to complete a number of tasks to achieve full marks. Although students succeeded in identifying and commenting on syntactic features, they did not always identify a discourse feature. Even fewer students were able to connect their examples to context and register. For full marks, it was expected that at least one example would be connected to formality and context.

Syntactic features relevant to the context and register of the speech included
* use of declarative sentences to provide relevant background information
* antithesis used to set up contrasts; for example, the 'private' (line 71) and the 'public' (line 75)
* listing (lines 8–12) to establish those involved in the ceremony to give an impression of importance and significance
* parallelism (lines 26–29) to focus on the qualities of the Corporal, while allowing the Governor-General to build her speech to the climax of recognising his humility.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

As the register is formal, with a convivial tone, Bryce employs the heartfelt opening, 'My friends' (line 1) to immediately establish this tone, and since the register is formal, she must formally welcome them, using the verb welcome on line 2 to the audience, and then also welcome Corporal Keighran individually, as it his award ceremony. Other discourse features such as noun-phrases, 'The Victoria Cross for Australia' (line 83) is highly pertinent to this context as it is the actual award. As she is praising Keighran, as well as informing the audience of his admirable achievements, sentences are predominantly declarative as in, 'We see a man…strength' (line 25) and 'we see you there…done.' (55-69). It allows the purpose of describing Keighran's achievements to be fulfilled.

Section B

Question 6

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

The text used for Section B was an advertisement for a food product that appeared in a weekend magazine. The text focused on the healthy and wholesome qualities of the product, thereby attracting an audience who recognised the importance of eating well. The register of the text was quite informal.

Features of the text discussed included
- lexical choices connected to the domain of food and healthy eating. These lexemes had positive connotations. For example, 'healthy grains' (line 19)
- humour. By using a simile and comparing Mother Nature to a mother-in-law, the text starts in a lighthearted manner and encourages the reader to continue reading. This feature also requires the use of inference to be understood
- use of the pronoun 'we' to involve readers and suggest that the issue of healthy food is one that concerns us all
- sentence fragments, (line 5), contractions (line 17) and colloquial language (line 17, 'darndest') reduce formality and suggest a casual, spoken tone
- orthography. The use of capital letters (lines 1–5 and lines 24–25) emphasise the company's position and draw attention to the text, but also add to the informality of the text
- information flow. The use of 'it' to refer to food (line 6) is used as a cohesive tie and is an anaphoric reference.

On the whole the analysis task was done well. Students were able to write at length, despite the brevity of the text, and identified a range of stylistic features as well as providing examples and line numbers. Most students correctly identified the register of the text.

However, students are reminded
- that close analysis of linguistic features is encouraged; the listing of features without analysis is to be discouraged
- to avoid paraphrasing the text
- that, when providing information about context or register, they should not repeat word for word the information presented at the beginning of the task
- that the purpose of the advertisement was not to entertain. The primary focus of the advertisement was to sell a product and make the reader aware of the qualities of the product
- to connect the stylistic features of the text to social purpose, context and register
- to focus their analysis on the written text and not to spend too much time commenting and hypothesising on the visual background of the text. That said, brief comments on the background were accepted
- to check the task carefully. A small number of students analysed the wrong text and therefore did not receive any marks for this section.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response. This response was well structured and successfully identified and commented on a number of stylistic features. The student correctly identified the register as informal. However, not all features were successfully connected to social purpose, register or context, and this exposed a few small areas of weakness in the student's analytical skills. For example, the use of ellipsis reduced formality, but also created a conversational tone that was engaging to the reader. The student erroneously wrote that most sentences were simple sentences and also the commentary on paragraphs did not add to the overall quality of the analysis.

The text is an informal, written advertisement for a food company which makes cereals and muesli bars named 'Be Natural'. The text appeared in the Sunday Life magazine produced by The Age, a lifestyle magazine focusing on the issues such as health, travel, cooking and fashion. As such, the readers of the magazine can reasonably be expected to be aware of natural food and the apparent benefits it can have. The aim of the text is to persuade the audience to view the brand in a positive light by aligning values and goals of the individual with the identity the company is trying to project.

Lexical choices such as 'flavour' (9), 'generous' (15) and 'nutrition' (9) all have desirable and positive connotations for food and companies which produce food, which can help create an identity for Be Natural to which customers will be willing to support. Lexical choices such as 'messing' (5) and 'pear-shaped' (11) push the text towards the informal end of the spectrum, which is slightly balanced out by the polysyllabic choices found in 'combination' (19) or 'researchers' (15). Alliteration can be

found in 'combine and complement' (15) which is used to place stress on that part of the sentence and emphasise the link between the actions. A little bit of creative word play can be seen in 'darndest' (17), the use of a non-standard word in the text.

The sentences in the text are largely declarative, which fits the text's goal of pushing a positive philosophy which people will be attracted to in order to increase their customer base. Declarative sentences can be found in examples such as 'it literally fuels our life.' These sentences can also be quite persuasive to the reader since they are stated as if they were universal truths, not the opinions of the company. Non-standard syntax can be found throughout the text which gives the advertisement an almost conversational tone, such as the continual starting of sentences with conjunctions, found in 'And yet' (6), 'But' (12) and 'Because' (20). This brings down the formality of the text and is a method of building rapport and decreasing social distance between the text and the reader. The use of 'we' throughout the text refers to Be Natural, the company, but is used to make it seem like the company is a collection of like-minded people interested in good, natural food, making it easier for the reader to align and agree with what they were saying. Ellipsis can be found readily throughout the text such as 'Reminding them…' (19-20) where 'we are' is used only implicitly, taken from the previous sentence. It helps that most of the sentences are simple sentences, so that the text undergoing ellipsis is more easily inferred. The ellipsis decreases the formality of the text and helps the function of connecting with the audience.

The text is structured almost like a letter to the reader, with an introductory paragraph at the top and a sign off, 'Be Natural' (20) at the bottom. There is a logical progression of ideas throughout the text, and graphologically the paragraphs are effective at splitting up the text, which aids cohesion. The initial reference to 'mother-in-law' (3-4) is repeated in line 23, which wraps up the text and alerts the reader that the text will soon be finished – it bookends the advertisement. The identity of a company which values natural, healthy food is built up through the entire text, through agreeable semantics and desirable lexical choices so that the audience can feel very connected to what the company is attempting to achieve.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response. The analysis was clearly structured and used the subsystems of language to create topics of discussion for each paragraph. Metalanguage was used appropriately and close analysis of the text occurred. However, while the text and its features are connected to informal language use, the student did not make enough links to the main purpose of the text, which was to persuade the reader to buy the product. The response did not comment on how humour (the reference to the mother-in-law) created entertainment that made the text engaging and encouraged readers to continue reading.

The advertisement by 'Be Natural' functions to promote the company by appealing to the audience's desire for natural food, through declarative sentences. In context, this is also supported by the background image that depicts an orchard and apples hanging off branches. The advertisement itself is informal, which supports its function, and this is shown in a variety of subsystems. It uses numerous colloquialisms and other lexical features, non-standard syntax and semantic features like metaphors with the discourse.

The lexis in this advertisement is quite noticeably informal, which appeals to consumers. This is done on the more basic level simply by using contractions like 'doesn't' (13) and 'it's' (7). As informality is an existing and growing value in Australia, even these contractions can appeal to the audience. Similarly, colloquialisms can reach the same effect, including 'messing up' (80), 'munch' (16), 'stuff' (17) and 'darndest' (17). Informality is also achieved by reducing social distance. This is done with the first plural pronoun 'we' (6,14,15) as they include the consumer in the context. Approbative adjectives elevate the status of natural food, like 'healthy' (19), 'fancy' (19) and 'amazing' (20). They also contribute to informality as they are not exactly sophisticated in tone.

In addition to informal lexis, informality is also achieved via non-standard syntax. 'Food, it literally fuels our life' in line 6 demonstrates left-dislocation – an uncommon stylistic feature. It places focus on 'food' which forms the semantic field of the text, as well as requiring consumers' attention. Informality is also appealed to by using co-ordinating conjunctions in a non-standard way i.e. not linking independent clauses, as shown with 'and' in line 6 and 'but' in line 12. There is a similar instance subordinating conditional conjunction 'if' in line 13, which does not link a clause: 'If anything'. Such fragments are typical of informal texts, which is why they contribute to informality and this is shown again in 'more of the good stuff' (24-25).

Aside from the informal elements, this text uses various linguistic techniques to present numerous semantics. Metaphors are one such technique, 'we should be farmers and cooks not scientists and researchers' is an antithetic comparison that implies that 'we' should be people who do not exploit and contaminate food. This is further suggested in line 12: 'food travels far and through many hands' suggests that conventional food manufacturing already involves too much handling and damaging food. It even uses the idiom 'pear-shaped' in line 11, which appeals to informality. The collocation 'good, old Mother Nature' (9) is used to heighten the image of natural food via a religious tone. Mother Nature herself is described in a simile as 'like a mother-in-law not worth messing with.' (2-5) By 'including our mother-in-laws' (23) again, in context, this suggests that mother nature is a part of everyone and that everyone should not mess with their mother-in-law by tampering with the 'good stuff'. (24-25) Her status is even mimicked by the use of capitalisation in lines 1-5, showing her as a mighty figure. Finally, 'Be Natural' in line 26 is an act of wordplay – functioning as an imperative and as a signature of the company – a form of lexical ambiguity.

Section C – Essay

Question chosen	None	7	8	9
%	1	39	32	28

Questions 7–9

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

Successful students
- stayed on topic and did not resort to pre-prepared responses
- wrote at length and included contemporary examples
- used metalanguage effectively and appropriately
- challenged the contention of the topic when appropriate
- managed their time well and wrote a complete essay.

Question 7
Relevant topics included (but were not limited to)
- taboo
- euphemisms
- politeness and meeting face needs
- political correctness
- covert and overt norms
- the use of 'weasel words' and obfuscation.

Question 7 was the most popular of the three essay topics. Students had a very broad interpretation of social harmony and a large range of topics was discussed – some more relevant than others. However, it was apparent that not all students had a strong understanding of political correctness. Rather than commenting on discriminatory language, a number of students referred to taboo topics such as death instead. The use of 'teenspeak' as a topic of discussion was very popular, but such responses were seldom of a high quality and, instead, relied on poor examples. Surprisingly, a number of students did not discuss politeness or face needs, and these were vital points of discussion in this subject. Students are reminded to comment on two subsystems of language when it is prescribed by the question.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response. This essay is a confident and detailed response that discusses, perceptively, how social harmony can be promoted or threatened. The essay contained an interesting and broad range of euphemisms to highlight how language can be used to create harmony, although it was necessary to point out that, sometimes, the use of such euphemisms could have the opposite effect than the one intended. The discussion of informal language raised valid and pertinent points as well as showing a range of examples from current society. The student referred to at least two subsystems of language and made a clear reference to the prompt.

Language has a powerful influence on social harmony in contemporary Australian society. Euphemism manipulates lexicology and semantics to promote social harmony by removing negative connotations associated with some lexemes. In addition, euphemism enables the reduction of prejudice through politically correct lexemes, although dysphemistic language may achieve the opposite by perpetuating prejudice and threatening social harmony. Furthermore, an increasing level of lexical and syntactic informality in the public sphere demonstrates the powerful role it plays in promoting social harmony by building rapport. In contemporary Australian society, language choices are powerful tools for the promotion or threatening of social harmony.

Euphemistic language involves conscious lexical and semantic choices to effectively negotiate taboo topics, thereby aiding social cohesion. Euphemistic lexemes are employed often in military statements in order to avoid offence associated with breaching the taboo topics of war and death. Recent terms in statements by the Australian military regarding operations in Afghanistan including the verb phrase 'remove from the battlefield' for more standard 'kill', the noun 'engagement' for standard 'battle' and the verb 'transitioning' where 'retreating' would be chosen for the standard term. Other government bodies likewise employ euphemistic lexemes to promote social harmony by obfuscating the nature of their actions where they are likely to engender negative public relations. This was evident in March 2013 when the Baillieu Government announced it would be 'exiting' teachers, a euphemistic verb replacing the negatively connoted, more standard, 'firing.' Similarly, when Yarra Water admitted to 'over-recovering' money to customers it sought to obfuscate the fact that it had, in more standard Australian English, 'over-charged' customers by employing a euphemistic verb. Euphemism promotes social harmony by minimising the offense and negative reactions associated with undesirable actions.

Euphemism and dysphemism manipulate the semantics of government lens in order to respectively eliminate and perpetuate prejudice. The government plays a vital role in reducing societal prejudice introducing euphemistic lexemes to replace derogatory terms. Fromkin (1999) states that 'words and language are not intrinsically good or bad but reflect the individual or societal attitudes." As a result, lexemes which gain negative or derogatory connotations must be continually replaced by neutrally connoted terms, a process linguist Stephen Pinker refers to as the 'euphemistic treadmill'. Recent introductions by the Australian government to combat prejudice by replacing derogatory terms include 'children of other cultures', a noun phrase which employs 'people first language', where in the subject is post, rather than pre-modified, to avoid the negative connotation associated with the more common noun phrase, 'immigrant children' and adjective 'non-disabled' to describe those who are 'normal' in the presence of disabled people. In addition, a guide for employers released by the Immigration Department in August 2013 introduced the acronym CALD, 'Culturally and Linguistically Diverse' to avoid the offense associated with the word ethnic. In contrast, dysphemistic language serves to perpetuate prejudice, thereby threatening social harmony where government interests are served. This is particularly evident in the language of asylum seeker policy. In addition to the recent change in the name of the Department for Immigration and Citizenship to the Department for Immigration and Border Security, lexemes used to refer to asylum seekers, including, 'boat people', 'illegal immigrants', 'queue jumpers' and even the de-humanising initialism 'IMAs' for 'Irregular Maritime Arrivals' employ dysphemistic semantics to portray asylum seekers as outsiders and criminals. Whilst euphemism aids social cohesion by eliminating prejudice, dysphemism threatens social cohesion by perpetuating prejudice.

As brands recognise the ability of informal language to build rapport, the level of lexical and syntactic informality employed in the public sphere is increasing. The relatable, friendly tone conveyed by informal language and its resulting power in increasing solidarity have seen brands employ informal linguistic features in order to build rapport with their market. For example, a decision by the Royal Women's Hospital to change its signage and branding to the highly ellipted vocative 'The Women's' demonstrates a desire to decrease social distance between it and potential patients. Likewise, ongoing advertisements by Virgin Active, employing sexually connoted language such as imperative verb phrases 'Get sweaty' and 'Let the studio touch you' aim to promote social cohesion between Virgin Active and its market by portraying the brand as relatable and trendy. This phenomenon was particularly evident in the dramatic shift in the register employed in the Microsoft Windows Operating System with the introduction of Windows 8 in September 2012. Its notification that, 'Your margins are pretty small. It's possible some of your content will be cut off when you print' employs the second person pronoun you, a simple sentence and informal lexical items such as informal qualifier 'pretty' and colloquial verb phrase 'cut off' to create a relatable, friendly tone and contrasts with Windows 7's that 'the page borders of section 1 are outside the borders of the page.' An increasing level of linguistic informality in the public sphere indicates brands' awareness that informal language has a powerful ability to promote social harmony by building rapport.

Language is a vital factor in the strength or lack of social harmony in modern Australia. Euphemism plays a number of roles in promoting harmony, including aiding the negotiating of taboos and eliminating prejudice and informal language contributes to social cohesion by building rapport. However, dysphemism threatens social harmony by contributing to the perpetuation of prejudice. Hence language has significant power to impact social harmony.

Question 8
Relevant topics included (but were not limited to)
- Standard Australian English
- Aboriginal English
- sociolects
- ethnolects.

It was possible to take several positions in response to this essay. Most students argued that social dialects, such as Aboriginal English and ethnolects, are prestigious in certain contexts and in such situations create covert prestige. These covert norms are powerful markers of identity. Many of these students also discussed how attitudes to such varieties vary and provided intelligent insights into language use in Australia today. A number of responses recognised the importance of Standard Australian English in our lives as a variety taught in schools and used by government, thereby arguing that other varieties carried less prestige. Interesting and relevant examples were used.

Slang is not variety of Australian English, but some students organised their responses around this feature of language. Instead, students should have used slang as examples to show how a particular variety of language creates prestige. For example, the use of particular slang in an ethnolect.

The following is an example of a mid-range student response. This student used teenspeak, ethnolects and broad Australian as topics to discuss how some varieties of language are considered more prestigious than others. Some of the examples used were original and engaging, but this was not the case consistently. The essay contained appropriate metalanguage, although, at times, opportunities to show knowledge of language were missed by the student. For example, 'like' was referred to as a word rather than a discourse particle. Also, assimilation and shortenings were erroneously confused with compounding.

In Australian society, varieties of Australian English create different types of prestige and use and can either be the more standard overt prestige or the more informal and casual covert prestige. Teenspeak is a variety of language that creates covert prestige between groups, while ethnolects are a type of Australian English that leads to a non-standard covert prestige. Broad Australian English is a variety of Australian English in which the accent used also creates large amounts of covert prestige and power.

Teenagers are a group of individuals who use language to create an identity. This variety of Australian English is one that has large amounts of covert prestige in groups, but is criticised by prescriptivists as well as the majority of the older generation. The language is specifically used to create an identity that is unique. An example of this type of language is the use of the word 'eshay' which is a slang term to describe an Australian lad. The use of this slang term creates covert prestige in groups. Another common term used in teenspeak is the word 'like'. It has numerous functions in the teenspeak domain and can be used as a pause filler or to soften the phrase that will come next. The use of this term specifically is ridiculed by the older generation, mostly due to it changing function so regularly. As Dr Robert Groves, an editor at Macquarie Dictionary said, 'Once a well-known word gets used for a different function people come down hard on it.' This is exactly the case with 'like' in teenspeak language. The teenspeak variety of language has low levels of covert prestige in groups who use these similar terms.

Ethnolect language is another variety of Australian English that is recognised due to Australia's strong sense of multiculturalism. It creates a very strong sense of covert prestige in groups, but is not well received in society as non-standard language such as an ethnolect is considered sub-standard and 'not speaking English correctly.' An example of how it can create covert prestige is the Turkish use of the word 'lan' instead of mate, which helps uphold cultural values and create covert prestige in groups. The phonological differences in non-standard language are frequent, as can be seen by Italian Australian English. Words such as football and dog have elongated vowel sounds so they sound more like footballa and doge. This is ridiculed in society as being 'incorrect' language and also in the media, as can be seen by the creation of films such as 'Wog Boy' deliberately targeting these differences. In modern society, ethnolect language has very little amount of prestige due to it still being seen as incorrect by the wider community, but it is still an important communication tool that creates covert prestige in groups as Kate Burridge hinted when she said, 'Non-standard dialect is as powerful a communication tool as standard.'

Speakers of the Broad Australian English accent are a group of individuals who create prestige through their use of language. While the Broad Australian accent becomes less and less prevalent due to the push toward speaking in a general, standard way, it is still used to create covert prestige. The use of suffixation adding ie/y/o to words such as barbie, arvo and convo are a lexical feature that helps maintain the conversational features of the Broad Accent and create covert prestige amongst users of the accent. Another feature of the broad accent is compounding, when words such as going to, want to and track suit become 'gonna', 'wanna' and 'trakkies'. This is a feature that is typical of the accent and is used as both speakers know it will be understood, while Broad Australian English is more rare nowadays, it is still used in certain contexts as Melbourne journalist Brendan Brown stated, 'Between family and friends vernacular English is still the preferred choice. While a more general accent is becoming common in Australian English, the Broad Accent is still used in given contexts to create prestige, such as footy clubs and family barbeques.'

Different varieties of Australian English are considered more prestigious than others by society and the people who use them. Teenspeak, Ethnolect language and the Broad Australian accent all create covert prestige amongst groups, but the non-standard tendencies of these varieties, they hold very little overt prestige when used in society.

Question 9
Relevant topics included (but were not limited to)
- diminutives and shortenings
- idioms and colloquialisms
- creative word formation
- neologisms
- word play in the media and advertising.

Students found this question to be challenging and few excelled with this topic. The question could certainly be challenged by students arguing that cultural stereotypes seldom reflect the whole population. Yet, all too often, students agreed fully with the topic's contention and did not challenge it in any way. These students often referred to slang, rhyming slang and diminutives to show how Australians are inventive and playful. A number of weaker students relied solely on the prompts to provide content for their essays or provided a study of Australian language features without

connecting these to playfulness or inventiveness. Furthermore, a discussion on features of ethnolects was often tenuously linked to the topic.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response. This was a confident and detailed response. The topic was fully addressed and the use of relevant examples and metalanguage was strong. Puns, creative word formation, nicknames and idioms were some of the features discussed. The discussion of language use in formal contexts was very impressive and reflected a sound understanding of language use in society. This response had a clear, cohesive structure that showed effective use of the features of written discourse. However, this student accepted the essay topic's contention and did not challenge it. The stimulus material was referred to and at least two subsystems of language were discussed.

As Australians we have a propensity to bend and break rules of standard language so it is more playful and reflective of our boisterous national identity. Our language is often spontaneous and inventive, particularly in regards to swearing, allowing us to invoke humour and reflect our values of informality and mateship. We also use vernacular to reflect our identity by sharing values of egalitarianism and anti-authoritarianism. Even in formal contexts, our language is playful, and this is the strongest reflection of our casual, laid-back identity. There is no doubt that our language is characteristically innovative.

We often 'play around' with our language to be more sociable and demonstrate our colloquial and humorous personalities, which is naturally part of who we are. This can be most easily seen in the language of Dave Hughes; he creates language that we all seem to love. In particular, at the Melbourne Comedy festival earlier this year, he employed the innovative onomatopoeic expletive, 'whoop-de-f***ing-do'. In fact the language use at this festival was frequently playful like this, and in many social contexts, we seem to intuitively express ourselves in this inventive way, as in the metaphoric colloquialism 'rocking up', or our propensity to attach the suffix '-y' to adjectives, so that they become adverbs. As Rove McManus puts it, 'we do it (play with language) to have a good time, and it shows how friendly we really are' is a true reflection of our national identity as it indexes our qualities of mateship and lust for informality.

Our playful vernacular is another potent marker of our identity as it reflects our egalitarian and anti-authoritarian attitudes. This is exemplified in the inventive language of our politicians, such as Kevin Rudd. In fact John Howard recently described Rudd metaphorically as 'the chameleon of politics' as he plays around with his language, especially in informal contexts. In particular, Rudd recently directed the innovative idiomatic expression 'take a cold bath' to Malcolm Turnbull, showing that even the most distinguished Australians who have high social status and clout, use playful language, as it is an inherent part of our identity. He also uses sociable innovation when talking to regular Australians, such as the diminutives 'Aussies' and the slang term 'mate' when speaking to teachers and students at school during the election campaign. Furthermore, he recently tweeted the pun 'It was a tie between me and Thisie (sic) in Parliament today' to which he accompanied a picture of himself and Thisie wearing the same tie. Clearly, playful and inventive language is central to Rudd's life, just like it is in many of our lives; it is a core idiosyncratic feature of our identity.

Confirming the fact that playful and inventive language is integral to our identity, and a prominent way in which we express ourselves is the fact that we see it in formal contexts. Just yesterday, during the first day of Parliament, this was exemplified when Christopher Pyne used the pun nickname 'Electricity Bill Shorten' to epithetically label Shorten. It was not deemed to be 'in Parliamentary language' by Madam Speaker Bishop, and even though there was some controversy, this kind of language has clearly become acceptable in contexts as formal as Parliament, and as such, it strongly indexes our identity as a nation who uses inventive language ubiquitously. Furthermore, at a recent funeral I visited, the idiomatic expression 'even though he's carked it, he's still here with us' was used, showing that language play is even used on contexts that are formal and sincere. Therefore, our tendency to play with language and express ourselves in an inventive way is an innate characteristic of our identity.

Australian English is indubitably innovative, and the language play we demonstrate in our everyday lives, whether it be in a formal or informal context, is central to our identity. This language play can show our larriksome and frivolousness, it can show our sociability and our desire to be equal with other Australians, and it can also show our 'ballsiness'. It has always been a natural part of who we are, and it will continue to be as we find new ways to bend and break standard linguistic rules.