

General Certificate of Education
June 2007
Advanced Level Examination

ENGLISH LANGUAGE (SPECIFICATION A)
Unit 6 Language Debates

ENA6



Wednesday 27 June 2007 1.30 pm to 4.00 pm

For this paper you must have:

- a 12-page answer book.

Time allowed: 2 hours 30 minutes

Instructions

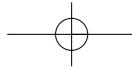
- Use blue or black ink or ball-point pen.
- Write the information required on the front of your answer book. The *Examining Body* for this paper is AQA. The *Paper Reference* is ENA6.
- There are **two** sections:
 - Section A:** Data Analysis
 - Section B:** Response in a Particular Form.
- You **must** answer the compulsory question in both sections.
- Do all rough work in the answer book. Cross through any work you do not want to be marked.

Information

- The maximum mark for this paper is 80.
- The marks for questions are shown in brackets.
- You will be marked on your ability to use good English, to organise information clearly and to use specialist vocabulary where appropriate.

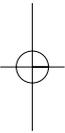
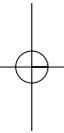
Advice

- It is recommended that you spend 30 minutes reading and preparing the source materials, 60 minutes writing your answer to Section A and 60 minutes writing your answer to Section B.
- This unit assesses your understanding of the relationship between the different aspects of English Language.



The topic for this paper is language change.

It is recommended that you read all the texts before beginning your answers to the tasks.



SECTION A – Data Analysis

Answer all three parts of Question 1.

It is recommended that you spend 1 hour writing your answer to this question. You should spend a total of about 20 minutes on (a) and (b) and 40 minutes on (c).

The marks for questions are shown in brackets. Another 10 marks are available for the quality of your written expression in all three parts of Question 1.

- 1** (a) Read the **Data List**, which you will find on page 5. Comment linguistically on the word formation processes shown by **three** words in this list. (5 marks)
- (b) Explain the methodology you would use to carry out an investigation of people's attitudes to language change. (5 marks)
- (c) Read **Text A**, which you will find on pages 6 and 7. It is a news article from *The Independent*.
- Analyse and evaluate the ways in which ideas and opinions about language change are presented in the article.
 - Discuss how convincing you find the ideas and opinions expressed about language change in this article. (20 marks)

Turn over for Section B

SECTION B – Response in a Particular Form**Answer both parts of Question 2.**

- 2 (a) Your task is to write an editorial to appear in *The Independent* about language change.

Your brief is to explain and comment on different views about the nature of language change, with particular reference to new words and expressions. Your editorial should draw its own conclusions about the nature of language change.

Your editorial should refer to the ideas and issues discussed in **Text A** and **Text B** which are articles published in *The Independent*. You should also use ideas and examples given in **Texts C** and **D**, which are extracts from books about language. **Texts A, B, C** and **D** are printed on pages 6 – 12. You may also draw on your own knowledge and research.

(35 marks)

- (b) Identify **three** different choices of language you made when writing your editorial. Describe your choices linguistically and comment on the meanings and effects you were trying to convey.

(5 marks)

END OF QUESTIONS

Data List

New Word	Meaning
pagejacking	stealing the content of a website and using it in another website
hoody (hoodies)	a hooded top or jacket or the person wearing such clothing
blackberry	a wireless mobile phone with web access
happy slapping	assaulting someone while the event is filmed on a camera phone
podcasting	making audio broadcasts available via the internet in a format that listeners can download to MP3 players
gonna	going to

Text A

THE INDEPENDENT SATURDAY 18 JUNE 2005

Lover of English slang tak

By Genevieve Roberts

When Lynne Truss laid down the law on apostrophes and sloppy language in her bestseller *Eats, Shoots & Leaves*, the nation quailed.

But for those who failed to brush up their grammar, hope is at hand from a new book that celebrates slang and poor punctuation.

In a counter-argument to Truss's book, which sets out to preserve the traditional conventions of grammar, Kate Burridge, professor of linguistics at Monash University in Australia, even calls for the apostrophe to be dropped. "When I suggested on radio that the possessive apostrophe should be dropped from the language because people get it wrong so often, you would have thought that a public flogging would not have been a severe enough punishment," she said. "I re-

ceived hate mail, and letters from the apostrophe support group, though not all of them used the apostrophe correctly."

In her book *Weeds in the Garden of Words: Further Observations on the Tangled History of the English Language*, published this week, she calls for dictionaries to acknowledge new words and usages of grammar and punctuation to stay relevant. She said: "Today's weeds – non-grammatical expressions and pronunciations – are often rewarding garden species if left to grow. The words Samuel Johnson described as low usage and cant, such as novel, bamboozle and capture, are now totally conventional.

"E-mail chat over the internet is a kind of speech written down, it has loosened the straitjacket effect to language that writing had. For example, the word

'gonna', as opposed to 'going to', is a marker of future time to replace 'will,'" she says.

Euphemisms are also transient, she says, and will deteriorate in the future when people will be more direct about body parts and bodily functions.

Professor Burridge is supporting a campaign to get the *Little Britain* char-

acter Vicky Pol "yeah-but-no-b into the *Collins Dictionary*. "People markers like this, significant ph mind-boggling meanings."

She thinks *Ea Leaves* shows that people feel serving the lang

Text A photograph has been omitted due to third-party copyright restraints.

kes on Truss and tradition

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Pollard's phrase "friendly fire" entered *the English Dictionary* often sneer at this, but they are phrases with a complex

Eats, Shoots & Runs the passion we feel towards pre-emptive language. "Rules

are important, but they are not all good. People can get too worried about these things. Communication is important, people are not being co-operative by focusing on specific words."

For Professor Burrige, the truly evil weed words are dishonest euphemisms that try to sound neutral when really they are nega-

tive, such as "friendly fire" and "downsize".

Professor Jean Aitchison, emeritus professor of language and communication at Oxford, applauds the book: "Truss's book is a terrible muddle. It is badly organised and fusses about things that are not trying to get good meaning across. I am a great admirer of

Kate Burrige's work, and care about words and worry about them, but it is the clarity that counts."

John Simpson, chief editor of the *OED*, said: "The *Oxford English Dictionary* is descriptive rather than prescriptive, and monitors the use of language. I have no objection to 'yeah-but-no-but' being included if it is widely used, but we like to classify the language and say that it is slang, or a regional variation."

Nigel Pickard, head of literacy at Hadden Park High School in Nottingham, said: "The truth is somewhere in the middle between Lynne Truss and Kate Burrige. Within schools ... we demand too much accuracy as opposed to creativity and imagination. But pupils do speak in a lingo, and we have to teach them the distinction between speech and writing. Not all pupils realise the distinction."

Source: GENEVIEVE ROBERTS, © *The Independent*, 18 June 2005
Photograph courtesy of BBC and Troika on behalf of Matt Lucas

Text B

Lost for Words

The broadcaster John Humphrys details the abuses which have driven him to write a book about the growing misuse of the English language

Text B photograph has been omitted due to third-party copyright restraints.

Our language is showing signs of obesity, which is the consequence of feeding on junk words. Tautology is the equivalent of having chips with rice. 5

We talk of future plans and past history; of live survivors and safe havens. Children have temper tantrums and politicians announce “new initiatives” – though maybe that is to distinguish them from the many “initiatives” that are recycled versions of failed old ones. We say “from whence” and “he is currently the chairman...” 10

You see signs along the road informing you of “delays due to an earlier accident”, as though they could be due to a later one. Traffic warnings on the radio tell you roadworks are “still continuing”, probably adding that they do so “at this moment in time”, as though a moment could be in anything else. 15

Some of the obesity comes from our relatively recent tendency to sprinkle prepositions where they should not be. We attach them to verbs which are self-sufficient. We “test out”, “raise up”, “descend down”, “revert back”, “separate out”, “free up”, “enter in”, “divide up”, “exit out” and “feed into”. It is not only estate agents who insist that a house “comprises of” three bedrooms. We write “all of” when we need no more than “all” and we even double up prepositions to be on the safe side. Things are “opposite to” (which compounds the felony), “up against”, “off of” and “up until”. And can anyone remember when we met people instead of “meeting up with”? 20

Then again, maybe I should chill out – or possibly just “chill”. 25

Euphemism is another enemy of good, simple language. People who bought houses on a new development in Weston-super-Mare last year had terrible problems: uneven floors; dangerous wiring; windows and roof tiles that did not fit. In one case the entire front of a house had to be removed because the brickwork was so shoddy. When the builders finally got around to apologising this was how they put it: “We were aware of the build quality issues ...” 30

Here is a company building houses that make the buyers’ lives a misery and they still cannot bring themselves to use that simple word, “problems”. Instead there are “build quality issues”.

The motivation for euphemism is usually pretty clear. “Slaughterhouse” gave way to “abattoir” because the sound of the French word had none of the savagery of “slaughter”, with its reminder of what happened to the sweet little lamb that has ended up as chops on the butcher’s shelf. 35

I guarantee that “butcher” will be the next to go. No doubt when all our local butchers have been driven out of business the supermarkets will find a cosier word for their rows of chill cabinets masquerading as a butcher’s shop.

Our grandchildren will never see blood dripping from a butchered joint on a slab and they will be encouraged to think all meat comes naturally wrapped in cellophane. Did I say “meat”? Try “protein packs”, maybe. 40

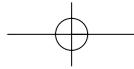
I spoke on *Today* to a man from Scottish and Southern Energy about what his company was doing to the countryside and he resolutely refused to use the word “pylon”. Instead, he banged on

about “electrical transmission infrastructure”. You can hear the PR consultant briefing him: “On no account use the word “pylon”. It gives us problems.” Not that he would have used the word “problems”. It’s “challenges” these days. 45

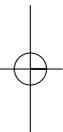
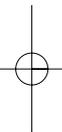
A businessman peddling an ambitious project for which he was trying to raise a lot of money exaggerated its potential earning power. When, some years later, he was tackled about it and asked if he had been dishonest. “No”, he said, “I was telling future truths.” I leave it to you to judge whether he was, in the euphemistic language of another of my interviewees “ethically challenged”. 50

Euphemism has, I suppose, always been with us but what seems new today is the number of new words and phrases that add nothing to the language and simply sound pretentious: words such as “infotainment” and “infomediary”; phrases such as “paradigm shift” and “step-change”. Business is mostly to blame – especially the so-called business gurus who come up with a new theory (and a new vocabulary) every five minutes. We have them to thank for needing to be proactive and think outside the box while we play hardball, simultaneously applying best practice to pluck the low hanging fruit and deliver client-focused solutions that give us win-win, result-driven, value-added bottom lines. But none of that will happen if we are out of the loop and fail to exploit synergies while touching base going forward. 60

Source: JOHN HUMPHRYS, adapted from *The Independent*, 8 November 2004
Photograph Copyright © BBC



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Text D**Language change**

The phenomenon of language change probably attracts more public notice and criticism than any other linguistic issue. There is a widely held belief that change must mean deterioration and decay. Older people observe the casual speech of the young, and conclude that standards have fallen markedly. They place the blame in various quarters – most often in the schools, where patterns of language education have changed a great deal in recent years (§44), but also in state public broadcasting institutions, where any deviations from traditional norms provide an immediate focus of attack by conservative, linguistically sensitive listeners. The concern can even reach national proportions, as in the widespread reaction in Europe against what is thought of as the ‘American’ English invasion.

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UNFOUNDED PESSIMISM

It is understandable that many people dislike change, but most of the criticism of linguistic change is misconceived. It is widely felt that the contemporary language illustrates the problem at its worst, but this belief is shared by every generation. Moreover, many of the usage issues recur across generations: several of the English controversies which are the focus of current attention can be found in the books and magazines of the 18th and 19th centuries – the debate over *it’s me* and *very unique*, for example. In *The Queen’s English* (1863), Henry Alford, the Dean of Canterbury, lists a large number of usage issues which worried his contemporaries, and gave them cause to think that the language was rapidly decaying. Most are still with us, with the language not obviously affected. In the mid-19th century, it was predicted that British and American English would be mutually unintelligible within 100 years!

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There are indeed cases where linguistic change can lead to problems of unintelligibility, ambiguity, and social division. If change is too rapid, there can be major communication problems, as in contemporary Papua New Guinea – a point which needs to be considered in connection with the field of language planning (§§55, 61). But as a rule, the parts of language which are changing at any given time are tiny, in comparison to the vast, unchanging areas of language. Indeed, it is because change is so infrequent that it is so distinctive and noticeable. Some degree of caution and concern is therefore always desirable, in the interests of maintaining precise and efficient communication; but there are no grounds for the extreme pessimism and conservatism which is so often encountered – and which in English is often summed up in such slogans as ‘Let us preserve the tongue that Shakespeare spoke.’

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THE INEVITABILITY OF CHANGE

For the most part, language changes because society changes (§10). To stop or control the one requires that we stop or control the other – a task which can succeed to only a very limited extent. Language change is inevitable and rarely predictable, and those who try to plan a language’s future waste their time if they think otherwise – time which would be better spent in devising fresh ways of enabling society to cope with the new linguistic forms that accompany each generation. These days, there is in fact a growing recognition of the need to develop a greater linguistic awareness and tolerance of change, especially in a multi-ethnic society. This requires, among other things, that schools have the knowledge and resources to teach a common standard, while recognizing the existence and value of linguistic diversity. Such policies provide a constructive alternative to the emotional attacks which are so commonly made against the development of new words, meanings, pronunciations, and grammatical constructions. But

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before these policies can be implemented, it is necessary to develop a proper understanding of the inevitability and consequences of linguistic change (§54). 45

Some people go a stage further, and see change in language as a progression from a simple to a complex state – a view which was common as a consequence of 19th-century evolutionary thinking. But there is no evidence for this view. Languages do not develop, progress, decay, evolve, or act according to any of the metaphors which imply a specific endpoint and level of excellence. They simply change, as society changes. If a language dies out, it does so because its status alters in society, as other cultures and languages take over its role: it does not die because it has ‘got too old’, or ‘become too complicated’, as is sometimes maintained. Nor, when languages change, do they move in a predetermined direction. Some are losing inflections; some are gaining them. Some are moving to an order where the verb precedes the object; others to an order where the object precedes the verb. Some languages are losing vowels and gaining consonants; others are doing the opposite. If metaphors must be used to talk about language change, one of the best is that of a system holding itself in a state of equilibrium, while changes take place within it; another is that of the tide, which always and inevitably changes, but never progresses, while it ebbs and flows. 50 55

Source: DAVID CRYSTAL, *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language*,
Cambridge University Press, 1987

END OF TEXTS