Student responses with examiner commentary
A-level English Language 7702
Paper 2: Language Diversity and Change 7702/2

For teaching from September 2015

For assessment from June 2017

Introduction

This resource gives examples of marked student responses to questions from our A-level English Language specimen materials, with accompanying examiner commentaries illustrating why responses have been placed within particular levels of the mark scheme.

The responses in this resource all relate to Paper 2: Language Diversity and Change. Please see the separate resources for examples of marked student responses from Paper 1.

Paper 2: Language Diversity and Change (7702/2)

As detailed in the specification (4.2), the aim of the area of study examined in this paper is to allow students to explore language diversity and change over time. Students will study the key concepts of audience, purpose, genre and mode and will explore language in its wider social, geographical and temporal contexts. They will explore processes of language change. This part of the subject content also requires students to study social attitudes to, and debates about, language diversity and change. The question paper examines students' knowledge across these areas.

In Section A (Diversity and Change), students answer one question from a choice of two, either completing an evaluative essay on language diversity, or an evaluative essay on language change.

In Section B (Language Discourses), students are presented with two texts about a topic linked to the study of language diversity and change. They answer a question requiring analysis of how the texts use language to present ideas, attitudes and opinions. They then complete a directed writing task linked to the same topic and the ideas in the texts.

Question 1:
Evaluate the idea that spoken interactions between men and women are characterised by miscommunication.

Assessment objectives covered:
AO1 (10 marks)
AO2 (20 marks)

Total marks available: 30

Student response (1)

There is a debate in the linguistic field that spoken interactions between men and women are characterised by miscommunication. There are linguists such as Lakoff and Tannen who claim that there is difference in how men and women use language. This leads to the argument that perhaps it is miscommunication that forms a major characteristic between men and women's spoken interactions. There are others however, such as Cameron, who disagree and claim that differences are exaggerated and focused on too much, for reasons other than language.

Robin Lakoff identified characteristics that were predominantly found in women's language. Lakoff suggested that hedges and fillers along with tag questions were found in women's spoken language more than in men's. It could be considered by men that women's use of hedges, filler and tag questions mean women are needy, talk too much and are indecisive. However, according to Lakoff, women talk less than men. It could be argued that the language features used by women show that they have an inferior social status then men. This is known as the Deficit Model and could be a reason for a possible miscommunication between men and women. Men could see women's use of tag questions as indecisive whereas a woman would see them as trying to get the man's view on a subject and understand how he was feeling or what he was thinking. It is language features such as this which could lead to miscommunication and confusion between men and women.

However, research conducted by O'Barr and Atkins on American courtroom trials found that many of the features identified by Lakoff to be "female" were found in both men and women who were of low social status. This suggests that the language features Lakoff identified as being female are in fact found within individuals who are feeling powerless and not just women on the whole. Lakoff's ideas of women's language features cannot be applied to all women and therefore may not be a clear indication as to why there may be miscommunications between men and women in spoken language as men are using some of the language features that Lakoff has branded as being a feature of women's spoken language.

Another feature of spoken language that could provide miscommunication between men and women is the issue of dominance. Men have a desire in a conversation between men and women to be seen as the dominant participant and have control of the conversation including when people speak, how long they speak for and the topic of the conversation. Men could do this by not taking up a woman's suggested topic of conversation and instead putting their own topic across by interrupting the women as Zimmerman and West found in their 1975 study. Conversations between men and women were recorded by Zimmerman and West and they found that 96% of all interruptions in the whole conversation recorded were by men. They argue that this was a reflection of male dominance in society, something that Lakoff's research also suggests.

There is a common misconception that women interrupt more and do this to potentially show support to the person or people who they are in a conversation with. Beattie follows this view point but criticises Zimmerman and West by saying that men may not be interrupting to show dominance alone but may be attempting to show some form of support and that they are listening to the conversation by saying things like 'yeah' and 'mhummm'. Interruptions can often be mistaken for something else within a conversation. They can be seen as an attempt to gain control and dominance of a conversation but could actually be intended for the complete opposite as Bettie reported.

Comment [A1]: This first paragraph is helpful in setting out some of the key thinkers in the field, but not very clear at establishing what is meant by 'miscommunication'.

Comment [A2]: A clear discussion of Lakoff's Deficit Model and some of its features. As it stands, this is probably in Level 2 for AO2 at the moment.

Comment [A3]: This helps develop the focus on the question and allows an implicit focus on 'miscommunication'. The extra detail is helping this into Level 3 (or even low Level 4) for AO2 as alternative interpretations are being offered of the same language features.

Comment [A4]: The discourse markers and paragraphing are helping AO1 to sit securely in Level 3.

Comment [A5]: This again helps develop AO2 and makes it more securely Level 3. The awareness of alternative models and suggestion of wider variables - status and power – rather than just gender, are helpful.

Comment [A6]: This falls into the trap of generalising male behaviour, so perhaps suggests that the subtlety of approach needed for a high Level 4 AO2 is not present here.

Comment [A7]: Some evaluation of Lakoff and Zimmerman & West is offered here, suggesting a more secure AO2 mark in Level 4. However, the lack of detailed discussion of examples prevents close focus on language in use and falls back a little too much on general comments.

Comment [A8]: While the attempt to offer an alternative interpretation (Geoffrey Beattie's 1982 article in *New Scientist*) is to be welcomed, this is not clearly expressed or explained, so is a missed opportunity for evaluation.

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Tannen takes the approach of describing men and women's conversational style as being different which could lead to miscommunication. Tannen, like Zimmerman and West, claims that men are concerned with dominance in a conversation and interrupt a lot to gain status. Women are the opposite to this and, according to Tannen, are far more interested in forming bonds with who they are talking to and so they agree more and talk less than men do. Another feature Tannen found was that men are more inclined to give direct orders such as 'give me that' and are not attempting to get away from any conflict. Women on the other hand, use more polite and indirect orders such as 'would you mind giving me that please' in order to avoid conflict and maintain positive face with who they are talking to. Men have no problem with breaking face in order to communicate with another person and communicate directly what they mean. Tannen also notes that women show understanding and offer support rather than solutions where as men are the opposite and want factual information. Men are more concerned with finding solutions. Women may see men as being emotionally unattached when engaging in a conversation when in fact it is simply just the way in which men communicate.

Comment [A9]: There is evidence of some knowledge here to support AO2, but the polarised representation of male and female speech doesn't allow for the kind of challenge and evaluation needed for Level 5.

The nature of how men and women converse can provide a large source of what could be described as miscommunication. Cameron would disagree entirely with Tannen and claim that research is biased and there has been a huge focus on the differences between male and female language, which is rather small, and not enough focus on the similarities.

Comment [A10]: This offers some detailed knowledge of Tannen' Difference Model but tends to accept it face value rather than evaluating the ideas more critically. There are elements of Levels 3 and 4 AO2 here, as a result.

Language is used in everyday life and it is easy to sometimes mishear what people say or take what they have said in the wrong way. This is something that can lead to miscommunication and on top of that, there is the added issue of how men and women communicate differently which leads to another level of miscommunication. People can use language in a vulgar way to express how they are feeling or in a more articulate way. This suggests that language is not only a source of miscommunication between men and women but also between different social classes. Working classes tend to speak with shorter sentences and think that the person who they are talking to shares similar experiences to them. The middle class however tend to talk with longer, more complex sentences and do not assume that the person they are talking to has undergone similar experiences. Of course this is, like Lakoff's research, highly generalised but is a set of generalised statements that can be applied to society. This shows that gender is not the only factor that is causing miscommunication between men and women but also social status and class.

Comment [A11]: This is a missed opportunity to offer a more convincing evaluation of older models. The reference to Deborah Cameron's Myth of Mars and Venus could have been developed more fruitfully.

Comment [A12]: This offers a different angle on miscommunication but is lacking detailed language focus.

Comment [A13]: Wider variables (class and status) are suggested here, but the reference is rather simplistic and overstated. There is a qualifier added afterwards, but it doesn't help push this much higher in AO2.

Spoken interactions between men and women can lead to miscommunication for a number of reasons such as interruptions occurring, dominance being asserted and conversation starters not being taken up. There are different theories as to why this happens along with the idea that men and women simply communicate in a different way which inevitably leads to miscommunication between the two sexes. However, it may never be fully and definitely understood by leading linguists as to why there is, at times, such miscommunication in spoken interactions between men and women. Perhaps the topic in itself is just misunderstood.

Comment [A14]: This helps a bit more with AO2 (Level 4 AO2: "consider research on/effect of other variables, eg context, age, class, ethnicity")

Examiner summary:

This is a response that shows some knowledge of the topic and a clear engagement with the issues around gender and communication. There are gaps in the answer – a lack of detailed examples and a lack of clear definition of the terms in the question – but many strengths too.

Comment [A15]: The student pulls a few ideas together here and concludes, but it's perhaps not the most effective final sentence.

For AO1, the structure is sound, the expression clear and generally effective. There is a clear attempt to develop a line of argument. The linguistic register is appropriate and there are few errors. This would be a secure Level 4.

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For AO2, the student has written with some knowledge about different models for gender study: deficit, difference, dominance (and some diversity). These are illustrated on occasion, but some longer examples – either drawn from existing studies, from the student's own investigations or case studies looked at in class – would have been helpful. Also, the lack of a clear definition of 'miscommunication' at the start of the answer prevents the student from investigating and challenging some of the assumptions inherent in it. There are some good moments of evaluation and some awareness of the need to weigh up different approaches and assess their validity. The answer displays the characteristics of most of Level 3 and many of Level 4 so would probably be a sound Level 4 mark.

Positives:	Weaknesses:
- Shows detailed knowledge of different models. - Offers some effective evaluation of different models. - Some references to case studies (O'Barr & Atkins, Zimmerman & West) - Offers examples of language features and alternative interpretations concerning their use. - Starts to evaluate the different positions in light of recent work on gender. - Some wider variables are mentioned (class, status, power)	'Miscommunication' could have been defined from the start. - Some explanations and evaluations would benefit from greater clarity of expression. - More specific and contextualized examples could have been used sooner (including slightly longer examples of speech). - Some evaluation isn't developed sufficiently to offer a challenge or critique to polarized models of male and female talk. - Some models are taken at face value, without enough sense of how they might be limited by treating men and women as homogeneous groups.

Student response (2)

The difference between men and women in society in general has been a long-standing debate argued throughout the centuries and the differences between men and women in speech do not vary from this pattern. There are many different views and in fact theories as to whether men and women differ in the way they communicate both supporting and disputing whether the foundations of male and female interactions are characterised by miscommunication.

Professor of linguistics at Georgetown Deborah Tannen developed a theory which she called The Difference model, which would have supported the idea that interactions between men and women are characterised by miscommunication. She believed that the characteristics of each genders method of communication completely oppose one another and are at opposite ends of a linguistic spectrum. She represents this in six contrasts including the idea of status vs support and advice vs understanding. Using these contrasts she outlined the way in which the genders are different for example using the status vs support contrast she believes that men grow up in a world where conversation is competitive which means that they are competitive in their speech to gain status and dominance, whereas women use conversation to gain affirmation in their ideas and to gain support from the people whom they are speaking with. Tannen also believes that men and women's speech also varies in their linguistic characteristics. She referred to male speak as report

Comment [A16]: Some attempt is made to offer social context to the debate. The wording could be clearer and some of the ideas more carefully constructed, however.

Comment [A17]: Clear focus on one of the key thinkers on this topic.

Comment [A18]: Some detailed knowledge (Band 3 of AO2)

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talk, as they speak in a very structured way to negotiate status and avoid failure giving more factual representations of events for example. She referred to women's speech as rapport speech as they speak to achieve a different purpose, to build relationships with others. Because of this Tannen believes that in order for members of each gender to be able to communicate effectively a conscious effort must be made to learn the others communication methods and purposes and only then will men and women be able to communicate effectively with full understanding between them.

A theory that would oppose this idea is Deborah Cameron's Gender theory which states that there are in fact more differences within the genders than between them. She would argue that the interactions between men and women are not mischaracterised by miscommunication but that in fact the theories outlining the differences between them are. Cameron believes that the way in which we speak is characterised by our own personality, emotions, interests and many other individual factors but not solely our gender. She acknowledges that there are certain gender specific expectations within society that some feel they must adhere to to remain looking manly or feminine, but she feels that this does not completely tailor the way in which we speak. Many feel that Deborah Cameron's theory represents the attitudes within modern society now as the gap between the roles of men and women in society has largely closed. She believes that the way in which we speak is tailored personally to us and to categorise our speech in to genders would not only be incorrect but would also be evidentially lacking.

Another linguist who developed a theory demonstrating the differences between genders and their importance is Robin Lakoff, who developed the theory of women's language. She claimed that women use certain features very differently from men and analysed women's speech to form a basic set of assumptions she believes demonstrates the way in which women use language. She believed that women use features such as hedging using modal auxiliaries such as 'may' or 'might' where men would use the more definite forms, and that this shows women's insecurity in expressing certain ideas. She also believes that women make more use of tag questions than men and this is a way to gain reassurance and support from her audience, especially when in the company of males. The list of these assumptions goes on, however their criticisms do seem to undermine their purpose in a modern society. Lakoff was a feminist and she used this theory to show how she believed that the oppression of women had had an effect on their language; however many feel that although this may have been the case in previous decades the roles of men and women have largely changed and there are very few differences in their work and social lives now. This means that lexically and semantically a gap has been closed as there is much more common ground between men and women now in the topics they discuss compared to, for example, the 1960's. This leads some people to believe that Lakoff's theory has lost its credibility as it is no longer valid as times have changed, and that this now means that miscommunication does not characterise interactions between men and women.

In both Tannen and Lakoff's theory it is not only believed that men and women have varied pragmatic purposes but that they also have varied use of spoken language features in their interactions. This can highlight what some believe to be miscommunication in speech. For example both men and women use tag questions in their speech, however some believe that men use tag questions to ensure that their audience is engaged in what they are saying and to gain backchannels which increases status, whereas women use tag questions to gain reassurance and support in their speech. This could cause miscommunication as the different purposes may not be recognised by each gender and this will cause confusion; however nowadays many believe this to be untrue. Many would ask how it is possible to determine the pragmatic meaning behind every single tag question a male or female uses, and how this could possibly be generalised in this way.

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In some cases the use of tag questions may adhere to these guidelines but who is to say that men don't use tags for support, and women don't use them for status?

In conclusion, I believe that the language debate about gender will continue into the future as no clear answer or guideline can be distinguished. I personally believe that it is impossible to categorise our interactions into that of typical male of female ones as we all differ so much in the way we communicate due to our own internal differences, and differing external factors. I believe that men and women can communicate effectively in many cases and to say that mixed gender interactions are characterised by miscommunication would be only representative of a minute section of society in the modern day.

Examiner summary:
This is an effective and well-argued response that offers some detailed knowledge, evaluation of different models and an intelligent overview of the topic.

For AO1, the expression is generally organised and clear, with an appropriately linguistic register and some shaping of the overall structure to address the demands of the question. There are infelicities in places and some ideas are not as clearly expressed as they might have been, lessening the impact of the evaluation at times. It would probably achieve a Level 4 mark for AO1.

For AO2, there is some clear discussion of alternative models (difference, deficit and diversity), although these are not always labelled as such. The answer moves rapidly through the Levels for AO2 and achieves most elements of Levels 3 and 4 and some of Level 5. While the overall approach is evaluative and exploratory, there are few specific examples to begin with and this is an area that would need to be improved to secure a higher mark. Examples do appear later on and they are assessed and interpreted with some insight. There is detailed knowledge of different ideas and some reference to individual studies, but some more specific examples could have been quoted and some other studies mentioned. Overall, this would be a borderline Level 4/5 for AO2. It has many strengths and few weaknesses, but might not achieve a high Band 5 because of the lack of examples.

Positives:	Weaknesses:
- Starts well by defining terms form the title and concludes well by returning to 'miscommunication' - Shows detailed knowledge of different models. - Challenges polarized notions of male and female difference. - Offers examples of language features and alternative interpretations concerning their use. - Shows the beginnings of a conceptualized understanding about how social contexts can influence views about gender and language.	- Some explanations and evaluations would benefit from greater clarity of expression. - More specific and contextualized examples could have been used sooner (including slightly longer examples of speech). - As well as models and ideas, specific case studies (Goodwin, McElhinney, Coates) might have also been discussed.

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Question 2:
Evaluate the idea that the English language is changing and breaking up into many different Englishes.

Assessment objectives covered:
AO1 (10 marks)
AO2 (20 marks)

Total marks available: 30

Student response

Language, by its nature, is not a static monolith. English can be seen throughout the world as a lingua franca. Like one of its predecessors, Latin, which eventually broke up into French, Italian and Spanish, English is breaking up into many different Englishes. We can see this happening across the globe today and can date its journey back as early as 1400s, the discovery of America and the first migration to Australia. During the early 17th century, English had approximately 5 to 7 million speakers, by the 21st century, it had 1.5 to 2 billion worldwide speakers, and this is growing faster than the population of the Earth.

If we think of English of being broken up, there are many different types of English today. For example, from Singapore we have Singlish and from India, Hinglish has emerged. These two types of English are only some examples of the many different types of Englishes we can see today, not counting the ones from Africa, other parts of Asia and the Americas. A big example of an English which has broken up and also changed is Jamaican patois. This has been a big influence in what we call Multicultural London English which we can see all over London today but it also takes influences from Asian languages. That is why I would say that English is not only changing and breaking up but is also being influenced by other prevalent languages, especially from Africa and Asia.

In terms of English changing, it might be useful to note that English has always changed with the influence from Latin, Norse and Celtic. However I do think that with the influence of technology and

Comment [A33]: An effective opening sentence

Comment [A34]: A key idea, but not one that is explained clearly here. **Familiarity** with linguistic ideas (AO2 Level 2)

Comment [A35]: A helpful parallel

Comment [A36]: Not the clearest reference to dates!

Comment [A37]: Shows pace and scale of growth of English

Comment [A38]: Is this actually possible?

Comment [A39]: Examples of other world Englishes. **Familiarity** with linguistic ideas (AO2 Level 2)

Comment [A40]: Yes, give some sense of the range

Comment [A41]: While Jamaican Patois is an interesting case study, it's neither explained or exemplified here, and the attempt to focus on Multicultural London English isn't very helpful here.

Comment [A42]: This is a fair point to make but we have no real support for the argument provided here. To reach Level 3 of AO2, "detailed knowledge" would need to be shown.

Comment [A43]: Some sense of the history of English is apparent from this line.

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globalisation English has changed more than ever. So much so that we can't even recognise it anymore. It has been said that the speaker of world English or 'Globish' as Jean-Paul Nerriere would call it, would have difficulty understanding a speaker from England even though a speaker from Egypt would be able to understand a speaker from China. This globalisation of English is probably due to it being a lingua franca for most countries. It is easy to understand and convey your ideas, and there are many more ways of expressing the language in English then there are in Russian for example. This is why it has become the language of business, law and even media.

As I have discussed above, English is being broken up but is also changing. You will find words in Singlish that you might not find in Hinglish, for example cultural terms and idioms that are unique to that language. For example, omission of functional words such as 'the', or shortening of groups of verbs - 'I have been having strange dreams' to mimic their mother tongues grammar. They might also use of the epistemic modal verbs 'could' and 'would' instead of 'can' and 'will' and omit pluralisation of nouns.

In 1992, the three circle model was proposed by Braj Kachru. This was used to determine how many speakers there were in the world, whether they were native speakers and where they were. In the 'inner circle' there were 350 million speakers, these included the USA, the UK, Canada, New Zealand and Australia. The 'outer circle' included another 350 million speakers, which were mainly in India, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. The final circle was the 'expanding circle' which included non-native speakers of approximately 1 billion. Some of these countries were China, USSR, Japan, and Egypt. It is right to assume that this has grown since his proposal, and is growing even today

Examiner summary:
This is rather short as an answer to the exam question, but has many points to credit. Overall, it has more strengths than weaknesses and offers some interesting ideas about English as a language and both its past and present.

Comment [A44]: These would benefit from clear examples.

Comment [A45]: Is this true?

Comment [A46]: A useful person to introduce but this needs to be more than name-dropping. **Familiarity** with linguistic ideas (AO2 Level 2)

Comment [A47]: Yes, this could be the case, but examples would help, as would linguistic explanations. To reach Level 3 of AO2, "detailed knowledge" would need to be shown.

Comment [A48]: Still not defined

Comment [A49]: Is this true?

Comment [A50]: Starting to "outline reasons for standardisation within global English: business, communication, understanding" (Level 3 of AO2).

Comment [A51]: Yes, this is true, but again we are short of examples.

Comment [A52]: Not a clear example

Comment [A53]: While these are recognized features in some varieties of World Englishes, they are rather decontextualised. The student is starting to produce some examples, however.

Comment [A54]: No. It wasn't devised to do this but to conceptualize the nature of different forms of English around the world and their relationship to each other.

Comment [A55]: Fine on numbers, so there's clearly some good knowledge here, but it's not really developed. A mixture of Levels 2 and 3 for AO2.

Comment [A56]: Lacks a clear conclusion. The standard of AO1 structure in the rest of the answer is enough for a solid Level 3, though.

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For AO1, the answer is a firm Level 3 in the 5-6 mark range. While there is no clear conclusion, the writing is generally accurate. There is a clear linguistic register and terminology is consistently and accurately applied. The answer communicates clearly.

For AO2, the answer is a mixture of Levels 2 and 3. While there is some knowledge, it is not always detailed and occasionally fits better in the band for "familiarity" with linguistic ideas. Overall, there is probably enough in here by the end to reach Level 3.

The advice to a candidate answering a question in this way would be to focus on some specific examples and discuss them linguistically (applying language levels by perhaps looking at lexical differences, phonological patterns etc.). It would also be good advice to define, early on in the essay, exactly what is meant by terms such as Englishes and Lingua Franca.

Wider factors such as the attitudes towards different Englishes, the nature of the relationship between British English and other Englishes (or even Britain and other Englishes) would also be good to discuss, alongside the reasons for its spread around the world.

The key term to focus on at the top of the mark bands is "evaluate" and this student is not able to access that part of the mark scheme because they have not offered sufficient range or depth to explore and weigh up different views. Equally, while there is some knowledge evident, it does not go beyond "detailed knowledge" into Levels 4 and 5 where you might expect to see some exploration and evaluation of different views.

Positives:	Weaknesses:
- Starts well and challenges notion of English being a monolithic form - Grasps historical parallel with Latin and sees some of history of English - Mentions America, Singapore & Africa - Some suggestion of reasons for English's spread around world - Nerriere and Kachru name-checked with some understanding of latter's Circles Model	- Doesn't develop this idea any further - Could perhaps have developed this to look at development of different varieties of English in UK - Doesn't give sustained examples of different World Englishes or their characteristics - Not much discussion of other historical reasons for spread: colonization, trade, literature & education, role of USA and popular culture - More than name-checking would have helped develop the focus on the relationships between different Englishes - Evaluation of different ideas isn't attempted because the individual ideas are not really explained clearly enough to then develop.

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Question 3:

Text A, printed on the insert, is a blog post about language change from The Guardian online. Text B, printed on page 3, is the start of an article about language change from The Daily Telegraph online.

Analyse how language is used in Text A and Text B to present views about the nature of language change. In your answer you should:

- examine any similarities and differences you find between the two texts
- explore how effectively the texts present their views

Assessment objectives covered:
AO1 (10 marks)
AO3 (15 marks)
AO4 (15 marks)

Total marks available: 40

Student response

Text A is titled "How language is literally losing its meaning". This alliterative, simple declarative sets up the blog post by using the adverb "literally" in the correct but playful way. Sutherland goes on to explain "The Oxford English Dictionary has accepted a new definition for the word literally – **and it's not the only word changing beyond recognition.**" This compound, declarative sentence begins with a formal tone, but switches to more of a conversational tone in the **second independent clause** that is joined by the coordinating conjunction 'and'. This paragraph ends with a simple sentence "It's enough to, like make one despair". The use of the verbal filler 'like' adds to the conversational tone that is carried throughout the post. It creates a sense of humour as this is the exact thing he discusses in the post. It's like he is showing the reader how annoying it is to have 'like' cropping up in the middle of a sentence not being used for its original purpose.

"Writers have responded, protesting very convincingly that we are breaking up the English language – we are like so many monkeys tossing around a Ming vase, the richest cultural property we possess." This complex sentence begins with the verb phrase "…have **responded, protesting very convincingly**…" The **verbs** and adverbs are doubled up suggesting that the writers think this is a very serious matter and therefore creating emphasis. It positions the writers above us, as prescriptivists, suggesting that they are against this change in the meanings and usage of certain words. However, language is always changing and always has. There is nothing we can do to stop changes creeping in and out of our idiolects. The use of the adverb phrase "very convincingly" suggests that the fact language is changing is a big problem and we are guilty of this crime. It leaves the reader wondering is it really a crime when words and meanings are changing all the time and always have changed?

Sutherland continues with a simile "**we are** like so many monkeys tossing around a ming vase…" The use of the **1st person plural pronoun and present tense verb** suggests that he is placing himself among the readers, suggesting that he also uses literally in a non-literal sense. However, he is also comparing us to monkeys, suggesting that we don't care about the history or original meanings of words. He suggests that we are careless with language and are not preserving it like prescriptivists think we should be, as suggested by Jean Aitchison's damp spoon metaphor. He's comparing language to an historical and cultural Ming vase – something that is old and has history and needs to be preserved which can be explained by Aitchison's crumbling castle metaphor.

Comment [A57]: This is an effective and astute opening to the answer. The student shows a good grasp of tone & meaning (AO3 Level 5) and some accurate and well-exemplified language features, including sentence and clause types (AO1 Levels 4& 5)

Comment [A58]: A slightly imprecise example as there are 2 verb phrases here

Comment [A59]: Accurate AO1 (Level 3) and helpful examples.

Comment [A60]: Positioning is addressed here (an AO3 Level 5 characteristic) but isn't clearly enough explained.

Comment [A61]: This suggests a good understanding of discourses around language change but doesn't quite link the bigger picture to the points made here. There is good AO1 (Level 4 – phrase types) but slightly less convincing AO3 here.

Comment [A62]: This is a good combination of AO1 and AO3 addressing positioning through the use of pronouns and tense.

Comment [A63]: This starts to place the arguments in text A in wider discourses of decay and tradition. This is moving into the top end of Level 4 for AO3 and suggesting that if connections are drawn between this and text B, AO4 might also be in Level 4.

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These metaphors are also explored in the next paragraph in the simple, declarative sentence "**Consequently**, we don't handle language with care any more." **The adverb** has been fronted to bring emphasis to the fact that we've become careless and because of this we are facing the consequences of language change. It makes language change appear to be a bad thing, even though language changed in the past and it wasn't because of carelessness. Surely because there is more written language the consequence is us being more creative.

"**I never hear** the word "innit" without wishing we had some better way of doing what the Europeans do." Sutherland makes a very abrupt point, which also seems a little harsh. He shows a high level of certainty with the **1st person singular pronoun and negative verb phrase,** allowing him to position himself away from the reader taking a prescriptive viewpoint. It suggests that he thinks the English most of us use is sloppy and embarrassing to him and that we could do better with English. The use of the verb "wishing" in the progressive aspect makes him appear almost jealous of other European languages seeing as French have the French Academy to help protect their language. It's like he's just upset as it comes across that he views the English language as messier than other European languages.

Sutherland ends the article with "A new acronym must be adopted: SOL. Save our literacy." The first simple sentence is passive and therefore avoids addressing the imperative verb phrase "must be adopted" at anyone. It allows it to be presented in the form of a humorous idea, bringing the blog post to a light hearted close. Although it makes it seem a little less serious, the imperative still suggests that maybe we do need to take more care over language. It's like Sutherland is longing for some kind of English equivalent to the French Academy.

Text B begins with a complex sentence that has omitted the subordinate conjunction (that) prior to the **subordinate clause**, "…"literally" has become so commonplace **it is now "epidemic**"…" The use of the present tense <u>verb phrase</u> suggests that usage of literally inappropriately is something that increased over time, as the adverb of time 'now' indicates to us that it's currently a so called 'problem'. The use of the hyperbolic, common noun 'epidemic' is used to suggest to us that it is like an infectious disease as suggested by Jean Aitchison's metaphors. It suggests to the audience that the usage is so widespread and people have gradually started using it like they would catch a disease. It adds a sense of drama and highlights the problem.

It ends with the compound-complex sentence "**There is no other** word that means 'literally' and *if the word 'literally''s meaning is eroded by all this misuse* then there is nothing to replace it and we'll get a lot more confusion." It begins with a **declarative main clause** to explain that there isn't an exact synonym of 'literally'. It conveys a high degree of certainty suggesting that this is a potential problem. Next there is a *clause of condition*, which suggests to the reader the possible outcome if we continue to use literally in a non-literal sense, which could push the reader to start thinking about the words they're using and the context they use them in. The use of the verb 'eroded' suggests that we're using 'literally' incorrectly so often that the original meaning is becoming slowly more and more worn away as a result and that maybe this careless use of the word is breaking down language and communication and causing confusion.

Examiner summary:
This is a perceptive and analytical response to the question that scores very highly for AO1 and AO3 but is undermined by the lack of explicit comparison across the two texts (for AO4).

For AO1, the analysis is precise and focused, with good exemplification of a range of language features from word classes through to phrase types, sentence types and clauses, as well as

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explicit discussion of positioning. It would be a good Level 5 for AO1. In terms of expression, it is very accurately written, but perhaps a little lacking in some cohesion between paragraphs. A more signposted structure navigating between ideas in the two texts might have helped make this a top mark in AO1 and allowed more discussion of the two texts together for AO4.

For AO3, this is slightly less secure than AO1 as some of the explanations of effects are not absolutely clear. Overall, there is a clear grasp of how both texts create meanings and express viewpoints, with some good focus on modality and persuasiveness (touches of Level 5) and how English is represented as a cultural artefact (Level 4), but overall this would probably have enough depth and understanding to be awarded a mark at the top end of Level 4. While many language features are discussed, they are not always linked closely to meaning (e.g. referring to a sentence/clause but then only discussing the idea, not the effect of the linguistic choice in conveying the idea) and this prevents the answer from entering Level 5.

For AO4, while there is clear understanding of the different discourses (Aitchison's crumbling castle and infectious disease) and a good grasp of how each text is placed within these discourses, there is no explicit comparison or discussion of the two texts' shared concerns and themes. This makes it a difficult answer to fit into the higher levels of the mark scheme. Level 1 (2 marks) states in one of its descriptors that students will "write about both texts separately", so Level 1 is where it would go. In questions such as this, with an AO4 component, it would definitely be a good idea to encourage students to adopt a structure that allows them to pull together ideas from the texts and treat those together, rather than treat the texts side by side and separately. Alternatively, encouraging students to at least have an overview paragraph towards the end, in which different themes and techniques are pulled together, might be another way of addressing AO4, but to achieve a high mark there must be explicit comparison and evaluation.

Positives:	Weaknesses:
- Very clear and focused language analysis across all levels - Clear and effective use of examples. - Strong appreciation of authors' language choices, positioning and key ideas. - Grasps tone and irony. - Places texts in their wider discourses and engages with how individual language features contribute to these wider discourses.	- Student could have compared texts and structured essay to allow more obvious evaluation of different ideas and language devices. - More signposting and grouping of ideas might have helped, rather than a paragraph by paragraph structure. - Some consideration of the placement of the texts, their design, mode and existence in an online context where debate and discussion are encouraged would perhaps offer a broader context to the whole discussion.

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Question 4:

Write an opinion article about language change in which you assess the ideas and issues raised in Text A and Text B and argue your own views.

Assessment objectives covered:
AO2 (20 marks)
AO5 (10 marks)

Total marks available: 30

Student response

Language change over time has 'literally' been a rapid process, to the extent that it is hard to keep up with. The broadening of 'literally' will leave some quivering at the thought and it is a change that seems, to me, pointless. Giving a metaphorical meaning to the word we use to show that something is exact? Seems one big contradiction to me! In fact, the complete contrast in meanings is so counteracting that what is the point in the word at all? We are now living in a world of confusion with a daily challenge being whether to believe that, "literally a million" is fact or fiction.

Of course we should give the informal use of the word its time of day but what we should be focussing on is how this came to be in the first place. The meaning of the word getting so twisted that it'd become an antonym for itself is quite something to get your head around. It can be argued that this broadening is a means to an end and that it is on the track to becoming an archaism.

Unfortunately, 'literally' is not the first word to have a semantic change of heart, and yes I mean it is literally not the first. I'm sure your childhood memories of the cowboy heroes of Old Western's has been quashed by your very real, very adult fears of encountering a cowboy builder.   This pejorative shift has much disappointment to account for.

For years we have been losing and gaining gems to our lexis. It can be argued that some we have acquired, through the media for example, make no cultural contribution to our society whatsoever. I would hate to have such a negative attitude towards a word but 'yolo' is a tragedy we cannot ignore. The acronym was made famous by Drake who thankfully, as far as I know, has left his lexical talents in the past.

Comment [A70]: This is questionable: language change has been happening for a long time. Some of the changes may well be rapid, however.

Comment [A71]: There is no sense yet of who this "me" is: sub-editorial shaping (a headline, strapline etc.) would all help establish a clearer identity in the piece.

Comment [A72]: Awkward sentence construction

Comment [A73]: Style issues

Comment [A74]: This addresses the issue of broadening and meaning change with a clear (prescriptive) opinion

Comment [A75]: Style?

Comment [A76]: This is an interesting point but perhaps too technically worded for a non-specialist audience.

Comment [A77]: Again, probably too technical. And here, it's not very clear either. Not transforming linguistic material (required for AO5 Level 3) very effectively at this stage.

Comment [A78]: This is effective style and shaping of language

Comment [A79]: Punctuation error

Comment [A80]: This could be glossed

Comment [A81]: This is a useful example and establishes a witty and playful tone

Comment [A82]: Too technical?

Comment [A83]: Draws on contemporary language change examples, but would need to gloss this for a mainstream (& older?) audience who might be unfamiliar with the term

Comment [A84]: A word formation process is mentioned

Comment [A85]: Again, perhaps assuming too much audience knowledge.

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However, the word has its merits as we are able to see the influence media has even in the area of linguistics. It seems a fairly simple chain of events, people hear the song, use the word and others then use it too. This is a bottom up change and so it was not dictated upon us. Rather we, for some strange reason, chose to use it and bring it into common use.

It would be hard not to acknowledge the prescriptivist and descriptivist debate that acts as our own linguistic Eastenders – full of drama and arguments. Whilst I admit I am a stick in the mud over some, not all, grammatical and lexical elements, it would never be to the point I'd call myself a prescriptivist. But if we meet, maybe at a suave dinner party, and engage in some intellectual discussion over the addition of the informal use of 'literally' to the Oxford English Dictionary, you would indeed call me a liar. The official acknowledgment of this use will encourage this meaning to overtake the original which is true madness to me. It is hard to imagine a world where literally nothing is exact.

Examiner summary:
This is a serious (if brief) attempt to address the question and write in an op-ed form, but it falls short of being a successful response. As a result, it offers a few useful pointers for teachers and students about addressing a task like this.

AO2: There is evidence of some knowledge of arguments around language change and the prescriptive versus descriptive model, but there is a lack of clear explanation and development of these ideas. Some, but not all, of Level 2 is addressed (some examples of language change and some discussion of how language change occurs) but there is a lack of detailed knowledge on show. To reach Level 3 or above, this would need to consider a wider range of ideas, not just 'literally' and its changing meanings, but some of the other examples provided in Texts A and B and the bigger linguistic ideas behind them. There is some discussion of the author's own view of change (a touch of Level 3) and a mention of a cause of language change (popular culture and music) but little beyond this. As a result, it would probably stay in Level 2 at the top end of the band; it is not fulfilling all of Level 2 but does have flashes of level 3.

AO5: The writer shapes some sentences effectively and has clearly tried to engage and interest the audience with wit and style. This would suggest moments of Level 3 achievement in places, but there is also a tendency to leave technical terms unclear for the non-specialist audience ('lexis', 'prescriptivist', 'descriptivist' and 'broadening'). It would be much better to gloss these for the audience. The lack of headline and subeditorial features is also an issue. When writing an opinion piece, these are not just added extras or a question of making the text "look the part", but essential features of structure and style. To establish a clear voice (as the writer attempts) requires some sense of who the writer is and where the piece is appearing, along with a clear sense of where they are going with the article. These are lacking and it would be a good idea to work with students to make sure they have studied style models and are ready to use subeditorial features for texts

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like this. The student has included some nice touches of style but these are offset by lapses in clarity and accuracy. Overall, this would probably secure a high Level 2 mark, but an answer like this would struggle to be rewarded more highly without clearer shaping, structure and clarity for a non-specialist audience.

Strengths	Weaknesses
- Use of Text A and B examples - Responds to some issues of language change - Writes (mostly) with clarity and some engaging style - Uses some of own examples & offers opinion - Starts to discuss debates about language (prescriptivism vs. descriptivism)	- Short and undeveloped - Doesn't use headline or other subeditorial features - Doesn't gloss technical vocabulary for audience - Lapses in clarity & accuracy at times - Doesn't range very widely - Doesn't address wider language issues connected to change (how it happens, why it happens etc.)

Student response (2)

Dear John Sutherland, We chimps have been throwing around the Ming vase for like literally ages.
Alice Student

In response to John Sutherland's 'Language is literally losing its meaning' Alice Student defends the continuous change of the English Language.

John Sutherland's latest addition to the Guardian's "Trending Topics and News Analysis" got me quaking in my boots. This is because it disturbed two facts that I have always relied on when looking at English Language change:

1. Language is always changing: we cannot stop it and it has been happening for hundreds and thousands of years.
2. People in the older generations will always worry about younger generations damaging language. I promise you if we are, it's not on purpose.

So when John Sutherland quipped "We are like so many monkeys tossing around a Ming vase", I climbed right up onto my high horse.

Yet… I am but a youth, what could I possibly know. I have graced the earth for a mere 17 years and John's silver fox editorial picture shouts wisdom and experience. However, I do know enough to tell you that all sorts of words we use today and even ones that might grace Johnno's pen have changed their meanings totally and utterly, sometimes beyond recognition. Let's throw in a little example. Johnno might be spotted tapping into his computer that change of language is absolutely "awful". Little does he know that 'awful' actually used to be defined as something "worthy of awe" and not something "very bad or unpleasant". Oh no! John! I feel I might have found a small but wide-open hole in your argument. We are in quite a muddle. You have shamed your English language forefathers who shake their heads disapprovingly at your slaughter of the English Language.

Comment [A93]: Appropriate and witty use of subeditorial features to establish focus

Comment [A94]: Clear use of strapline/standfirst to support main argument.

Comment [A95]: An attempt to use stylish language, but not perhaps successful with 'quaking' and 'disturbed'

Comment [A96]: Establishes 2 clear arguments in response to Text A

Comment [A97]: Establishes position and stance early on: all helpful for AO5 high levels.

Comment [A98]: Provocative and witty style. Creative and innovative.

Comment [A99]: Addresses language change as an issue, suggesting - at the very least - Level 2 for AO2 at this stage.

Comment [A100]: A precise and well explained example

Comment [A101]: The voice becomes a little less secure here but the style is still engaging and effective.

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I'll start with discussing the simple word: 'like'. I'm going to be honest now, place my palm on the bible, and tell you all I am a user. It's a filler. It serves a purpose. Speech is spontaneous, fast and challenging. I have always been of the opinion that scientific facts not only give one the appearance of being a brain box but also function to disprove and affirm arguments. 'Like' serves a linguistic function. It fills what linguists call 'a filled pause in spontaneous talk'. The moment we say 'like' it's a pause for our brain, letting our mind explore all sorts of avenues of opportunity in conversation and perhaps makes what we are saying all the more valuable because we *like* have had *like* time to *like* think about it. Time which I feel my dear friend John needed before regurgitating old fashioned in fact pre-historic views on language change. The French use fillers. Hey? They might be a little sexier, a little more St Tropez than St Ives but our friends over the Channel use the word "urm" to give their minds quick breaks in speech. It's a hard life eating all those croissants and the French uuuurm need fillers just as we do.

I'm always interested to see how other linguists and writers examine language change. John says "We don't handle language with care anymore". What does he mean "anymore"? Records of people "misusing" the word literally have been around for literally ages. The book 'Little Women' published in the 19th century said that the land "literally flowed with milk and honey". What is Johnny on about? 'Literally' has been used to intensify for centuries, so why have we only just made a problem about it? I'm willing to reason with this one. Language change shows patterns which can be analysed, words go in and out of use like fashion and the ebb and flow of words can be recorded with current technology. The Yale University behavioural economist Keith Chen put forward the theory of the S-Curve Model which shows us that language change is initially slow but will then be take on much more speed as it is accepted in the language, before slowing down once it has been accepted. Perhaps we are scaling a mountain here, maybe more and more of us are using 'like'. I disagree with writer and comedian Paul Parry's remark that "There is no other word that means 'literally' and if the word 'literally's meaning is eroded by all this misuse then there is nothing to replace it and we'll get a lot more confusion" I don't feel confused. I think "literally" now serves a purpose in intensifying; it stresses urgency to my friends. If I exclaim "Guys my M&M's literally just got stuck in the vending machine" they understand the seriousness of the situation. *Literally*, how am I supposed to eat that chocolate goodness? Literally therefore serves a function, and aids in proving the "Functional Theory", that language changes and adapts to the needs of its users. It shows why I as a 17 year old don't need a word for a pill box with 7 day compartments so I can arrange my foot rash medicine but I do need a word for when I take an exceptionally good selfie and the process of uploading it to Instagram (use it in a sentence - "I'm gonna Instagram that").

Another example of words changing meaning comes from our dear pantaloons and tights wearing friend: Shakespeare. Notorious S.H.A.K.E.S.P.E.A.R.E created the words 'fam' and 'cuz'. Need I say anymore? Well apparently yes. Unfortunately some linguists can't even take proof from the mighty Shakespeare. These linguists wander the dark streets of Peckham armed with a grammar book to brandish, hoping to give youths a pretty hefty paper cut for using the dreaded "Street Slang". A recent rumble I enjoyed watching was between Michael Rosen and Lindsay Johns. The two battled it out over new words such as street slang. Johns was smug he thought he was here for an easy knockout, he recited that he has a "zero tolerance towards inchoate street slang" he went on to cite a personal vendetta against the word 'blud'. But Michael Rosen saw it coming, countering with a bare knuckle into Lindsay's gut. "Shakespeare used the word blud" Rosen coolly mentioned. Rosen knows. Street slang in fact has a rich heritage sown by some of our best and brightest playwrights. But why is it that some of the older generation shows concern for younger generations damaging language. It's difficult because the generation before thought exactly the same. One thing that can particularly bother older generations is the creation of new words, because it's happening all the time and with a huge growth of social media it is possible for new words to spread like ripped knee jeans around the globe to anyone with access to a mobile phone.

Comment [A102]: Clear adoption of a voice and identity – knowing and clever Level 5 AO5.

Comment [A103]: Another good example (drawn from the points in Text A)

Comment [A104]: Challenges Sutherland's views, linking them to a wider prescriptive discourse. Uses very effective and stylish style to make this cohesive and witty.

Comment [A105]: Refers to ideas in both Texts A and B.

Comment [A106]: Effective reference to counter Sutherland's claims.

Comment [A107]: Good, clear signposting of a developing argument.

Comment [A108]: Effective use of wider knowledge to illustrate change (AO2 Level 4)

Comment [A109]: Engages with and challenges ideas in Text B. Level 5 AO2.

Comment [A110]: Again, witty and original use of language to present a persona and stance.

Comment [A111]: Brings in further AO2 knowledge to help explain the nature of change. Level 4 AO2.

Comment [A112]: Again, very effective, witty and stylish for AO5.

Comment [A113]: Widens the focus to look at other arguments about language usage.

Comment [A114]: Links back to topic of lexical and semantic change from Texts A and B.

Comment [A115]: Puts this debate in wider context of Texts A and B.

Comment [A116]: Links this to wider language change issues

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This spread is known among linguists as the 'Wave Theory' where people close to the epicenter of change like bustling London feel the tremors of language change the most, but people further away are less likely to adopt it. However, this model was devised in 1973 and with a quick tweet new words can now go from the East end to Edinburgh in under a second. We shouldn't be worried: language change isn't new and it's not going to destroy anything. After all, we can't pickle the English Language and doing so would be impossible. Instead we should sit back and enjoy it, maybe even put our own spoon in and give it a stir.

Examiner summary:
This is a stylish, witty and extremely well-controlled response. The texts are addressed effectively and the ideas engaged with in a lively and well-informed way. The student is prepared to challenge the views in both Text A and B with a strong sense of personal voice and opinion.

AO2: There is strong evidence of detailed knowledge of language ideas and views. The student identifies different models of language change (wave, s-curve, functional theory) and applies these to the material in the texts. Strongly supported challenges are made to Sutherland's views in A and Parry's in B, with wider references and examples being cited. Wider contexts are offered, with reference to arguments about street slang and non-standard English, while key ideas about lexical and semantic change are related back to the material in Texts A and B. The response fulfils much of Level 4 and the confident challenge suggests a mark in Level 5.

AO5: The text is effective and stylish, with some close control of language and form to support a well-structured argument. There is ample evidence of creativity and innovation to support a Level 5 mark. Some of the language choices however, don't quite hit the spot ('quaking' and 'disturbed' in the first paragraph, for example) and the references to Sutherland as 'John', 'Johnno' and a 'silver fox' do not always strike the right tone. On the whole though, the student does extremely well to balance the demands of language content with those of stylistic flair in timed conditions with texts she has not seen before.

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Excellent control of language: cohesive, interesting and fluent • Willingness to challenge views in Texts A and B • Links ideas in A and B to wider arguments and complaints about language change and diversity • Excellent references to own examples and wider debates • Strong grasp of language change models • Transforms material for audience	• References to progress and decay, and wider discourses about language, could have been spelt out more clearly by addressing the metaphors used in the texts • Occasional moments where address to the original text author sounds forced or strikes the wrong tone

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The comments in the right margin read:

Comment [A117]: AO2 wider knowledge used effectively.

Comment [A118]: Offers some critique of a change model.

Comment [A119]: Really stylish and effective conclusion.

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