

Cambridge International AS & A Level

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

9093/41

Paper 4 Language Topics

May/June 2021

2 hours 15 minutes



You must answer on the enclosed answer booklet.

You will need: Answer booklet (enclosed)

INSTRUCTIONS

- Answer **all** questions.
- Follow the instructions on the front cover of the answer booklet. If you need additional answer paper, ask the invigilator for a continuation booklet.
- Dictionaries are **not** allowed.

INFORMATION

- The total mark for this paper is 50.
- The number of marks for each question or part question is shown in brackets [].

This document has **8** pages. Any blank pages are indicated.

Section A: English in the world

Question 1

Read the following text, which is an extract from an article published on the BBC website in 2018.

Discuss what you feel are the most important issues raised in the text relating to the varying use of English globally. You should refer to specific details from the text as well as to ideas and examples from your wider study of English in the world. [25]

Feeling litt? The five US hotspots driving English forward

Feeling *scute* with your *on fleek* eyebrows or with your new *balayage*? Or are you *rekt* and *baeless*?

The English language is forever in flux, as new words are born and old ones die. But where do these terms come from and what determines whether they survive? 5

According to new research, most of the more recent coinages will have originated in one of five distinct hotspots that are driving American English through continual change. The researcher behind the study, Jack Grieve at the University of Birmingham, UK, analysed more than 980 million Tweets.

The result was a list of 54 terms, which covered everything from sex and relationships (such as 'baeless' – a synonym for single), people's appearance ('gainz' to describe the increased muscle mass from bulking up at the gym), and technology ('celfie' – an alternative spelling of selfie). Others reflected the infiltration of Japanese culture (such as 'senpai', which means teacher or master). They also described general feelings, like 'litt' (or 'litty' – which means impressive or good), or affirmations such as 'yaaaas' (as an alternative to yes). Interestingly, some of these terms such as 'candids' (a noun describing photos taken without the other person's knowledge) have been around for years, but were extremely rare until seeing a sudden rise in popularity. 10 15

In total, Grieve identified five hubs driving linguistic change. In order of importance, they were: 20

West Coast

The West Coast primarily introduced concepts such as cosplay (costumed role-playing), technical jargon like 'faved' (favourited) and gaming-language such as 'rekt' (defeated). *Notable terms: amirite (Am I right?); baeritto (a lover you'd like to wrap your arms around like a burrito); slayin (looking great) and waifu (wife).* 25

Deep South

Grieve suggests that the lexical innovation, particularly from the Atlanta metropolitan area, may result from its large African American population (Atlanta is often considered the centre of African American culture), which is bringing its colourful expressions online. *Notable terms: baeless (single); boolin (chilling); famo (family and friend).* 30

North East

With its dense population, it's little surprise that New York would be a centre of linguistic innovation. Surprisingly these words did not have a large geographical reach, however, and tended to be contained within neighbouring states. Interestingly, however, New Yorkers would often follow the West Coast trends, and vice versa. *Notable terms: balayage (a hairstyle); litt or litty (good); lituation (a 'litt' situation).* 35

Mid-Atlantic

Once again, the greatest creativity appeared to arise in the regions with the largest African American populations.

Notable terms: on fleek (on point/flawlessly styled); shordy (short); wce (woman crush everyday). 40

Gulf Coast

One of the region's most noteworthy contributions – 'idgt' (I don't get tired) – became a catchphrase of the rapper Kevin Gates, who grew up in Baton Rouge, the state capital of Louisiana, and released a single of the same name in 2014.

Notable terms: bruuh (bro'); idgt (I don't get tired); lordt (Oh Lord!). 45

Section B: Language and the self

Question 2

Read the following text, which is an extract from an article written by a professor of medicine. It was published in 2013 on the website of *The Guardian*, a British newspaper.

Discuss what you feel are the most important issues raised in the text relating to the ways in which language can shape and reflect how individuals think. You should refer to specific details from the text as well as to ideas and examples from your wider study of Language and the self. [25]

Is it time to call a truce in the 'battle against disease'?

Our obsession with war-like language in medical research may unconsciously limit our creativity in finding new treatments

Almost every night that I have watched the news these past few months, my senses have been assaulted by unpleasant, at times distressing, images of war. I wake up the next morning, trying to forget what I watched the night before, and going to work with our researchers to develop the next potential high-tech cure for cancer, thinking: 'does what we do matter at all?' 5

So I was intrigued by an article in a scientific journal in our field entitled: 'Nanomedicine¹ metaphors: from war to care'. The next lab meeting we had, I was constantly thinking that a lot of the words we were using to communicate our science were directly imported from the language of war: *targeting, stealth nanoparticle, smart bomb, elimination, triggered release, cell death*. I struggled to find alternative language. 10

The language and semantics of war are commonly used to describe our approach to medical treatments. First of all, there are the frequent 'wars' on different diseases that are declared by politicians, but more importantly I think it is our instinctive psychological need to 'eradicate' disease when it occurs. In these 'wars' there are good guys (doctors) and bad guys (diseased tissue) and the 'theatre of battle' is our body. In the situations when a disease has been diagnosed, Hollywood analogies and simplistic interpretations about 'good' and 'bad' may be inaccurate, but they do seem appropriate and convincing. 15 20

I must say, however, that even in pathology², modern medicine increasingly considers the disease to be part of our body, often leading to successful treatment not by 'eradication' and 'elimination' but by holistic management of a chronic condition. The case of HIV therapeutics is perhaps the brightest example of such revisionist thinking, which has transformed the disease from a 'death sentence' in the early years after its discovery to a nonlethal chronic infection today. 25

The question I keep asking myself since I read the article about war metaphors in nanomedicine has been whether we are using terminology in a simplistic, single-minded manner that could stifle creative and out-of-the-box thinking. The semantics of our descriptions can influence the way in which we think about a problem – for example, if I only think of cancer (or any other disease) in a combative manner, I may preclude myself from negotiating a solution to this unfortunate condition without necessarily being fixated about its complete eradication. 30

The way we think and talk about medicine – even within the scientific community – can be counterproductive for finding ways to manage disease that offer patients a longer and healthier standard of living. Perhaps a lot of my colleagues should be thinking twice next time they describe their inventions as 'smart bombs'. 35

Notes:

¹ *nanomedicine*: a specialised form of medicine using extremely small (nano) tools and machines

² *pathology*: the science of the causes and effects of diseases

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