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Section A: Language Variation and Change

Answer at least one question from this section.

Answers should demonstrate awareness of wider geographical/historical/social perspectives (as appropriate) in relation to English Language.

Examples may be drawn from written or spoken English, or from both.

Do not repeat material in your answers to different questions on this Paper.

1 Read Texts A(i) and A(ii), and then answer the question below.

Steven Pinker in discussing '10 'grammar rules' it's OK to break (sometimes)' says, 'You shudder at a split infinitive, know when to use 'that' or 'which' and would never confuse 'less' with 'fewer' – but are these rules always right, elegant or sensible?'

Discuss in detail significant issues related to the correct usage of English.

You should include a range of examples/ideas from both Texts A(i) and A(ii) and your wider studies of English language, with detailed reference to lexis, grammar, syntax and discourse as appropriate.

[25]

Text A(i) is an example from Pinker's article mentioned above.

and, because, but, or, so, also

Many children are taught that it is ungrammatical to begin a sentence with a conjunction. That's because teachers need a simple way to teach them how to break sentences, so they tell them that sentences beginning with "and" and other conjunctions are ungrammatical. Whatever the pedagogical merits may be of feeding children misinformation, it is inappropriate for adults. 5

There is nothing wrong with beginning a sentence with a conjunction. "And", "but" and "so" are indispensable in linking individual sentences into a coherent passage, and they may be used to begin a sentence whenever the clauses being connected are too long or complicated to fit comfortably into a single megasentence. 10

The conjunction "because" can also happily sit at the beginning of a sentence. Most commonly it ends up there when it introduces an explanation that has been preposed in front of a main clause, as in: "Because you're mine, I walk the line." But it can also kick off a single clause when the clause serves as the answer to a why question: "'Why can't I have a pony?' 'Because I said so.'" 15

Words with More Than One Spelling

When the dictionary lists two alternate spellings of a word, should you use your judgment (or is that judgement?), or is there some other criterion for selection?

5

Here are some common entries with more than one orthography:

1. **Adviser/advisor:** Adviser is the preferred spelling, though it is inconsistent with the spelling of the adjectival form advisory.
2. **Among/amongst:** The -st extension is, in both American English and British English, widely considered an unnecessary appendage. (The same preference applies for amid/amidst and while/whilst; whilst is, at any rate, rare in American English.) 10
3. **Barbecue/barbeque:** Barbeque is a variant of barbecue influenced by the truncation BBQ.
4. **Nite/night:** Nite is an informal variant of night 15

2 Read Text B, and then answer the question below.

Julie Coleman in her book 'The Life of Slang' says, 'The English language is also frequently referred to as a plant or a garden: it's a living thing that must be tended and nurtured to stop it reverting to its natural state. Slang terms are weeds that invade what should be the well-tended pastures of English. They are a burr sticking to the flower of English, or a fungus growing on the stem. Slang is a wild fruit grated onto a tame stock: a source of new vitality, but only if properly controlled. More positively, slang terms are flowers from among which the English language plucks only the best for decoration.'

Discuss in detail attitudes towards the future development of English and their implications on society.

You should include a range of examples/ideas from Text B and your wider studies of English language, with detailed reference to lexis, grammar, syntax and discourse as appropriate.

[25]

Text B is from an article taken from CNN Travel, 'mrbrown revives bygone Singapore slang'

Here's a dummy's guide on how to use "stylo milo", "steam" and "chop chop curry pok" without looking like a "goblok"

We need a revival to bring some well-loved Singlish phrases and words back into our daily conversations.

So in the dead of night, I sent out the word "Tebaboom" under the hashtag #wordstorevive into my Twittiverse, and my Twitter friends joined in with contributions. Here are some of the words we want revived: 5

1. 'Confirm, guarantee, plus chop' or 'Confirm, stamp, chop.'

This means you are very sure of something. In Singapore, we use the word "chop" for stamp, like when a customs officer stamps our passport. Getting a "chop" is like getting a stamp of approval or authority. 10

In the army, where getting written approval is a way of life, this phrase gets used a lot when a soldier wants to know if something is indeed approved by the higher-ups.

2. 'Stylo Milo' 15

Even my mother used this term in her time, I think. Milo is a popular chocolate malted drink powder, and when paired with Stylo, refers to someone or something stylish.

3. 'Outside settle' or in Hokkien dialect, 'Ow Buey Gong!'

Used by gangsters and wayward youths in the past to mean settle this with a fight outside. The literal translation of the Hokkien phrase is "let's talk at the back (usually alley)." 20

These days, milder folk use this to mean "let's settle the bill outside the restaurant."

Section B: Language, Culture and Identity

Answer at least one question from this section.

Answers should demonstrate awareness of wider geographical/historical/social perspectives (as appropriate) in relation to English Language.

Examples may be drawn from written or spoken English, or both.

Do not repeat material in your answers to different questions on this Paper.

- 3** Read Texts C(i) and C(ii) , and answer the following question.

Discuss in detail ways in which language is used to construct social attitudes and values towards institutions of higher education.

You should include a range of examples/ideas from Texts C(i) and C(ii) and from your wider studies of English language, with detailed reference to lexis, grammar, syntax and discourse as appropriate.

[25]

Text C(i) is taken from the website from Monsters University.

GIVING TO MU

"Together, we can magnify the impact MU has on science, technology, and culture." -- MU supporter, Jarvis Appleton (MBA '23)

The University's dedicated staff will guide you through the many giving options available to MU alumni, from long-term charitable trusts to unrestricted gifts that can make an immediate impact. 5

A gift to Monsters University adds strength to a centuries-old foundation of generosity, allowing MU to address its most pressing needs and its most exciting opportunities, including:

Scholarships for talented monsters with financial need. 10

Faculty recruitment

State-of-the-art facilities

Resources matter and every act of alumni giving make MU a better place. Thank you for your generous support!

WAYS TO GIVE 15

Giving online is not available at this time. If you're interested in making a gift of any type, please stop by our office in the MU administration building room #1152B and ask about giving options. We'd be happy to help.

Text C(ii) is an article taken from a university publication: **IMPACT – gifts in action**. The article features how gifts from alumni, parents, friends corporations and foundations are making an ongoing impact on our students, programmes, research, faculty and facilities in NTU.

SEMBCORP MARINE

Gift Powers Green Energy Research

A \$20 million gift (with government matching) from Sembcorp Marine Ltd is powering green energy research at NTU.

The generous gift from the marine and offshore engineering leader establishes the Sebmcorp Marine Lab@NTU , which will focus its research on eco-friendly solutions for the sustainable growth of the industry, including the use of renewable and clean fuels for marine engines, emission control technologies for mitigating greenhouses gases, and innovative heat recovery techniques for marine engines. 5

Housed at and led by NTU's School of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering (MAE), the lab is also a research and development platform which allows Sembcorp Marine and other industry players to utilise its resources for research collaborations with NTU. 10

And research projects are already underway even while the lab is currently being renovated. 15

One of the projects being funded by the gift is a prototype electric power generator using integrated fuel cells coupled with on-board-ship hydrogen production by thermocatalytic decomposition of methane. This is to generate hydrogen as a feed to fuel cells as a source of clean fuel to power a ship.

“Another project is the simultaneous adsorption cooling and water production for marine applications using simulated waste heat. This is to recover waste heat from the exhaust flue gas of the marine engine to supply part of the thermal and cooling demands in the ship,” said Professor Lua Aik Chong, who heads the Division of Thermal and Fluids Engineering in MAE. 20

4 Read Text D(i) & D(ii), and answer the following question.

Linguists in an extract from a chapter on “The Talk of Women and Men”, writes, ‘Many language and gender studies have investigated and frequently also challenged these stereotypes about gendered language use. However, gender stereotypes should not be dismissed in scholarly debate entirely as they reveal interesting ideologies about how women and men *ought* to speak. These ideologies shape dominant discourses which are accepted as ‘common sense’ by many members of socio-cultural groups, and therefore serve as points of orientation for speakers in their actual language use.’

Discuss in detail ways in which language can be used to construct and reinforce gender identities and relations between men and women.

You should include a range of examples/ideas from Text C and the quotation above. and from your wider studies of English language, with detailed reference to lexis, grammar, syntax and discourse as appropriate.

[25]

Text D(i) is from article, *The unstoppable march of the upward inflection?*

Uptalk had been spotted even earlier, in 1975 by linguist Robin Lakoff, who wrote that "there is a peculiar sentence pattern... which has the form of a declarative answer to a question, and is used as such, but has the rising inflection typical of a yes-no question." But the actual term "uptalk" wasn't used until a New York Times piece in 1993.

5

Some people believe the phenomenon is used by uncertain speakers hoping to win their audience over. It acts as a constant check that listeners follow - phrasing every sentence, no matter how declarative, is a subconscious begging by the speaker to be reassured. It's a use Robin Lakoff first noticed 40 years ago. "The effect," she wrote, "is as though one were seeking confirmation, though at the same time the speaker may be the only one who has the requisite information."

10

"If you hear it from younger women you suspect of being excessively insecure, though it's not intended as such it can be interpreted as a form of conversational weakness," says Liberman. That's something Collins agrees with.

15

"It's a bit meek; a bit everyman," Collins says. "To me it's not the language of business and power. But a lot of people are using it now, including men."

20

Text D(ii) is a transcript of three 18 year olds discussing future career paths in casual conversation.

Interlocutors: S1 & S2 are Female, S3 is Male

- S1 May Ann what do you want to do ah/↑(.) like what do you want to do /↑ 1
- S2 There's nothing to do in this world
- S1 Wah so depressing (.) //
- S2 // cos I was talking to my mom about it you know
- S1 no lah// 5
- S3 // <sniggle> you should write for Sarah's blog
- S1 // I mean like what
- S1 <laughs>
- S2 I was talking to my mom about it then I was like mom I don't want to be a teacher /↑
(.) because I don't (.) ever want to go back into this school system (.) and (.) there's 10
nothing and I don't want to be a diplomat because the divorce rates are so high (.) and=
- S1 =trust you to have that as a concern
- S2 <laughs> no but seriously like you have to move around like every three years right (.)
like you have to move to a different country every three years and how are you going
to sustain your family life kind of thing(.) // 15
// that's true// (.) unless you have a husband who is
- S1 willing to=
- S2 //and
- S2 =yeah
- S1 or // 20
- S2 // but which honestly which husband would//
- S1 //unless he or unless or unless or unless
he has a job that would like allow him to// travel also
- S2 // to like freelance=
- S1 =yeah 25
- S2 but that's like a one in a million (.) you know (.) and I cannot imagine myself having an
office job (.) I would just die
- S1 I can imagine myself having an office job except I must be the (.) boss of that office lah
- S2 <laughs>
- S3 but then you can work for the MFA and stay in Singapore what^ you don't have to 30
move around=
- S2 =but I=
- S1 = but if you're not like a diplomat for the MFA what're you going to do you're going to
be like deskbound=
- S3 =no like a political analyst 35
- S1 you're still going to be deskbound// it's still a nine to five job
// no I mean (.) literally virtually every job in the
- S3 world is (.) is deskbound in one (.) even if you're a diplomat you're still deskbound// in
one way or another
- S1 // that's true that's 40
true (.) but at least there's that element of excitement in your life

- S2 but (1) but as in I've thought about it and being a diplomat (.) like the friendships you make and you know all the networking (.) it's like//
- S1 // it's not genuine
it's very superficial it really is like I've talked to people who were in it the MFA before 45
and I don't want that kind of life (.) it's like everything I've been going against (.) all this
whole friendship thing like how (.) in school we're so against people who're so
superficial about their friendships and everything what (.) I don't want that to be// to
S2 become me (.) yeah
- S3 // on a geopolitical level 50
hmm but these kind of like superficial relationships are important (.) for like countries
- S1 what because I mean there's no way you can have a deep relationship between
countries
- S2 mmm that's true but I'm not someone who's willing to do that/ I want as in I want my
friendships to be genuine and I don't want that kind of life for myself 55

Transcription Key:

(1) = Pause in second (.) = micro-pause // = speech overlap
 ↗ = rising tone ↘ = falling tone = = speech runs together, no pause
 <laugh> <sniggle> = paralinguistic features

REFERENCE TABLE OF IPA PHONEMIC SYMBOLS (RP)

1. Consonants of English		2. Pure vowels of English	
/f/	<u>f</u> at, rou <u>gh</u>	/ɪ:/	be <u>a</u> t, ke <u>a</u> p
/v/	<u>v</u> ery, <u>v</u> illage, lo <u>v</u> e	/ɪ/	b <u>i</u> t, t <u>i</u> p, b <u>u</u> sy
/θ/	<u>th</u> eatre, <u>th</u> ank, ath <u>l</u> ete	/e/	b <u>e</u> t, m <u>a</u> ny
/ð/	<u>th</u> is, <u>th</u> em, w <u>ith</u> , e <u>ith</u> er	/æ/	b <u>a</u> t
/s/	<u>s</u> ing, think <u>s</u> , loss <u>e</u> s	/ʌ/	c <u>u</u> p, s <u>o</u> n, bl <u>oo</u> d
/z/	<u>z</u> oo, bed <u>s</u> , eas <u>y</u>	/ɑ:/	c <u>a</u> r, h <u>ea</u> t, c <u>a</u> lm, <u>a</u> unt
/ʃ/	<u>s</u> ugar, b <u>u</u> sh	/ɐ/	p <u>o</u> t, w <u>a</u> nt
/ʒ/	pleas <u>u</u> re, beig <u>e</u>	/ɔ:/	p <u>o</u> rt, s <u>a</u> w, t <u>a</u> lk
/h/	<u>h</u> igh, <u>h</u> it, b <u>eh</u> ind	/ə/	<u>a</u> bout
/p/	<u>p</u> it, t <u>o</u> p, sp <u>i</u> t	/ɜ:/	w <u>o</u> rd, b <u>i</u> rd
/t/	<u>t</u> ip, p <u>o</u> t, st <u>ee</u> p	/ʊ/	b <u>oo</u> k, w <u>oo</u> d, p <u>u</u> t
/k/	<u>k</u> ee <u>p</u> , t <u>i</u> ck, sc <u>a</u> re	/u:/	f <u>oo</u> d, s <u>ou</u> p, r <u>u</u> de
/b/	<u>b</u> ad, ru <u>b</u>		
/d/	ba <u>d</u> , <u>d</u> im	3. Diphthongs of English	
/g/	gu <u>n</u> , bi <u>g</u>		
/tʃ/	<u>ch</u> urch, lun <u>ch</u>	/eɪ/	l <u>a</u> te, d <u>a</u> y, gr <u>ea</u> t
/dʒ/	j <u>u</u> dge, <u>g</u> in, j <u>u</u> ry	/aɪ/	t <u>i</u> me, h <u>i</u> gh, d <u>ie</u>
/m/	<u>m</u> ad, j <u>a</u> m, sm <u>a</u> ll	/ɔɪ/	b <u>oy</u> , n <u>oi</u> se
/n/	ma <u>n</u> , <u>n</u> o, sn <u>ow</u>	/aʊ/	c <u>ow</u> , h <u>ou</u> se, t <u>ow</u> n
/ŋ/	s <u>ing</u> er, lon <u>g</u>	/əʊ/	b <u>oa</u> t, h <u>o</u> me, kn <u>ow</u>
/l/	<u>l</u> oud, k <u>ill</u> , pl <u>a</u> y	/ɪə/	<u>ea</u> r, h <u>er</u> e
/j/	<u>y</u> ou, p <u>ure</u>	/eə/	<u>air</u> , c <u>are</u> , ch <u>air</u>
/w/	<u>o</u> ne, <u>w</u> hen, s <u>w</u> ee <u>t</u>	/ʊə/	j <u>ury</u> , c <u>ure</u>
/r/	<u>r</u> im, br <u>ea</u> d		

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