1.3 Language: Language Change and Diversity: Test Pack

AQA 7702 · about 35 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions.

Two Voices, Two Eras: An Original Transcript and Diary Pastiche

Source written for Revision Library (original, copyright-free). Text A is an invented transcript of spoken regional/social dialect composed specifically for A-level English Language study; it does not represent a real recording or real people. Text B is an original pastiche composed in the style of mid-nineteenth-century prose to illustrate historical semantic change; it is not a reproduction of, or extract from, any real historical document. Lines in Text A are numbered for ease of reference in the questions that follow.

TEXT A: Spoken transcript (spoken mode, informal register, unplanned)

Transcript of an informal conversation between two Year 13 students, Aisha and Connor, recorded with permission in a sixth-form common room in Bolton, Greater Manchester, on the morning of a mock examination, March 2026.

Key: (.) = a micro-pause of under one second; [square brackets] = a paralinguistic feature.

1. Aisha: eh up (.) y'oreyt (.) you look proper knackered

2. Connor: aye (.) been revisin' till two (.) me mam kept mitherin' us to go to bed

3. Aisha: mitherin' (.) ha (.) me nan says that an' all (.) where's our kid gone (.) is he still in bed

4. Connor: yeah he's proper lazy our kid (.) he'll not shift for owt

5. Aisha: tell him get up (.) we're supposed to be meetin' Chelsea at the bus stop for half nine

6. Connor: he'll not listen to me (.) listens to no one that lad

7. Aisha: honestly he's mad in't he

8. Connor: [laughs] mad for it he is (.) anyway (.) you sorted for the exam (.) I'm dead worried about the change unit

9. Aisha: nah it's sound that bit (.) it's the diversity data response that does me in

10. Connor: we'll be reyt (.) we've done nowt but revise all week

TEXT B: Personal diary extract (written mode, formal register, historical pastiche)

An extract from a fictional personal diary, composed in the style of mid-nineteenth-century English prose. (Original text written for Revision Library; it is a pastiche and does not reproduce any historical document.) The diarist, a young gentlewoman, describes an evening spent at her aunt's house.

3rd April, 1852.

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My aunt dined with us this evening, grown monstrous nice in her tastes, and would touch no meat upon the table save a little dressed veal, though there was cheese and bread and fruit enough to call a feast. My cousin's girl, ten summers old, sat close by her brother, a girl of six himself in our old nurse's tongue, who names every small child so, be it boy or maid. The child told of a hare, quick in the meadow not an hour since, brought down by the hounds before our very eyes, and my aunt named the sight an awful one, crossing herself as though she had witnessed something not of this earth. Mr. Hartley called after supper, silly with love for my cousin as any man I ever saw, meek and blessed in his devotion, and nothing did let him from speaking his mind, though he near starved himself with waiting these six months for her answer.

1 Refer to Text A, the transcript of Aisha and Connor's conversation.

(a) Identify four features of Text A that show non-standard regional or social dialect rather than Standard English grammar or vocabulary. For each feature, quote the exact word or phrase from the text and give its line number. **(4)**

(b) Analyse how Aisha and Connor's language reflects their regional and social identity. In your answer, refer to lexis, grammar and the way accent is represented through spelling. **(8)**

(Total for Question 1 is 12 marks)

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2 Refer to Text B, the 1852 diary extract.

(a) Four words in Text B are used with meanings different from their most common meaning today: nice, meat, awful and silly. For each word, state the meaning it has in Text B and name the type of semantic change (broadening, narrowing, amelioration or pejoration) that has occurred between 1852 and today. **(8)**

(b) Text B also contains the words girl, quick, let and starve used in senses that differ from today's most common meaning. Explain what these four examples show about processes of semantic change in English, using appropriate terminology (e.g. broadening, narrowing, semantic shift, specialisation). **(10)**

(Total for Question 2 is 18 marks)

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Mark scheme · 1.3 Language: Language Change and Diversity: Test Pack

Question 1

(a) Feature 1 correctly quoted with line reference (oe any of: 'owt'/'nowt', 'our kid', 'mitherin'', 'in't he', 'y'oreyt', 'he'll not shift for owt', 'we've done nowt but revise') **B1**

(a) Feature 2 correctly quoted with line reference, different from feature 1 (oe) **B1**

(a) Feature 3 correctly quoted with line reference, different from features 1 and 2 (oe) **B1**

(a) Feature 4 correctly quoted with line reference, different from features 1 to 3 (oe) **B1**

(a) Answer: Any four of: 'owt'/'nowt' (lines 4 and 10, dialect lexis for 'anything'/'nothing'); 'our kid' (lines 3, 4, regional kinship term for a sibling); 'mitherin'' (line 2, regional dialect verb meaning to nag or pester); 'in't he' (line 7, non-standard negated tag question); 'y'oreyt' (line 1, eye-dialect spelling representing a regional greeting/accent); 'he'll not shift for owt' (line 4, non-standard modal negation and dialect lexis combined).

(b) **L1** Simple identification of one or two dialect features with little or no linguistic terminology; limited or no link to identity. **1-2**

(b) **L2** Some relevant features identified using basic terminology (e.g. 'dialect word', 'accent spelling'); some, mostly generalised, comment on regional identity. **3-4**

(b) **L3** Clear analysis of a range of lexical, grammatical and phonological/graphological features using accurate terminology; features are convincingly linked to regional and social identity and to the informal context. **5-6**

(b) **L4** Sophisticated, well-supported analysis across multiple frameworks (lexis, grammar, phonology/graphology); precise terminology; perceptive discussion of how the features construct regional, social and peer-group identity, integrating relevant ideas (e.g. covert prestige, the accent/dialect distinction). **7-8**

(b) Indicative content:

- Eye-dialect spellings such as 'y'oreyt' and 'reyt' represent regional pronunciation (accent) rather than a difference in vocabulary or grammar
- Dialect lexis ('mitherin'', 'nowt', 'owt', 'our kid') signals regional identity and in-group solidarity; may be discussed with reference to covert prestige (Trudgill), where non-standard forms carry social value within the peer group despite lacking overt status
- Non-standard grammar ('in't he', 'he'll not shift for owt') marks the speech as a distinct regional/social dialect rather than an error, consistent with the descriptivist view that all dialects are rule-governed systems
- Discourse features (minimal responses, laughter, informal address) support a relaxed, solidary register appropriate to two peers talking informally, reinforcing shared social and regional identity
- Candidates may reference Labov's studies of the social stratification of accent/dialect, or Trudgill's urban dialect research, to support points

Question 2

(a) 'nice' correctly glossed as fussy/particular/hard to please (oe) **B1**

(a) 'nice' classified as amelioration (cao) **B1**

(a) 'meat' correctly glossed as food in general, not only animal flesh (oe) **B1**

(a) 'meat' classified as narrowing (cao) **B1**

(a) 'awful' correctly glossed as awe-inspiring/full of religious dread or reverence (oe) **B1**

(a) 'awful' classified as pejoration (cao) **B1**

(a) 'silly' correctly glossed as blessed/innocent/deserving of pity or love, not foolish (oe) **B1**

(a) 'silly' classified as pejoration (cao) **B1**

(a) Answer: nice = fussy/particular (amelioration); meat = food in general (narrowing); awful = awe-inspiring/reverential (pejoration); silly = blessed/innocent (pejoration).

(b) **L1** Minimal or largely inaccurate comment on one example, with little terminology. **1-2**

(b) **L2** Basic explanation of one or two examples with some appropriate terminology, but limited development. **3-4**

(b) **L3** Clear explanation of at least three examples using accurate terminology; some understanding of processes of change. **5-6**

(b) **L4** Detailed, accurate explanation of all four examples, correctly naming the process of change in each case; secure understanding of how meanings shift over time. **7-8**

(b) **L5** Comprehensive, precise explanation of all four examples with sophisticated use of terminology; makes connections between the examples (e.g. a general pattern of narrowing/specialisation) and shows awareness of how such change is documented (etymology, historical corpora). **9-10**

(b) Indicative content:

- 'girl' originally referred to a young person of either sex ('a girl of six himself'); its meaning has narrowed/specialised to refer only to a female child
- 'quick' originally meant 'alive' (as still preserved in 'the quick and the dead'); its dominant modern sense ('fast') represents a semantic shift, with the older sense becoming archaic and restricted to fixed expressions
- 'let' here means 'hinder' (an obsolete sense, preserved today only in the tennis term 'let'); the word has undergone semantic shift, with a newer sense ('allow') effectively replacing, and even opposing, the older one
- 'starve' originally meant 'to die' in a general sense (from Old English steorfan); its meaning has narrowed to mean specifically 'to die of, or suffer from, hunger'
- Overall, most of these changes illustrate narrowing/specialisation of meaning over time; candidates might link this to general theories of semantic change and to the idea that meaning change is gradual and driven by usage, not decay (Aitchison)

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