

5.1 A starting point

As well as a general knowledge of the structure of spoken and written English, linguists use certain core concepts to classify language. The key terms introduced in this section will provide you with the necessary basis for linguistic analysis since they establish a background against which all kinds of language change and variety can be considered.

5.2 Standard English and Received Pronunciation

STANDARD ENGLISH (SE) is a form of English which has been accepted as a norm. It is the variety with which other forms of English are compared. Sometimes it is called a *dialect* although it is not linked to a specific region and has no regionally distinctive words or grammatical structures.

All language users adapt the form of their language according to where they are, what they are trying to communicate, and to whom they are speaking or writing. Even Standard English, therefore, exists in a variety of forms – spoken and written; formal and informal; personal and impersonal. Although most people speak either a regional variety of English or a mixture of Standard English and regional forms, Standard English provides the country with a unified means of communication. It is what we usually hear on the television and radio news, for instance, because it is a form that everyone can understand. In its written form, Standard English is found in print and in formal written varieties like essays and business letters. It is also called **BBC ENGLISH** or **THE QUEEN'S ENGLISH**, and for some people it is the symbol of 'good English'.

It is a prestigious language form because it is associated with government, the law, education, the Church and the financial world. It is the form taught to second-language speakers because it is universally understood and this perpetuates its cultural value.

Linguists are interested in the varieties of English we use and in order to describe them they use Standard English as a point of comparison. Any variety which does not use the same vocabulary or grammar as Standard English is called **NON-STANDARD ENGLISH**. By using this term, linguists can avoid value judgements – non-standard varieties of English are not wrong, but different.

Just as Standard English provides linguists with a convenient norm for describing variations in vocabulary and grammar, **RECEIVED PRONUNCIATION (RP)** provides a standard form of pronunciation. It is an accent often associated with the South-East

where most RP speakers live, but unlike regional accents it is not confined by regional boundaries. In fact, RP tells you more about speakers' social and cultural backgrounds than about the region from which they come.

There are no linguistic reasons for describing RP as the 'best' accent, but socially it is associated with respectability, good education and high social status. It is prestigious because it is linked to the law, public schools and the Church. Second-language learners are often taught an RP accent, and it has been linked to the BBC since the early days of broadcasting.

Today, although RP still exists, only 2-3 per cent of the British population speak it in its original pure form. Now it most commonly exists as **MODIFIED RECEIVED PRONUNCIATION (MRP)**, educated speakers having mixed characteristics of RP with regional forms. Speakers equally modify regional accents by moving towards a spoken form that they see as more prestigious, a form that they believe will improve their social status. The **ESTUARY ENGLISH** of the 1990s, for example, shows the way some regional speakers adapted their accent by using features of RP. Although it originated in the South-East, young people as far north as Hull now adopt Estuary English as a 'trendy' accent.

Because language change is constant, some people argue that RP will not survive in its original form. Social judgements about regional varieties have to some extent become less dogmatic and this inevitably affects the way that users view different accents. The use of RP is no longer a prerequisite to social status - BBC presenters, academics and politicians now often retain their regional accents, although probably in a modified form. Ultimately, the use of Standard English is socially more important than the use of RP.

5.3 Attitudes to language

There are two distinct approaches to language: **PRESCRIPTIVISM** and **DESCRIPTIVISM**. The **prescriptivists** believe that English is governed by a set of rules which dictate a 'proper' and 'correct' use of language. They believe that if the 'rules' are not obeyed, the speaker or writer is 'wrong'. The form of English they see as 'correct' has a high social prestige - it is associated with formal written and spoken language and is used in dictionaries, grammar books and language handbooks. Because prescriptivists regard one particular form of English as the 'best', they dislike linguistic change. They see it as a process of decay which erodes standards and leads to a debased form of English.

The **descriptivists**, on the other hand, observe language as it is spoken or written in different situations. They aim to describe the ways in which language varies according to the user, the use and the context. While prescriptivists dislike language change, descriptivists see it as inevitable. They recognise that a living language cannot be fixed, but will adapt to meet the demands of its users.

Despite this, descriptivists recognise the need for a standard form of language as a point of comparison. Although they believe that some usage is 'wrong' (*I in live town the*), they are more interested in describing variations from the standard as 'non-standard' than as 'incorrect'. In other words, they do make judgements, but these are based on a knowledge of audience, purpose and context.

5.4 Audience, purpose and context

All speakers and writers make decisions about the kinds of language they use - often subconsciously. They think about who they will be addressing (**audience**) and the kind of relationship they need to create. They assess the formality or informality of the occasion (**context**) and the reason for the speech or writing (**purpose**). Lexical choices are then a reflection of their assessment of the linguistic situation.

Each individual has a wide range of language forms called a **PERSONAL REPERTOIRE**. We draw on these, speaking and writing in different ways according to the impression we want to make - with friends we are informal and familiar, with employers or teachers we are polite and formal. By assessing what is expected of us according to our audience, purpose and context, we regularly make decisions about what is **appropriate** or suitable. The term **APPROPRIATENESS** offers linguists an alternative to the right/wrong approach of the prescriptivists. It encourages a recognition of the variety and flexibility of language, and recognises that there are different linguistic expectations for different situations.

Language can also be assessed for its **ACCEPTABILITY** - whether it is considered permissible or normal by ordinary users. Linguists use **acceptability tests** to assess what is and what is not acceptable and their results show that language users do not always agree. Variations in opinions are caused by geographical, cultural, social and personal factors. To a linguist, however, any form of language that is regularly in use in speech or writing is acceptable in an appropriate context.

ACTIVITY 5.1

Read through the following examples of informal spoken English and then answer the questions below.

- a Are the utterances acceptable or unacceptable to you?
- b If they are unacceptable, can you identify what does not seem normal?
- c To what extent would the acceptability of these utterances depend upon the formality or informality of the context?

Examples

- 1 I never do nothing on a Friday night.
- 2 I'm going to town now, me.
- 3 Don't forget to get off of the bus at the right stop.
- 4 Who did you speak to?
- 5 They always start Star Trek by saying 'To boldly go where no man has gone before'.
- 6 I was badder than my brother when I was little.
- 7 I met up with Julie when I went to town.
- 8 Tom forgot to pick me up and I was sat there for more than half an hour.
- 9 You're all right now. You just need a good rest.
- 10 We was going shopping for mum when it happened.
- 11 The little boy fed hisself quite well for a toddler.
- 12 The temperature today will be 19° through 21°.
- 13 I can't make an appointment with the doctor while 5 o'clock.
- 14 The mouses were running everywhere last night.
- 15 The chairperson picked up her brief for the meeting.
- 16 I'm better than he is at writing stories.
- 17 I likes it better when my friend comes to play.

You may or may not have found examples that seemed unusual to you. Despite the fact that many of these utterances differ from the norm or standard, descriptivist linguists would say that they are all **acceptable** because they are real examples of everyday usage in British regional dialects. However, it is important to realise that they would not be **appropriate** in all contexts. The comments below summarise some of the grammatical and linguistic features to which you may have responded.

Verb forms will often be different from the standard in regional dialects. In utterance 8, the verb phrase *was sat* would be replaced in Standard English by the progressive *was sitting*. The use of the verb *to be* + *past participle* is associated with the passive voice and linguistic purists would argue that in this example the *by* + *agent* has been omitted from a passive construction – that is, *I was sat there ... by someone*. In utterance 10, there is evidence of a dialectal standardising process in which the first person plural past tense of the verb *to be* is replaced by the singular *was*. A similar process of standardisation occurs in utterance 17 – the verb *likes* has the *-s* inflection we would expect to see with the third person singular present tense. *You'm* in utterance 9 also standardises an irregular pattern: it is a dialectal contraction of *you are* in which the first person singular *am* is contracted to *-m* and applied to all parts of the verb. These are all common processes of regularisation, since dialects often simplify irregular patterns.

Other non-standard features linked to verbs can be seen in the use of a multiple negative in utterance 1. In Late Modern Standard English, the use of *never* and *nothing* together cancel each other out, although in earlier forms of English, listing of negatives was used for emphasis. The phrasal-prepositional verb *to meet up with* used in utterance 7 is a new combination and its meaning is still not yet stable. While some speakers use it to denote an accidental meeting, others would interpret it as an arranged meeting. This ambiguity is evidence of the way in which language change takes place – during the process of change, several variants often exist alongside each other. Finally, utterance 5 may or may not have seemed non-standard to you. Prescriptivists argue that an infinitive like *to go* is a lexical item and should not be split by a word placed in between. They would say that *to go boldly* is the 'correct' form, while descriptivists would argue that language is flexible and that *to boldly go* is far more dramatic in this context.

Pronouns are also often non-standard in regional dialects. In utterance 2, the object pronoun *me* is semantically redundant, but it is used in some dialects for emphasis. The reflexive pronoun *himself* in utterance 11 also simplifies a pattern. Most reflexive pronouns are formed by adding *-self* or *-selves* to a possessive determiner: *my* + *self*; *your* + *self/selves*; *our* + *selves*. For the third person singular, however, *-self* is added to the object pronoun *him*. The dialectal form regularises the pattern by using the possessive determiner *his* + *self*.

Several examples here show how **prepositions** can be flexible in dialects. In utterance 3, the preposition *of* is not needed in Standard English to describe the direction of the movement since *off* denotes this itself. In utterances 12 and 13, Standard English would use a different preposition – *through* would be replaced by *'from _____ to _____*, (SE) and *while* by *until* (SE). This kind of dialectal substitution can cause problems in communication since speakers not familiar with the dialect could fail to understand the meaning. The utterance in example 4 may not have seemed unusual, but prescriptivists would argue that sentences should not end with a preposition. They would see *To whom did you speak?* as the 'correct' form, with the preposition moved to the initial position and an object pronoun form of the relative pronoun *who* following it. This structure is more common in writing than in speech.

Some **adjectival** use is also non-standard. Example 16 highlights the process of

grading adjectives. In Standard English, mono- and many disyllabic adjectives add the inflection *-er* (*slow* + *er*, *easy* + *(i)er*); some disyllabic and all polysyllabic adjectives add *more* (*more* + *recent*; *more* + *intelligent*). Irregular adjectives do not follow this pattern, but instead have distinctive forms. The example here uses *better*, the irregular comparative form of *good*, adding the regular *-er* inflection as well. In utterance 6, an irregular comparative *worse* is standardised in the form of *badder*. This kind of simplification can be found in child language where a child recognises a language pattern and then overuses it by applying 'the rule' to irregular as well as regular words.

Some **nouns** may also be different in non-standard forms of English. In utterance 14 an irregular noun plural *mice* has been standardised as *mouses*. The regular *-s* inflection has been added where in Standard English the plural is marked by a change in the vowel. (In written language the consonant also changes, from *s* to *c*, but it is important to remember that these sound the same phonologically, and in speech would both be realised as /s/.) This is another instance of overextension in which a child assimilates a 'rule' and then overuses it. Finally, the use of *chairperson* in utterance 15 may or may not have attracted your attention. Purists may argue that the use of *chairperson* is unnecessary and awkward, but most people would prefer it since there is no need to distinguish between the sexes in this role.

The dialectal forms here may be **inappropriate** in some contexts, but in others they are **appropriate**. If they were used in informal contexts within regional boundaries where the audience was familiar with such variations, they would not cause problems in understanding. Modern linguists would not automatically describe them as 'wrong', therefore, but would assess the appropriateness of each utterance by considering the audience, purpose and context.

5.5 Register

REGISTER is a term used to describe variations in language according to use – lawyers use a legal register, doctors a medical register and priests a religious register. When analysing an example of spoken or written language, linguists ask questions about three key areas of register. The **MODE** can either be spoken or written, although subdivisions can be identified where a formal speech is written to be read aloud or a written record is made of spoken language. A letter to the Prime Minister and an informal conversation with a friend, for instance, would use different registers: one uses a written mode while the other uses a spoken one. The **MANNER** describes the relationship between the participants and the formality or informality of the context in which communication takes place. A written examination essay does not aim to create a personal relationship with an unknown examiner because it is a formal task, while a postcard to a friend is both informal and personal. The **FIELD** is linked to the subject matter – by looking at the kind of words used, linguists can come to conclusions about the topic or focus of communication. A medical field, for example, may use words like *medicine*, *patient*, *asthma* and *inhalant*, while a legal field may use *judge*, *fixed penalty*, *sentence* and *witness*.

By considering mode, manner and field, linguists can draw conclusions about the role and form of language in different contexts. Different varieties of English are characterised by distinctive features and 'register' is a logical starting point for analysis.

ACTIVITY 5.2

Some writers adopt different registers in order to create particular effects. The following extract is taken from *Ulysses* (1922), an experimental novel by James Joyce. It describes a June day in Dublin in 1904, mainly from the viewpoint of Leopold Bloom whose thoughts and activities are in some ways a parallel to the epic adventures of Homer's Ulysses.

The extract focuses on a conversation between friends in a pub. Read it through and try to identify where the changes in register occur. To help you, think about Joyce's use of:

- 1 direct speech and description;
- 2 religious language;
- 3 legal language;
- 4 informal and colloquial language.

- 1 – I know that fellow, says Joe, from bitter experience.
– Cockburn. Dimsey, wife of David Dimsey, late of the admiralty: Miller, Tottenham, aged eightyfive: Welsh, June 12, at 35 Canning Street, Liverpool, Isabella Helen. How's that for a national press, eh, my brown son? How's that for Martin Murphy the Bantry jobber?

– Ah, well, says Joe, handing round the boose. Thanks be to God they had the start of us. Drink that, citizen.

– I will, says he, honourable person.

– Health, Joe, says I. And all down the form.

10 Ah! Ow! Don't be talking! I was blue mouldy for the want of that pint. Declare to God I could hear it hit the pit of my stomach with a click.

And lo, as they quaffed their cup of joy, a godlike messenger came swiftly in, radiant as the eye of heaven, a comely youth, and behind him there passed an elder of noble gait and countenance, bearing the sacred scrolls of law, and with him his lady wife, a dame of peerless lineage, fairest of her race.

Little Alf Bergan popped in round the door and hid behind Barney's snug, squeezed up with the laughing, and who was sitting up there in the corner that I hadn't seen snoring drunk, blind to the world, only Bob Doran. I didn't know what was up and Alf kept making signs out of the door. And begob what was it only that bloody old pantaloons Denis Breen in his bath slippers with two bloody big books tucked under his oxter and the wife hotfoot after him, unfortunate wretched woman trotting like a poodle. I thought Alf would split.

25 – Look at him, says he. Breen. He's traipsing all round Dublin with a post-card someone sent him with u.p.: up on it to take a li . . .
And he doubled up.

– Take a what? says I.

– Libel action, says he, for ten thousand pounds.

– O hell! says I.

30 The bloody mongrel began to growl that'd put the fear of God in you seeing something was up but the citizen gave him a kick in the ribs.

James Joyce, *Ulysses*

COMMENTARY

Changes in **mode** are noticeable where direct speech (spoken mode) becomes description (written mode) at lines 12, 27 and 31. The extract opens with spoken language and the **manner** is informal because these are friends drinking socially. The informality is marked by exclamations like *Ah!* (l. 10), *eh* (l. 4) and *Ow!* (l. 10). The use of shortened forms (contractions) like *How's* (l. 4), colloquial language like *boose* (l. 6) and dialect like *oxter* (l. 22) (Irish and Scots dialect for *armpit*) also reflect the informality of the manner. In the second line, however, one of the characters reads aloud from the births and deaths column of a newspaper. Information is provided in the almost note-like written form associated with obituaries placed in a newspaper personal column. The register changes again when Joyce uses another written style, drawing on the **field** of religion: *And lo* (l. 12), *the sacred scrolls of law* (ll. 14–15). Contrasting with this is the **field** of myth, which talks of a *godlike messenger* (l. 12) and a *dame of peerless lineage* (l. 15).

The result here is comic because Joyce's choice of register contrasts with the reality of his characters. By juxtaposing (setting one thing against another) *boose* (l. 6) with *quaffed their cup of joy* (l. 12), and *an elder of noble gait and countenance* (l. 14) with *Denis Breen in his bath slippers with two bloody big books tucked under his oxter* (ll. 21–2), Joyce encourages his reader to see both the comedy and the grandeur of ordinary life. This effect can also be seen in the contrasting descriptions of *Little Alf Bergan* (l. 17) as a *godlike messenger* (l. 12) and a *comely youth* (l. 13) and *Denis Breen's wife, an unfortunate wretched woman* (l. 23), as the *fairest of her race* (ll. 15–16).

The **field** of law is briefly used to establish another contrast. The references to *libel action* (l. 29) are juxtaposed with the informality of the context and the insignificant reason for the libel case. Finally, Joyce's repeated use of *bloody* (ll. 22, 31), establishing a realistic informal context, can be juxtaposed with his use of a literary register in describing *Denis Breen's wife trotting like a poodle* (l. 23). This is not a traditional simile, but nevertheless creates a vivid image for the reader.

By identifying register changes, the reader can see links between the grand world of myth and the ordinary world of Dublin. This enables Joyce to elevate the city of Dublin and its inhabitants through his mythological references, but also to satirise them because of the difference between myth and reality.

5.6 Spoken and written English

There are significant differences between speech and writing. For instance, a lawyer summing up in court uses language in a different way from a legal document like a will; the language of an estate agent discussing a valuation with a client wishing to sell property differs from an estate agent's written selling details; the language of a live television news interview differs from a tabloid newspaper report; the language of a television cookery programme differs from a cake recipe in a cookery book; and a child's explanation to her mother about why she wishes to miss gym at school will be different from the note the mother writes to the teacher. In each case, the register is different: the **mode** for some is spoken while for others it is written; the **manner** for some is more formal than others, which affects the kind of relationship created between participants; and the **field** varies depending on the subject matter. Just as we can write in a variety of ways, so we vary our speech according to our audience, purpose and context.

Many people believe that written language is more prestigious than spoken language – its form is likely to be closer to Standard English, it dominates education and is used as the language of public administration. In linguistic terms, however, neither speech nor writing can be seen as superior. Linguists are more interested in observing and describing all forms of language in use than in making social and cultural judgments with no linguistic basis.

Linguists' analysis of speech and writing has highlighted key differences between spoken and written language.

The nature of speech and writing

Spoken

Speech is spontaneous and often transient. Most forms of everyday speech are not recorded for repeated listening, although in the age of the mass media much of what we hear on radio and television can be bought on cassette or video, or recorded for repeated home use.

Audience

Spoken

Spoken encounters (conversations) usually take place **face-to-face** with a particular person or persons. A telephone conversation is a notable exception.

Written

Written language may be intended for a particular reader (a postcard; a letter), but often it will be addressed to an **unknown audience** (a coursework essay; an anthology of poetry).

Speakers can use **paralinguistic features** as well as words to check that communication is meaningful.

Deictic expressions like *this one*, *over there* and *just now*, referring to the present situation, are common.

Interruptions and **overlaps** allowing the addressee to participate are common (informal conversation; BBC Television's *Question Time*).

Written

Writing is permanent: the same text may be read repeatedly or by several different readers (e.g. a recipe; a newspaper).

Written language may be intended for a particular reader (a postcard; a letter), but often it will be addressed to an **unknown audience** (a coursework essay; an anthology of poetry).

There is **no immediate feedback** for a piece of written text. Equally, the time difference between the writing and reading of the text means that writers must make sure that there is no unintentional ambiguity.

All **references** need to be built into the written text because the reading context will be different for each reader (a novel; DIY instructions).

Communication is **one-way**. Although the reader may respond in a written or spoken form, the response is rarely immediate (the reply to a letter; an examiner's comments on an essay).

Style

Spoken

Speech is not usually **planned** in advance and speakers tend to think ahead as they speak (informal conversation; 'Question Time' in Parliament).

Speech often has a **loose structure**, marked by repetitions, rephrasing of ideas and comment clauses. Errors once uttered cannot be withdrawn.

Lexis is often informal and there may be examples of a personal lexicon developed between familiar speakers (family conversation). In more formal contexts, vocabulary may be subject-specific (a political speech), but speech is still likely to be marked by contractions and comment clauses.

Intonation and pauses are used to mark the **grammatical boundaries** of utterances. They are often long, with **multiple co-ordination**. **Subordination** is used but speakers have to make sure that embedded subordinate clauses do not place too many demands upon listeners who cannot easily reconsider an utterance.

Prosodic features like volume, pace, rhythm, tone and stress patterns as well as words communicate meaning.

Written

Writing is often **pre-planned** and ideas can therefore be carefully organised (a poem; an opinion essay).

Interruptions during the process of writing are not visible in a final copy. **Drafting** also means that errors can be corrected.

In many contexts informal **lexical** features like contractions will be unacceptable (a job application; an essay). Some lexical items will be rarely used in spoken language (chemical and mathematical equations).

Punctuation and layout are used to mark the **grammatical boundaries** of sentences. In more formal kinds of writing, sentences are often marked by **multiple subordination** and balanced **syntactical structures**.

Writers use **paragraphing** and **page layout** to organise their text. **Capitalisation** and **underlining** can be used for stress, while **question marks** and **exclamation marks** can be used to convey attitude.

Function

Spoken

Speech is a useful **social tool** which can develop relationships and convey attitudes and opinions directly, and so on.

Written

Written text is useful for recording **facts** and **ideas**; making **notes**; and developing large-scale **fiction**, and so on. Because they are more permanent than speech, written texts can be longer without causing communication problems.

COMMENTARY

The table shows you how spoken and written language do not always appear at extreme ends of the scale – in many instances **formal speech**, for instance, will be marked by features of written language, and **informal writing** will have similarities with speech. The choices you made in each case will have been dictated by your instinctive knowledge of language and the way it is used.

As an example of informal speech (1) you could have chosen 'friends chatting in a nightclub'. The **context** is informal, the **participants** are familiar and the **purpose** is social. Permanent speech (2) is not typical of spoken language, but a taped police confession, for instance, will be repeatedly listened to by different people in different contexts. The **context** is formal, the **participants** may be known (other police officers) but they may also be unknown (a jury). The **purpose** is official.

Written lists like shopping lists and reminders of tasks to be completed are short-lived (3) because they are often destroyed once the job has been done. The **context** is usually informal and personal, the **audience** is often the writer alone and the **purpose** is informative. Most writing will use Standard English (4) because it tends to be formal. Students will choose Standard English for A-level work, for instance, because the **context** is formal and the **audience** is unknown. The **purpose** is to reveal academic knowledge and to demonstrate written skills. Non-standard speech (5) is common in any informal **context** where participants feel no pressure to conform to the standard. Often the **purpose** of communication will be social and the **audience** will be known. Equally, a television soap opera which aims to imitate life will use the appropriate regional accent and dialect according to the area in which it is set. In Channel 4's *Brookside*, for instance, the young people speak to each other informally in a Merseyside accent.

5.7 Using the basic concepts

All the terms used here play a central part in the study of English because they provide a means for linguists to classify different attitudes and varieties.

Different attitudes to language determine the way usage is classified – while a **prescriptivist** may say a particular usage is 'wrong', a **descriptivist** will describe it as **appropriate** or **inappropriate**. When faced with a range of spoken and written varieties of English, linguists need to establish the **register** (mode, manner and field) and to assess whether the language use is **standard** or **non-standard**. This kind of information enables linguists to avoid uninformative evaluative judgements, ensuring instead that analysis is based on **linguistic evidence**.

Because the terms highlighted here will be used frequently throughout the rest of this book, it is important to understand them before moving on.

Inevitably, a summary like this generalises the differences between speech and writing, but the distinctions here are a useful starting point. It is important, however, to be aware of the overlap between spoken and written forms. Written texts, for instance, can imitate spoken words, so that when spoken they sound spontaneous; likewise spoken texts can be transcribed. An informal conversation and a formal essay can be seen as two extremes – between these, there will be varying degrees of difference. In assessing the differences between spoken and written examples, linguists first establish the audience, purpose and context of the discourse. Having done this, they can consider the extent to which a text or an utterance is typical of speech or writing.

Society is invariably judgemental about language – people write to papers like *The Times* bewailing the poor standards of the 1990s. Prince Charles on several occasions has spoken of what he claims is a deterioration in standards, resulting from a supposedly sloppy attitude towards language and a lack of knowledge about it. At the centre of complaints like these lies the debate about the relative worth of spoken and written language.

Recently, emphasis has moved away from written language as the only mode of value. Traditionally, written language was seen as most significant because it was the medium for education and literature and was, therefore, prestigious. Now, however, schools both use and assess spoken language alongside written language. Our society is dependent upon the telephone, the television and the radio, all of which use spoken language in a variety of forms. Politicians often no longer deliver their speeches as formal written texts read aloud, but 'speak' them directly from notes.

While prescriptivists see speech as inferior because of its errors and hesitations, descriptivists use speech as the basis for much of their research. Not only does spoken language reflect how language is used in society, but language is first and foremost a spoken phenomenon with written language as a by-product.

ACTIVITY 5.3

Copy and complete Table 5.1 with appropriate examples, considering the general features of spoken and written language.

Table 5.1 Features of spoken and written language

Features	Spoken	Written
Level of formality		
• Formal	Politician's speech	Examination essay
• Informal	1	Shopping list
Level of permanence		
• Permanent	2	Novel
• Short-lived	Conversation with a neighbour over a garden wall	3
Use of Standard English		
• Standard English	BBC News	4
• Non-standard English	5	Use of non-standard language in literature