A-LEVEL ENGLISH LANGUAGE

2025-2027

Year 11

TRANSITION WORK

TEXTUAL REPRESENTATIONS:

What is a textual representation?

In A-Level English Language, the term representation refers to how language is used to portray people, places, events, ideas, or social groups. It's about analyzing the choices made by a writer or speaker to construct a particular version of reality.

Key Aspects of Representation:

- Lexis (word choice) – What kinds of words are used? Are they formal, informal, emotive, technical?
- Grammar and syntax – How are sentences structured? Are they active or passive? Who is given agency?
- Tone and register – Is the tone serious, humorous, sarcastic, respectful?
- Narrative perspective – Who is speaking or writing? What point of view is used?
- Context – What is the social, cultural, or historical background of the text?

TASK 1:

Who or what is being represented in this text?

How is this person/group/event/idea being portrayed?

What language choices shape this representation?

TASK 2:

Who or what is being represented in this text?

How is this person/group/event/idea being portrayed?

What language choices shape this representation?

TASK 3:

You have read and analysed two examples of headlines that represent the same event differently. **In the space below**, explain how language choices shape representation using the headlines to support your ideas.

OPTIONAL EXTENSION TASKS:

Find the cover of a magazine and analyse the meanings and representations created through the language use.

Consider:

- The focus of the article
- The way the issues/focus is being represented
- Key language/style choices that create the meanings and representations.

LANGUAGE VARIETIES

What is slang?

Slang, n. a jargon of thieves and disreputable persons: the jargon of any class, profession, or set: words and usages not accepted for dignified use.

TASK 1:

How do you respond to the definition above? Do you think this is accurate? Explain your answer with reasons and examples.

TASK 2:

Read the following article.

The Life of Slang

By Julie Coleman

Pass it on, you numpties and muppets

Slang divides opinion. "Squares" (first cited in the OED in 1901), or guardians of linguistic purity as they would have it, regard it as dangerous, vulgar, a debasement of language. In the other corner lurk overexcited "numpties" (1988) transported with delight by its youth, novelty, its anything-goes creativity.

Julie Coleman, professor of English at Leicester University, thinks they're both wrong. Slang is not a product "of poor breeding and poor taste" or a sign of limited vocabulary. "Puh-leeze!" (1931): as she points out, anyone who says "mega", "banging" or "wicked" could equally well use the Standard English "great", "fantastic" or "amazing". (And some of these words were once slang too, she reminds us. Slang users are not particularly creative either: most of the subcultures renowned for their slang (teenagers, hippies, flappers) borrowed it from elsewhere. "Peeps", for friends, seems recent but was first used as early as 1847; "innit" is at least 50 years old; and most surprisingly, Coleman traces "nang" (excellent), to 1922, although other sources give it a far more recent provenance: slang etymology is tricky to pin down.

So what is the deal with slang? It's a way of identifying yourself as part of a group, and Coleman takes us on a journey through the real crucibles of slang – First World War trenches, prisons, 19th-century public schools – claustrophobic environments in which people collectively resisted oppression and expressed themselves. Only since the birth of the consumer society after the Second World War have youth and slang become so synonymous.

Slang's codes are notoriously hard to keep up with – "cool" has been cool and uncool again countless times – and by the time the secret passwords have been codified in a "proper work", they may be out of date. Even when an authority figure thinks they've cracked it, it ends badly. "An adult using youth slang is either ridiculous or creepy. What's key," notes Coleman, "is that you use it well in an appropriate context and in a way that achieves the result you want. Unfortunately, the judges of your success are applying ever-changing rules that no one will ever explain to you."

The Life of Slang is particularly acute on why slang works. It's a form of social grooming, allowing the saying of the same thing in a variety of ways, to help build relationships: "slang conveys a far more exuberant sense of admiration and humour than Standard English can". And her insight into how slang takes hold and spreads so rapidly is convincing: if you don't know the meaning of a slang word a peer uses you'd be a "muppet" (1989) to ask, and so you adopt it willingly.

Coleman relishes slang in all its chewy, vigorous glory, and gives a sociological insight – that context is key – which elevates it way above a dictionary of rude words. This book is "the cat's whiskers" (1920); or, if you're of a less delicate sensibility, "the dog's bollocks" (1949).

TASK 3:
Choose three slang terms mentioned in the article. What do their origins and changing meanings reveal about language change?

WORD	Where did this word originate?	What does this reveal about language change?

TASK 4:	
Investigate two slang words that you use in your daily language. Consider: ▪ How do you use the word? ▪ Where did the word orginate? ▪ Has the word changed meaning?	
WORD 1:	WORD 2:

TASK 5:
Watch the following TED TALK: https://www.ted.com/talks/anne_curzan_what_makes_a_word_real

a. What is Anne Curzan's main argument about how words become "real"?	
b. How does she challenge traditional views of dictionaries and language authority?	
c. What examples of new or informal words does she mention, and how are they used in real life?	
d. What role do speakers and communities play in legitimizing new words?	
e. Do you agree with her view that usage determines legitimacy? Why or why not?	

OPTIONAL EXTENSION TASKS:
Write a short blog-style post (200–300 words) titled: "Who Gets to Decide What Counts as English?"

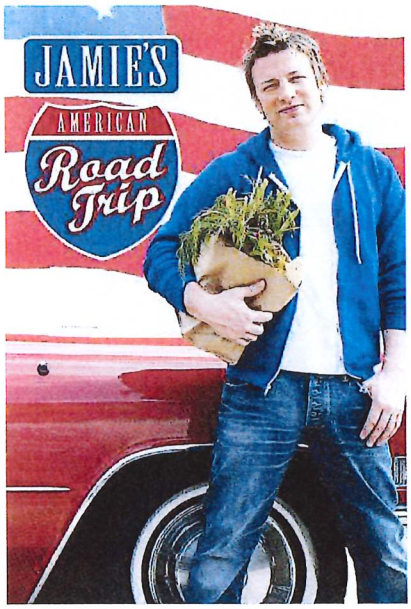
NEA – LANGUAGE INVESTIGATION

TASK 1:

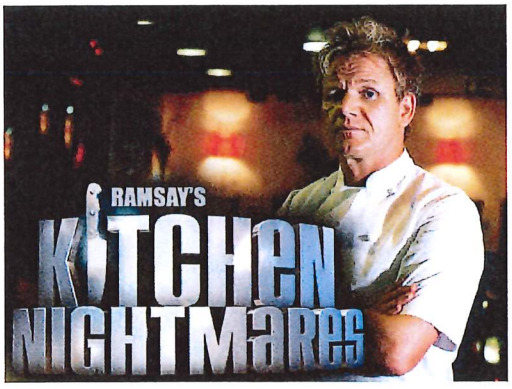
What do you know about each of these language users? (Jamie Oliver and Gordon Ramsay)

How are they represented in these advertisements?

Both are chefs? Do you think they would use the same language?



JAMIE OLIVER



GORDON RAMSAY

TASK 2:
Read the following exam NEA investigation published in the EMC magazine and answer the following questions.

What is the investigation trying to find an answer to?
What sources did the investigation use to find the answer? What are the ways that they analysed the data?
What was the conclusion of this investigation?

English Language Coursework for AQA B A2

In emagazine 51 Margaret Coupe offered some insights into doing well in the media piece for the AQA B A2 language coursework, drawing on her students' work. We're delighted to publish Megan Moore's complete submission for this unit. Her language investigation is followed by her linked but free-standing media piece.

Introduction

Jamie Oliver and Gordon Ramsay are successful celebrity chefs who have both broadcasted a series created in the USA on British television. I have decided to investigate how they use terms of address when in the presence of different people in different situations.
I chose this investigation as, a few months ago, Chris Moyles on Radio One, mocked Jamie's unconventional use of terms of address in his new series; *Jamie's American Road Trip*. I wanted to explore them in depth the reasons for Jamie's unusual language choices and compare with the types of terms of address Gordon Ramsay uses whilst also in the USA.

Jamie Oliver has often been described as the typical, regional 'Essex boy' and 'the boy next door.' In his series *Jamie's American Road Trip*, he visits many places around the USA meeting a range of people with extremely diverse lifestyles and backgrounds. I will particularly be focusing on and recording Jamie's use of terms of address in the New York episode, where he meets illegal immigrants and the LA episode where he explores Mexican influences in the ghetto and gang culture.

On the other hand, Gordon Ramsay has been referred to in the press as 'aggressive' and 'foul-mouthed', however, I shall be investigating in particular his use of terms of address in the series *Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA*. I will be focusing on his episode in Mexico, but also his 're-visits' episode. I chose Gordon Ramsay as he has an aggressive, powerful persona; I wanted to find out how power affects Gordon's use of language and terminology.

I will be taking into consideration that both series are set in entirely different contexts; whereas *Jamie's American Road Trip* is a series dedicated to meeting new people and discovering food from different cultures, Gordon Ramsay's primary aim is to work with managers and staff to recover their failing restaurants. Also both chefs may be cultivating personae that they use for media purposes.

Terms of address have been traditionally considered to be 'polite' as in the accommodation theory, 'We use politeness to maintain solidarity and rapport'. It will be interesting to see if the chefs' use of

terms of address is employed as a politeness strategy.

Methodology

To collect the data I needed for my investigation, I have watched two episodes of *Jamie's American Road Trip* and two of *Ramsey's Kitchen Nightmares* on Channel 4 online. I recorded in a table when Jamie and Gordon used a term of address, what word or phrase was being used, what context the word or phrase was said in and who the receiver was.

With both chefs, I focused on use of convergence or divergence, depending on who they are speaking to, use of vulgar language, and how language enforces power in the terms of address. Also, I investigated the types of terms of address being used, whether it is an animal reference or taboo and how they are used to establish a relationship with the audience as well as their addressee.

I have used Brown and Levinson's politeness theory of 1987 to decipher the theories behind the pragmatics and semantics of the terms of address both chefs use. Also I will exploring Howard Giles' communication accommodation theory.

Analysis

Animal References

In Jamie's New York series, he refers to older women as 'Tiger'. Contextually, the woman he was speaking to spoke little English. She raised her voice a little when she saw Jamie make a mistake, thus he reacted with:
'Alright Tiger'

This is a collocation of 'Easy Tiger', another phrase which Jamie often uses. The animalistic reference suggests that the woman has shown assertion, and Jamie is surprised and almost mocking her control and power.

Jamie is showing little respect to his addressee. Considering the woman speaks very little English, it is most likely that she does not understand what Jamie is suggesting through his language. In this specific situation of spoken discourse, the woman is a less powerful participant; therefore it has become an 'unequal encounter'. Jamie is almost exploiting his addressee through vulnerability to create a 'humorous' effect for a British, English speaking audience.

Male Gender References

Covert prestige is a factor which could affect the chefs use of terms of address and the types of gendered references they employ. In Jamie's Los Angeles episode, he is exposed to a lot of young gang members and ex convicts. He constantly uses the terms 'Bruvva' and 'bruv", these are all examples of southern British, cockney slang, which could suggest that he is playing up his British charm for an American audience, but also to determine his nationality and indifference to the Americans, which somewhat contradicts his other uses of downward convergence. Although some British slang is used, Jamie also uses 'man' which is an example of 1950s American vernacular slang. On one hand, this could be an attempt to create a friendly relationship with the men; however, on the other hand, it could suggest Jamie's intimidation when conversing with them. Jamie could be using it as a form of 'male bonding' as he is trying to fit in with the men without looking superior to them. This could be to encourage their trust in Jamie, allowing them to share personal experiences with him without feeling intimidated. Howard Giles developed the communication accommodation theory; he suggested that convergence was where a participant in a conversation adapts their speech to mirror the speech patterns of whom they were conversing with, Giles states:

> *'...it is probably safe to assume that these shifts resulted in a favorable appraisal of the speaker, that is, they have created an impression that the speaker is trying to accommodate to his or her listener(s).'*

Gordon Ramsay uses downward convergence, such as 'my man' and 'mate' whilst greeting men in the 'revisits' episode. This could similarly suggest that he is trying to create a positive relationship with the men he is conversing with as he already knows them; however, this could be a result of him having somewhat of a negative relationship with them when they had previously met.

My data suggests that Jamie uses the term 'man' for multiple purposes:

> *'Awe man that's insanely good' and 'ya'lright man'*

Both of these examples demonstrate that 'man' can be a personal addressee, 'ya'lright man'; this is Jamie's most common use of the word as in the Los Angeles episode, the specific use of the word 'man' is used twice. However the other use of the word 'aw man that's insanely good', is only used once as what could be seen as an exclamatory of speech. It is not clear if he is addressing the chef that has cooked him the food, or if he is using it to express the fact that he is enjoying the food.

Brown and Levinson's theory on terms of address (1978) 'proceeded from the idea that people in interaction are mainly interested in preserving face.' Brown and Levinson proceeded to theorise as they created two forms of 'Face', 'Negative Face' and 'Positive Face'.

Gordon Ramsay refers to an obese man as 'Big Boy'. On one hand this could be seen as a face threatening act as he pays disregard to the man's emotions. Having been obese himself earlier in his life, Gordon may feel somewhat unsympathetic toward him for being overweight, however, on the other hand, Gordon's addressee takes the term of address as a humorous gesture rather then an insult, and turns it into positive face as it could be seen as 'male bonding'.

Female Gender References

It is apparent that both chefs tend to refer to women by their first names, this could demonstrate gender stereotypes of women being more sensitive than men, mainly the chefs use terms of endearment such as 'darlin''.

Jamie uses 'Girl' to speak to an elderly Peruvian woman, this could be interpreted as being derogatory and sexist as Jamie tries to accommodate a humorous tone. In 1989 Miller and Swift came up with the conclusion that:

> *'Women get called girls throughout their life irrelevant of their age, whereas men's address changes from 'boys' to 'men' once they reach a certain age, adulthood.'*

It comes across somewhat patronising as with men Jamie tries to converge towards their uses of language, however with women he almost diverges away from any politeness or respect towards them.

Later in the programme Jamie offers a women whom he had not previously met before a drink and says 'there you go sweetheart'. This is a very informal, personal term of address; one could argue that it would be inappropriate as such to refer to an adult as such, due to lack of respect or politeness. Sweetheart is predominantly a 'significant other, or a beloved family member or friend', the women he has met happens to be neither of these definitions of the word 'sweetheart'. One could see this as Jamie is seeing the women as a consumable, which is derogatory, however there is the possibility that the word is merely part of his sociolect, and he used it subconsciously, being ignorant of its possible connotations towards women.

Similarly with Gordon Ramsay, who uses 'honey' to refer to a woman by using a term of address which connotes that he sees her as a consumable, and sounds extremely patronising. On the other hand, this could demonstrate maybe a lack of insight into how he should politely address a young woman without trying to sound too serious or threatening, it almost suggests that he, unlike Jamie, is trying to create a bond by using a term of address which he possibly thinks she can relate to.

Terms of Endearment

The endearment of Jamie referring to a woman as 'my darlin" and the possessive pronoun 'my' suggests that his addressee belongs to him. Both times he uses it he is speaking to a middle aged woman. The denotation of 'darling' is:

> *'One dearly beloved; a favourite.'*

This suggests that the meaning of the word has been through a semantic shift and its meaning has broadened to suggest that 'darling' can apply to any woman of little or no association to you. In Jamie's New York episode, he said 'Nice to meet you my darling'. It is clear that he has never met this woman before, and that she is not 'dearly beloved' by him.

> *'darlin' - typical address to female (usually of an unknown name). A familiar (much hated by women) cry from men often heard is 'allo darlin".'*

'Darlin" is Jamie's most commonly used term of address for women, and is an example of cockney slang. One reason for his excessive use of the word could be that he does not know his addressee's name, thus he uses a 'slang' name for women, however it could just be his regional dialect and idiolect. By using it in America, Jamie might be using this slang to create a persona which portrays 'British charm', playing up his nationality and also creating a humorous tone. Gordon Ramsay also uses the term of address 'my darling' for women; he could also be doing this to play up his British nationality to the Americans. However, pragmatically, this could suggest that 'darlin" is the most common term of address for women in the South of England, where both chefs originate from, but also, one could view being called 'darlin" some what patronising and sexist .

Insults/Taboo

Gordon Ramsay uses a lot of taboo language when he's shouting at chefs or restaurant managers, 'half of it's fat you f****** idiot!' The pragmatics of him using taboo suggests he has an aggressive, powerful persona and he is in total control of everything he says and does; on the other hand, Gordon is using covert prestige, perhaps creating 'macho' posturing to reinforce his successfulness in his established career. His use of vulgar language has ultimately created his success and he is widely known for it through other programmes such as 'The F word', a prime example of his well known use of taboo language. I think it has become such a trademark in his profession, that it has become expected of him to use taboo language in his programmes, so even though they could come across very insulting and often inappropriate, it is all part of a persona Gordon Ramsay creates for entertainment purposes. One could suggest that Gordon Ramsay likes to think of himself as a 'perfectionist', thus suggesting his total frustration with anything that is not up to his expected standards; this could portray why he uses an excessive use of taboo language as he may feel that it is the only way that he can get successful results.

Gordon Ramsay's 'Revisits' episode clearly demonstrates a change in attitude from when he was repairing a failing restaurant 'You f***** idiot!' to an ultimately successful restaurant sometime later 'good to see you my man'.

This pragmatically suggests that the only way that Gordon could have saved the restaurants was to be as aggressive as possible, and unable to create a friendly relationship. However on the 'Revisits', he seems to want to create that relationship by changing his aggressive attitude into a much more positive one. The terms of address suggest that he is excited and optimistic to see the restaurants and their employees again.

Conclusion

I would contend that Jamie Oliver's uses terms of address much more frequently than Gordon Ramsay's. Gordon usually only uses terms of address when he is being introduced to people or meeting new people, and tends to refer to people by their first names. I think Jamie's excessive use of different terms of address helps him to create a better relationship and almost a friendship with those who he talks to. Both chefs seem to act somewhat sexist towards women, perhaps to accentuate their 'male dominant' personas, however it creates non-parallel treatment. Ultimately I do not think that the chefs use terms of address as a politeness strategy. Contextually, Jamie is meeting a lot of people, who play vital roles in his programmes, whereas, most of Gordon's time is spent conversing with the same group of people. I think, whereas, Jamie wants to create a friendship with the people he meets, Gordon creates a divide between him and the people he works with, as he is not there to befriend them but to guide and teach them. Therefore he has to maintain somewhat of a professional persona. Both chefs' regional dialects affect the terms of address and language they use, however their surroundings sometimes affect their language choices. Also, both chefs have very diverse personas to create. Whereas Jamie tends to acquire humorous aspects into his series, Gordon Ramsay has to maintain an aggressive, powerful persona.

It has come to my attention that Jamie does not refer to the people he meets on a first name basis. This could be because whilst he is meeting so many new people he may find it difficult to remember names, or simply just because by calling them a substitute name such as 'darlin" or 'mate', there is no chance he could offend that person by getting their name wrong. On the other hand, Gordon refers to people mainly by their first names; this could be a result of his authoritarian, powerful approach. It portrays that he is directing insults, as well as guidance personally to his addressee, making what he is saying a lot more personal and effective. Gordon Ramsay was brought up in Stratford upon Avon, in Warwickshire whereas Jamie Oliver was brought up in Essex. Both chefs' uses of terms of address seem to have been affected by their regional, dialects such as 'Darlin" in Jamie's case and 'Darling' in Gordon's. Also both chefs use terms of address to create a relationship with their addressee, as a form of bonding. Gordon's use of terms of address however is less frequent than Jamie's; this could be a result in their different genres of television programme and on screen personalities, but also contextual features such as their different backgrounds and their difference in age. With Jamie being younger than Gordon, his choices of language could reflect the changes in language throughout time and generations, and how possibly, younger generations use bonding, social terms such as 'darling" and 'mate', rather than using their addressee's first name, a lot more than an older generation. This could portray that it has become more socially acceptable.

Evaluation

My investigation was successful as I feel I explored in depth how and why these particular chefs use different terms of address, however, If I could have repeated or worked longer on this investigation I would have perhaps liked to develop the contextual factors that differentiate Gordon and Jamie's choice of language, as I feel there may be many social and regional factors that could have affected, not only their language, but their on screen personalities, personal backgrounds and choice of genres in their television programmes.

There are many things which affect the kinds of terms of address we use: age, race, status, where you live in the UK or even if you're an English speaker outside of the UK from America or Australia. Wherever you're from, whoever you are, no one can deny the ever quickening pace at which new terms of address are popping up and old ones are being replaced.

Whether it is gang slang or granny knitter chitter, people of all ages use terms of address. It is apparent that young people are much more intent on bringing the English language into the 21st century by forming neologisms (newly invented words) to add to their ever-growing vocab bank of terms of address.

'Bredrin' is a new term you may have heard being flung round among young people. Its meaning is that of a very close friend or comrade. Predominantly used in southern England, the word derives from 'brethren', a religious brotherhood who was a member of Protestant Christian religious bodies. Another common word is 'blud', borrowed from the Jamaican meaning of brother. So it seems as though more recent terms of address seem to imply bonding and brotherhood between friends, which could link to youth gang culture.

You don't see many elderly people walking around shouting 'wagwan bredrin' or 'wattup gangster', so what kind of terms do elderly people use? Well, terms of endearment such as 'chuck' 'duck' and 'flower' seem to be the most commonly used terms. So what do they actually mean?

'Duck' is in fact thought to come from the word 'ducis', and was the term used for a leader or a commander and later in British history, a duke. There are also many modern interpretations of the term 'duck'. In popular youth culture, it is often used to describe an unattractive girl, so if you're thinking of using 'duck' as a term of endearment, you might want to think twice about doing so.

PC is an element which has made us in the UK extremely cautious when it comes to addressing those of a different race, culture and even age. People of black origins are able to use the word 'Nigger' to address one another without it being offensive; however it has become extremely offensive for a white person to address a black person as such. 'Nigger' derives from the colonisation of Nigerian slaves in the USA and the UK. A contemporary term of address which is equally as offensive to white people as 'nigger' is to black people is 'cracker'. The word signifies the slave driver who whipped the Nigerian Slaves.This, in effect suggests that there are boundaries to the terms of address we can use as a result of race. The word 'cracker' appearing suggests a sense of equality that if there is an utterly offensive word to use against a black person, there has to be one to use in retaliation to that of a white person. The limits of our language seem to be endless, however, many things restrict our language usage and reign it in so as not to offend of disgruntle. We are no longer to call the elderly elderly, but we are encouraged to call them senior citizens, to make them sound more superior and accepted. Terms such as 'dearie' and 'love', have been classed as offensive when addressing elderly women, so much so that it is set to be ruled out by new guidelines from the Nursing and Midwifery Council. There have though been arguments that it is unacceptable to ban certain words which are part of someone's local dialect. Local dialects: every country, every city, every town, has got their own, personal terms of address, many which would seem foreign when being used in another part of the UK. If you're from Bristol you would say 'al'right my lover'; Liverpool it would be 'kidda' or 'la'; 'chucks' in Chester, 'hens' in Scotland, 'butties' in Bridgend, 'cariad' in Wales, and 'treacle' in the south west. Truth be told it would be nearly impossible to name all of the terms of address used in every part of the UK as there are simply so many!'Butty' is used across the whole of Wales. The word travels back to the mining days, when miners used to refer to their partners or companions as 'butty'. Originally it was pronounced as 'booty', and meant to plunder into uncertainty. Whether you look into it deeply or not, most people use terms of endearment subconsciously, as part of their every day idiolect (personal speech style).It's not only in the UK where terms of address are changing thought, Across the world the same thing is happening, new terms of endearment are popping up daily which are very different to those us Brits use. Arguably the most famous term used for a female in Australia is 'Sheila'. 'Sheila' in fact derives from the Hindi word 'Sheela' meaning gentle. So whoever you are, wherever you are: if you are using a personal term to address people, and have no idea what it means or where it originated, you might want to find out before it's too late!

Writer

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TASK 3:
Consider three areas of language use that you would like to investigate. What would you want to find out and know about each area or topic?

IDEA 1
IDEA 2
IDEA 3