ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LINGUISTICS SYLLABUS

Pre-University
Higher 2

Implementation starting with
the 2017 Pre-University One Cohort

Ministry of Education
SINGAPORE

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

The English Language and Linguistics (ELL) course aims to develop students' understanding, use and appreciation of the English language. It is informed by the discipline of linguistics, and involves the investigation of the nature of the English language and some contemporary language issues.

AIMS

To encourage students to deepen their interest in and enjoyment of the use of English as they:
1. develop and apply their understanding of the concepts and methods appropriate for the analysis and study of the English language
2. develop an understanding of language issues and debates, and respond critically to these issues
3. develop their skills as interpreters and producers of meaning

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

LO 1	Apply their understanding of linguistic concepts, methods and approaches to the construction and analysis of meanings in different modes of communication[1]
LO 2	Analyse and evaluate the influence of contextual and cultural factors in the production and reception of the English language
LO 3	Demonstrate expertise in use of English which is informed by the study of linguistics

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[1] Modes of communication refer to written, spoken and multimodal texts.

21ˢᵗ CENTURY COMPETENCIES IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LINGUISTICS

To help our students thrive in a fast-changing world, the Ministry of Education has identified crucial competencies and infused them in the total curriculum. The emerging 21st Century Competencies (21CC) necessary for living in a globalised world fall under three domains: Civic Literacy, Global Awareness and Cross-Cultural skills; Critical and Inventive Thinking skills; and Communication, Collaboration and Information skills. According to the aims and outcomes of English Language and Linguistics, students taking the subject will acquire, develop and apply skills from all three 21CC domains:

Civic Literacy, Global Awareness & Cross-Cultural skills	ELL students need to acquire knowledge of a very wide range of social, cultural and historical circumstances in order to examine why and how English is used in a variety of social and geographical contexts. This would contribute to their understanding of different socio-cultural situations and interactions at home as well as abroad.
Critical & Inventive Thinking skills	ELL students are required to analyse how meaning is constructed via language use; and to evaluate and explain the influence of various contextual factors on the production and reception of language.
Communication, Collaboration & Information skills	ELL students are not only expected to make appropriate linguistic choices when writing for specific purposes, audiences, contexts and cultures, but also to explain their linguistic choices. Thus they should possess a much deeper understanding of the communication process than students with no or little knowledge of linguistics.

2. CONTENT

ORGANISATION OF THE SYLLABUS

The English Language and Linguistics course is made up of two areas of study. Each area of study deals with specific content and is designed to help students achieve a set of learning outcomes by the end of the course.

For each area of study, the knowledge and skills to be developed in relation to the outcomes are presented, followed by the specific content to be studied.

The recommended curriculum time for English Language and Linguistics in a two-year programme is 4 hours per week.

AREA OF STUDY 1   *Analysing Language Use*

This area of study focuses on language as a meaning-making system and how language varies according to use and user. Students will understand how people use language to represent their identities, their relationships and aspects of the world; to engage in actions; and to interact with one another. Students will also understand how various social and cultural factors determine the way people express themselves and communicate with one another.

The use of the English language will be examined in its immediate contexts of audience, purpose, subject matter, genre and modes of communication. Key linguistic concepts and tools for the systematic study of spoken, written and multimodal texts will be introduced. Students will apply their knowledge of contextual factors and linguistic concepts and tools to the analysis, evaluation and production of texts.

Knowledge and skills to be developed

Students will be able to analyse and evaluate how writers and speakers use language in context. This will require them to:

- *Describe and distinguish the linguistic features of written, spoken and multimodal texts*
- *Apply knowledge of linguistic concepts and methods to the analysis of how meaning is constructed*
- *Describe and interpret how meanings vary with different modes of communication*
  - ➢ *Demonstrate an awareness of the features of different genres*
- *Apply knowledge of how purpose, audience, context and culture influence language use*
- *Present ideas and arguments clearly using appropriate linguistic terminology and concepts*
- *Adopt appropriate tone and style in writing for specific audiences, purposes, contexts and cultures*
- *Make appropriate linguistic choices in writing for specific audiences, purposes, contexts and cultures*
- *Comment on linguistic choices in writing for specific audiences, purposes, contexts and cultures*

Content

Students will study:

a. how language is used, with reference to:
    - planned and spontaneous texts
    - texts about a range of subjects, for varying audiences and purposes
    - formality and style
    - written, spoken and multimodal texts
    - the interface between language and other visual meaning-making resources
        - ➢ visual analysis could take into account graphical devices, action, concept, angle, framing, colour, gaze, layout and reading path

b. how language (lexis, syntax and discourse strategies) is used to construct meaning and reflect:
    - attitudes, feelings, values
    - social norms
    - the representation of people, institutions, events and issues
    - the relationship between speaker/writer and listener/reader

c. how language use varies with culture and different social factors:
    - participants (social distance: intimate/distant; status: superior/subordinate)
    - purpose and topic (high/low information content; high/low affective content).
    - setting (formal/informal)

Examples of:

Spoken texts
everyday conversations, news broadcasts, political speeches, radio interviews, comedy sketches, song lyrics, podcasts

Written texts
tabloid and broadsheet journalism, magazines, print advertisements, publicity materials, press releases, music and film reviews, leaflets, biographies and other non-fiction books, diaries, letters, e-mails, blogs, text messages

Multimodal texts
documentaries, vodcasts, websites, picture books for children, television programmes, music videos, cartoons, films, comics, computer games, illustrated articles

*Some of the examples listed under spoken and written texts can also be considered multimodal texts.

Examples of variables to consider:
- *occupation*
- *age*
- *power*
- *social class*
- *gender*
- *race/ethnicity*
- *region*

The following linguistic concepts and tools will form the basis for analysing language use as stated above:

Sub-fields of linguistics	Key Questions	Linguistic concepts and tools to cover
Phonetics and Phonology	▪ How are speech sounds and prosodic features organised to convey meaning? ▪ How is Singapore English different in terms of the organisation of sounds?	▪ IPA for English ▪ Overview of how sounds (vowels and consonants) are produced ▪ Prosodic features
Morphology	▪ How and why are new words formed? ▪ How do the intended meanings and uses of new words influence the processes of their formation, and vice versa?	▪ Word formation processes ▪ Word formation rules
Syntax	▪ What does the use of particular syntactic elements or structures convey to readers and hearers, and in what circumstances are they used?	▪ Types of word class ▪ Elements of a sentence ▪ Sentence types based on complexity and mood
Semantics	▪ How and why are particular vocabulary items chosen to convey meaning? ▪ How do words and phrases convey meaning beyond what they denote? ▪ In what circumstances is connotational and figurative meaning used?	▪ Denotational and connotational meaning ▪ Semantic fields ▪ Synonyms, antonyms, hyponyms ▪ Collocation ▪ Figurative language ▪ Processes of semantic change ▪ Context dependence ▪ Levels of formality
Pragmatics	▪ What determines the meaning of an utterance? ▪ How do participants in an interaction ensure successful communication? ▪ How and why is meaning sometimes expressed implicitly rather than explicitly? ▪ How do readers and hearers interpret implicit meaning?	▪ Accommodation Theory: speech convergence and divergence ▪ Grice's Co-operative Principle: be true, be brief, be relevant, be clear
Discourse Analysis	▪ How are various linguistic units organised to form texts about a range of subjects and for varying purposes, audiences, contexts and cultures? ▪ Why are different types of texts organised in different ways? ▪ What are the distinctive features of a particular genre?	▪ Unity of structure: theme, rheme ▪ Unity of texture: cohesion ▪ Genre ▪ Register ▪ Field, mode, tenor ▪ Conversational analysis ▪ Forms and functions of non-verbal aspects of speech

Application: Writing in different genres for different audiences and purposes

Drawing on their understanding of spoken, written and multimodal texts, students will explore writing for a variety of audiences and purposes. Examples include:

      a.   writing to persuade, e.g., an online appeal for schools to be run on a 3-day week; a speech to promote a school event

      b.   writing to advise/instruct, e.g., an information brochure on study skills; a magazine article on 'how to organise an exciting camp for children'

      c.   writing to inform, e.g., a magazine article on an exotic travel destination; a pamphlet for school leavers on how to choose a college

Students can also experiment with writing in a variety of styles on the same topic.

AREA OF STUDY 2   *Investigating Language Use in Society*

This area of study focuses on the investigation of language as a dynamic entity and its place in society. It demands a more sophisticated understanding of language use in its wider social, geographical and temporal contexts. Students will discuss language issues from a variety of perspectives, drawing on concepts that they have learnt and their observations and experiences of language use. To understand how language is constantly interacting with and shaping society, students will examine a range of social, cultural and historical circumstances surrounding the development and use of English in various parts of the world. Students will also examine the impact of recent developments like globalisation, new media and political correctness on language change, culture and identity.

Students should draw on their understanding of how different texts are constructed (Area of Study 1) to infer the underlying social and cultural relationships at work.

A.   LANGUAGE VARIATION AND CHANGE

Knowledge and skills to be developed

Students will be able to discuss and evaluate issues relating to language variation and language change. This will require them to:

- *Comment on trends and patterns of language use*
  - *Distinguish between language variation and language change*
  - *Comment on trends and patterns in language variation and language change*
- *Compare and contrast language use across immediate and wider social and geographical contexts*
  - *Use and explain key concepts that relate to different varieties that have developed as a result of the spread of English*
- *Present ideas and arguments clearly using appropriate linguistic terminology and concepts*

Content

Students will study:

a. reasons for language variation and language change, such as
    - *speakers' attitudes to, and adoption or rejection of, particular linguistic features and language varieties*
    - *new concepts that need to be named*
    - *religious, economic and political motivations*

b. notable examples of language change (i.e., historical, recent or ongoing changes that had/have arisen from significant social, cultural and/or political circumstances)

c. terms and concepts related to language variation
    - *vernacular, national language, standard language, lingua franca, pidgin, creole, dialect, sociolect, idiolect*
    - *code-switching, code-mixing, diglossia, speech community*

d. variation in the English language
    - *regional, social and stylistic variation*
    - *how new varieties of English reflect the societies they are situated in*

e. attitudes to different varieties of the English language
    - *the classification of different varieties of English and how it reflects attitudes towards those varieties*
    - *the role of standard varieties of English in society*

f. Standard Singapore English (SSE) and Colloquial Singapore English (CSE)[2]
    - *the various roles and functions of SSE and CSE in Singapore*
    - *lectal continuum, diglossia, cultural orientation*
    - *competing or complementary*

g. English as a world language
    - *contributing factors*
    - *consequences of the worldwide spread of English (e.g., language loss, death of minority languages)*

h. the impact of new communications technology on the use of the English language

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[2]   Also referred to as Singlish.

B.   LANGUAGE, CULTURE AND IDENTITY

Knowledge and skills to be developed

Students will be able to discuss and evaluate the relationships between language, culture and identity. This will require them to:

- *Identify and discuss the attitudes, identities, values and cultures conveyed through language use*
  - *Examine the ways in which the English language encodes identity, social relationships and attitudes and, conversely, how social and cultural influences affect the use of the English language*
- *Comment on trends and patterns of language use*
- *Compare and contrast language use across immediate and wider social and geographical contexts*
  - *Comment on how trends and patterns in the use of the English language reflect social and cultural values*
- *Present ideas and arguments clearly using appropriate linguistic terminology and concepts*

Content

Students will study:

   a.   how culture and language influence one another in general
- *culturally based ways of speaking and writing*
- *how language affects the thought processes of its speakers and predisposes them to certain perspectives*

   b.   the use of language to convey, influence and even construct how we understand and respond to society and culture
- (i) how language is used to reflect or transmit particular characteristics of individuals, groups and institutions
  - *aspects of identity (e.g., gender, occupation)*
  - *whether the English language possesses or has acquired any features that convey expectations, stereotypes, bias or other pre-conceived notions (e.g., supposedly gender-neutral job titles; politically correct expressions)*
- (ii) how language is used to shape perspectives and behaviour
  - *representing people, institutions, events and issues*
    - *to determine how something is perceived; to highlight or obscure particular characteristics*
    - *purposes and/or reasons (e.g., to promote; to denigrate)*
  - *creating, reinforcing and/or challenging values and attitudes*
    - *to maintain, challenge or re-appropriate the status quo*
    - *purposes and/or reasons (e.g., to preserve conformity; to empower)*
  - *including and excluding*
    - *to encourage identification with an individual/group; to differentiate an individual/group from others*
    - *purposes and/or reasons (e.g., to foster solidarity; to reinforce notions of status and prestige)*

3. PEDAGOGY

PRINCIPLES FOR TEACHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LINGUISTICS

Contextualisation

Situate learning of linguistic concepts and language issues in authentic contexts of use, demonstrating how purpose, audience, culture and context determine the appropriateness of speech, writing and presentation in different situations.

Learner Centredness

Enable students to learn through differentiated teaching approaches and materials, and task-based activities. Activities should be planned around the different interests, abilities and intelligences of the students, and space created for multiple perspectives and interpretations.

Integration

Teach students, through an integrated approach, to see the connections between linguistic concepts and tools2; language issues; and language use.

Spiral Progression

Teach linguistic concepts and tools, and language issues, so that students revisit and extend their language knowledge and skills at increasing levels of difficulty and sophistication.

TEACHING PROCESSES

Promoting Active Learning

Give students ownership of what and how they learn. Design activities that require the students' full participation, engaging them in dialogue and providing them with opportunities to find their own answers.

Facilitating Collaboration

Create a classroom environment that emphasises interaction, collaboration and intellectual exchange. Lessons ought to capitalise on the social and participatory nature of learning, especially with regard to the collecting and sharing of linguistic data.

Scaffolding Metacognition

Strengthen students' consciousness of their own learning needs and guide them to plan, monitor and evaluate their learning through reflection, questioning and dialogue. As experts of their own learning, students are to reflect on their own progress and learning processes.

4. ASSESSMENT

All candidates sit two written components, Paper 1 and Paper 2:

Paper	Title	Duration	Period of Assessment	Weighting
1	Analysing Language Use	3 hours	End-of-course examinations	50%
2	Investigating Language Use in Society	3 hours	End-of-course examinations	50%

PAPER 1: ANALYSING LANGUAGE USE

The paper is divided into two equally weighted sections. Each section consists of one compulsory task. The tasks are text/data based, with the material printed in the question paper. This material will consist of texts that are:
- of different text types;
- written, spoken and/or multi-modal; and
- drawn from various areas (e.g., transcriptions of everyday conversations, tabloid or broadsheet journalism, advertisements, blogs, e-mails).

Section A: Analysis

This section's compulsory task is based on two linked texts printed in the question paper. Candidates will be required to analyse the various linguistic constituents of both texts, as well as the relevant contextual factors.

Section B: Adaptive writing and commentary

This section's compulsory task is based on material printed in the question paper (different from that used in Section A). The task has two parts – candidates will be required to:
(a) Adapt the given material for another written medium for a specified audience, purpose and format. Appropriateness in both register and levels of formality will be expected.
The required format will be one of the following: an information brochure/pamphlet; an article for a magazine/newsletter; publicity in the form of an e-mail, blog or advertisement; or a press release.
(b) Write an evaluation of their adaptation, discussing the various linguistic constituents upon which they have drawn.

PAPER 2: INVESTIGATING LANGUAGE USE IN SOCIETY

The paper is divided into two sections. Each section consists of two questions. Candidates must answer three questions in total, and at least one question from each section. All the questions are linked to material printed in the question paper. This material may contain graphical / statistical / tabulated data in addition to conventional prose.

Section A: Language variation and change

Each question will require a response in the form of an essay about variation and change in the English language. Candidates will be required to include examples and/or ideas from the given material, and to make reference to linguistic features as appropriate.

Section B: Language, culture and identity

Each question will require a response in the form of an essay about culture, identity and the English language. Candidates will be required to include examples and/or ideas from the given material, and to make reference to linguistic features as appropriate.