1. Consider the meaning of the word language in the following expressions and paraphrase it in such a way as to bring out the contrasting usages clearly:

*Language is what distinguishes human beings from apes.*

*Language* here refers to the uniquely human ability to communicate by means of speech, or in some cases, writing or signing (on "sign languages" used by deaf people, see the following example). In its structural complexity and its expressive potential, this human language faculty far exceeds all animal communication systems. In other words, while many animal species communicate, only human beings speak.

*She teaches sign language in a school for the deaf.*

Instead of sounds, gestures and body movements are used as a means of conveying the communicative message. The fact that a linguistic utterance can be transferred from the acoustic to the visual medium shows that it has a structural reality independent from its material substrate.

*Sally can conduct fluent conversations in at least four languages.*

The term *language* here denotes the specific linguistic systems of particular communities. The language faculty is shared by all human beings; the way it manifests itself differs from community to community.

*Watch your language, kid!*

*Language* is used to denote an impolite or vulgar way of expressing oneself in a particular language.

*As a teacher I sometimes feel that the children speak a completely different language from me.*

In this example, the term *language* is used in a transferred sense, to refer to a particular style or way of using a given language which identifies a particular group of people.
Lëtzebuergesch used to be a dialect of German but has been one of the three official languages of Luxemburg since 1984.

This use of the word *language* highlights the fact that people are sensitive to the social status of particular ways of speaking. A type of speech which enjoys official recognition or provides the model for writing tends to be designated as "language", whereas speech forms without such recognition and prestigious functions tend to be classified as "dialects". Formal linguistic criteria are insufficient to justify such a distinction in many instances, because it is essentially a result of historical and social circumstance (as our example makes clear). In other words, linguistic criteria alone are not sufficient to justify the distinction.

Who was the guy who got the Nobel Prize for decoding the language of the bees?

*Language* is here used metaphorically, or in a loose sense, to refer to any system of communication. The frequency of such uses should not blind us to the fact that there are profound differences between natural human languages and "animal languages" or, for that matter, computer "programming languages."

*If you know how to read the language of graffiti, they tell you a lot about life in the city.*

Here, *language* is used as a synonym for *code*, any conventionalised system for conveying information.

2. a) You will probably remember that *woman* is the general term for female adult human beings while *lady* refers to women of noble rank. However, it will also be clear to you that "the lady over there" need not necessarily refer to a noblewoman …

b) The "solution" will emerge as part of your enquiries …

c) These are the first 15 instances of *lady* found in the F-LOB corpus of British English:

**Lady** in F-LOB
1 100 counted", Wilkie told Harriet at the end of November. The G09 101 play, No Thoroughfare, was adapted from the Christmas G09 102 number All the Year Round as a vehicle for Charles G09 103 Fechter and his leading lady Carlotta Leclercq. Wilkie and
Dickens had first seen Fechter when he was a successful romantic actor in Paris. He created the part of Armand Duval in La Dame aux Camélias, a play then conside

2 "additional caprices or embellishments." As she says of this brilliant Twenties work, all the entertaining is done by Edith Sitwell's poetry in tandem with the music. Lady Walton had opened the three-part evening with thirty minutes of reminiscences - her first meeting with William, his instant proposal of marriage, and her initiation into his circle of talented friends and patrons.

3 uis behind him, Connors met the Duchess in a private room beneath the grandstand. "Yes, we're friends," he said afterwards. "We've known each other for a few years and she's a very nice lady." Vitas Gerulaitis, a former tennis rival of Connors and his best friend, said: "The Duchess is friends with Jimmy and Patti (his wife) and she invites them for dinner when they are in London.

4 le to having something quite splendid. I hope now it will be well used by people, they have as much right as anyone else to use our pools and access is very important." She mentioned one elderly lady who had never used the pool before but who had been in every day since the hoist was installed last week and has now bought a season ticket. Magistrate refuses club owner's licence

5 llectively it showcases a singer with a lasting relevance. If you've got a note in your pocket, and are unsure which lady to pick, Diana or Paula Abdul, stick with a tried and tested formula and make it Lady Di. (7/10) Pete Wylie and Wah! - Infamy (Siren): He's been away a long time and many thought he had finally talked himself to death. Liaisons with the Farm and an appalling new haircut rightly

6 125 said that those who take decisions should be made accountable. That is exactly what new clause 1 seeks to do. It seeks to make the Government accountable for what they are forcing upon local authorities. If the hon. Lady and her colleagues are so keen on this mechanism, it is odd that they are resisting this new clause, which specifically addresses the fact that the Bill provides the Secretary of State with strengthened powers by gi

7 ould praise his concern for the arts and the Daily Mail
would see it as further proof of his dedication to Europe. But there is more to his current success than sycophancy. The voters still blame Lady Thatcher for the sorry state of the economy and excuse Major his leading part in it. They still blame her for the Poll Tax and forget that he defended it. They forget his uncaring dismissal of the plight of the poor.

8 problems. We do in our way have revolutions. Prejudice was not perhaps all on one side: "I wasn't having the Marquess at any price whatever his ability," remarks one fiercely democratic lady, active in the Association. The appeal of Mr Major on that occasion lay for his experience in the non-armigerous world of local government. "We were," says one official of the time, "very well, in fact! I exchanged a few words with her the following afternoon: Edmund had disappeared, and I was looking for him, so I was in a hurry. I am afraid I teased her." A little frown wrinkled Lady Waverton's forehead. "She is very innocent. More so than most girls of her age, from the circumstance of our having lived so very retired. She would have no idea of the risk she ran." A little frown wrinkled Lady Waverton's forehead. "She is very innocent. More so than most girls of her age, from the circumstance of our having lived so very retired. She would have no idea of the risk she ran."

10 I believe that they never discussed it. Minnie was no stranger to these delicate matters. Two of her closest friends were sisters - Adeline, Duchess of Bedford and Lady Henry Somerset, daughters of the redoubtable Lady Somers who was one of the fabulously beautiful Pattle sisters. Lord Henry Somerset, a son of the Duke of Beaufort, had been driven out of the country in 1879 when his interfering mother-in-law broadcast his love for Lord Rule, black periwig somewhat wetly draggled, swept the plumed hat from his head and made an exquisite bow. "Servant, ma'am." Likewise, madam, likewise." Bess, Lady Winslow, flashed paste rings, whirling a lace kerchief in a flourish. She stretched one silk-breeched leg to the fire, hand casually resting over the larger of its patches. "I don't like gen"

12 Fergie was very tidy, immaculate in fact. She wasn't a great Hooverer or ironer but everything in her room was always very tidy. She can't stand a mess." They employed an Indian cleaning lady to do the dusting and polishing and the sitting room was always full of fresh flowers - freesias and roses were Sarah's favourites - and the walls were hung with oil paintings. "We didn't en
13 ures. Perhaps a simple solution to this problem would be to remedy some of the minor sticking points like ensuring that the main pedestrian access to the Queen's Hotel is kept puddle-free. I witnessed two wealthy lady visitors attempting to negotiate large puddles on the pavement in order gain access to the hotel entrance. Unless the councillors of our town address the basic errors of judgement demonstrated

14 would give him a message as soon as he returned. She said that she would; then a doubt came to him about her reliability, and he said, "May I ask who you are?" She said, "I am the cleaning lady here," she said. He didn't guess that she used the words 'cleaning lady' merely because she knew that this was what he and her employer would call her (though not to her face), but the confidence and

15 As keeper of the Realm, he has come to meet the King on his return from Ireland, no doubt. How did he greet Henry?" "Amicably, I gather. They are in conference now. Room can be found for Lady Philippa and her woman in one of the domestic dorters in the eastern bailey, but we shall have to camp here overnight. Sir Malcolm already has your pavilion erected." "Twill be no harm..." You can see that, as would be expected, Lady (with capital L) is used in its literal sense, as a title in names. In addition, however, there are several uses which are motivated by a desire to be polite, using lady in cases in which woman would be factually appropriate (see exx. 3, 4, 8, 13).

Individually, each of these uses is intended as a nice gesture. In sum, however, they add up to trivialising the meaning of the word. A term originally denoting a woman of high social rank becomes a possibly patronising general term – a type of language change which feminists have observed and deplored in this instance as in many others. Examples 12 and 14 illustrate the compound cleaning lady, a term for which alternatives are also in use.

The more examples of actual language use from corpora you will look at, the more detailed your insights into such issues of usage will become...

Now, to continue this data-driven analysis of linguistic meaning, look at the first 15 instances of the word woman from the same corpus and see what happens if you try to replace woman by lady:
Woman in F-LOB
1 her novels to the handsomeness of her heroes and the beauty of her heroines (not only from the neck up) is an indication of the pleasure she took in good appearance. She was not without vanity. "A pleasing young woman" was how a friend described her to Cassandra, who repeated the compliment. G29 "Well", commented Jane, who was then thirty-five, "that must do: one cannot pretend to anything better now, G29"

2 liened from his partner and baby. Some men may feel jealous that what was once 'their' domain is now shared. Couples must try to communicate their needs and try and find ways of remaining close to each other while the woman is breastfeeding even if, during that time, there is no intercourse. E33 Scott describes the other side of breastfeeding. While her husband loved to watch her breastfeed and found her increased bust si

3 G08 pregnancy with first-born Susanna, intimations of all the future black ink of shame and stress - as well as some relief at G08 authorizing his trespass. But he had also felt resentment at being 'hooked' by an older woman. With her second pregnancy the strong emotions he had felt were doubled; the creative ventricles of his brain had been stretched to bursting point. Yet as the belly of his spouse swelled abnormally large with visible

4 131 Judge Charles Mahon sentenced him to 18 months jail in addition to a five year term for robbery that Riley has just started. A43 He told Riley: "You intimidated this couple and imprisoned them in this woman's home for two or three hours. A43 "The very nature of the second attack was much nastier than the A43 first one and left the woman cowering against a wall saying 'keep A43 137 him from me'." A43 The co

5 06 135 wandered about Santiago, I had my ears pricked as it were, to D06 discover such a person. There were various art tours, with erudite guides. There were several, worn, solitary men, but few women. Paul D06 had said that a woman was on her way, travelling with two children, D06 but my flight was booked before she was due. D06 Then suddenly I saw this smiling, open face, fair hair flying, D06 blue jeans, pink shirt. Without thinking I said in En

6 ting up of appointment panels staffed by lawyers, judges and lay people and the use of established selection G72
methods. Researcher Sally Hughes, who produced one of the reports, The circuit judge – a woman’s place, actually found that the chance of women sitting on the bench had declined since the 1970s. The publication of the Law Society reports and an article by barrister Geoffrey Bindman, whi

7 ME FOR EVER He shouldn't have talked so much. The lights turned red and Jed was so angry, he stamped on the brake much harder than he needed to. His bald tyres screeched on the hot asphalt. A woman almost toppled off her gold high-heeled sandals. She was wearing a T-shirt that said I CAME TO MOON BEACH AND LIVED. BUT ONLY JUST. Jed thought, through gritted teeth. BUT ONLY  

8 s not travelling, much of his time was spent on paperwork. As a bachelor, he braved twenty years of this life without complaint, and then one day in 1896 - when he was thirty-nine - he married an attractive young woman who was nearly half his age. Her name was Ida Mabel Limouzin. She had been a governess in India, and had been engaged to marry another man, but was jilted, and accepted Blair on the rebound. A slender woman with la

9 ight even be dead, is less ironic than perfunctory. Much of the action is seen through the eyes of the neighbours. Bridget Turner, a matchless comic actress, is wasted in the part of the thin-lipped old woman, respectable, inquisitive, unforgiving, but defensively demanding her right to interfere. Predictable she may be, but the character hangs together, unlike her male counterpart (Paul Slack): a slob deserted by his w

10 5 "I'll bring it through as soon as it's sorted." Frances asked as she replaced the top on her pen and handed the forms back to June. The older woman shook her head, and Frances stood up. "In that case, I'll go and get my X-ray request form." Leaving Dr Ryan in the office, she went out to the desk where Lynne, another of the receptionists, gave h

11 f her with one of his laden arms and steered her along to their seats. She had never been more pleased to see anyone. "Boy, that was close," he said to a stewardess. The woman smiled tightly and glanced quickly away from Grace. ANTICIPATING EVERY DETAIL ON A deal this far ahead, when any error
could cost him everything, was part of the excitement of N14 1

12 me!" P20 193 "No, I'm not!" P20 194 Charles looked down into Harriet's wide eyes. He was very fond P20 195 of her and they got on well. He knew he must marry one day, and if P20 196 he couldn't have the woman he loved, perhaps... P20 197 "What about marriage - and children?" P20 198 Harriet's heart gave a wild leap, but she paused gravely to P20 199 consider the question. P20 200 "I think it would

13 2 207 similar problem in terms of seeing 'gestalt' figures (duck/rabbit; J62 208 old/young woman), states: "I cannot 'choose' or 'decide' to J62 209 see the figure in a certain way. If I am able to see it as a J62 210 picture of an old woman, this is because that way of seeing forces J62 211 itself upon me. We can speak of the dawning of an aspect." J62 212 Proffered 'proof' about the 'gestalt' figure ('here is the nose, J62 213 here the chin', etc.) is proof only to

14 the power to vote. We could change the world! There would be P20 216 women in Parliament keeping an eye on the men. A woman Prime P20 217 Minister even!" Harriet's eyes glowed with fervour. P20 218 "The Prime Minister a woman? Och, Harriet, what P20 219 nonsense!" Chrissie giggled. P20 220 "Well, maybe that's going a wee bit far," her P20 221 friend agreed with a grin. "But you must come, Chrissie, to P20 222 help hold

15 he qualitative data already collected has produced a wealth of J29 24 information on the often subtle and complex negotiations between J29 25 household members concerning the allocation of money and resources. J29 26 As one woman describes: J29 27 I allot myself approximately about 250 (pounds per J29 28 month) for food, which might sound a lot for three of us but we've J29 29 got two big dogs that eat a lot and the two men eat like they've

3. According to the OED, the word woman is an Old English compound consisting of the Old English word for "woman" wif and the Old English word for "human being" man. The meaning "female human being" has persisted to the present day, but formally the word is no longer recognisable as a compound. The particular advantage of the OED for this kind of historical study is that it traces the meanings of a word from the earliest attestations to the present and gives authentic examples as citations.

The earliest meanings of woman are:
- An adult female human being (earliest attestation from the year 893)
- The female human being; the female part of the human race, the female sex (usage documented by attestations from 950)
- A female servant, esp. a lady’s maid or personal attendant (from 766)

*Lady* goes back to an Old English compound consisting of *hlaf* (= loaf, bread) and *dig* (= to knead).

The earliest meanings of *lady* are:
- A mistress in relation to servants or slaves; the female head of a household (earliest attestation 825)
- A woman who rules over subjects, or to whom obedience or feudal homage is due; the feminine designation corresponding to *lord* (from 1000)
- A woman of superior position in society, or to whom such a position is conventionally or by courtesy attributed (from 1205)
- A woman whose manners, habits, and sentiments have the refinement characteristic of the higher ranks of society. (1861)

The first traces of the polite (or condescending) use of *lady* thus go back to the Middles Ages, and the usage emerges fully formed in 1861.

4. *We don't need no education.*

Informants responding to this example are very likely to point out that double negation of this type is considered a grammatical sign of uneducated or non-standard usage.

*Hopefully, the war will soon be ended.*

Unlike the first example, this use of *hopefully* as a sentence adverb is not considered a sign of uneducated usage but still disliked as an innovation by many speakers. Such speakers will point out that the supposedly correct use of *hopefully* is as a manner adverb, as in *they were all looking ahead hopefully*.

*Let me assure you that I am not actuated by mercenary considerations.*

On hearing this sentence people are likely to comment on its formal "Latinate" vocabulary (*actuate, mercenary, consideration*), which would be most unlikely to occur in this degree of concentration in present-day English. Responders well versed in 19th-century British fiction will additionally recognise an allusion to Mr. Micawber, a character from Charles Dickens' *David Copperfield* (1849), who is famous for his pompous diction.
Had I in the least surmised that it was her husband's rash purchase of an expensive automobile that she was going on about I would have told her to shut up and get her act together.

This sentence is funny because it mixes very formal style in its first part (surmise, purchase, inversion of subject and auxiliary in the subordinate conditional clause) with informal and slangy expressions in its second half (e.g. to go on about something).

5. These onomatopoetic expressions are commonly used to make the point that the connection between sound and meaning is not arbitrary at least in some words. Note, however, that any acoustic similarity between the sound of a sneeze, or a cock crowing, and the words used to denote it is overlaid by arbitrary language-specific conventions, for example with regard to the number of syllables used. With regard to one verbal realisation of the sneeze in British English, there is even a dialect difference in comparison to American English.

6. quantum physics, quantity, quantita\tive, quantit\t\tively
   I go to school every day
   If he goes, I go too

   All examples follow the same rule: /t/ is flapped between vowels, both within a word and across words, but only if the second vowel is not stressed. This environment is provided in the ending of quantity and in go to. The conditions do not apply, however, to the second /t/ in quantitative and the /t/ in go too, as here the vowels following the /t/ bear stress. Reduction of /t/ regularly occurs after nasals if the following vowel is not stressed. This explains the cases of quantum, quantity and quantitative.

7. Both texts are difficult to understand, but for contrasting reasons. The extract from the conversation is embedded in a communicative context which needs to be known to get the message. Furthermore, parts of it are not in standard English but in a North-of-England dialect. Foreign learners of English and even some native speakers from the language from outside Britain may thus find it difficult to understand a sentence such as "But he's one of them lads where she'll never have owt, cos he don't do, he won't bloody work will he?" = "But he is one of those young men from whom she will never have anything, because he doesn't do [any work]/ won't really work ..."
The second example, from a scholarly article in the natural sciences, shows a simple and common clause pattern (SVO), but has extremely complicated modification structures in the object noun phrase.

8. Work out an answer to this question by yourself!