

General

- Use what language you will, you can never say anything but what you are. — RALPH WALDO EMERSON (American essayist, lecturer, and poet)
- Like everything metaphysical the harmony between thought and reality is to be found in the grammar of the language. — LUDWIG WITTGENSTEIN (Austrian-British philosopher)
- Male supremacy is fused into the language, so that every sentence both heralds and affirms it. — ANDREA DWORKIN (American radical feminist and writer)
- Language most shows a man, speak that I may see thee. — BEN JONSON (English playwright, poet, actor, and literary critic of the 17th century)
- Language is the dress of thought. — SAMUEL JOHNSON (English essayist, moralist, literary critic, biographer, editor, and lexicographer)
- Language needs the chance to constantly renew itself. — GUNTER GRASS (German novelist, poet, playwright, illustrator, graphic artist, sculptor, and recipient of the 1999 Nobel Prize in Literature)
- A lot of friendships and connections absolutely depend upon a sort of shared language, or slang. Not necessarily designed to exclude others, this can establish a certain comity and, even after a long absence, re-establish it in a second. — CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS (English-American author, columnist, essayist, orator, religious and literary critic, social critic, and journalist)
- Political correctness does not legislate tolerance; it only organises hatred. — JACQUES BARZUN (American historian)
- Euphemism is a human device to conceal the horrors of reality. — PAUL JOHNSON (English journalist, historian, speech-writer, and author)
- Euphemism is a euphemism for lying. — BOBBIE GENTRY (American singer-songwriter)
- All Australian accents have changed, but they change through the speech of young people. Once you reach your 20s, your accent doesn't change much. — FELICITY COX (Australian phonetician)
- Tact is kind; diplomacy is useful; euphemism is harmless and sometimes entertaining. — JULIAN BURNSIDE (Australian barrister, human rights and refugee advocate, and author)
- Swearing is more than a way of expressing extreme, usually negative emotion. It's a social adhesive that units and binds us more than any other ... it opens people up, cements relationships. — MICHAEL STUCHBERY (Australian author)
- Slang works much like masonic mortar to stick members of a group together — and of course at the same time to erect barriers between them and the outside. — KATE BURRIDGE (Australian linguist)
- 'Bloody' has now become an important indicator of Australianness and of cultural values such as friendliness, informality, laid-backness, mateship — and perhaps even the Australian dislike and distrust of verbal and intellectual graces. — KATE BURRIDGE
- If you lose your language, you lose your personality, your character and who you are. — HUGH LUNN (Australian journalist and author)
- The expression of language has become richer because of the internet. — DAVID CRYSTAL (English linguist)
- Our (Australian) accent is a product of our social history. — FELICITY COX
- Teenagers use language as a kind of identity badge that has the effect of excluding adults. — PAM PETERS (Australian linguist)
- Australian English is becoming well known for its quirky, larrikin, idiosyncratic creativeness. — ROLAND SUSSEX (Australian linguist)
- Texting has added a new dimension to language use, but its long-term impact is negligible. It is not a disaster. — DAVID CRYSTAL

Prescriptivism vs Descriptivism

- All languages meet the social and psychological needs of their speakers, are equally deserving of scientific study, and can provide us with valuable information about human nature and society. — CRYSTAL
- Prescriptivism is often based on "religious and philosophical preconceptions." — JEN AITCHISON
- Language is constantly evolving and this is part of the evolutionary process. — BRUCE MOORE

Standard English and Text Speak

- The vast majority of spelling rules in English are irrelevant. They don't stop you understanding the word in question. — CRYSTAL
- Spelling was only standardised in the 18th century. In Shakespeare's time you could spell more or less as you liked. — CRYSTAL
- Standard English spelling is an absolute criterion of an educated background. — CRYSTAL
- Sounds are too volatile and subtle of legal restraint. — SAMUEL JOHNSON (Author of the first English dictionary)
- ... tendency to believe the notion that face can be saved by following the practices recommended by the grammarian. — CRYSTAL

Language and Identity

- More than anything else, language shows we belong, providing the most natural badge or symbol or public and private identity. — CRYSTAL
- All subsystems of language can have an influence on how we mark identity through language. — MACMILLAN TEXTBOOK
- Ethnicity is an important part of social identity and something that people want to demonstrate through their use of language. — BURRIDGE AND MULDER
- A broad Australian accent and the use of conventionally tabooed language become desirable macho markers of gender identity. — BURRIDGE AND MULDER

Australian English

- Mark out a community as different from others in history, its way of life, its attitudes and its traditions. — MACQUARIE DICTIONARY WEBSITE
- Australian English can be seen as the natural development of a post-imperialist colony, through divergent linguistic development. — MITCHELL AND DELBRIDGE
- In periods of patriotism, it was felt that “swearing and a strong, broad Australian accent,” for example, are associated with toughness and strength and these can be highly valuable qualities. — BURRIDGE
- Cultivated Australian English can be seen as snobbish and one often encounters hostile or amused reactions to the cultivated accent. — BURRIDGE
- Australian English functions as a significant and extremely powerful symbol of national identity. — MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY

Slang

- Slang is language of a highly colloquial and contemporary type. — BURRIDGE AND ALLAN
- The use of slang is a means of marking social or linguistic identity. — CRYSTAL
- Swearing can become a dominant linguistic trait. — CRYSTAL

Jargon

- A variety of language used among people who have a common work-related or recreational interest. — BURRIDGE AND ALLAN
- Chief linguistic element that shows social togetherness. — CRYSTAL
- Unless you are a member of a clique ... it's gibberish. — STEVE PINKER
- One person's jargon is another person's vocabulary. — ILANA MUSHIN

Euphemism

- Serve direct human interests by avoiding those things which threaten to cause offence and distress. — BURRIDGE
- You could think of euphemism as a kind of linguistic dressing. It can be decorative, flavour enhancing, concealing ... — BURRIDGE
- Latin words sound scientific and therefore appear to be technical and clean whereas their Anglo-Saxon counterparts are taboo. — FROMKIN, BLAIR, AND COLLINS
- Euphemism treadmill ... the new word becomes tainted, prompting the search for yet another fresh word. — STEVE PINKER
- Euphemisms are certainly motivated by the desire not to be offensive but they are more than just linguistic fig leaves. — BURRIDGE

Dysphemism

- They remain in the language to vent strong emotion. — FROMKIN, BLAIR, AND COLLINS
- Swearing has important social function. — CRYSTAL

- The focus of offensive language has definitely shifted from the religious to the secular, especially to matters relating to sexual and bodily functions. — BURRIDGE
- Laws against profanity, blasphemy and (sexual) obscenity have been replaced in heinousness by sanctions against -IST language. — BURRIDGE AND ALLAN
- Words and language are not intrinsically good or bad but reflect individual or society values. — FROMKIN, BLAIR, AND COLLINS
- Words are often sacrificed when they take on secondary, emotionally charged meanings. — PINKER
- It is generally accepted that ‘cunt’ is the most tabooed word in the English language. — BURRIDGE AND ALLAN

Discriminatory Language

- Women are rendered invisible in the language when the masculine pronoun ‘he’ is used. — FROMKIN, BLAIR, AND COLLINS
- There are even legally recognised sanctions against what broadly might be called IST-language. — BURRIDGE
- The whole framework ... so deep rooted that it goes unnoticed. — CRYSTAL

Political Correctness

- Political Correctness brought a fresh awareness of the nature of regional and ethnic identity, which led to greater valuing of linguistic diversity. — CRYSTAL
- PC language deliberately throws down the gauntlet and challenges us to go beyond the content of the message and acknowledge the assumptions on which our language is operating. — BURRIDGE AND ALLAN
- The suggestion that by eradicating offensive language we would eradicate social attitudes and inequalities betrays a lack of understanding of how language works. — CRYSTAL
- A healthy expansion of moral concern. — NOAM CHOMSKY

Political Language

- The whole tendency of modern prose is away from concreteness. — ORWELL
- Language that makes the bad seem good, the negative seem positive and the unacceptable appear attractive. — CRYSTAL
- The truth is less significant than the political conquest. — WATSON
- In our time, political speech and writing have largely been the defence of the indefensible. — ORWELL
- Political language is designed to make lies sound truthful, murder respectable, and to give the appearance of solidarity to pure wind. — ORWELL
- Language has been made the machine of business and politics. — WATSON
- Designed to intimidate the populous through mystification. — THORNE
- Truth is the first casualty of war. — US SENATOR JOHNSON, 1918
- It is language which pretends to communicate but really doesn't. — LUTZ

Polite Language

- What counts as polite behaviour varies between human groups. — BURRIDGE AND ALLAN
- Negative politeness avoids intruding and so emphasises social distance. — HOLMES
- Different cultures and linguistic groups express politeness differently. — HOLMES