



Examiners' Report Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2019

Pearson Edexcel IAL
In English Language (WEN02)
Unit 2: Language in Transition

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WEN04_01_1901_ER

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Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide centres with an insight into the assessment process and give an overview of how candidates approached each question. In this series some candidates performed well, engaged positively with the texts and produced some developed and analytical responses. There was an improvement with candidate's approach, particularly in section B, demonstrating a better knowledge and understanding of the requirements of the question and making consistent reference to the data.

It is recommended centres continue to provide candidates with opportunities to familiarise themselves with the content and format of the examination paper, ensuring that they have a clear understanding of the requirements of each question before the exam. Exemplar materials and accompanying commentaries of the previous series are available on the Edexcel website and give valuable insight into the marks awarded at each level and the standard required.

Candidates should read through both questions, as well as the extracts in the source booklet, before beginning their written response. This will allow them to gain an understanding of the discussion points within the paper and note connections across the texts before they begin.

The paper is divided into two sections providing an opportunity for a comparative analysis in Section A and a discussion based essay in Section B. Candidates are invited to analyse three texts representative of the spoken and written modes of language. Each section contains one question worth 25 marks each. Candidates must answer both questions.

Section A: Spoken Language Today This section provides an unseen piece of spoken language from the 21st century which is a variety of English. Question 1 engages candidates in an analysis of the development of this variety in relation to Standard English. In this series the spoken language was an example of English spoken in China.

Section B: Written Language of the 19th -21st Century

Candidates answer one discussion question on two written texts in the Source Booklet that look at the issue raised in Section A from a wider perspective. This series, the two extracts featured were an article discussing the language contact between English and Chinese speakers and issues with literal translations in writing and an article about Chinese loanwords in English. Candidates were asked to discuss how varieties English in China reflect the changes to and development of English across the world.

Section A

Candidates performed well on this question demonstrating a confident and consistent use of terminology to illustrate their points. Most candidates made a reasonable attempt to engage fully with the task, and there were a range of responses that made use of the bullet points as a scaffold addressing the different language levels. These allowed candidates to structure their response and engage in a systematic analysis of the text.

The majority of candidates commented on the full range of language levels showing an understanding of the question requirements and made attempts to apply theories. A strong knowledge of grammatical features was demonstrated along with an improvement of phonetical analysis encompassing the production of sounds.

More candidates scored within level 4 and 5 this series which was pleasing to see. These responses covered a range of features including grammatical, phonological and lexical features using sophisticated terminology such as copular, clause structure & explanations of nonstandard features linking to other varieties of English. Some candidates also referenced theories of language change discussing Kachru's circle, accommodation theory, prescriptivism and Aitchison's crumbling castle theory. They provided lots of examples and made links to the discourse. High grade responses looked to deepen and explore connections between the data and standard forms of English, making relevant and discriminating selection of source material and identified the different level of language skills amongst the speakers and that English is a second language.

Level 3 candidates tended to lack the range of features in their analysis which is required for the higher bands and may have limited discussion on theories or discourse. Some middle to higher level candidates structured their answers clearly and coherently and used a step by step approach to discussing language features. They successfully analysed the data with this overview in the process but missed some opportunities to explore further on cultural contexts where connections across Standard English and the data could have been made in some depth.

Weaker candidates tended to feature spot and describe what was there particularly with phonology and lexis. Lower level candidates would mention some terminology such as word class or phonology and be able to link one or 2 features to American culture or such as 'kinda' or 'guy' and discussed neologisms 'webzine' linking to technology. They identified general differences and attempted some exploration such as identifying that Tiny is less fluent and uses more non-standard features than the other speakers, usually commenting on the omission of plurals in foreigner. Concepts such as covert prestige or convergence maybe linked to the data but not fully explained or applied.

Candidates awarded at level 1 and lower band 2 described and paraphrased what was there and identified the language as non-standard.

Section B

There was a noticeable improvement in the standard of responses to this question. There continues to be a wide range of approaches utilised but candidates were more successful resulting in a greater balance of marks awarded across both questions. This improvement can be attributed to candidates making more reference to the data than in previous series, recognising the need to source examples from the texts to support their points. It is important that candidates continue to do this with the aim of identifying connections across the sources that demonstrate language evolving and transitioning. Some candidates were able to identify the use of the colloquial greeting 'long time no see' in Text A linking to its origins in Chinese language explained in Text C. This was further exemplified as a having non-standard syntax due to a literal translation and an example of the spread of global English.

As with section A there were scores within the upper levels where the highest responses focused on all bullet points, referred to the source texts, applied theories and built their answer around the development of Global English with reference to features present in Chinglish. Top marks were detailed using terminology and could explain the influence of Chinese syntax, identify features of American influence within speech and how the language varies, linking to accommodation theory and covert/overt prestige as well. Strong candidates showed an understanding of events which impacted the spread of English such as trade, colonisation and war and made reference to Kachru's circle and media/technology. Middle level responses tended to address all three bullet points but focused on one which limited them. They may also make excellent points using their own examples of language but less application or over reliance to the source texts. They discussed some theories but with limited application.

Lower level responses applied a general analysis recognising how exposure to other varieties of English via the media and trade affects language as evidenced in the data. They tended to address one or two bullet points in little detail. Some discussed education and business as factors in the spread of English but largely focused on trade and war as featured in the data. They will quote some examples from text but may focus on only piece of data. Some candidates engaged in a lot of summary from the data and were unable to draw their own conclusions, focusing solely on the information in the texts.

Paper Summary

Based on their performance on this paper candidates are offered the following advice:

- Employ effective time management in the examination to ensure that appropriate time is spent on each question in relation to the assessment objectives.
- Read all three sets of data before attempting the question to gain an understanding of the discussion points across the paper.
- Use terminology throughout your response in both questions.
- Ensure you refer to the sources in both questions and support your points with evidence from the texts.
- In Q2 consider all three texts in your discussion. Do not limit your response to one set of data or to one discussion point.
- In Q2 do not summarise and copy large sections of the data. Candidates are required to reference it and identify the transition of language with examples.
- Use the bullet points as a scaffold when writing your response to make sure all parts of the question are addressed and you have the opportunity to achieve full marks.