Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2017

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

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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 demonstrating a better knowledge and understanding of the requirements of each question, which was pleasing to see. There were still a few candidates who were unprepared for the standard of the examination evident by the lack of content within responses, applying a descriptive approach or writing brief responses which did not attempt to cover all aspects of the question. Candidates are encouraged to dedicate a realistic amount of time to each question and use the amount of marks available as a guideline of how much to write.

Centres should 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 Pearson-Edexcel website and give valuable insight into the marks awarded at each level and the standard required.

It is recommended that 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 South Asia.

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 were examples of Literature about India and a newspaper article about recent developments in English in India. Candidates were asked to discuss how English in South Asia reflect the changes to, and development of, English across the world.

Section A

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. Less successful responses, tended to list examples without much exploration or an attempt to link form and function within the context of the data. Some feature spotting approaches descended into providing a bullet point approach in itself by literally listing examples of features. This approach restricted achievement to the lower levels. Some candidates also limited themselves by focusing only on phonology or lexis which meant their response was hampered by a lack of range.

Top level 4 and 5 responses covered a range features including grammar, phonology, lexis, used terminology and discussed theories such as Accommodation Theory and overt/covert prestige. Candidates looked to deepen and explore connections between the data and standard forms of English, making relevant and discriminating selection of source material. Points were supported with lots of examples from the text and made links to the discourse and development of English.

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. Some candidates expanded on this mentioning terminology such as phonemes and were able to link one or two features to American culture or Hindi such as 'Bollywood' or 'abhi'. Explanations of how the language differed from Standard

English and recognising Meera as a second language speaker due to her non fluency allowed for marks awarded in level 2 demonstrating general understanding.

Candidates awarded at level 1 and lower band 2 described and paraphrased what was there and identified the language as non-standard. References to the English as being incorrect/wrong were common with some candidates identifying errors and providing corrected versions of the language use, with some also losing sight of the data itself.

Section B

There was a wide range of approaches to this question with some candidates focusing on one bullet point to develop the answer. Some lower to middle level scripts were characterised by the need to explain (and to some extent explore) the differences between a 'correct' use of English and that which the data presented. Often candidates presented the given examples of syntax as incorrect and then sought to provide correct alternatives. This approach also extended into elements of discussing Received Pronunciation as well as fluency for the spoken data, and in some cases suggestions of 'better' vocabulary. Candidates are reminded to avoid labelling non-standard forms as incorrect as it can lead to a judgemental analysis of the language.

Some lower level responses discussed how the texts represented English 'getting better' and so the concepts underlying the development of the language were bound to ideas of how individuals have 'improved' in their use of English over the years.

Level 4 marks focused on all the bullet points in their discussion, referred to the source texts, applied theories and structured their answer around development of English in South Asia. Strong responses were detailed, used terminology, identified influences of other languages and discussed Accommodation Theory linking to India diverging from Standard English. Some responses also addressed Covert Prestige in Text C and identified the role of International English within media and literature. Level 3 responses may have addressed all three bullet points but focused more on one which limited them.

In many cases there was a neglect of all of the texts and a focus on one or two at the expense of others.

Across both questions, there were attempts to classify the data into pidgin and/or Creole versions of the language which was then used as a method into a wider analysis. Often candidates attempted to offer alternative classifications of the data, or strived to explore how the data sets were examples of a pidgin-English in South Asia, and how these had developed over time. This approach was rarely successful.

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.
- Ensure you refer to the sources in both questions and support your points with evidence from the texts.
- Use the term 'non-standard' rather than 'incorrect' when referring to varieties on English.
- In Q2 consider all three texts in your discussion. Do not limit your response to one set of data or to one discussion point.
- 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.

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link: