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# **Examiner's Report**

## Principal Examiner Feedback

June 2018

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. As demonstrated in the January series there was an improvement with candidate's approach, particularly in section A, demonstrating a better knowledge and understanding of the requirements of the question, and confident use of terminology. However, on section B candidates are performing with less success than section A highlighting a need for a more developed understanding of the criteria for question two.

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. It is recommended centres 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 Australian Aboriginal English.

**Section B: Written Language of the 19<sup>th</sup> -21<sup>st</sup> 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 interview with an Aboriginal storyteller and an online article about the development of Australian English. Candidates were asked to discuss how varieties of English in Australia reflect the changes to and development of English across the world.

## Section A

Candidates approach to this question has improved demonstrated by a confident and consistent use of terminology to illustrate their points. In previous series terminology tended to be absent amongst the lower levels but it is now featured amongst the majority of responses allowing candidates to access marks for AO1.

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.

Candidates are achieving in the upper levels and 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. Discriminators in high performing candidates' responses is the range of features discussed as well as accomplished and perceptive phonological analysis. Strong understanding was demonstrated of accent features making links to other accents which display similar phonetic variations and discussing elision, assimilation and production of sound. They also 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. Some analysis was hampered by referring to Tammie's language as incorrect and referencing low intelligence/lack of education as reasons for her dialect. Candidates are reminded to use the term 'non- standard' when discussing varieties of English and avoid terms such as 'incorrect', 'wrong' and 'improper'.

Weaker candidates tended to feature spot and describe what was there particularly with phonology. Some candidates mentioned terminology such as phonemes and were able to link features to Australian or Aboriginal culture such as 'mob' or 'long grass/short grass' and identified that the speaker has a similar pronunciation to accents in another variety of English- most notably African creoles.

## Section B

There continues to be a wide range of approaches to this question with varying degrees of success. Despite some strong responses, overall candidates performed less successfully on this question when compared to question one. Candidates are continuing to make improvement on referring to the source material which has been in an issue in previous series. This demonstrates that candidates are recognising the need to source examples from the texts to support their discussion specifically to the development of English in Australia. It is important that candidates continue to do this with the aim of identifying connections across the sources that demonstrate language evolving and transitioning. The three sets of data are linked and show the progression of a variety of English over time. Some candidates were able to identify and discuss the influence of the native Aboriginal language on Australian English while also acknowledging a non-standard variety of English had also developed within the Aboriginal community. Further reference

was made to the story teller featured in Text B and his attempts to preserve the Aboriginal language and culture due to the expansion of global English.

As with Section A 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. 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 the spread of English in general terms with little reference to the varieties in Australia which hampered the relevance of their discussion and suggested they may have planned a generic response to the bullet points which they would write regardless of which variety was presented in the sources.

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 varieties of English in Australia. Strong responses were detailed, used terminology, identified influences of other languages and discussed Accommodation Theory linking to Australian Aboriginal English diverging from Standard English to preserve cultural heritage. Some responses also addressed Covert Prestige in Text C and identified the role of International English within media and documentaries. Level 3 responses may have addressed all three bullet points but focused more on one which limited them.

In some cases, there was a neglect of all of the texts and a focus on one or two at the expense of others. Despite a significant increase in terminology in question one this was not always reflected in question two. Candidates should use terminology where possible when illustrating their points as it meets the criteria for the assessment objective of describing construction in meaning and will show sophistication within their written expression.

## 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.
- Continue to 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.
- Use the term 'non-standard' rather than 'incorrect' when referring to varieties of 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.

