



Examiners' Report Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2020

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

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Publications Code WEN02_01_pef_20200305

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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, candidates performed well showing improvements in their approach and a confidence with the requirements of the exam. In past series, candidates have demonstrated stronger performance on section A but they are now producing more balanced responses across the paper, demonstrating good knowledge and understanding in section B while 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 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 Belize.

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 and history of Belize and a blog post about the language written in Belizean English (with English translation). Candidates were asked to discuss how English in Belize reflects the changes to and development of English across the world.

Section A

Candidates continued to perform well on this question demonstrating 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. This allowed candidates to structure their response engaging 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 attempting to apply theories. A strong knowledge of grammatical features was demonstrated along with effective phonetical analysis.

Candidates who scored within Levels 4 and 5 this series covered a range features including grammatical, phonological and lexical features. They used sophisticated terminology such as copular, clause structure & explanations of non-standard features linking to other varieties of English. Some candidates also referenced theories of language change discussing Kachru's circle, accommodation theory and prescriptivism. They provided many examples and made links to the discourse. Theories were applied to the speakers concern that using her creole language would potentially confuse her international audience demonstrating how she usually accommodates her language using more standard forms when communicating online. Other candidates also referred to her use of creole as showing pride in national identity and made links to covert/overt prestige. 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 difference between her language when she moved from her dialect to using her native creole.

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 and made links to the development of creole languages. Some applied theories of gender to the speaker stating her use of non-standard forms disagreed with various theorists on female speech. They successfully analysed the data 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.

Lower-level candidates would mention some terminology such as word class or phonology and be able to link one or 2 features to Belizean culture. They identified general differences and attempted some exploration such as identifying common features of creoles such as

omission of plurals or verb agreement. 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 with candidates performing equally across both questions. In the past, there has been an underperformance on Section B compared with Section A but this appears to be improving. 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. In this case, the data provided some historical context to the development of Belizean Creole and its status within the country. This was further supported with a text, which showed the written variety of Belizean Creole demonstrating a standardised orthography. Higher-level candidates were able to discuss this effectively noting the use of phonetic spelling and commenting on semantic transparency of the language identifying lexis that was non-standard but the meaning could still be interpreted.

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 and applied theories. The development of a standard spelling system was linked to attitudes surrounding the preservation of creole languages and recognition of the importance to national identity.

Strong candidates showed an understanding of events, which affected the spread of English such as trade, colonisation and made reference to Kachru's circle and media/technology. Some candidates supported their points with knowledge of other creoles and languages, which have similar features and have developed in similar circumstances.

Middle-level responses tended to address all three-bullet points but focused on one, which limited them. They made 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. They had a tendency to describe the contents of Texts B and C as opposed to fully engage with what the data represented about the language and how English develops across the world.

Lower-level responses applied a general analysis recognising how exposure to other varieties of English via the media and 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 colonisation as featured in the data. They tended to quote some examples from text but focused on only some pieces 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.
- 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:

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>

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