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Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

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Pearson Edexcel International Advanced
Subsidiary

In English Language (WEN01)

Unit 1: Language: Context and Identity

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This unit introduces students to how language is used in data from a range of sources. Students explore how the contexts of production and reception affect language choices in spoken and written texts. Students also explore how language reflects and constructs the identity or identities of the user and varies depending on the contexts of production and reception. Students apply appropriate methods of language analysis to a range of written, spoken or multimodal data taken from 20th and 21st century sources using the key language frameworks and levels. They also demonstrate their understanding through the creation of a new text for a specified audience, purpose and context.

Unit 1 is assessed by examination of 1 hour 45 minute's duration. Candidates answer two questions: one question from Section A and one question from Section B. The paper is marked out of a total of 50 marks with 35 allocated to Section A and 15 to Section B.

Section A: Context and Identity **Question 1 (35 marks)**

Candidates answer one question on two unseen extracts selected from 20th and 21st century sources. They are required to produce an extended comparative response showing how the presentation of identity is shaped by language and contextual factors in both unseen texts.

The task is assessed across AO1, 2, 3 and 4:

- AO1: Apply appropriate methods of language analysis, using associated terminology and coherent written expression.
- AO2: Demonstrate critical understanding of concepts and issues relevant to language use.
- AO3: Analyse and evaluate how contextual factors and language features are associated with the construction of meaning.
- AO4: Explore connections across texts, informed by linguistic concepts and methods.

In the January 2022 examination, Text A was an edited extract of an article posted on the United Nations News website in May 2020. The article contains excerpts of the speech made by António Guterres, United Nations Secretary-General, at the launch of a new policy initiative to address the challenges faced by the elderly during the Covid -19 pandemic of 2020. Guterres presents as a well-informed individual, in keeping with his status, whose concern for the treatment of the elderly extends beyond the Covid crisis to the broader social, economic and humanitarian issues pertaining to the treatment of the elderly across the world. The extracts of Guterres' speech are shaped and sequenced by the compilers of the website, who convey the collective and institutional voice of the UN.

Text B was drawn from a blog about the role of young volunteers in Sierra Leone in the campaign to combat the Ebola virus. It was posted to Plan International's website by Sierra Leone Youth Advisory Panel member Kamanda Kamara in March 2016. In his blog, Kamara reflects on the West Africa Ebola outbreak and young people's participation in the campaign to contain the virus. He speaks as a member of a community stricken by Ebola and of the power of social media to

communicate with, and to mobilise, young people to collective action within their communities. He presents as a dynamic individual driven to act as voice and advocate for the vulnerable. He also reflects with pride on the achievements of the Advisory Panel in raising awareness and as a driver for change. The voices of Aminata aged 17 and an unnamed 'old woman' are directly incorporated to represent the views of local communities across generations.

The question asked candidates to analyse and compare how the language of both texts conveys personal identity. Three bullet points offered additional prompts and guidance directly linked to the Assessment Objectives (and the mark scheme) for this component and reminding candidates of the specific areas of study they should apply to the task:

- relevant language frameworks and levels
- concepts and issues such as social, cultural and gender factors
- contextual factors such as mode, field, function and audience.

Centres are advised that the format and focus of the question will be consistent across the lifetime of the specification. Actual wording may, inevitably, change depending on the nature and content of the two unseen texts presented.

However, the focus of assessment is clearly stated in the question stem with its prompt to consider and compare how personal identity is constructed and presented in the source materials. The bullet points remind candidates of the areas of study they should apply to this comparative exploration and are linked directly to the Assessment Objectives applied by examiners to their responses.

The mark scheme contains indicative content and may well provide centres with a useful resource when preparing their students for subsequent examinations.

The texts were clearly linked by the issue of viral pandemics and there was much opportunity for candidates to explore the links and contrasts between them. The focus of the question was the construction and presentation of **personal identity**, and the ability of candidates to incorporate this into their analysis proved something of a discriminator, with a significant minority struggling with this concept. Those that framed their analysis through this central focus were rewarded.

In January 2022, responses to Section A covered a full range of achievement. Most candidates offered consideration of the genre and context of both texts and were able to draw links between them based on their central focus on the issue of pandemics. They were also able to offer comparative consideration of the differing audience and context of each text and shape these – with varying success – through the differing perspectives and circumstances of the international statesman, Guterres, and the global reach of the UN and the youth worker Kamara and his personal and communal experiences in Sierra Leone.

The source texts proved to be accessible to most candidates and the majority offered a balanced consideration of both and the theme that linked them. Most candidates could differentiate context well and most responses across the range could point to more complex aspects of each. These included the multiple functions of both texts; the nature of the Guterres speech and editorial influence of the host UN site in framing this; the youth audience targeted by Kamara; the

voices of others and how they were incorporated into the blog. They often developed insightful contrast between the personal and 'professional' experiences of the speaker/writers and how these influenced perspectives on the impact of pandemics. There were also some very competent explorations of the cultural and societal attitudes towards age and gender within the context of the respective health crises.

It was pleasing to see that many centres had made use of the support afforded by the Examiner Report and the indicative content in the mark scheme produced in previous series. This enabled many to meet more of the specific requirements of the Assessment Objectives. Some used these documents as a framework for their responses which ensured coverage and structure in the mid- bands of achievement, but which sometimes led to repetition at the lower levels and, in some, less frequent, cases, restricted responses at the mid to upper levels. In these instances, candidates sometimes looked for direct points of comparison across frameworks that were not really evident in the texts themselves, and the subsequent analysis was somewhat strained/forced as a result. **Those that used the mark scheme framework to provide 'subheadings' sometimes generated repetitive and or/undeveloped responses.** Centres are advised that the mark scheme offers indicative content – it is **not** prescriptive, and given the nature of the specific frameworks considered, there is considerable overlap. **Candidates need to be selective and only apply framework that relate directly to the task and which can be exemplified directly from the source materials.**

Most were able to describe method and effect but many at the mid-lower levels of achievement struggled to apply specific language terms to their consideration of how – and why – these effects were produced. A more systematic approach, whereby comments are supported by evidence drawn directly from the source materials would have provided candidates with the opportunity to explore the language from which this evidence was comprised (applying concepts, terms and frameworks) and would have enabled them to reach the requirement for higher levels of achievement provided in the mark scheme. Some responses used a range of impressive language terms to describe language features but did not go beyond a descriptive/feature spotting approach and marks had to be restricted because of failure to link to context/purposes. **A list-like approach/feature spotting is not a successful way to tackle this question.** Responses that were placed in the highest bands of achievement supported comment and assertion with evidence directly drawn from the texts which was used to explore the specific language choices made, applying terminology in good range at word, sentence and whole - text level. These linked comment to the concept of 'voice'/persona as constructed/presented thereby developing the meaningful links between form and function/effect that signals a successful response.

Some offered generalised comment on context whilst those that developed comment not only on the background context of the texts but also on key aspects of production and reception of each (including key generic conventions) were rewarded accordingly. **A significant minority did not address AO4 and the requirement to comment on the links between the two texts and this made an upward movement through the levels difficult.**

Successful responses to **Text A** looked the conventions of the speech itself and how its structure fulfilled both its informative/persuasive function and enabled the development and presentation of voice and identity of Guterres on a personal and professional level. The best explored the editorial hand of the compilers of the UN website that framed the speech into an online article. These successful responses picked up on the shared values and concerns of both Guterres and the organisation he represents.

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Less successful were those responses that offered generalised comment on the context of the speech and the issues upon which it was based. These often failed to acknowledge that the speech was edited and incorporated into an online article. They often adopted a very descriptive approach to content with limited levels of specific analysis. A significant, but small, minority misread the prompts in the question and produced a discursive essay on the issue of COVID-19. Those that offered limited exemplification and limited specific analysis of technique were anchored in the mid/lower bands of achievement.

Successful responses to **Text B** took cues from Kamara's presentation of himself as a member of a community stricken by Ebola and of the power of social media to communicate with, and to mobilise, young people to collective action within their communities. As with Text A, the best were able to offer analytical comment on the influence of the host site in shaping the blog, were able to comment on the crafting of the blog to develop a relationship with his audience and thus further its rhetorical and promotional function. Most handled the multiple functions of the text effectively.

Less successful responses offered generalised comment on the context of the blog and adopted a very descriptive approach to its content. Those that offered limited exemplification and limited specific analysis of the language used were anchored in the mid/ lower bands of achievement. Limited consideration the construction and presentation of the personal identity of Kamara, or of the other voices integrated into his blog, negatively impacted on the success of the response.

AO4 requires candidates to explore **connections and contrasts** between the source texts. Comparative work was usually helpful in lifting responses into Level 4 (at least) enabling candidates to demonstrate a more discriminating approach to the data. There was a pleasing increase in responses that approached this comparison in an integrated manner this series. Others, however, lacked confidence to deal with the texts in an integrated comparative approach and dealt with them in separate sections and this negatively impacted on the potential for reward. The most successful responses seized the many opportunities for comparison and contrast. Many explored the purpose of the

texts and developed links through the persuasive function of each. Most picked up on the fact that both texts were clearly linked by the issue of pandemics but were differentiated by the age and status of the speaker and writer and the socio-geographical focus and reach of each text.

Less successful responses outlined the links and contrasts between the two texts but failed to develop any but the more obvious or to explore the language which evidenced these. Such responses were characterised by an essentially descriptive approach. A significant number of candidates took a summary approach to the content of the texts which is not a useful approach to achieve marks. This proves reading ability but not an ability to analyse language features in use.

The following excerpts are taken from a response that was awarded a mark of 27 for Question 1. The mark places the script towards the top of Level 4.

It offers mostly integrated points of comparison and achieves a balance in terms of coverage of both texts. There are developed links between form and function. The response moves with system across frameworks and this ensures coverage of key AOs. There is clear use of the headings in the mark scheme here but the integrated nature of the comparison moves the response away from a limited 'listing' approach. Analysis is in reasonable range, but here is less security with sentence level analysis and this accounts largely for its placement in Level 4 as this lack of specifics is a slightly restrictive factor in terms of reward.

The promise of an integrated comparison is signalled from the start and is sustained throughout the response:

The field of both texts focuses on ~~the~~ disease. Text A discussed how COVID-19 affects the life of the elderly and how it is unfair that they don't get the help they deserve. ~~It also~~ Text B focuses ~~on~~ on ebola and how much progress Plan International has made to combat the disease.

The purpose of both texts is to inform and to educate. Both try to make the reader reflect on their action. Text A uses more of pity towards the elderly to make the reader feel more responsible. "Older people must not be treated as invisible or powerless." Text B uses positive connotations to get the reader's attention like saying the organisations achievements. While neither of these ~~are~~ texts outright act to donate they do have that effect on the reader and it is also their function especially of text B. The purpose of text B might also be to get more volunteers. ~~It~~ The purpose of both texts is to also raise hope of the reader.

There is clear consideration of voice/identity and its construction/presentation:

He also makes himself respectable by saying that he himself is an old person. It makes his opinion more trustworthy.

...

The frequent use of personal plural pronouns "we", "our" gives a sense of community in the organisation like it is a combined effort.

Analysis at word level is relatively strong. There is effective consideration of lexical choice which is linked competently to effect and function, as in the exploration of Text A:

The lexis and syntax of text A is more complex than that of text B. Since it is a speech presented by the United Nations Secretary-General it has a more official tone (which would be against the audience of old people). It uses many low-frequency language and medical-economic jargon "disparities", "autonomy", "social economic", "coherent".

...

The text also uses many synonyms of important "vital", "crucial", "essential". This shows the reader the scale of the situation and has the same effect. Throughout the text the writer uses strong vocabulary that holds a positive

Throughout the text the writer uses strong vocabulary that holds a positive

connotation "inspiring", "skills", "heroes", "community". These are words that help describe

the organisation in a positive light. She also uses strong adjectives "devastating" when describing the disaster. Also strong language like "get rid of" which accomplishes the same effect.

For those that have direct knowledge the mention of chlorine might be a stark realisation of the danger of the situation as outside of pools chlorine gas can be deadly.

There are some valid points on rhetorical features which link to the persuasive function:

used tripling "WhatsApp, Facebook and Skype" which was used to show the scale of their effort. "Fear, denial, myths" is also tripling which was used to show the issues in these villages. This would make it seem more serious. She also used euphemism "lost many of them" when

Sentence level analysis is less developed and it is this factor that prevents movement beyond Level 4:

When it comes to sentence structure it is a much more complex than...

Text B. It uses longer sentences and more complex structures which fits the official language. It also uses discourse markers like 'Moreover',

...

The sentences are formed more simply and the language...

is easy to understand even for the youth.

Section B: The Creation of Voice **Question 2 (15 marks)**

Section B of the examination is assessed against AO5: 'Demonstrate expertise and creativity in the use of English to communicate in different ways' with a total of 15 marks allocated for this component. As such the task assesses both the fluency and accuracy of written expression and the ability to generate an original and (hopefully) engaging text.

Candidates are expected to demonstrate their own expertise and creativity in the use of English. They are encouraged to incorporate personal and local references. Candidates were expected to draw upon the at least one of the source materials provided in Section A but reshape them to meet the requirements of the context.

In January 2022 candidates were asked to produce the text for an article in their local newspaper encouraging people to participate in an aid programme in their community during a serious health crisis. The question stem was carefully worded to provide candidates with a clear indication of expectation of context, function and audience. The format of the question will be relatively constant, but wording will, inevitably, change according to the nature of the creative task set. As this is a creative response, examiners will accept any approach that concedes to the prompts provided.

The second part of the question:

In addition to your own ideas you must refer to material from at least one of the texts in the Source Booklet

highlighted a key requirement of the task, that is the need to incorporate some material from one (or both) of the source texts into the report. This proved problematic to a significant minority of candidates but is an important requirement which must be taken into account and is a key discriminator in marking this question. Less successful responses made no concession to the source and all, others simply quoted directly from the texts, struggling to integrate the material and therefore disrupting the fluency of their response. It is NOT necessary to incorporate every detail from the source; indeed, many that did produced lengthy and essentially pedestrian paraphrases that failed to engage. More successful were those that took only relevant information from the

source materials and reworked this to a lively and engaging agenda better fitted to the prescribed context of delivery.

There was some improvement at the upper bands of achievement in Section B responses this series with many achieving marks in Level 4 and Level 5. This is very pleasing as the 15 marks available for this component can make a huge difference to the final grade awarded. Unfortunately, this improvement was not fully evident in the mid and lower levels. Here responses were often very brief which severely restricted links to the source materials or failed to fully engage the reader. Others appeared to be very rushed and undeveloped, indicating that candidates did not manage their time effectively. A significant, though small, minority failed to even attempt Q2.

Successful responses effectively applied conventions of an article and showed awareness of the local and community-based nature of the prescribed audience. These produced clear, well-structured responses and demonstrated an understanding of writing for an audience, experimenting with register. They demonstrated clear awareness of audience and function, conceding clearly to the context and the persuasive/informative function of the article. Many drew on personal experiences linked to their own community which contributed positively to some very fluently written and convincing new texts. The best adapted the source material fluidly – for example, drawing upon the rhetorical ‘voice’ of Kamara to target their audience.

Many, in the mid-range of achievement could adopt a tone or ‘voice’ which was convincing even if the technical accuracy in written English was lacking.

Less successful responses struggled with the precise purpose of the task or with maintaining the generic form and appeared to lack the vocabulary and control of syntax to fulfil the requirements of the task. Some were often restricted by flawed written expression – these proved essentially self-penalising. Some struggled to sustain a consistent tone/register given the nature of the task and the tone and content of the source materials.

Centres are advised that, although the paper is weighted across the two tasks (with 35 marks allocated for Q1), the 15 marks available for Q2 can be the difference between several final grades. Candidates are urged to set aside sufficient time to understand the specific requirements of the task in terms of genre, context, audience and purpose and to produce a meaningful and, hopefully, engaging response. They are also reminded that they **MUST** draw on the material from at least one of the source texts – there were some very engaging responses that failed to do this and were essentially self-penalising.

The following extracts are taken from a script which was awarded a mark of 14 which places it in Level 5.

It is consistently on task and although there are occasional technical slips it is well structured and expressed.

The opening section presents a clear concession to genre - and link to source:

today's issue will be dedicated to the brave volunteers of Plan Development's Sierra Leone chapter.

There is clear concession to the local context required and continued judiciously shaped linking to source materials:

As this virus continues to wreak havoc on our hospitals, schools and retirement homes, we must ask ourselves: "How can I help?" This is the question on many people's minds, ever since UN Secretary-General António Guterres made a speech at the height of the outbreak. Since then local medical students have been asking for an increase in volunteers for assistance in testing. And so, as responsible citizens, we would like to help in the

The response is developed with some fluidity to incorporate personal/local information and the result is a viable new text that is fully fit for the required informative and persuasive purpose:

reconsider your choices should you be vaccinated. A doctor we interviewed stated that 12% of all patients he receives are unvaccinated, and that these patients are more likely to clog up the ICU, while other unrelated cases will be unable to get the care they desperately need. Just last week an 8 year old girl who had an injury unrelated to the virus, died due to a lack of space in the ICU. Her parents pleaded with us to tell all those who are not vaccinated to do so,

It approaches the persuasive brief on a number of levels, from promoting the wearing of masks and vaccination programme to volunteering to help the local community. As such it combines original and source material with confidence:

And for those who truly care, start
volunteering. An aid programme to help the
elderly is being assembled by the
Red Cross, and is asking for 20,000 volunteers
that would conduct testing, aid in communications
development and help the elderly with day
to day life. There is no better way
to aid in the fight, than to join those
who are working overtime to protect us.

This is a detailed and well-developed article. Its focus on the task is sustained and the final article is viable and engaging, hitting all AOs effectively. This range and detail are key factors in the placement of the response in the top band. Briefer answers are likely to be restricted to mid-levels of achievement.

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