

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2012

International GCSE Bengali (4BE0)
Paper 01

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General comments

A significant proportion of candidates performed well and scored highly in this year's examination. The demand of the paper is generally comparable with the June 2011 paper. It was pleasing to see that overall candidates' performances this season was slightly better than last year.

Candidates had every opportunity to produce good and proper translations. Some key words and phrases helped to differentiate between the performance of candidates. Also a number of outstanding pieces of translations, including examples of continuous pieces of writings, were evident from a number of responses.

Question 1

It is quite pleasing to see that almost all candidates were able to translate all five sentences, though at a varied level, where they were tested on specific grammar points. The vast majority of candidates were able to translate the 1a, 1b, 1c, 1d and 1e sentences without difficulty. However, the less able candidates while transmitting 1b and 1e, were often unable to translate key words eg 'never agreed' in 1b, and 'this morning' in 1e. The remainder of the sentences were very well responded to by more able candidates.

Question 2

Question 2 required the translation of an English passage about the possible safeguarding of buildings in Dhaka city against the recurrence of earthquakes. The majority of candidates succeeded to transmit the content of the passage fairly well. The more able candidates performed the translation task in standard Bengali with a good flow. There has also been occasion, where the time sequence, syntax and basic grammar were not transmitted appropriately. Less able candidates often struggled to transmit words such as, 'zone', 'code', 'mandatory', 'geologist', 'experts', 'active' and 'exaggerated'. This may be due to a lack of knowledge or unfamiliarity regarding the corresponding Bengali meaning of these words, which ended up in displaying transliteration. However, on the whole, candidates performed quite successfully, displaying good literacy skills in both languages.

Question 3

Question 3 required a Bengali passage about the state of mind of a student who came for higher studies abroad, to be translated into English. The majority of candidates translated the most part accurately. High scoring candidates were able to transmit the major key ideas from the Bengali passage into English with only a few spelling mistakes. Such answers also applied the use of correct grammatical structures and the appropriate use of tenses. However, candidates who did not score as well, often struggled to translate some words and phrases such as '*shosti*', '*paichari*', '*obhostow*', and '*poroshi*'. A few candidates had used the wrong meaning of '*shosti*' as punishment. Candidates who failed to score as many marks were often unable to transmit and manipulate these phrases successfully in correct tense forms and meaning.

Question 4

The majority of candidates have done well in their essay options this year. However, the number of candidates who have chosen to answer question 4b and 4d are considerably higher.

There was a requirement of an anticipation of facts, good flow, analysis of points of view and opinions. Unfortunately, it was not evident amongst candidates in general. On average, the responses were mainly descriptive. Very few candidates used a high level vocabulary or idiomatic phrases or expressions. The manipulation of languages was very basic on occasions. Further errors included the incorrect use of syntax, wrong use of verb forms, mismatching of verb endings. On the other hand, candidates who fulfilled these criteria and displayed a coherent piece of writing scored the top range marks.

Conclusion

On the whole, this paper appeared to be fair and well balanced. The overall performance of candidates showed that the standard of literacy including the transmission skills to and from the target language has improved though on occasion, candidates' performances lacked a good grasp of a range of structures, manipulation of tense concepts and knowledge of grammar. A wide display of transliterated words / phrases was also evident in the candidates' performances across the board.

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