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Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2017

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE
In Bengali (4BE0) Paper 1

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General comments

About 2140 students were entered for the IGCSE Bengali in June 2017. A good proportion of students performed well and scored high marks in the paper.

Question 1

Able candidates generally performed well in translating all 5 sentences without any difficulty, and scored good marks. However, less able candidates struggled due to the lack of appropriate syntactical and grammatical knowledge in transmitting ideas, which was evidenced in 1(a), 1(b) and 1(e) in particular. In 1(a), some candidates found the word '**assume**' very difficult to translate. In 1(b) students had difficulties in translating '**eligible**' and '**apply**'. Similarly, in 1(e), the past continuous form of sentence was not translated appropriately.

Question 2

This question was about the lifestyles of the slums in Dhaka. Generally, the transmission of this passage by the majority of candidates was well responded to, except that a small number of candidates struggled to transmit the Bengali meaning of words such as '**slum dogs**', '**natural disasters**', '**demolish**', '**shacks**', '**exhausting**' and '**measure**', and used either inappropriate meaning or transliterations. Nevertheless, stronger candidates performed well and achieved good marks.

Question 3

This question was about a student of Dhaka University, a brilliant athlete who appeared in a TV interview. Like question 2, most candidates performed well on this question, transmitting the passage successfully. In cases where the candidates were unable to put the correct meanings of Bengali words and phrases such as '**shikharthi**', '**Bishopdale**', '**labonno**', '**antabishobiddaloy krira**', and '**kriraongon**', they used either their transliterations or inappropriate words.

Question 4

The essay options **4b** and **4d** were well responded to by able students. Essay questions **4a** and **4c** were popular and well responded to by the majority of the students. The able students put their view points, feelings, and thoughts coherently and sequentially giving their justifications followed by displaying facts and information, hence achieving good marks. Only a very small number of students had written essays with less than the required number of words. In addition, when the quality and the required relevant information was taken into account; it resulted in them scoring lower marks.

There was a requirement of facts, good flow, analysis of points of view and opinion(s). Unfortunately, it was not evident amongst students in general. There were quite a few occasions when responses were mainly descriptive. Also, not very many students used high level vocabulary or idiomatic phrases or expressions. The manipulation of languages was often very basic. The use of syntax and wrong use of verb forms, mismatching of verb endings and the amount of common spelling errors gave the impression that the language was the second language for a number of students. Students who fulfilled these criteria and displayed a coherent piece of writing displaying a variety of structures, a range of vocabulary scored the top of mark ranges.

Conclusion

The overall performances of able students showed that the standard of literacy including the transmission skills to and from the target language has improved. This may be due to centres embedding appropriate exam techniques in their teaching.

However, less able students' performances showed a lack of a good grasp of grammatical knowledge in both English and in the target language, inability to display a range of structures and phrases, manipulation of tense concepts / time frames and common spelling errors. Also, a wide display of transliterated words / phrases were evident in the students' performances.

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