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Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2017

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE
In Classical Arabic (4CA0) Paper 1

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General comment:

According to the specification, the aim of Classical Arabic 4CA0 01 paper is to provide a framework for the development of written and transmission skills. This demand is further assessed with the practical application of the Arabic grammar. Schools should emphasise this by training their students to transmit the ideas in the original text by using sound sentence structure.

Accurate punctuation is of vital importance so students should be encouraged to cut up the English/Arabic texts into sentences of varying lengths with the use of capital letters and full stops in the appropriate places. Some students tend to include alternative answers in brackets, however this practice should be discouraged as it will lead to the loss of valuable marks.

Examiners noted following points on different questions:

Question 1

In the first paragraph, many students were not able to translate قوارير ديس correctly. Many transliterated it and it was often mistranslated. أيام ولايته was often translated wrong too. Many did not translate or else incorrectly translated فعساه أراد التفضيل في القسمة

In the second paragraph, many did not translate the word كراء الحمّال as required but went on to translate it as something else. In this same paragraph, the word العصيدة was translated wrong many times .

In the third paragraph إذا استحال الشراب خلاً was often mistranslated. The word نديم was also misunderstood by a majority of students resulting often in the transliteration of it, because it is believed that many students thought it was a proper noun.

From the above examples, it is students could possibly be reading more classical texts and becoming more aware of the meaning of the terms used in the medieval period. What is equally important is their ability to translate these terms not using modern-times terms, but by finding alternative words suitable for the era. For example, we cannot accept 'presidency' for أيام ولايته, nor can we accept 'the driver' for الحمّال.

Question 2

This was a modern text which gave the opportunity for many students to gain some good marks. This proved much more comprehensible to many students, and most of them seem to have felt that they were on firmer ground, with certain points recognisable from their own experience of life. The same general translation issues mentioned above in relation to Q1

apply also here. Unfortunately, student's English language abilities and the lack of understanding some Arabic vocabulary often let them down.

In the first paragraph, the word **أفاق** was often translated incorrectly.

In the second paragraph, the word **الحنين** was translated by many students incorrectly.

In the third paragraph the expression, **الجملة العابرة** proved to be a challenge to some students. Also, the translation of **يا حبذا** was often incorrect and avoided by some students at times, or transliterated by many. The expectation is that most students would have been exposed to these phrases if they had been reading various Arabic texts.

Question 3

Generally, most students achieved 50% or higher marks for this question. Less able students often had some difficulties in vocalizing the verb e.g. **لم يَلْبَثْ** this was probably due to the lack of understanding Arabic Morphology. Many did excellently in this question.

Question 4

The text had straightforward sentences which were simple and easy to translate. The more able students translated the text in a very classical manner while others struggled, resulting in many omissions and gaps being left without any translation. Often the lack of knowledge of good classical vocabulary and the understanding of Arabic grammar was clearly reflected in their translation.

In the first paragraph, many did not translate the word 'sighed' correctly, resulting in many to translate the writer (author) *said* rather than *sighed*. The word 'reviewers' was another word which many students often mistranslated.

In the last paragraph, the sentence 'I would go for walks in the rolling hills of the tea estates' was a challenging translation for most students. Most students ignored translating the adjectives describing the hills.

For students to score high marks in this question they need to understand how Arabic works. The following are the main points that teachers have to teach and train the students on:

- good sentence structure.
- sound spelling by differentiating between the subject of a sentence and the object.
- effective use of **التنوين** especially at the end of a masculine noun in the accusative case.

- choosing the masculine ending on a التاء المربوطة when the noun is in the accusative.
- accurate use of 'كان'.
- managing the changing orthography in the use of the hamza.
- acknowledging the difference between 'إذ' and 'إذا', and the use of 'غير'.
- good use of verbs in the sound masculine plural form; or in the use of participles in an adverbial position.

Students should be encouraged to write in Arabic at least three times every week.

Question 5

In this question students were not only expected to give an accurate translation of the sentences in Arabic but, they had to use classical language, correct spelling and vocalize words correctly. As a result, high scoring reflected student's ability to deliver the sentence correctly in good grammatical classical Arabic.

Most students made a good effort

a) Many students did not translate the expression correctly and many made mistakes when conjugating the feminine 3rd person plural verbs.

- The appliance of grammatical rules regarding the التمييز and numbers was a very common mistake in this sentence.

b) This sentence was often translated correctly with a variety of words used to translate *initial results*. Many students did not apply the correct orthographical sign specially when using لكنّ.

c) The more able students knew how to use the لمّ followed by the فعل الممنوع من الصرف and how to apply the grammar of مضارع مجزوم سعد. This sentence was misunderstood and therefore mistranslated by many students. Some students wrote the opposite meaning of the sentence resulting in no marks been awarded.

d) Many students did not use a correct translation for the word *jury*. Also many were not able to use the numbers and the التمييز correctly.

e) The word *present* was translated incorrectly for some students. Also, the correct application of the grammar of فعل مضارع مجزوم was a challenge for most students.

f) This sentence was often translated correctly.

g) The مفعول به grammar was expected to be used in translating this sentence when using the verb رأيت . Many students used the correct words without application of correct or relevant grammatical rules.

h) The application of the grammar of the مفعول به و خبر أصبح was not used correctly by most students.

With relation to Question 5 many students neglected the vocalization of words possibly due to a lack of knowledge of basic Arabic grammar. Students should be advised to practice the most basic yet important grammatical rules which will enable them to apply them in the translation of these sentences. Style in writing these sentences was another problem; it resulted in many students writing aiming just to pass on the meaning of these sentences, without giving much importance to the spelling, style, or vocalization.

Grade Boundaries

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