

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2015

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE
In Swahili (4SW0) Paper 01

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The following points were noted by examiners:

Question 1

This part of the examination is designed to test grammatical elements of the language.

Question 1a:

This sentence was testing the use of 'kuwa' in the past. The word 'great' caused some problems with a number of candidates translating it as 'shujaa' (brave), 'mrefu' (tall) etc. The examiners accepted mkubwa, mkuu etc

Question 1b:

This question was testing the usage of the '-o relative' and also the past. Most students translated 'found' as 'pata'. This was not a correct answer, candidates were expected to translate in context and use 'kuta'.

Question 1c:

This question was testing the 'me' tense, the subjunctive and also '-ote'. Most students did well here.

Question 1d:

Candidates were tested on the preposition 'kabla ya'. Some students didn't know the Swahili words for stamp, envelope and address.

Question 1e:

This question tested the passive. Most students could access this question.

It is highly recommended to centres to teach and help candidates master the Swahili noun classes and to pay particular attention to Swahili object marking, prefixes and various tenses.

Question 2

This question tested transmission and Quality of Language. The process of translating into a target language encompasses all aspects of the language including grammar and general vocabulary. This question was based on the idea of futuristic shopping. It contained words such as 'online' and 'computers' which were easily accessible and others which seemed more challenging, for instance 'credit cards' and 'special equipment'.

Candidates performed well on this question although there was a clear distinction between the performances of less and more able candidates with the more able correctly translating words such as 'comfort', 'community', 'products', 'delivered', 'personal identity' and 'reality'. This shows the importance of learning while using dictionaries.

Question 3

As in question 2, question 3 tests transmission and Quality of Language. The process of translating into a target language encompasses all aspects of the language including grammar and general vocabulary. It is highly recommended that basic grammatical structures are stressed and revised before future examinations.

Candidates seem to do better when translating into English rather than into Swahili. The passage was about a parents day at a school using vocabulary that was easily accessible.

There were however some challenging words, including 'maktaba' and 'miradi'. Some candidates incorrectly translated words such as 'hujadiliwa' and 'hufanya'. This is something to remember, that in Swahili, particle 'hu-' acts both as an indicator of habitual action (hujadiliwa) and a negative one (hujadiliwi), students are expected to differentiate this.

Question 4

This question required candidates to express themselves in Swahili as it tested Communication and Content and also the Quality of Language. Candidates were asked to write an essay of 200-250 words on four topics:

Most candidates chose to write on a destination of choice with some showing that they were familiar with the topic. Many students showed great language flair and awareness of sports, social media and plays.

There are however some points to consider for future improvement:

1. Swahili is an agglutinating language – candidates tend to separate grammatical structures hence impairing what they produce. 'ninayo ipenda' instead of 'ninayoipenda',
2. It must be stressed that candidates need to read good Swahili works by authors and use Standard Swahili dictionaries so they may differentiate slang.
3. Using appropriate idiomatic expressions in their work and using it moderately.

4. Essay structures need to be re-visited prior to exams. Some candidates do not have an introduction, a body and a conclusion in their essays, nor do they use paragraphs to separate ideas. These are extremely important in essays.
5. Candidates need to be aware of the word count.
6. Candidates should be reminded to be mindful of their handwriting and produce clear and concise pieces of writing? Ineligible writing may lead to loss of mark when an examiner cannot make out what has been written.

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