

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2016

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

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Publications Code 4SW0_01_1606_ER

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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 languages.

Question 1a:

This sentence was testing the habitual tense. Examiners accepted the use of the present tense. It was interesting to note that students translated rice as both 'wali' and 'mchele'. Both received a mark. However structures such as 'mchele wa mnazi' were not accepted.

Question 1b:

This question was testing the conditional 'nge'. It was interesting to note that the word 'tourist' which is 'watalii' seemed difficult and options given included 'msafirishaji, msafiri, mzungu, wapita njia' which were not accepted. Examiners accepted 'wageni wa nchi'

Question 1c:

This question was tested the conditional and the future tense. It was accessible to many. It was interesting that some students translated 'hospital' as 'spitali' for which they could not get a mark.

Question 1d:

Here candidates were tested on the past tense. It was discomfoting that many students did not know the term 'nenda' but rather used the room 'enda'. So there were a number of candidates that wrote 'enda kwa darasa sahi'.

Question 1e:

This question tested the imperative. Most students could access this question. There were some who wrote 'Kwahisaniyako instead of kwa hisani yako' – there seems to still be an issue with the use of 'kwa'.

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 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. Candidates performed well on this question although there was a clear distinction between the performances of less and more able candidates with the less able struggling with the following forms:

- 'Ukona nyumba ambaye/ ambao'
- Including prepositions in verb structures –'Nitofauti, yakuridhisha, kwasababu
- Confusing homophones such as 'Kuwa vs Kua'
- A house that you think of a great deal was translated as 'Nyumba ambayo (yenye) unaifikiria (nga) mpango mzuri, dili nzuri, yenye maana, yenye mkataba, yenye bei nzuri'
- Unaware of terms such as 'ceilings, garden'
- Confusing 'nyumba, chumba, jumba'

- Separating structures 'ninge taka, nina yo penda,
- Using incorrect structures 'ile enye, ukona nyumba', 'nyumba ambaye, chumba cha kulala ambaye '

However the level of performance was good.

Question 3

As in question 2 it 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 the use of Swahili on social networks, particularly twitter. Most students were aware of online terminologies and even included terms such as 'emoji'; they also showed world awareness where they translated the word 'kichina' for instance as 'mandarin'.

There were however some challenging words, including 'juzi', 'sanifu'.

This question was well performed.

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 to write an essay of 200-250 words on four topics:

Most candidates chose to write about their trip to the cinema and had extremely creative narrations. It must be noted that often, things would go wrong for instance burglars would show up at the cinema, people got killed and the candidates would just about make it out alive.

The best performance was among those who chose (b) where they discussed traditions VS modern life where the essays were more structured and thought out. This was the hardest question. The same can also be said about (a) which was also challenging and had very good responses.

Many students showed great language flair and awareness.

There are however some points to consider for future improvements:

1. Swahili is an agglutinating language – candidates tend to separate grammatical structures thence 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 from standard.
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. Students need to be aware of the word count.
6. Can we also please recommend that students be proud 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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