



Examiners' Report

January 2010

GCE English 6EN03/01

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General comments

This paper reflected the breadth and depth of the new specification with its focus on language change over time and global diversity (Creole and American dialect) in section A and children's written language in section B.

Much of Section A of this paper would have been accessible to previous A level English language students, both in the types of text used and the approaches the candidates could take. Section B presented a new area for exploration – Children's written language development.

Generally speaking, the responses to Section 2, Children's language development, were fuller and more convincing than those for Section 1, Language Diversity. This may reflect the two-fold difficulty of teaching such wide and demanding topic areas and giving candidates the necessary experience of a wide range of different texts to explore in a short period of time.

Despite the number of texts and questions, very few candidates seemed to experience timing issues but candidates do need to be made aware of the importance of time management and linking length of response to the number of marks available. Each of the four tasks requires a succinct response with clear focus on the key constituents as well as contextual factors relevant to the text and adopting relevant linguistic approaches, including knowledge of issues and concepts.

There was some variation in achievement across the AOs but most candidates achieved a balance between AO2 and AO3. As AO3 accounts for 41% of the marks available for the paper, and AO2 39% it is important that all candidates are able to offer explicit analysis across a range of key constituents, noting contextual factors, using suitable linguistic approaches and links to theories and concepts. In the longer responses candidates should be aware that a well written and organised response with a wide range of linguistic terminology is important for achieving top bands in AO1.

Question 1a

This is the first exam series where short responses have been included on the A2 examination. Q1a allowed the candidates to focus in depth on two examples from the text and asked them to demonstrate a firm grasp of the key constituents and the ability to relate the example to its historical context while referring to any related theories or concepts. In this case, candidates were asked to explore a text from the start of the Early Modern English period. The 10 marks available for this question (5 marks per example analysed) reflects the length of response that is expected from candidates.

Unfortunately, many candidates did not respond as intended. Instead, a significant number tried to analyse the whole passage (covering several key constituents very briefly) or produced narrative accounts based around the later development of dictionaries and grammars which barely touched on the text. Candidates need to be reminded of the importance of reading the question carefully to ensure they are meeting its demands.

The expected approach is that candidates select two examples from the text which illustrated two different key constituents. When the candidate has selected an example from the text they must explore and analyse it. This involves explaining what the feature is, why it is present in the particular text they are examining, placing it in context of language change and explaining the differences between the type of language used in the text and the English that would be used today. In the course of this analysis, the candidate will need to use precise linguistic terminology to describe the characteristic key features of the examples.

In the lower mark bands, answers tended to be very superficial and descriptive accounts. They offered vague or simple reasons for the changes such as simply claiming the spelling was different because there were no dictionaries or just noting that the text was difficult to understand for modern readers. Many candidates mistakenly labelled the text as Old English, using it as a catch-all term for any English older than Modern English, instead of the more precise and accurate Early Modern English.

In the higher bands candidates selected appropriate examples illustrating different key constituents, most commonly from the level of spelling (such as the lack of fixed value of letters like 'i' and 'y'), morphology (3rd person –eth and the use of a final 'e') and grammar (the formation of the negative) which allowed for detailed exploration, and analysed them closely using appropriate terminology. Candidates at this level described the feature, attempted to spot patterns of use in the extract, offered plausible explanations of why the selected feature was present and often gave other related information such as when and why it was lost and how it relates to modern Standard English.

Question 1b

Overall, this question was probably the least successful, with few candidates achieving the top band. Despite global diversity being an important part of the specification, the appearance of forms so far removed from modern Standard English seemed to confuse many students. Centres should be aware that candidates need a significant time to prepare for such a demanding and varied topic area.

Both texts offered a very wide range of features for analysis and exploration related to their status as oral narratives and global forms of English. Representation of accent through spelling, audience address (to involve them in the narrative and maintain its oral origins), examples of non-standard grammar related to Creoles and American dialects, lexical issues reflecting global diversity and use of graphology to indicate prosodic features such as stress were all potentially productive areas for analysis.

Like much of the paper, a focussed and succinct response is necessary here and many candidates wasted time by repeating information from the title which is seldom necessary. Others spent too long on an individual feature, meaning that they were unable to respond to other aspects of the text. Whilst it is not necessary to cover every point in the mark scheme for a top band answer, candidates should be reminded that a range of key constituents, including grammar, discourse and pragmatics, are necessary for achieving the higher mark bands.

The majority of candidates examined each text in turn (which is an appropriate approach) but there was a tendency to repeat information which can be time consuming. The focus for many in the lower mark bands was just a discussion of phonetic spelling and a small but significant number of candidates made negative and judgmental comments about the language by stating that the distinctive linguistic features were the mistakes of poorly educated people or that the texts had no grammar.

Using an adaptable linguistic framework is probably a useful approach but it must be applied flexibly, alongside clear references to linguistic concepts and theories which are appropriate to context. Although some general theories and concepts related to English as a global language were present in the responses of many candidates, few specifically identified text 2 as an example of a Creole and related the language features found to concepts underpinning this language form such as simplification and mixing. Additionally, very few addressed their status as oral narratives and explored how this was reflected in the language used. Amongst other issues, candidates could have explored the use of deictic expressions in text 2 and the fact that text 2 is supposed to be an accurate representation of a real-life speaker whereas text 3 is largely a literary construction.

The grammatical structure of Text 2 reflects the fact that the English originated first from a pidgin and has developed into the creole. Omission is evident in line 8 "on de barbecue fetch meat" which in SE might read "on the barbecue to fetch the meat". Omission of such grammatical items as definite articles and prepositions is common in creoles as the original pidgin would have seen the language stripped to its ~~the~~ lexical items to ensure communication between slave owner and slave. Auxiliary verbs are also omitted for the same reason. What is interesting about Text 2 is the use of multiple negation. "I don't inquire into no man's business." This again links the dialect to that of the early settlers in America. When the

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Examiner Comments

This response shows how a variety of AOs can be covered in the course of the analysis. It succinctly conveys an understanding of the origin of the text by simply stating that it is a Creole form. The candidate shows knowledge of the key constituents by selecting a valid example of grammar to discuss. The candidate's response meets AO1 by clearly exemplifying and using appropriate linguistic terminology to describe the feature being discussed, as well as expressing themselves with clarity. The explanation of this feature is linked to some significant characteristics of Creole forms and demonstrates the writer's understanding of the linguistic concepts underpinning this global variety. It is worth noting that there is no attempt in this part of the response to deal with other contextual factors such as the extract's status as an oral narrative because it is not necessarily relevant to the selected example.

could also be seen as a good indicator of class.

By far the largest key constituent to explore is phonology (which can also be seen in the orthography and morphology of these texts). The consonant replacement in Text 2 indicates again the pidgin origin of the English being used. /d/ replaces /ð/ and the consonant cluster is reduced to one consonant sound, a common feature of Black-English. Likewise, the pronunciation of the

b) consonants for the economically deprived white Americans can be seen in the use of "ax" where /ks/ replaces the more standard English /sk/. This could be a reflection of class (as education would rarely standardise such phonemes) or, once again the fact that the pronunciation may be based on that of the tMn English. The vowel sounds also indicate both region and cultural contexts. In text 2 fe (~~for~~) seems to represent a shorter vowel sound /fə/ rather than SE /fɔ:/, and likewise tak (take) use the ~~the~~ harsher sounding /æ/ rather than SE /eɪ/ or /teɪk/. ~~The~~ As this creole may have originated in Jamaica (the hub of movement for the slave trade) the vowels might represent a mixture of English and the West coast African tribes. The vowel sounds evident in text B (agin = /ægin/) as opposed to SE /ægeɪn/) may reflect the origin of the ~~protect~~ accent. If we follow the line of argument that the accent represented in the text originates from that of the early settlers, the vowel sounds may therefore originate from the South coast of England circa 1620s. (This might explain the aspiration of /h/ at the beginning

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This candidate clearly signposts the treatment of a new key constituent and identifies it as one of the most distinctive in the text before exemplification and explanation. Use of the IPA is an important aspect of the discussion of the spelling in this text and is necessary to achieve high band answers. The candidate makes good use of it to discuss the spelling/phonological patterns found and shows an implicit understanding that these representations are meant to be 'heard'. Accurate terminology is applied with confidence and the candidate relates the exploration to some common phonological features of Creoles. Throughout the rest of the section the candidate is careful to relate points to social and cultural contexts and attempts to offer plausible explanations for the presence of key phonological features. By doing so, this response is achieving highly across all AOs. This answer could have been improved with a brief mention about why the writers have chosen to represent accent using non-standard spelling and the effect it has on the narratives and audience.

Question 2a

Like Question 1 a, this is a short answer response worth 10 marks. Fewer candidates missed the wording of the question as completely as Q1a but a significant number selected more than two examples.

On the whole, candidates seemed to feel more comfortable with analysing a child's written language. Although the quality of responses varied from the narrative descriptions to more incisively analytical, most candidates focussed on the phonological nature of the spelling and its links to the phonics method of teaching and Sophie's developing letter forms. Centres had clearly spent some time on theories and the stages of written language development and many candidates were able to employ this information successfully in the course of their analysis with named theorists such as Barclay often suitably integrated into the analysis. A number of responses also showed some knowledge of the situation in which the texts were produced and made links to the role of the teacher.

Lower band answers tended to catalogue features rather than analyse and describe. They often focussed on aspects of the text (such as the accompanying pictures) that while valid did not really allow a detailed enough exploration for a higher band answers. This shows candidates need to be discriminating about what they select for analysis.

① The orthography of Texts 4-6 reflect the fact that Sophie is spelling words as she speaks them (Given these texts were all produced in her first 2 years of school she would have been taught using the principles of phonics and would have practiced such skills as segmenting and blending sounds). This is apparent in Text 5 with *muvy* (movie in SE orthography). Here Sophie has ~~replaced~~ ^{sounded} the /u/ phoneme and decided on the grapheme *u**. The use of the 'y' grapheme makes

number	
2a	^{sense} given our spelling system often uses <i>ie</i> and <i>y</i> to produce the same sound /i:/.


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The candidate produces a short but quite detailed response which is appropriate for this section. The selected example 'muvy' allows the candidate to make reference to how children learn to spell and so demonstrates the understanding of some concepts and issues. Confident and relevant application of the IPA in the exploration shows the candidate's ability to apply linguistic knowledge to the text. Although the response could be improved with a brief mention of a theorist or reference to the wider context of this text (produced at school) it still clearly demonstrates an understanding of some the issues involved in early spelling.

Question 2b

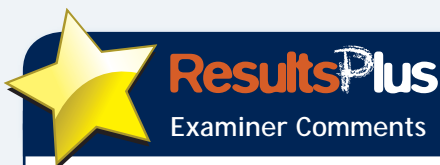
Candidates generally approached this question with confidence and most candidates attempted to some degree to apply key constituents to the text by employing a framework based approach. Top band answers discussed the home/school contexts of the text as well as addressing the purpose of the texts. It was clear from many of the responses that centres had spent some time on theories and theorists and the majority of candidates were able to include references to these at some point in the course of the analysis.

Although it is an important part of written language development, some candidates spent a significant part of their response describing the punctuation across the two texts meaning they were not able to cover other features. Low band answers sometimes focussed almost solely on punctuation. Merely cataloguing the instances where Sophie's punctuation strayed from standard forms with no attempt at exploration and explanation meant these responses did not score highly. Additionally, candidates in the lower bands were sometimes judgemental and thought that Sophie's language skills needed improvement.

Candidates in the highest bands covered a wide range key constituents, including an exploration of grammar (covering areas such as sentence type and adverbial placement), morphology (by looking at verbs in the extracts), spelling (including an exploration of standard spelling to show she was no longer fully dependent on oral forms), and comments on discourse. They also employed a wide range of terminology, including the IPA. Such responses typically included appropriate exemplification and employed terms like 'virtuous error' and 'non-Standard' to describe the forms. Context is an important factor here and some candidates made interesting comments on the differences between texts written at home and at school (sometimes relating these to concentration levels or certain key words being modelled for the class in Text 7). Many also wrote of the role the teacher's written corrections had in developing Sophie's writing and convincing links to behavioural theories of language acquisition because of the positive reinforcement and modelling of the standard form in text 7.

It is obvious from all of the text that Sophie understands the importance of multimodality and that the language will change dependent on the form. ~~The~~ Texts 4 and 5 use declaratives to describe the images and Text 6 uses imperatives for the list of instructions necessary. By the time we get to texts 7 & 8 Sophie is using a variety of linguistic features necessary for the purpose of a journal or diary account. So cognitively Sophie has made much progress.

Grammatically, the most obvious sign of development evident in texts 7 & 8 is the use of compound sentences (for example lines 14 - 17) and complex sentences with the adverbial clause "On the day of the wedding..." (Text 8) which illustrates Sophie's development from the simple sentences in the earlier texts. I also think it is worth mentioning the number of times the adverb "then" is used in Text 7 (although this can be seen as a lexical issue too!) which means that Sophie is sequencing events, so the overall discourse structure has developed since text 6. Sophie is still making progress with the conventions of the written form as, particularly in Text 8, the use of uppercase is not perfected. However given this is written at home and Sophie is not being guided by her teacher, the context may explain the difference in the uppercase usage between texts 7 and 8.



This extract from the opening section of a candidate's response starts by giving a very brief overview of the texts and how the changing function shows Sophie's development and understanding of the different uses of language. This assertion is supported with a short but relevant grammatical comment about sentence type. The response makes suitable links back to the earlier stages of writing and so puts Sophie's development in context.

In the subsequent section, the candidate expands on some ideas about Sophie's grammatical development by discussing a fronted adverbial and the adverb 'then' and includes an accurate link to the discourse structure of the text. In so doing, the candidate has displayed a confident application of two key constituents and associated terminology. The comment on contextual features surrounding the use of upper case letters show that the candidate is aware of how external factors can affect a child's written language and the point is related clearly to the language features under discussion. Although the candidate is implicitly aware that Sophie is altering her grammar to suit her purpose (e.g. highlighting the day of the event in a narrative) the response would have benefitted from a brief explicit discussion of this.

6EN03 Grade Boundaries

Paper No	Max Mark	A	B	C	D	E	N
6EN03/01	100	72	64	57	50	43	36

Note: Grade boundaries may vary from year to year and from subject to subject, depending on the demands of the question paper.

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