Examiners' Report
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GCE English Language 8EN0 01

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Introduction

In this, the second year of the AS English Language specification, it was clear that candidates had been well prepared for this unit and knew what to expect. The unit consists of two sections, Language and Context and Language and Identity. Each section has one question. Question 1 on Language and Context, required candidates to write an extended comparative response exploring how contextual factors affect language choices in three short texts related to museums and exhibitions. Question 2 on Language and Identity, asked candidates to explore how language is used to reflect and construct identity in a witness statement submitted by Charlotte Church to a public inquiry into the ethics of the press.

In this unit as a whole, examiners expected candidates to show the ability to:

- apply analysis across data

- support this analysis with a range of relevant examples

- organise the structure of their response and write in an appropriate register and style

- use and apply linguistic terminology accurately

- show knowledge of contextual factors and the ability to link this knowledge to the construction of meaning

- apply relevant theories, concepts and methods to the data

- apply critical skills to description, analysis and evaluation of a range of data.

Generally, the responses of candidates to Question 2 were shorter than the average answers to Question 1 and examiners agreed that candidates seemed more confident when answering Question 1 than Question 2. Undoubtedly there was a time problem for some candidates who had not allowed enough time for the second question. It would benefit candidates to have as much practice as possible in working to time limits and planning how to tackle the exam in relation to the weighting of marks. Another issue to do with time is that candidates are advised in both questions to get into the analysis as quickly as possible. Some candidates lost valuable time by repeating in their introductory paragraphs information about the texts taken from the exam rubric.

In both questions, the most successful candidates were those who kept the focus firmly on the use of language. They were able to use their knowledge of levels and frameworks and linguistic vocabulary to analyse the texts in a productive way. Examiners noted that there were weaker candidates found this easier to do in question 1 than in question 2 where the highly personal, at times almost confessional, nature of the content sometimes led candidates to summarise or adapt a narrative approach or to speculate and comment on areas outside the field of language study, such as character and moral rectitude.

Question 1

Examiners reported that this question was responded to appropriately in the vast majority of cases. Candidates had clearly been well prepared for this task and were able to analyse and compare contextual factors across a variety of texts. This year they were asked to comment on three pieces of data related to museums and exhibitions. The texts included an extract from a museum's website, an audio-guide aimed at children and an email. campaigning against the movement of a collection from a local museum. In responding to this question candidates were assessed according to their ability to fulfil the following assessment objectives:

• applying appropriate methods of language analysis, using associated terminology and coherent written expression

• analysing and evaluating how contextual factors and language features are associated with the construction of meaning

• exploring connections across texts, informed by linguistic concepts and methods

In their feedback on the paper, examiners reported that candidates showed confidence in understanding the requirements of this question. Last year there were a number of candidates who failed to address all three texts in their answer and others who failed to make connections across texts. These oversights were less common this year. The vast majority made some kind of comment on all three texts and made an attempt to comment on similarities and differences. Most candidates structured their response around the bullets given in the question dealing with mode, field, function and audience in turn. This was a perfectly sensible strategy as long as candidates kept in mind the need to compare across texts as they went along. Candidates who didn't do this and instead dealt with comparisons across texts in a separate section were unable to achieve the higher levels for AO4. There was a small number of candidates who instead of developing their ideas logically, using paragraphs and coherent sentences with smooth transitions between topics, opted instead for a note-like approach, just listing language features without making connections or relating them to the construction of meaning. This approach made it difficult to achieve a mark above level 2.

Successful candidates were systematic in applying linguistic analysis to the data in Question 1. They were confident in their use of linguistic concepts and terminology and were able to make links between linguistic features and the construction of meaning. While most candidates were able to identify simple language features on various levels such as the use of interrogatives and imperatives or the use of Latinate polysyllabic lexis, more successful candidates showed clearly how these features were influenced by the various contextual features (field, mode, function and audience) and were able to discriminate between subtle variations in use. The best responses were able to move beyond comments on lexis and graphology and were able to analyse features of discourse and pragmatics. Also, more successful candidates were able to develop a sophisticated analysis of connections across texts by a sustained and integrated focus on similarities and differences.

Less successful candidates were generally able to identify some linguistic features, usually on the level of graphology and lexis, and begin to relate them to field, mode and function. However, they often found it hard to move beyond very broad features and an oversimplified idea of context. For example, when looking at field, weaker candidates tended to identify the field of all three texts as 'museums and exhibitions' without recognising the range of lexical items drawn from other fields which were present in the

texts, such as terms suggesting myth, magic and mystery in text A, or terms drawn from political and trade union discourse in Text C. Similarly the most productive discussions of mode in text B were the ones where candidates went beyond the basic categories of 'spoken' or 'written'.

Candidates are expected to comment on theories, concepts and methods when exploring comparisons across texts and the majority of students did this. Among the theories referred to were Speech Act theory, Brown and Levison's Politeness theory, Giles' Accommodation theory and theories related to Language and Power (including especially, the concept of synthetic personalisation). Successful candidates were able to reference a relevant theory or concept in the course of their discussion of the data explaining clearly what the theory or concept was and why it was relevant to that specific piece of data. Weaker candidates simply referred to theorists without making it clear why the particular theory was relevant to the data. The weakest candidates showed a limited understanding of theory. Grice, for example, was often misunderstood and applied indiscriminately. Synthetic personalisation was sometimes a useful concept, but it is important that candidates understand that every pronoun used is not 'synthetic'.

This is an extract from a solid level 5 response to question 1. The response is particularly strong in the way that it sustains an integrated approach to comparisons across texts.

In terms of grammar, text A uses rhetorical questions to engage its public audience into the web-advert. 'Should we beware the mummy's curse? Were the Egyptians obsessed with death? Did aliens build pyramids?' The use of this rhetorical device used in a triadic structure creates an initial bombardment of interrogatives for the audience to recieve and internally respond to. Consequently, this allows the audience to engage and want to continue reading the advert in order to resolve the questions. As the text continues, an element of hypophora in response to the rhetorical questions such as the proper noun, 'Weston Park' and time adverbial 'in October' directs the audience to be persuaded

by the advert and therefore the function of the text is fulfilled. Moreover, the use of the epistemic modal verb, 'will' in terms of "Secret Egypt will challenge..." determines a sense of certainty and a level of promise, which builds on the audience's desire to find the answers to the initial rhetorical questions and almost a guarantee by the museum, therefore they to gain more admissions, which is their purpose.

Whereas, whilst text B also uses the same technique of a triadic structure of rhetorical questions, to appeal to its audience of children and comply with its function of educating, this technique has been manipulated in a different way. "I thought he was good at this? Why didn't he paint people to looks like people? Isn't that what artists are supposed to do?". In this way, this technique has been applied to enable education through the narrator mimicking the internal thoughts of the child. Consequently the lexical use of the first person personal pronoun, 'I', builds a relationship between the narrator and its audience, which although

...must be generic and appropriate for a large audience, but in the literal experience is personal between him and the child listening. Moreover, the use of the italicisation of 'people', phonologically creates or directs prosodic features to place emphasis on the noun. As a result the use of the triadic rhetorical interrogatives set up an adjacency pair with the second voice which answers these interrogatives and thereyou educates its audience of children in an interactive way due to mimicking the child's own thoughts and questions and then, by the discourse of the text, resolving them.

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Examiner Tip

Make sure you remember to keep in mind the need to make comparsons across texts as you answer this question. Adopt an integrated approach, always looking for similarities and differences as you analyse the texts.

This is an extract from the work of a candidate who achieved a mark in the middle of band 4. It is consistent in its focus on language and in showing an integrated approach to comparisons across the texts.

Texts A and C have the same primary function of persuasion. Text A However, what they are trying to persuade their audiences to do constrast. Text A is trying to get their main audience of the public to come to the current exhibitions. They do this by using techniques like rhetorical questions such as 'were the Egyptians obsessed with death?'. The use of elevated lexis throughout may be to target a more knowledgeable side to the public. For example 'perpetuated' artel is are clear use of low frequency lexis. This may engage and persuade their audience as they may feel that this elevated lexis shows that they are going to learn a lot if the attend this exhibition. However, in Text C the writers are trying to persuade their audience of the general public too to not let the Yorkshire museum move the photography museum exhibition. They bold the important parts of the email in order to draw the audiences eyes to the key information. Statistics like '8000 signatures'

may persuade people to sign their petition as the audience may consider social desirability and think that because most people have signed they must too. In contrast to this the primary function of Text B is to inform. This is due to it being a script for an audio tour guide. The function can be seen through information like 'Picasso, himself, painting a mode' and 'he decided to break the rules'. Also the information is fairly basic and understandable as their target audience is 5 to 13 year olds.

The following extract is from a response that achieved a high level 4.

In Text B lexis is used to invite the visitors and convey information. Interestingly, the subordinate clause the pre modifier or of "really, really" adds emphasis and meaning to the opinions conveyed in the text acting as another example of hyperbole, meaning it is also used in Text B in addition to Text A showing they use similar language and methods to adapt to the function. Also this is repetition. This links to the theory of Grice and regarding the maxim of quality as it is followed as in this speech as the information seems to be accurate and the maxim of relevance is followed as it is certainly relevant to the topic. Also, the emphasis included of "he's" adds meaning and makes it stand out, ensuring the readers are aware of what the speaker is reffering to, meaning there is deictics used as the context of the conversation must be understood to be aware of the items they are speaking about. This is also elision showing some informality, linking to the function of being at ease in the company of the visitors and letting them relate to the speaker. Specifically the metaphor "It runs" referring to the mouth could be an example of colloquialisms used as it is commonly used and understood by the listeners and visitors. This is in contrast to Text A as there is less informal

and understood by the listeners and visitors. This is in contrast to Text A as there is less informal colloqualisms and elision in Text A as it has the function is slightly different to Text B. Text C uses lexis including compound adjectives two connected by hyphens showing in depth description and there is also elision including "it's" as similarly to Text B. This links to the function of attempting to appeal to the reciever. Also there is politeness shown including "Dear Nick" and "Please". Is specifically "please" is negative politeness which is the theory by Lakoff and it links to Brown and Levinson Showing negative politeness is used to show respect to people not known particularly by the Speaker, as in this case. The statistic "8000" shows meaning and validaty to their argument linking to the function to appeal to the reciever believing them.

In contrast
to Text A, Text B uses more shorter sentences and
it is clearly more informal, meaning it could appeal
more to the ~~some~~ readers. ~~This~~ This could be an example
of downward convergence by the speaker referring to
the ~~theory by Giles~~ Accomodation theory by Giles as
the speaker could be decreasing the distance between
their natural dialect or idiolect and that of the readers.
The interrogative sentence "Can you find him?" engages
the readers, including them in the speech and making
them ~~likely~~ ~~more likely~~ to feel involved in the topic. This
potentially could have the effect of making them
more interested, linking to the function of making
the visitors ~~into~~ engaged in the museum. In addition
the constant simple sentences and declarative sentences
including "~~shot~~ It doesn't quite look like the model".

Specifically this states facts to the readers
and the deliberate understatement, also being
emphasised "quite", adds some humour and
sarcasm, again illustrating some downward convergence
to appeal to the readers and allowing them to
understand.

The next extract is from a candidate who achieved a mark in level 5.

> Both A and B are interrogative sentences "~~they were the~~ with death"? the Egyptians obsessed with death?" in A and "Can you find him?". However, as suggested by the Speech Act Theory, Form ~~function~~ doesn't always reflect functions, since these questions ~~are not only~~ do not only aim to get answers. In A ~~a~~ interrogatives are a ~~eff~~ common connection of advertising and aim to grab the readers' attention, while in B the interrogatives aim to engage with the children by ~~part~~ challenging them as well as to be more humorous.

Question 2

This question required that candidates use their linguistic knowledge to explore the concepts of identity/presentation of self exemplified in a short extract of data. In responding to this question, candidates were assessed according to their ability to meet the following assessment objectives:

- applying appropriate methods of language analysis, using associated terminology and coherent written expression

- demonstrate critical understanding of concepts and issues relevant to language use

- exploring connections across texts, informed by linguistic concepts and methods

It was often the case that the responses to this question were briefer than the average length for question ones. As was the case last year, it was clear that some candidates simply ran out of time and weren't able to give to question two the amount of time that the marks indicated was necessary. It is important in this examination that candidates plan carefully and ensure that they give equal time to both questions. Some candidates were able to comment with insight on the ways in which Charlotte Church used language to present herself to the inquiry. They also wrote well about the constraints of the context and how the public and legal aspects of the situation had an effect on Charlotte Church's choice of language. It was evident that some candidates were unsure what the purpose and providence of a public inquiry might be but nevertheless they recognised the public and legal aspects of the event and were able to identify ways in which these might have an effect on word choice.

With Question 2, the most successful candidates were those who kept their focus on Charlotte Church's presentation of herself throughout the response (often using key phrases such as 'Charlotte presents herself as...') while showing a consistent awareness of how the context would be likely to affect her choice of language. The strongest candidates were able to use their knowledge of linguistic levels and frameworks to explore these areas with a clear linguistic focus. Various theoretical positions were explored in relation to the data and when this was done well, it was enlightening. Strong candidates, when making links to theory, were able to explain the theory and point out its relevance to the text being studied. When considering concepts and issues, candidates refered to accommodation theory, gender theory, covert and overt prestige and face/footing.

Examiners agreed that what limited the achievement of weaker candidates was most often the failure to comment on language levels and frameworks. Instead, weaker candidates adopted a narrative or summary approach and speculated about non-linguistic matters such as character or motivation. In this question, it is essential that candidate realise that examiners will be looking for evidence of knowledge of language concepts and issues and some familiarity and confidence in using linguistic vocabulary.

This is an extract from the response of a candidate who achieved a mark in the middle of level 5.

2 Analyse how the singer, Charlotte Church, presents herself in Text D.

You should refer to **any relevant language frameworks and levels** to support your answer and consider:

- mode
- field
- function
- audience.

(25)

The mode of the text is written, a formal document of a witness statement. It has also been edited, which suggests alterations of the original material that may have affected the persona coming through the statement. The text includes lexis of the ~~subject~~ semantic field of the press, of fame and singing. The ~~function~~ statement is meant to be read by officials of the Inquiry panel, thus the high formality of the statement, and it aims to prove how Charlotte Church has ~~experienced~~ experience in the matter of the press behaviour, and thus it can be an important witness, as well as to gain sympathy for her bad experiences with the press so far.

The text uses mainly complex sentences, such as 'Through numerous ... less than a year', and 'Whilst I have been determined ... to those around me'. The complex sentences give the text a high degree of formality, and give Charlotte Church higher status, as she comes off as a well-spoken, ~~professional~~ mature adult, who is therefore a good choice as a witness. ~~Furthermore~~ The use of noun phrase ~~sentences~~ such as 'an 11 year old girl' and a 'whingeing celebrity', aims to garner sympathy for the troubles she has had with the press in the past. The first example aims to showcase her innocence and

young age when she first started her singing career, thus portraying her as someone who was not aware or prepared of the scrutiny she was going to face. The second example aims to show her as someone self-aware, someone who has now realised how press can affect her image, and thus she manages to paint a contrast between the girl she was and the person she has become. The model verb 'I could' ~~~~ in 'I could have sued' combined with the adjective 'ruthless' ~~~~ shows her as someone gracious and kind, who has not ~~~~ tried to hurt journalists who have hurt her. Finally, the continuous use of the personal pronoun 'I' ~~~~ gives the document a ther sense that she is sharing her personal, private story, thus enhancing her image of someone who deserves sympathy and compassion.

The text is cleverly separated into 3 paragraphs, starting off with a paragraph describing her younger self and her rise to fame, moving to the second paragraph which shows the trouble the press and fame have caused her and ends with a paragraph about the person she is now and how she is relevant to the case. The separation aims to reinforce her picture as someone who has been changed by the press, emphasising the contrast between her previous innocence and her current state.

There are several interesting lexical choices. The verb 'branded', when describing her image as a child, has negative connotations. Brands are associated with products, and so the verb 'branded' gives the impression that she was being treated as a product and not a person. Thus, her image as someone who deserves sympathy and compassion is enhanced. Furthermore, the adjective 'horrifying', which is premodified by the ~~~~ adverbial of degree 'utterly'

aims to show how difficult life has been for Charlotte as someone growing up coated in the spotlight. Once again, the reader feels sympathy for Charlotte as well as a dislike for the press.* Finally, in the 3rd paragraph ~~use~~ describes herself as a 'mother', when talking about her motive to testify. ~~A~~ The word 'mother' has connotations of warmth, and ~~protectiveness~~ protectiveness, as well as responsibilities. The word is meant to ~~make~~ present Charlotte as a responsible, concerned adult, who has decided to take action against the press. This further enhances her image as someone sympathetic. ~~and~~

Graphologically, the document is formatted as an official statement, with the title 'Witness statement of Charlotte Maria Church'. The title is in bold, giving even more weight to the importance of Charlotte's position. The use of her full name highlights the formality of the document, as well as the serenity of the situation and her position as a witness. The format serves to add to Charlotte's image of a mature, responsible adult, who is ~~the~~ capable and prepared to stand as witness.

* The word 'caricature' which has connotations of mocking someone, is contrasted with the angelic picture the press had painted of her in her younger years. Although both are exaggerated, her picture now ~~seems~~ is a negative one, thus adding to her impression of someone who has been pained and hurt by the press.

The first thing to say about this response is that it is firmly focused on the use of language throughout. The candidate keeps the question of how linguistic choice is linked to presentation of self in mind throughout the essay.

In the initial paragraph, the candidate considers the circumstances in which the text has been created and how this may affect the 'persona coming through the statement'. The candidate then goes on to briefly discuss field and function. Having established the 'high formality' of the text and the context, the candidate gives a couple of examples to show how this formality is embodied in sentence structure and links this to presentation of self. The candidate moves on to consider how noun phrases are used to present different aspects of the persona that Charlotte Church is seeking to present to the inquiry. The use of modal verbs is commented on as is use of personal pronouns. Again these are related to the construction of identity.

While clearly able to analyse specific aspects of the text such as word choice and syntax, this candidate shows that they can also talk about the text as a whole. In the third paragraph, there is a consideration of discourse in which the candidate identifies a triadic structure which is then linked to an implicit narrative about change and identity.

After some perceptive comments on lexical choice the response moves on to consider graphological aspects of the text before in the final addendum returning to the idea of the contrasting versions of 'Charlotte Church' which is one of the key themes of the text as a whole.

In terms of language levels and frameworks, this candidate has offered relevant and informed discussion of lexical choice (semantics), sentence structure (grammar and syntax), graphology and discourse structure without losing sight of the need to relate everything to the presentation of self.

Remember that it is essential to focus on the language in this question and avoid getting distracted by non-linguistic aspects of the content. To achieve a high mark, you must display familiarity with a range of language levels and frameworks and a knowledge of precise linguistic terminology.

This is an extract from a much longer script which was awarded a mark at the lower end of level 5.

The audience is the members of the inquiry in court. It is a legal proceeding, hence highly formal. The style is therefore appropriate with introduction as 'I, charlotte church' and providing appropriate details of ~~residence~~ lawyer (and the office address) and using the correct form of sentences ~~in terms of structure~~ like 'I make this statement...'

Charlotte has used appropriate register to address the matter at hand, formally putting down her statement and not using any slang. Even her colloquial sense is at a bare minimum. This is understood by the fact that no one speaks in this day and age (even in 2011) in such a formal manner in a general setting. This use of formal language is likely due ~~Charlotte has purposefully is~~ is the fact that this text is not of an ephemereal nature. It is to have a permanent legal record and it to be read by people of authority in these circumstances.

Charlotte has also, purposefully, used a passionate manner of speaking (writing), to portray her needs and her stance at best as possible. her use of sentences like 'my position has changed...' and 'their mother portrayed as someone ...' are deliberately somewhat of an emotional admittance to put emphatic stress on the feelings Charlotte has towards this whole affair. She aims to present herself as subject to situation, taking action for the greater good, of not only herself, but also those near and dear to her, specially when she talks about her children and their impressions of her.

Charlotte has also talked about her background in the beginning. This is a ~~topic used by~~ technique used by authors to create a feeling of knowing the character on a personal level and of ~~of~~ sympathising with their plight. Charlotte ~~fully~~ used this method (likely advised to do so by her lawyer) to allow the ~~court~~ ~~to~~ people of the court to feel her problem on an emotional level, from her point of view.

She talks about her stardom 'proffessional life' and an 'internationally recognised musical success'. She tells them about the drastic changes in her life 'going from a typical school girl' to 'a bankable commodity' and how her life was changed. She even states how this 'adversely affected her, even at a young age. 'used' and 'distorted' being used in relation to Tabloids to show how she is the victim off of the greed of journalists to sell a 'catchy headline'.

This is an extract from a script which achieved a mark at the lower end of level 4.

2 Analyse how the singer, Charlotte Church, presents herself in Text D.

You should refer to **any relevant language frameworks and levels** to support your answer and consider:

- mode
- field
- function
- audience.

(25)

When analysing the witness statement from Charlotte Church, it is clear that Church wants to present herself as not only a professional, but also a victim of tabloid scrutiny.

In terms of mode, this is a witness statement. This suggests that the writer should use professional and sophisticated lexical choices. This is apparent as Charlotte Church uses a range of sophisticated lexis such as "bankable commodity", "scrutiny", and "distorted". This presents Charlotte as a sophisticated and intelligent person. Also, Charlotte uses a range of lexis to present herself as a victim. Lexis such as "mock me", "devastating", and "whingeing celebrity."

In terms of field, this witness statement is highlighting behaviour and misconduct of the press. Due to this, Charlotte does frequently write about how the media

have personally effected her life. This again presents Charlotte Church as a ~~to~~ victim. She uses a range of emotive language such as "media's scrutiny", " utterly horrifying", and " devasting." This use of language makes readers empathise with her, making her story more powerful and persuasive.

In terms of function, the witness statement ~~reads~~ intends to provide information for the ~~inqueror~~ inquiry. Since the inquiry is a personal matter, and Charlotte Church is writing about how the situation has personally affected her, she ~~~~ ~~a~~ refers to herself in the first person. This helps to not only provide information for the inquiry, but also provide information on her own experience.

In terms of audience, this statement is intended for an inquiry panel. Due to this, Charlotte Church uses a range of polysyllabic and sophisticated lexis. She does this because professional people are usually seen as more reliable and trustworthy than those who are not professional. This shows that Charlotte Church is presenting herself as a trustworthy and reliable person.

Paper summary

Based on their performance on this paper, candidates are offered the following advice:

- Develop a flexible linguistic toolkit based on language levels and frameworks which can be applied to all data. Ensure basic linguistic vocabulary is used accurately.

- Take care with written expression and try to ensure that the answer as a whole has a coherent structure with smooth transitions between topics. Avoid feature spotting and responses in the form of notes which limit the possibility of developing points and making comparisons.

- Adopt an integrated method of comparing the three texts in Question 1.

- Keep a firm focus on identity/presentation of self in Question 2 and support your response with reference to language features.

- Plan use of time in the exam to avoid spending too much time on Question 1 and not enough on Question 2.

Grade Boundaries

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