

English Language

Advanced GCE A2 7827

Advanced Subsidiary GCE AS 3827

Report on the Units

June 2007

3827/7827/MS/R/07

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This report on the Examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the syllabus content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the Examination.

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REPORT ON THE UNITS

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UNIT 2701 - Frameworks for the Description of English (written paper)

This session's paper appeared to receive a very enthusiastic and positive response from candidates at all levels. The contemporary urban setting was one that many candidates obviously felt familiar with. Relatively few candidates worried about the social class or educational levels of the speakers, which was very pleasing, and most instead focused on the features of the particular type of sociolect and/or dialect that they were given to analyse. It appears that the use of words like 'sloppy' or 'lazy' to describe the way that people talk has been virtually eliminated which is excellent.

As has been noted in previous sessions, the use of technical terms (AO1) is very secure for many candidates, with candidates even at the weaker end still demonstrating that they have obviously acquired a sound working vocabulary for analysis. There is still some interchangeable use of 'accent' and 'dialect' and 'elision' and 'ellipsis', but less so. Candidates are also being helpfully instructed, it appears, in how to organize their answers through use of clear paragraphing and logical structuring of their responses and there were very few lapses in formality and appropriacy of style.

Examiners noted that the four main areas for analysis for AO3 are now being addressed much more systematically than in previous sessions. Semantics is starting to emerge much more positively as an area that candidates feel confident to address, and there were some fascinating discussions of the meanings and effects of words and phrases such as 'Portobello Gold', 'bare', and 'razzed' for example. Lexical choice was frequently discussed in the light of the Afro-Caribbean culture, the urban environment and the desire of the DJs to describe and convey the events in an interesting manner. Syntax was the weakest area, and it would be helpful if candidates had a practical grounding in analyzing sentence and clause structure and could identify the basic word classes. Phonology was unproblematic. It was noted that a number of candidates were not providing clear exemplification of what could have been excellent points, so it is important that all candidates are reminded that quoting from the transcription regularly and economically is 'best practice' for this examination paper.

The AO4 comments this year were pleasingly varied and thoughtful. Many candidates considered the role of politeness and face strategies and looked at the use of 'sir' for example. Many also fruitfully commented on the register and level of formality. Some considered the way that English develops and changes, both over time and from place to place and culture to culture, producing rich variation in dialect, slang, semantics and lexis. Some candidates had obviously listened to 'talk' radio before and explored the dynamics of the way the DJs or presenters have to talk both to each other and also to a silent listening audience at home and its effect on language. There were fewer references to named theorists which seemed to show that candidates were making every effort to explore issues that were relevant to the data rather than 'shoehorning' in everything that they know.

The January 2007 report recommended that candidates approach the data with an open mind and that appears to have happened here with considerable success. Hopefully centres will continue the good work with preparing candidates for this paper.

UNIT 2702 - Variation in the Usage of English (written paper)

General Comments

The quality of work was similar to that of the June 2006 series, though it was noted by examiners that the quality of written communication had shown slight improvement. There were also indications that fewer candidates were entering for this paper with only basic skills in linguistic analysis. There are some issues which will be raised in individual question responses below, but which are worth summarising here. Texting and e-languages are now no longer specifically new or different. Candidates would be advised to broaden their knowledge-base if using these as examples of linguistic variance. Candidates are advised to become more familiar with linguistic terminology (including the correct spelling of linguistic terms) and try to apply them consistently in all responses. Sociological jargon and language to do with social class and education achievement should not appear in this paper. The precise rubric for all questions must be read with care by candidates. Centres are advised that attention to these structural issues would likely improve examination performance for a number of candidates.

Comments on Individual Questions

Question 1 *Written Language*

There was a limited growth in the type of variations being offered by centres. Markers noted medical language and gender language and an improvement in the range of legal terminology. All these topic areas offer endless critical possibilities for candidates. There was still a considerable recourse to e-languages/texting form a number of centres. As noted above, this is an area which needs much further development. At the very least, in order to meet the demands of the rubric, candidates must refer to specific grammatical and syntactic variance in their answers. It is not sufficient to make lists of words in texts, without the addition of linking them to grammatical classes/syntactical ellipsis.

Work on both advertising and journalism presents problems to markers. Candidates must cite clear examples and offer an analytical response of a linguistic nature in order to satisfy the rubric. Lengthy social commentaries about imagined readerships, supposed journalese, material drawn from media studies, unacceptable diachronic citing of advertisements at least thirty years old - these do not meet the synchronic and structural demands required in this question. Answers which follow this pattern fail to meet the dominant AO3i. There were a number of excellent scripts where centres had encouraged candidates to widen their remit and respond in depth to chosen variant areas of language. These scripts were often succinctly written and displayed a clear knowledge of basic morphology, grammatical classes and syntactic structures and were able to offer interesting and thoughtful comments upon lexical choices. This grasp of linguistic constituents, presented in a well-organised essay format, is most encouraging. Teachers who have developed these skills in their candidates are to be congratulated.

Question 2 *Register and Levels of Formality*

Responses to this question were varied. The more incisive scripts followed an analytical path, looking carefully at structure and lexis and major features of discourse. Less analytical answers tended to paraphrase the contents, often displaying sociological bias in trying to attribute a particular social class to the potential audience for the passages. Markers also noted the tendency for some candidates to approach this question in the form of a modified literary 'practical criticism'. It must be said that these approaches are not ones which can really deal with the linguistic aspects of the material. The more thoughtful scripts showed how meanings are constructed through syntactical variations and the specific application of lexis, which is germane to the topic area. Such answers show a technical brio and can often point out particular discursal elements upon which register is likely to hinge. Some candidates appeared to find some of the language in the passages outside their own lexicons and dismissed this as 'archaic'.

It is important that, as linguists, candidates do not restrict themselves to negative generalities. Part of any in-depth answer by a candidate is to speculate upon language and endeavour to broaden their knowledge. It would be helpful if all candidates were reminded that the dominant AO is AO5i. This anticipates that candidates will see how context(s) and mode is likely to control subject matter and its features of discourse. This addresses the cultural aspects of production and picks up the conventions in language use which organise and inform its outcomes.

Question 3 *Child Language Acquisition*

Responses to this question were, in some cases, reasonably sound. In some others the work was of a very high standard, responding in depth to the precise demands of the rubric. Centres are asked to remind candidates that it is 'skills' which are the focus of the question. Answers which pick upon real or imagined linguistic deficiencies in the children are not sufficiently focused. Neither is it necessary to try and fit the passages around a range of theoretical models of language acquisition. All essential data is available within the passage itself. As a further caveat, passages are not marked in any way which suggests the social class of children. Any speculation along such lines is not part of the required answer. A good example of this was the elision of the /g/ phoneme. This is a common feature across most speakers. It is not a specific class marker demonstrating a child who is 'less educated'. This kind of drift in the paper can be linked to the sociological intrusions in Question 1.

Scripts of a high technical quality showed the benefits of careful applied teaching. These scripts responded to the highly developed skills of both children and showed their participation in a fluent conversation with clear heuristic features. The children showed a high degree of spoken grammatical command, especially noun phrases, a secure range of lexis and impressive social skills in turn-taking and interactional conversation with an adult. Centres are encouraged to ensure that candidates addressing this question use this as a potential model for candidates to adopt.

UNIT 2703 - Experiments in Writing (coursework)

General Comments

Teachers are by now expert in guiding candidates to produce a wide range of appropriate tasks across a range of genres. In the vast majority of cases the tasks attempted were valid and the texts produced showed good attention to subject, purpose, audience, genre, structure and style.

Spoken language pieces again figured prominently, with many transcripts being produced. These included informal conversations between friends, telephone conversations, adult/child interactions, customer/shop assistant interactions, sports commentaries and television scripts. Many transcripts of interviews were included, mostly with television personalities, fashion designers and models, musicians, sportsmen and women, actors, actresses and political figures. Other transcripts featured political speeches and persuasive talks on topical issues.

Written pieces included poetry, prose, newspaper and magazine articles on various topics, advertisements, informative leaflets, letters and diary entries. Many candidates produced reviews of albums, concerts, films, television shows, theatre productions, books and video games.

Moderators commented that the quality of commentaries overall seems to be improving, with many candidates demonstrating a good understanding of the importance of language choice and use to achieve particular effects. The best commentaries included a judicious balance of general comment and detailed analysis of linguistic features. These candidates used detailed examples to indicate how effects had been achieved, commenting perceptively on features of lexis, syntax, semantics and phonology, relating these clearly to the intended audience and purpose.

Poorer commentaries were largely descriptive, listing features without indicating their effects. In some cases it was the nature of the original task which limited the scope of the commentary. More ambitious writing tasks often give greater opportunity to apply knowledge of language and how it works.

The work had once again been shrewdly overseen by supporting teachers and was generally accurately assessed and helpfully annotated. However, there were still some candidates producing transcriptions which do not adhere to recognised transcription conventions. In particular some transcriptions included punctuation and capital letters. Please refer to page 41 of the specifications for a list of transcription conventions used by OCR.

Administration was generally competently carried out but a significant number of folders were submitted without candidate numbers on the cover sheets. It is, of course, essential that all sections of the cover sheet are completed. Moderators also reported that, in a number of cases, the marks recorded on the MS1 sheet were not visible on the moderator copy. Please ensure that the marks are clear on both copies before submitting the form.

Where there are ten candidates or fewer entering coursework it is not necessary to wait for the moderator to request a sample. The work of all candidates should be sent to the moderator along with the MS1 form.

Many submissions were close to 3000 words in length with a small number exceeding this. Candidates must be advised that the recommended word limit is 1500-2000 words and they should be encouraged to stay as close as possible to this limit. Where folders exceed 3000 words Centres are instructed to assess the first 3000 words only.

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The vast majority of assessment was accurate, with most Centres now being confident and competent in applying the assessment objectives. Where adjustments needed to be made it was usually the case that work in Band 1 had been placed at the very top of that band when it should have been placed lower down. Work at the bottom end was sometimes under-rewarded so marks were adjusted to more accurately reflect achievement.

UNIT 2704 - Language Contexts – Structural and Social (written paper)

General Comments

There was some variability in the performance of candidates. In Section A there were some very good scripts in response to each of the three *Structures* questions, but there were also a number of candidates who failed to ensure that the rubric was being addressed in necessary theoretical detail. This pattern was repeated in Section B. Here some candidates drifted away from the passages almost entirely, answering with largely secondary prepared materials, while better scripts ensured a secure concentration upon the material in the passages and supported this judiciously with secondary data where it fitted their critical observations. Centres are strongly recommended to consult previous reports where similar issues have been raised. The specification puts firm emphasis upon candidates working methodically outwards from the adequate range of linguistic evidence available in the set passages. The rubric further reinforces this aim. Candidates would be able to show a significant increase in quality of response if these directives were firmly followed. Markers also showed slight concern over a number of candidates whose grasp of formal terminology was insecure. For both the AO3ii and AO4 objectives in this paper, it is understood that the range of technical linguistics needs to show a clear progression from that necessary at the AS level.

Comments on Individual Questions

SECTION A - *Structures*

Question 1 *Language and Speech Sounds*

There were some outstanding responses to this question. In these scripts candidates reflected excellent teaching in phonetics and phonology. Answers showed the very simple mechanics of orthographic representation. They were then able to offer a range of potential 'technical' methods for correcting the transcription. The results were shown in efficient handle of phonemic symbols, clear analysis of suprasegmentals and the need for prosodic analysis to show tonic and stress patterns. There was good use of quadrilaterals, which were relevant in exemplifying possible London vowels taken from the passage. The weaker work tended to drift back to 2701-style commentaries and failed to address the need for technical knowledge as required by the rubric. There was some limited evidence of candidates trying to learn phonology from a book and simply repeating what they learned in their answers, with no application to the set passage. This suggests that some candidates are not being told to read the precise nature of the rubric with care and are thereby limiting their marks.

Question 2 *Language and Grammar*

There were a number of well organised answers to the passage, able to respond methodically to the grammatical and syntactical demands in the rubric. These answers recognised the elimination of a number of function words from the writing and the methods by which a narrative framework had been pared down. There was good comment made about the relative lack of adjectivals and adverbials, the absence of compounding in tenses, and the lack of modality. Collocations were seen as restricted and the syntactic pattern(s) as schematic. One or two outstanding responses related this to a kind of grammatical aesthetic, attributing a range of reasons to why an author might choose to write in this mode. All answers noted above were clearly fulfilling the dominant AO3ii. The minority of weaker answers indicated candidates with an inadequate grammatical knowledge, who tended to either summarise the contents in a rather critically negative way or simply picked up lexical items and suggested they were nouns and adjectives outside of their own linguistic experiences. Centres should remind themselves that in the *Structures* section candidates are marked largely upon an ability to bring a clear, detailed knowledge of linguistic terminology to their answers. The ability to analyse sentence syntax into

its linguistic constituents would seem to be essential as a pre-requisite to undertaking this question.

Question 3 *Language and Meaning*

Markers commented upon the ingenuity and thoughtfulness shown in a number of scripts responding to this question. Candidates demonstrated considerable resourcefulness in applying basic lexicography to issues surrounding meaning. It was clear that some centres had been encouraging candidates to visit the burgeoning number of websites linked to neologisms in English and to view the interesting television work in *Balderdash and Piffle*. This meant a number of scripts showed real application in detective work, calling upon morphology, broader basic etymology and an ability to write up succinct and efficient definitions. There were some problems with some of the words; but it was not the intention of the question to try and tie candidates down to being 'correct'. Answers showed that a context is not absolutely essential in mining meaning from pre and post modification of base nouns - though a few candidates went as far as developing some possible contextualisations. There were interesting comments upon connotations, especially those which seemed to attach themselves to foreign-sounding imports. There were relatively few weak answers. The most problematic to mark were those which wished to broach issues of a broader semantic/philosophical nature, with Wittgenstein replacing Saussure as the most cited critical source.

SECTION B - Social Contexts

Question 4 *Language Change*

In this series there were fewer scripts giving a rehearsed history of the English language from Caxton to Johnson. This meant a more controlled focus upon the passages. The lexis of (a) attracted some good AO5ii work, whilst the overall register of (b) was inclined to be slightly more problematic in the way candidates read it. There were some obvious unfamiliarities - *environ* as a transitive verb being a regular feature in many responses. In (b) it was more the pervading nostalgia in the lexis - *sentimentalise*, *varnished*, *scarlet memory*, *museum*, *private collectors*, *much loved*, which was not effective with the candidates. This was the significant cultural and structural difference. Candidates were not expected to recognise the highly formal Enlightenment style of (a), though a few came close to this in observing noun capitalisation and the density of sentences. The less detailed responses tended to count the speech marks, spotted spelling changes and saw *bite-sized* as modern, but not *commute*. It might be helpful if centres reminded candidates that it is still necessary in this section of the paper to show A2-level familiarity with grammatical terminology and that a detailed command of lexical analysis is a pre-requisite for an informed answer.

Question 5 *Language and Gender*

A number of candidates picked up the fact that the article was attributed to both female and male authors; and that the central issue was the re-branding of femininity to fit modern car advertising. This meant that with careful attention to lexis and register it was possible to treat the article as mocking the semi-redundant male and energising a second generation of feminists, aware of their power as consumers, and their 21st century status in terms of the market place. The article played with stereotypes and expectations, though few candidates could really analyse the symbolic resonances of marketing images connoted by the motor manufacturers eager to embrace a new market and a new kind of *feisty young woman*. This pre-modified noun phrase was a crucial discourse marker and the potential range of meanings associated with the foregrounding adjective was not pursued in any depth. The shift in voice and passages set in speech marks also deserved more detailed attention. Candidates who worked systematically with the passage, as the rubric instructed, were able to negotiate a sensible range of readings and support it with a reasonable range of terminology. There were still some centres where

candidates did not address the question and produced prepared materials, often linked to thirty year old material, concerned with first generation feminism. This was clearly not appropriate for this passage and resulted in limited marking against dominant AO4 and AO5ii. Centres should advise candidates that the phrase *where relevant* is an important one in determining the quality of a script.

Question 6 ***Language and Society***

Markers expressed concerns that for a number of candidates the set passages proved to be rather intractable. Quite a few candidates ignored the rubric and proceeded to write general linguistically-tinged essays about social class or e-languages (probably re-using 2702 materials), or embarked upon essays about RP and speech. This caused difficulty in awarding marks linked to the dominant AOs. Candidates who focused upon mining the materials in the passage were able to make some interesting observations about the nature of slang - not least the idea of its *creative* aspects. They also picked up the steer offered by items 1, 2 and 3. This gave the chance to discuss the media saturation of the supposed drugs, alcohol and sexual idiolects/vernacular of the younger generation. There were some excellent illustrations of the varied slang terms which encrust the dynamics of this area of life. Centres who encourage research into such sites as *urbandictionary.com* clearly are helping their candidates broaden their cultural and linguistic knowledge. It should be easy for candidates, also, to have an understanding of occupational slang. Since they are likely to have experienced educational practices for a number of years, this would seem to be a sound starting point. It is surprising to find a linguistics candidate expressing the view that s/he 'never uses slang' and is 'unaware' of it. This would appear to suggest that contemporary English usage, an extremely accessible area of advanced language study, might not be receiving the attention which it deserves in preparing candidates for this paper.

UNIT 2705 - Language Research topic (coursework)

This was another successful year for candidates submitting language research projects, with candidates investigating a wide range of relevant language related issues. Moderators reported that the vast majority of submissions were interesting and enjoyable to read. There was a good understanding throughout the investigations of how language works and how it might usefully be analysed. Many candidates presented projects which were well researched, well written and well presented.

This year's submissions showed a noticeable increase in investigations dealing with gender in a wide range of contexts. Candidates examined representation of gender in the language of the tabloid press, advertisements, films, magazines, comics and children's literature. Other projects focused on gender issues in spoken English, looking at male and female conversational techniques, use of taboo in single sex conversations and issues of co-operation and dominance in mixed sex conversations. Many of these were very successful in adopting appropriate hypotheses which were investigated using apt frameworks and linguistic terminologies.

Other spoken language projects looked at conversations between peers and authority figures, child language, political speeches, news reports and radio transcripts. Investigations of written texts included the language of newspaper articles, celebrity magazines, film reviews, football reports, children's literature and various web-based texts.

The tasks attempted were often highly original, offering reasonable scope for linguistic and stylistic analysis. Greatest success was achieved where the linguistic frameworks and approaches adopted were detailed and appropriate. In the best cases there was strong evidence of wider reading and theoretical knowledge was applied critically and concisely.

Weaker projects made many general points about language features but did not support these with detailed analysis of their own data. Many adopted a descriptive approach, making vague generalisations about language choice and use, when an analytical approach would have been far more productive. Some weaknesses were related to poor choice of title. Careful wording of research titles is vital, as is the selection of a suitable methodology. Investigations should start with a clear hypothesis, moving through data analysis to evaluation and conclusion.

In the majority of cases work had been shrewdly overseen by supporting teachers and was very well assessed. The application of the marking criteria was usually accurate and teachers' comments were generally detailed and helpful, making close reference to the relevant assessment objectives. Where adjustments were made it tended to be in the top band, where candidates' work was over rewarded and placed too high within that band or at the bottom end of the scale where marks needed to be increased to more accurately reflect achievement.

Administration was generally competently carried out but there was an alarming increase in the number of centres submitting work with incomplete cover sheets. In particular a significant number of folders were submitted without candidate numbers. It is essential that all sections of the cover sheet are completed. Moderators also reported that, in a number of cases, the marks recorded on the MS1 sheet had not gone through to the bottom moderator copy. Please check that marks are visible on the second copy before submitting the form.

Where there are ten candidates or fewer entering for a coursework unit the work of all candidates should be sent to the moderator along with the MS1 form. It is not necessary to wait for the moderator to request a sample when the entry number is so small.

UNIT 2706 - Exploring, Analysing and Evaluating English (written paper)

General Comments

The question paper worked well to engage candidates, to provide them with the opportunity to apply the skills and knowledge gained from their course of study and to discriminate clearly between levels of performance. Passages were connected by the theme of motor transport, a subject which seemed comfortably close to the experience of all. There was little evidence of faulty examination technique in terms either of poor allocation of time to the two different sections or of misreading of questions.

Most scripts revealed at least a general soundness of approach and a willingness to apply what had been learned of linguistic frameworks to evaluation, exploration and analysis. There was an encouraging sense in many scripts that the writers' interest in language had spread beyond simply what they had learned in lessons.

However, examiners noted a number of scripts in which the response was 'sub-linguistic' – that is, where the passages were clearly understood well enough in terms of their effects on the reader, but where those effects were simply described without any sense of the mechanics of language. Evaluations sometimes failed to develop beyond the comment that the use of (say) pronouns gave the passage a 'personal feel'. 'Feel' was a term greatly (and unhelpfully) over-used, replacing and at times precluding more precise comment on language. There was certainly some blurring of linguistic terminology, and a consequent 'flattening' of response: some candidates used the terms (and accompanying frameworks of) lexis, formality/register, grammar and syntax as if they were interchangeable.

Comments on Individual Questions

Question 1 a) and b)

The transposition task was to write an article entitled *The Secret Language of Selling Cars* based on material in a transcribed conversation involving car sales people talking about motor trade jargon.

Candidates generally coped with the material in terms of understanding. There were some ambiguities in the transcription, where it was not entirely clear whether the next speaker in a sequence was supporting or contradicting a previous explanation. However, many candidates seemed not to notice the ambiguities, and those who were aware of them were able to make useful points about the need for greater certainty in the written form.

The instruction to "aim to entertain as well as to inform" was taken to heart. Candidates adopted a range of suitably lively 'voices' for the article. The better scripts were those able to maintain the chosen style while remaining faithful to the attitudes and content of the original. Some candidates wrote unhelpfully long introductions to their articles, which meant that they were unable to use much of the transcription material. A remarkable number of answers began with the same question to the reader – "(Have you) ever ...?" – and went on to create a scenario in which the reader had been plunged into confusion by the jargon of car sales people. They then reassured the reader, almost invariably with archaic inverted syntax, that they need "fear no more".

Weaker answers to Question 1(a), as usual, resembled simple summaries - more or less accurate - of the material in the transcription, sometimes exhibiting inconsistent or inappropriate lexical choices. The weakest commentaries in 1(b) tended to focus on how hard the candidate had found the task because of the typical features of spoken language (especially the lack of punctuation) in the transcription.

Each year some skilful transpositions are (disappointingly) followed by thin commentaries which miss the opportunity to explain and explore what had seemed rather subtle language choices. This year's paper produced rather fewer such missed opportunities, though there is still a discrepancy between the complementary AO2 dimensions: the ability to make appropriate choices of language still runs ahead of the ability to explore and analyse those choices in linguistic terms.

Question 2

This section of the paper tests candidates' knowledge of linguistic frameworks and their ability to apply them (AO3) to four different passages linked, this year, by the theme of motor transport. The AO5 dimension entails exploration of language variation according to time and context.

Many candidates adopted a systematic passage-by-passage approach. Others organised their responses according to a series of frameworks (e.g. purpose, audience, register, lexis, grammar, phonology). Both approaches worked well enough for informed candidates, though the better answers were usually those more skilful in using cross-reference.

Candidates and Centres had heeded last year's advice not to allow discussion of purpose and audience to take up a great deal of any answer. Unhelpful assertions based on pre-conceived notions about levels of formality in particular forms and genres were also less common this year.

There was similar improvement in discussion of Passage A (the transcription) which had often tended in previous sessions to repetition of comment already made in Question 1. The co-operative nature of the conversation was noted in terms of repetitions and back-channelling. A few candidates argued for a strong competitive element in the conversation, seeing interruptions as attempts to gain the floor and assert dominance, and venturing into stereotypes of male and female linguistic behaviour. Some also attempted to speculate about accent, but more saw the contractions and clippings as features of informal speech rather than of a particular regional accent. Comment on the lexical/semantic field of motor transport provided many candidates with a bridge into discussion of the other passages.

Passage B has usually been the 'older' passage, and was regularly identified as the most formal. In weaker answers, this formality was simply attributed to its age. More developed answers attempted, with mixed success, to analyse sentence structure. The question of 'archaic' lexis causes problems every year. Helpful comments went beyond the general observation that a certain word was no longer in use, and deployed good knowledge of appropriate lexical and semantic frameworks to point out, for example, that "coke" must have been a form of fuel in 1832 but that the word had undergone pejoration to become by 2007 a slang term for cocaine or an abbreviation for a brand of fizzy drink.

Candidates had some difficulty with the term 'journal' as used to introduce Passage B, often seeing it as synonymous with 'personal diary'. Similarly, they were determined to see Passage C as an advertisement rather than a 'review', a tendency which led them to identify a great deal of 'persuasive' language. The field of family relationships employed to describe the New Beetle convertible was readily identified ("A vast improvement on its older brother.") but not evaluated in terms of lexical sets. Rather it was noticed and described more generally as a feature of informality or as an example of female gender-lect. Candidates were careful to point out that they knew it was a gender stereotype to distinguish 'female' language, but it was hard to resist arguing that "like an overstuffed grocery bag" and "huggable personality" were aimed at female readers.

Similarly, Passage D was seen as targeting not just men but anyone wishing to know how to change the oil in their car. Better answers appreciated the variety in this passage, with shifts from listing to advising to instructing. Here as elsewhere candidates were often inaccurate in

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terminology. Imperatives, interrogatives and declaratives were frequently mixed up; and, although examiners make allowances for slips of the pen under pressure, frequent inaccuracy can begin to undermine the security of overall achievement.

In dealing with Passage C, the most obvious weakness was the tendency to criticise the writer's "lack of grammar" when what is actually defective is the punctuation. Candidates were able, however, to correct the deficiencies, and were much more comfortable and accurate in their discussion of the heavy use of pre-modifying adjectives and post-modifying adverbials.

**Advanced GCE (Subject) (Aggregation Code(s))
January 2007 Assessment Series**

Unit Threshold Marks

Unit		Maximum Mark	a	b	c	d	e	u
2701	Raw	60	46	41	36	31	27	0
	UMS	90	72	63	54	45	36	0
2702	Raw	60	45	40	35	30	26	0
	UMS	120	96	84	72	60	48	0
2703	Raw	60	48	43	38	33	28	0
	UMS	90	72	63	54	45	36	0
2704	Raw	60	44	39	34	29	25	0
	UMS	90	72	63	54	45	36	0
2705	Raw	60	50	44	39	34	29	0
	UMS	90	72	63	54	45	36	0
2706	Raw	60	43	39	35	31	27	0
	UMS	120	96	84	72	60	48	0

Specification Aggregation Results

Overall threshold marks in UMS (i.e. after conversion of raw marks to uniform marks)

	Maximum Mark	A	B	C	D	E	U
3827	300	240	210	180	150	120	0
7827	600	480	420	360	300	240	0

The cumulative percentage of candidates awarded each grade was as follows:

	A	B	C	D	E	U	Total Number of Candidates
3827	16.1	32.7	60.9	82.8	94.33	100	547
7827	16.7	41	68.2	91.2	99.1	100	444

For a description of how UMS marks are calculated see;
http://www.ocr.org.uk/exam_system/understand_ums.html

Statistics are correct at the time of publication.

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