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Examiners' Reports

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CONTENTS

Advanced GCE English Language (H469)

Advanced Subsidiary GCE English Language (H069)

EXAMINERS' REPORTS

F651 The Dynamics of Speech

General Comments

Examiners were very pleased to see continuing improvement, as Centres and candidates continue to grow in familiarity with the structure and demands of this paper. Levels of performance in this session suggested thorough preparation informed by relevant theoretical knowledge. In particular, candidates are becoming more adept at moving between reference to concepts and theories and reference to specific examples from transcript evidence.

The main reason why some (otherwise apparently well-prepared) candidates seemed to have under-performed was that they left their discussion at a generalised and descriptive – rather than a clearly linguistic/analytical – level. Stronger candidates adopted a specifically and overtly *linguistic* method.

It is worth remembering the Assessment Objective weightings for this Unit. AO2 is dominant in Section A, AO3 in Section B. However, there will always be significant overlap between the AOs, and a competent linguistic approach is likely to integrate aspects of AO1, AO2 and AO3 into virtually every relevant comment.

The following comments on responses in this session should provide helpful guidance to those entering in subsequent sessions. In addition, the published mark-scheme offers indications of appropriate response in terms of the Assessment Objectives.

Comments on Individual Questions

Section A: Speech and Children

In Section A, many more candidates answered Question 1, which was based on an interaction between Harry (age four years and two months) and his mother, than Question 2, a transcription of an interaction involving three schoolchildren aged six to seven.

Question 1

The transcription gave candidates a great deal of scope to discuss how mothers (especially) might talk to a four year old child, and specifically how Harry's mother copes with talking to him about the delicate subject of pregnancy and childbirth:

you were tiny like <u>that</u> (.) like my little finger nail (.) then you got bigger and bigger and bigger and you were bigger than this dolly and then you come out my tummy

Most began with a secure understanding that Mother and Harry were having an informal conversation on their own without the presence of Will or Nanny, and were able to trace the turns by which the conversation drifts into an area that Mother is uncomfortable about. Examples of Child-Directed Speech – 'motherese' or 'caretaker' language – were identified: simplified lexis and structures, diminutives, pauses to allow Harry to assimilate and to formulate his potential responses, feedback comments, exaggerated intonation, repetition. Developed answers went on to explore in some detail how specific examples of these features enabled mother and son to communicate more effectively.

Weaker answers focused more on intonation, stress and volume: some candidates seemed to focus only on these aspects at the expense of all other analysis. There were also some weaker answers which simply moved descriptively through the transcription, paraphrasing what Harry said to his Mother and how she then responded.

There was some confusion as to what 'stage' of communication Harry was at. Some candidates suggested Harry was in the holophrastic stage, others that he was in the telegraphic or post-telegraphic stage. (There was also confusion about utterance types, between interrogatives, imperatives and declaratives.)

Those candidates who located and quoted specific examples of Harry's utterance were much less likely to be confused, and were then able to go on to analyse the fine detail of his lexical, grammatical and syntactical development. For example, careful readers noticed that when Mother employs downward convergence to accommodate Harry and uses the diminutive ('motherese') form 'doggies', Harry had already used the standard noun 'dogs'.

Most candidates referred to various theories of language development, particularly Skinner ('behaviourist' ideas of imitation and reinforcement) but also to Piaget, Chomsky and Vygotsky. Coupling the wrong name with the right theory, as some candidates inevitably did, is not a problem: the crucial thing is to integrate understanding of a concept (even at a very simple level) into a close analysis of the transcript evidence. Less successful candidates tended to write down everything they knew about a theory but did not apply this knowledge to specific details of language and interaction.

Candidates' understanding of phonological features has been steadily improving over the last few sessions, and here many made a good job of exploring what happens when Harry says *troke dogs*. This led to some really well-developed discussion of how Harry's mother interrupts to correct him, here and elsewhere, and how her own use of English is sometimes non-standard. Comments to the effect that these non-standard usages were not 'correct' – that they indicated low social class or poor education – were not particularly helpful. Much more helpful was the line of argument which considered that (for example) *you was* might be downward convergence and/or an aspect of the mother's dialect.

Similarly, many candidates noticed repetition by both mother and son, particularly of the illustrations of size – *you were tiny tiny tiny (.) and then you got bigger and bigger and bigger* – and were able to link their observations of lexical repetition with discussion of ideas (Piaget and Vygotsky) of cognitive ('proximal') development and the advantages of providing concrete examples (*tiny like <u>that</u> (.) like my little finger nail*). This line of argument was usefully linked to explanation of deixis – which, at last, some candidates are beginning to spell correctly!

The mark-scheme indicates other avenues of discussion which proved fruitful.

Question 2

This question was attempted by far fewer candidates, though those who did it coped well with the dynamics. Features of emphatic stress and raised volume were often explained in terms of the children's excitement as they were watching the snails in their school 'snailery' – or they were simply seen as a result of the absence of adults.

Finding a helpfully *linguistic* focus proved difficult for candidates who were determined to 'rank' the three children according to their linguistic development and prowess. Those answers which traced the dynamics of status and power in the interaction did rather better than those which made assumptions about gender stereotypes and then tried to make the transcription evidence fit their pre-conceptions.

Successful candidates noticed how imperatives show the excitement and engagement of the children, and function as discourse markers punctuating the interaction. They remarked upon the creation within the group of a hierarchy, with Susan adopting the manner of the adult/teacher who attempts to instruct and control the experience of the others: *well (.) theyre not exactly EYES (.) theyre a second load of FEELers (.) REALly (.) arent they (.) NO* They also discussed the way in which the children used language which they did know to fill in the gaps of the more specific terms which they could not know, such as *antlers* and *eyes* for feelers, *oil* and *moisture* for the snail's trail, and Jason's effort to describe the snail's movement – *they (1) walk very (.) slowly* – though his hesitation shows that he knows there is something wrong with ascribing this activity to a creature without visible legs, which Emma more aptly describes as *SMOOTHing*. Also noted were those features common to the rapidity of excited speech – Susan's *lerim* and *gerim*, *jə*, and *couldnt hardly see*.

Some less helpful assertions were made about social class or educational attainment based on perceived features of accent/dialect, and some candidates were more inclined to attribute the use of *antlers* and *oil* to the fact that the children just didn't know what they were talking about because they were too young.

Again, the mark-scheme contains further indications of relevant material and issues for discussion.

Section B: Speech Varieties and Social Groups

Many more candidates opted for Question 4 (a transcription of a radio programme) than Question 3 (a scripted scene from a television drama).

Question 3

Candidates were given the script of part of an episode of the popular television medical drama *Holby City*. An emergency caesarean section is being performed – what one candidate called *life-threatening surgery* – and the usual emotional undercurrents of power and passion between doctors and nurses are evident.

The task was to consider differences between scripted and spontaneous speech, which candidates did adequately in general terms but often poorly in terms of analysing specific features of the scripted scene. For example, almost all answers recognised the field-specific (occupational) lexis of hospitals and emergency procedures, but were too easily inclined simply to assert that these lexical items would not be understood by the viewer. Very few candidates argued that a regular audience would expect (and might actually understand) a certain level of medical/surgical 'jargon'.

Analysis of the medical/surgical lexis was very disappointing: candidates seemed to give up in the face of any lexical item which they had not encountered before, being unwilling to use their knowledge of word-classes, semantics or morphology. For example, hardly any attempted to work out what Mr Meyer might have meant when he said *Give me some heparin*. It must be a noun (unless he's deleting final *–g*!) and it's very likely to be a drug or some material needed in surgery since it's evidently a count-noun.

Many answers focused almost entirely on what did *not* appear in the transcript (pauses, fillers, false starts, interruptions, overlapping speech) on the grounds that these features ought to be there, because everyone exhibits them in speech, even doctors in operating theatres – and perhaps especially then, since this is a high-speed operation where people would overlap each other and hesitate over what they were saying. They would also swear, because of the tension, and they certainly wouldn't be so polite as to call each other *Mister* or *Doctor*.

Shrewd readers understood that, since address terms usually signal or reflect status, there must be some kind of hierarchy amongst the personnel; and they went on to explore how utterance types also reflected status. So, for example, Meyer expresses his instruction to Mister Adams as a veiled-imperative/polite-request (*Could you scrub up and cannulate the femoral artery please?*) while his utterance directed at the (anonymous) scrub nurse is a direct imperative (*Get a balloon pump and a perfusionist.*)

Thinking about 'politeness' encouraged candidates to write about how Grice's Maxims were employed (or flouted) – though they often failed to give specific references and therefore were unable to develop detailed linguistic analysis – and some showed an encouragingly more advanced understanding of 'Face' needs.

Speculation about what the dynamics of speech might be in any particular situation can be an unproductive approach. However, one very good answer entered into a great deal of detail about exactly what was said inside an operating theatre, and just why a Doctor in Owen's position would not be explaining that he was trying to *get into the womb* to deliver the baby, since everyone there would know this; nor would anyone waste time in saying that *it's not good* when the patient's *BP is crashing*, nor that when a baby stops breathing she needs to be resuscitated quite quickly. This response then argued forcefully that these kinds of details demonstrated just how far removed the dramatic script was from reality, almost re-writing the script to demonstrate how little would actually pass between professionals who were all used to working together and nurses who would know which instruments and equipment were needed without being asked. The point was also made that, in a real theatre, the nurses are such an integral part of the team that there would not be the detectable status differentiation that there seems to be in the script between the doctors and nurses.

Many candidates were able to point out the explicitness of the stage directions, which are not present in real speech, and the obviously dramatic effects of an on-going storyline and characterisation which were playing out during the scene. One candidate pointed out that this kind of thing was typical of a medical-drama genre going back to *Dr Kildare* (and beyond).

Reference may be made to the mark-scheme for further examples of relevant issues for discussion.

Question 4

Candidates who did this question generally made better use of their knowledge of the genre (which was most often seen as local radio documentary) than those answering Question 3.

Many answers made a thorough job of tracing the dynamics of co-operative interaction as Meg and Cameron told the story of how their son Brandon was poisoned by lead in the water supply of their new house – their *dream home*.

Accent and dialect often produce confused/conflated response, but many answers were careful and detailed in locating features of pronunciation and lexis which suggested that the speakers were Scottish. Some were also carefully detailed enough to be able to evaluate which speaker exhibited more of these features, and to argue that Cameron becomes more inclined to his regional accent and dialect as the transcript progresses, possibly because he is becoming less tense about speaking on radio, possibly as his love for his son makes him more emotional in his utterance.

Candidates are of course free to use the transcription evidence to reach whatever inferences they think reasonable about why speakers say what they do in the way they do. So it was perfectly possible to argue, as many candidates did, that Cameron is 'typically' male in the way he initiates the topic and concentrates on the factual (*detached house ... nauseous and tired ...*

very anaemic) whereas Meg is 'typically' female in expressing feelings (*wanted this house ... so worried*).

Research by Lakoff and Tannen was cited in support, and was generally better understood than it has been in past sessions. However, as with Harry and the dogs/doggies in Question 1, the most obvious/likely inferences were not the whole story. Meg overlaps/interrupts Cameron more than he does her; Brandon's *wee routine at night with his dad* seems to be a sign of caring parenting; and Cameron seems to be trying to credit Meg with finding the solution.

The best answers, therefore, read all the evidence carefully and were flexible enough to recognise that elements of competing theories can be applied to particular details. This is a good example of the *consistently detailed* work which characterises performance in Band 6.

Most candidates also avoided falling into the trap of assuming that interruptions/overlaps are signs of competition and a struggle for power/status, seeing that Meg and Cameron are re-telling their story collaboratively and supporting each other. For example, although Meg uses the ('typically' female) tag question *didnt we*, notionally looking for support, approval or reassurance from the ('typically dominant') male, she actually doesn't wait for Cameron to reply but carries on with what is actually quite a rhetorically-accomplished account. (Some candidates noticed the 'rule-of-three' used by both speakers.)

Cameron's final utterance – what might have ensued if they had not solved the problem – is even more powerfully rhetorical in its force and emotion, and some candidates saw it as being almost like the 'moral of the tale'. Indeed, some very good answers had begun from the realisation that the couple were closely united in the effort to tell their tale and that the dialogue followed conventions of constructing a narrative – in the setting up of the dream home with descriptions of how ideal it was, to allow the nightmare of what followed to contrast with their initial hopes for their lives there. Labov's concept of oral narrative structure was particularly well used in these answers. With or without the support of Labov, candidates noted the couple's supportive feedback and the way in which their propensity to list things – the boy's symptoms, what they did to try and help him – built up the drama of their story.

This was helpfully linked (AO3) to consideration of the radio audience, who of course would have no visual cues/clues as to emotional content, and would therefore be extra-dependent on Meg's and Cameron's lexical choices and emphatic stress.

The mark-scheme offers some further ideas of what might have proved helpful lines of exploration.

F652 Texts and Audiences

Task 1: Text Study

This task requires candidates to produce an analytical study of one written and one multimodal text. On the whole, candidates submitted interesting and appropriate texts for analysis, chosen from a diverse range of sources from film scripts, album covers and song lyrics to poems, letters, recipes and fairy tales. For the written texts many candidates chose to analyse newspaper and magazine articles and extracts from autobiography, biography, drama and prose fiction. Multimodal texts included posters, advertisements and transcripts of television programmes, films and interviews.

A small number of centres had guided all candidates to study the same two text types, e.g. a poem and an advert, or even identical texts. Although permissible, this approach can be quite restrictive. Where candidates are encouraged to choose their own data there is more scope for them to pursue their own interests and to develop their own strengths. The selection of appropriate texts is an important aspect of the process, and as such candidates should be encouraged to work independently to find suitable material for analysis.

A number of texts had been taken from language text books, which is also rather restrictive and ultimately means that the candidates may struggle to provide fresh and exploratory analysis. It is worth reminding centres, too, that a 'written' text must not include any visual images. Where these are included the text must be classed as multimodal.

Some candidates included too much data, for example, a complete children's book. Two or three pages usually give sufficient material on which to base a detailed analysis.

Many candidates had clearly labelled their texts, but this was not always the case. Candidates should be instructed to label their texts as 'written' or 'multimodal.' It is most helpful if the labels appear on the texts themselves, rather than on a separate sheet.

There was much excellent work submitted for Task 1. Candidates clearly showed enthusiasm and a sense of learning and exploration at all levels. In many cases the analysis was well structured and used a range of linguistic approaches.   In the best, there was perceptive analysis of style and register. The nature of multimodal texts was fully explored and candidates used a range of technical terms to show insight and understanding. Some weaker submissions were much more limited in technical terminology and had a tendency to be descriptive.

A number of candidates did not give equal weighting to the discussion of both the written and the multimodal texts they were analysing. Others had chosen multimodal texts containing very little written material, which limited their opportunity to discuss linguistic features, and some included only a very minor discussion of multimodality.

The objective of a multimodal analysis is to explore how alternative modes of communication operate in conjunction with written language to create meaning. As such, it is advisable to guide candidates towards selecting texts that offer broad opportunities for an analysis of this nature. The analysis should include references to the impact of the visual and/or prosodic aspects of texts, and refrain from focusing entirely on written communication. Where candidates are analysing transcripts for multimodal texts, in addition to speech features they must also consider paralinguistic features of spoken communication, such as facial expressions, hand gestures and prosody. In instances where stimulus materials are print based, concepts and issues need to be explored in relation to connotations of images, the choice of subject matter, colour, focus, angle of shot and position of the image on the page. The analysis should discuss how these aspects operate in conjunction with written language in order to create meaning.

Task 2: Adaptive Writing and Commentary

This task requires candidates to select one of the texts from Task 1 and reproduce it making it suitable for a new audience and/or purpose. Some candidates submitted interesting and well-considered pieces, where texts had been creatively adapted from the original stimulus material. Many of the tasks were challenging and stretched the candidates appropriately. A wide range of formats was seen, including monologues, comic strips, cartoons and diary entries. Newspaper and magazine articles were produced on many topics and transcripts of radio and television programmes were popular choices.

Unfortunately some centres still seem to be experiencing problems in the interpretation of 'adaptive writing.' In several cases the pieces submitted bore very little resemblance to the original texts and seemed more to be 'inspired by' the original than actual adaptations. Candidates need to adapt the language of the original so that a significant amount of the original still remains in the 'new' text. When producing adaptive writing, it is <u>not</u> acceptable to introduce new material from other sources. The material must come from the source text used in Task 1.

Most commentaries offered a comprehensive exploration of the writing process, and adhered well to the requirements of the specification, but a small number of candidates treated them as a linguistic analysis of their own work rather than a first person account of decisions taken and changes made to adapt the original text into the new one.

Commentaries require candidates to discuss the process of adapting an existing text for a different audience and/or purpose. There should be a detailed discussion of elements of the original material that have been retained, elements that have been omitted, and how these relate to the new context, audience and/or purpose of the adapted text. Failure to do this prevents candidates from fully addressing the demands of 'adaptive writing', and renders the outcomes of the assignment inadequate in respect to the overall requirements of the component.

Application of Mark Scheme and General Administration

The administration of the coursework submissions ran smoothly in most centres. Summative comments on coursework coversheets were very helpful and many teachers had annotated the scripts in order to identify specific strengths and weaknesses within the folders.

There were some irregularities in the organisation of folders, in that some centres sent multiple copies of the texts that were used in Task 1 whereas others did not include any copies of the base texts. Some folders contained draft and research material, which is not required.

F653 Culture, Language and Identity

General Comments

There was a significant improvement seen in this session, in the work of many candidates. Centres are to be commended for developing teaching approaches which have encouraged many candidates to approach the passages in an unformulaic, but intellectually and linguistically academic manner. It was quite clear that previous reports had been acted upon and greater guidance had been given to candidates in approaching Section B materials. In this part of the paper the very best responses demonstrated considerable skill in weaving together the AO2/AO3 objectives in sustained stylistic analysis and comment. There are several areas where all centres could devote some further teaching input which would be of value to candidates across the whole paper. The range of linguistic terminology appropriate to A2 study could be broader and applied in a more detailed analytical mode, rather than in a rudimentary observational style. A number of candidates would benefit, in terms of AO1, from greater practice in the skills of academic selectivity and clarity in writing. At this level no essay should be simply a summative commentary upon the materials set in the stimulus passages. For Section B a number of candidates need guidance with wider generic reading and how to integrate this into the body of an academic essay. By so doing they would create a more rigorous control over the AO3 objective.

Section A

Language and Speech

Almost all candidates recognised that the question invited exploration of the origins of and continual changes occurring in Received Pronunciation. There were some very good scripts which drew upon the diachronic aspect of speech in relation to the power of this acrolect. In such answers there were good uses of the vowel quadrilateral and further basic phonemic illustration of current changes taking place in the nation's speech. It is important that all candidates should find a method for illustrating examples of the spoken language, especially within their own social domain. Many candidates had a good broad knowledge of the history of Estuary English and were prepared to debate its influence upon modern RP. They were also able to reference the changes in the Queen's speech and give some very sound examples of this. Evidence of supportive wider reading was apparent in a great number of responses.

There remain a few problems with the requirements of the question. The passages are stimulus material for further discussion and illustration of speech and speech sounds. They are not set as exercises for summary or syntactic analysis. There is no need for lengthy summaries of the history of the BBC; nor to address the social history of public schools. Some candidates seemed to have had little aural practice in preparation for the examination. It is crucial that candidates have experience of listening and being able to make simple notations of the varying sounds in the English language. This is the primary focus of the question, asking for very elementary phonological exemplification and comment. This is clearly demonstrated in the dominance of the AO2 objective.

Section B

The Language of Popular Written Texts

There were some extremely engaging and thoughtful responses to this question. Candidates approached the poem/song/nursery rhyme with considerable technical expertise. There was discussion of prosodics, lexis and literary merit and even some offerings of alternative verses learnt when younger. The Beano passage also evoked some quite incisive comments and analysis. Candidate engaged with the links between images and words, covering a wide lexical field between 'Boadicea' and 'gibbering giblets'. Some alert responses pointed out how the images signified stereotypes embedded within a range of school stories. The Blyton passage was more of a challenge, seen as an ancient historical document, rather than a product with clear generic conventions. Very good answers debated the phonic accuracy of adult speech, stating that it was relatively unlike reality. They also pointed out how the passage attempted to foreground adult controls of the situation. Georgina's dual identity and Quentin's intimidatory features, plus threats of corporal punishment, were commented upon as interesting verbal signifiers which might be less acceptable in a more modern children's text. Most candidates responded to the multi-modality in passage (g). Alert candidates queried some of the lexemes, which suggested a scientific knowledge that could well challenge many younger people. They also contrasted the relative scientific maturity of such lexis with the less mature illustrations accompanying the text. Almost all answers showed a basic understanding in discussing narratives. There were good attempts to link the graphological to the written. An issue which could merit more centre attention, however, was the absence of references to any wider reading about popular narratives.

Section C

Language and Cultural Production

Whilst candidates who answered this question clearly had a sound general knowledge of the topic, they were not always entirely successful in translating this background into the rigours of linguistic analysis and contextual comment. In fact the contexts were important in the way they flagged up the wide spectrum of writing which was engaged with a huge market. The more focused approaches did see that there was a strong element of the language of marketing, especially in passages (i) and (j).They also were able to offer a basic commentary upon the mesolect of this digital world. The hyperlinks of the multi-modal blog were discussed, though candidates failed to grapple effectively with the odd grammatical cohesion in them. The syntax of (j) was briefly commented upon. However, the violent cohesiveness of parts of the text, exemplified by the non finite forms of 'stabbing', 'mugging' and the two following NP's 'graphic violence' and 'crazed hoodies', was not formally addressed as part of the ideologically embedded cultural realism running through this passage. This was a very important and clearly inscribed stylistic feature. Such layers of meaning are essential elements in considering the linguistic constituents in texts (AO2, AO3). They should be picked up by candidates, if they have been given clear guidance in looking carefully at collocations and cohesion within any given passages. The fact that all the passages were writing about variations in media production was a key element in their construction and language. This was absolutely germane to linking the language of such texts to the title of the topic area.

Section D

Language, Power and Identity

Many answers were able to reflect upon both identity and empowerment in the passages. In the more formal analytical responses candidates found much of linguistic importance to support their analyses. Some good answers were able to make substantial comments about the meaning of the headlines and the strap lines. Passage (l) seemed to attract considerable candidate attention, possibly because of the sub-text of vox pops or popular cultural nominalising, but answers were not always clearly linked to the semantics of the 'up market lifestyle' which the passage was effectively making a brand. Candidates were slightly less secure with passage (m). There was a misunderstanding of the journalistic convention of reporting speech, which some responses read as real life dialogue. More successfully navigated was the sociolect of business being held in apposition to the ideals and personal qualities of Horlick herself. Some close analyses of lines 5 – 25 gave good stylistic critical focus to this point. Some candidate tended to misread passage (n) seeing it as foregrounding masculine competencies. Very few saw the links between the marketese of passage (o) and the branding which was a strong feature of the other three passages, The key to this was given in the sentence in lines 7-8 of the passage. The more uneven answers tended to spend too long trying to link some dated feminist material to the writing. Centres should note that texts about power/disempowerment which deal with feminine speech are not relevant to written data. Some candidates did not give close enough attention to the needs of linking the journalistic written mode to the AO3 objective. This is an important factor to consider in all Section B passages.

F654 Media Language

Task 1:Independent Investigation: Comparison and Analysis

Candidates had obviously been taught well in a variety of aspects of the A2 course and they applied their learning appropriately to the analytical and imaginative tasks covered by this component.

Task 1 requires candidates to compare and analyse the language of one spoken, one written and one multimodal text, linked by a common theme or topic. It is clear that candidates had been encouraged to explore a range of texts and to use their own knowledge and areas of interest, which is the best way to prepare candidates for this kind of coursework. The candidates had covered a wide range of themes including topics as diverse as mental health, writing for children, university fees, the 1980s, the Bible, anger, sport, dance, and literary presentation of women. It is helpful if candidates state their linking theme at the start of their analysis.

Most of the candidates had been guided to choose interesting and appropriate texts for analysis. Written texts included football reports, film reviews, interviews, song lyrics and extracts from websites, biographies, autobiographies, and various novels. Spoken texts took the form of transcripts of spontaneous conversations, interviews, political speeches, television shows, radio programmes and extracts from films. Multimodal texts included leaflets, articles, advertisements, film and music reviews, television programmes and web pages on an extensive range of topics.

It is essential that all candidates submit copies of their three texts and that all texts are clearly labelled as 'spoken,' 'written' or' multimodal'. It is most helpful if the labels appear on the texts themselves. Please note that written texts must not contain any accompanying visual material. Where visual material is present the text must be classed as multimodal.

Most candidates had adopted appropriate frameworks with which to analyse their material and there was a good standard of analysis throughout, strengthened by excellent subject knowledge and use of linguistic vocabulary. There was a clear sense of candidates being encouraged to explore challenging topics and to stretch themselves as all levels.

Most candidates had provided detailed comparisons of their three texts but several candidates presented three separate analyses with no comparison. Failure to compare the texts prevents candidates from fully addressing the demands of the task and renders the outcomes of the assignment inadequate in respect to the overall requirements of the component.

Task 2: Original Writing and Commentary

This task requires candidates to produce an original piece of media writing with an accompanying commentary. Writing was produced in all three modes, once again covering a wide range of genres and topics. Successful pieces included short stories, letters and biographies, web pages, film scripts and film reviews, song lyrics, leaflets and newspaper and magazine articles.

In most cases the original writing pieces were highly creative and well suited to purpose and the detailed commentaries were interesting and illuminating demonstrating a strong awareness of the demands of creating texts.

Application of Mark Scheme and General Administration

For the most part, administration by centres was extremely well executed and this made the moderation process straightforward.

In most cases the preparation of the work seemed to have closely borne in mind the assessment criteria of the course. Assessment was precise and marks awarded were appropriate.   The summative comments provided by the teachers were helpful in understanding why marks were awarded. Many referred helpfully to grade descriptors and comments in the body of the work were helpful in identifying areas of strength and weakness.