GCE

English Language

OCR Report to Centres

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Advanced GCE English Language (H469)

Advanced Subsidiary GCE English Language (H069)

OCR REPORT TO CENTRES

F651 The Dynamics of Speech

General Comments

Performance on this paper was generally encouraging. Last year, examiners were pleased to report an improvement in the way candidates were able to move between reference to concepts and theories and reference to specific examples from the transcript evidence; and this improvement has continued.

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, slightly fewer candidates answered Question 1, which was based on discussion about the phases of the moon in a class of 6-7 year old children, than Question 2, a transcription of part of a conversation between a father and his four year old daughter.

Question 1

Candidates mostly began with general comment on the relative formality of classroom talk, and how they would expect teachers of this age group to use Child-Directed Speech. Less successful answers tended to accumulate and list features of Child-Directed Speech: questions, pausing, re-casting, praising and encouraging, using intonation. Better answers selected specific examples of the teacher's skill in trying to encourage pupils' language, and went on to show the effects, such as the way the teacher introduces the term *prediction* in line 7 and is rewarded nearly twenty lines later when Owen uses the word correctly.

The best answers resisted the temptation to make judgements about an individual pupil's linguistic development on the basis of one utterance, and astute readers were able to comment on how George's two early utterances may be characterised by frequent micro-pauses, but these are not necessarily non-fluent; and his final utterance is a completely fluent complex sentence.

The mark-scheme contains further indications of relevant material and issues for discussion.

Question 2

This question was attempted by slightly more candidates than Question 1, and also elicited useful discussion of Child-Directed Speech and child language development. Candidates recognised that Megan's father is extremely persistent in trying to get his daughter to respond to his questions, though answers which concentrated on the distractions evident from paralinguistic features tended to pay insufficient attention to the linguistic features.

Successful answers traced the dynamics of interaction carefully and were able to explore the effect of minor variations in the father's oft-repeated question about *what happened in grannys yesterday*, noticing how after three re-castings and one refusal-to-take-No-for-an-answer (*you do know (1) what did you do*) he moves on to prompting (*/a / /heɪrd/ you went out*).

Again, the mark-scheme indicates other avenues of discussion which proved fruitful.

Section B: Speech Varieties and Social Groups

Slightly fewer candidates opted for Question 4 (a transcription of part of a local radio interview in which a group of hunting enthusiasts talk about how important hunting is to them) than Question 3 (a transcription of part of a conversation in which three women talk about hairstyle disasters they have experienced).

Question 3

Faced with an interaction involving three women, candidates who had prepared material on gender-lect were sometimes still inclined to off-load what they'd learned and argue that if there had been men present then the women would have exhibited different speech behaviour.

More successful answers explored what was there rather than what was not. Elements of power/status/dominance were sometimes over-stated, but good answers traced the shifts in dynamics with some accuracy, arguing that Jean tends to dominate at first, not wanting Lynn to get in with her *REMEMBER WHEN (.)* and noticing that Lynn is dominant later on because she's re-telling the anecdote that Jean doesn't know.

It was good to see candidates keeping the question in mind, and making explicit comment on *how the three women use language to interact with each other and to share a memory*. They were also adept at noticing the hyperbole in *BARRICADED* and *THE FUNNIEST THING*, and a number attached this to theories of how women are much more likely to be emotional like this, though it's odd that they interrupt each other because really the research says that only men do that …

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

Question 4

Some candidates spent a lot of time making assertions about the role of the interviewer, and trying to suggest he dominates the discussion. More successful answers paid attention to the specific details of interaction and noticed that the interviewer has four turns, each one as a result of an interruption/overlap, and each one performing a different function.

Good answers examined Toby's first two (fairly long) turns, and suggested that his saying he'd *started at the age of four* gave the audience certainty that he knew what he was talking about; and then when he says that he'd *lived here for thirty years but hunted here for forty*, it showed that he might have moved into the area specifically for the hunting, which showed how passionate he was about it.

As is often the case, answers which tried to argue for competitive rather than co-operative male speech tended to have to ignore or distort the transcript evidence. Careful readers appreciated that Toby is helping Ian out when he overlaps with *fox's pad*, and that Chris is performing a similarly co-operative function when he overlaps Ian to say *its what we eat sleep think and drink about and talk about and and all the rest of it.*

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

F652 Texts and Audiences

Task 1: Text Study

Many candidates submitted work which met the demands of this coursework unit well. In Task 1, apt linguistic frameworks and approaches were adopted to analyse a vast range of texts in the written and multimodal modes.

Written texts included tabloid and broadsheet articles, reviews, political speeches, recipes, poetry and prose extracts. Multimodal texts included newspaper and magazine articles, film reviews, advertisements, leaflets and TV transcripts.

It is worth mentioning again that candidates should be encouraged to pursue their own individual strengths and interests in their selection of texts and tasks. There are still a small number of centres where the whole class is directed to analyse the same two texts or text types and to complete the same adaptive writing task. This practice is to be discouraged as it is restrictive and as such does not enable candidates to reach their full potential.

Centres are reminded of the need to clearly label the source texts as 'written' or 'multimodal.' It is most helpful if the labels appear on the texts themselves.

Much good quality analysis was in evidence, where close attention was paid to key stylistic and linguistic features whilst considering aspects of audience, purpose and context.

In some cases greater consideration could have been given to the impact of multimodal features, such as visual and/or prosodic aspects of texts. The aim is to show how more than one mode has been used. Some candidates analysed their multimodal texts in exactly the same way as their written texts, giving little or no consideration to multimodal features which were in fact an integral part of the chosen text. Candidates need to include discussion of the impact of these features on the language, style and meaning of the chosen text.

Task 2: Adaptive Writing and Commentary

This task was generally completed to a high standard. Adaptive tasks were rich and varied including tabloid articles adapted into autobiography, advertisements and diary entries and poems adapted into interviews, letters and diary entries. Autobiographies, articles, advertisements and speeches were all adapted into transcripts for radio programmes.

Many adaptive pieces were interesting to read and entirely suited for purpose. Good commentaries offer a comprehensive exploration of the writing process. The links between the two texts need to be clear. The commentary should contain discussion of decisions made to retain certain parts of the original and to omit other parts. It should explain how the language has been adapted to accommodate the new audience and/or purpose. Candidates need to make direct comparisons between the linguistic and stylistic features of the original and adapted texts.

A small number of centres had problems with the interpretation of adaptive writing. Some candidates are still producing pieces which are more 'inspired by' the original source text. Weaker commentaries gave little or no consideration of the process of adaptation. Instead they tended to involve candidates carrying out an in-depth analysis of the 'new' text, treating it as a completely independent piece of writing. These candidates did not fully understand the demands of text adaptation.

Application of Mark Scheme and General Administration

Most Centres applied the mark scheme with great accuracy and the comments of supervising teachers were most helpful. Some submissions lacked adequate annotation from teachers with several containing only the briefest of summative comments at the end of each task. It would be useful if the body of the candidates' work could be annotated with the corresponding Assessment Objectives (AOs 1, 2 and 3 for Task1 and AOs 1 and 4 for Task 2) as and when they are addressed.

In order to aid the moderation process, centres are reminded of the need to maintain accuracy when completing coursework cover sheets. Some sheets contained no candidate numbers at all and others contained errors, where the wrong candidate numbers had been added. Please take the time to check such details before submission.

F653 Culture, Language and Identity

General Comments

There was clear evidence in the scripts of improved performance this series. Better preparation was evident in the greater reference made to wider reading in Question 1. This was supported by more precise technical referencing, with candidates showing increased ability in using phonemic symbols. In Section B, some centres had prepared students for a wider selection of questions. Work in this section often showed effective insights into basic theories of narrative, indicative of supplementary reading and more confident academic guidance from teachers.

There are two general aspects of the paper to which centres need to encourage candidates to devote more attention. The first is the necessity for them to write in an appropriate academic style for this level of work. This is essential in meeting the AO1 criteria. The second is to remind candidates that they are expected to refer to all the structural features of language laid out in the Specification. This is very important in terms of addressing in depth the demands of AO2 and AO3.

Section A

Language and Speech

Though not mentioned in the passages, many candidates saw both (a) and (b) as an opportunity to address the multiple controversies surrounding the crucial initials RP. Although a number of candidates misread passage (a) as being written by The Queen's English Society, there was thoughtful response about prescriptivism, descriptivism and the debates about the changing nature and status of RP. This was often supported by cross-references to Estuarine issues; picked up largely from some of the data in passage (c). The answers were often supported by an impressive range of secondary reading and referencing. This included scholarly texts, dissertations, press reports and evidence of having seen and listened to a range of speaking voices. This last feature marked a very encouraging, and academically excellent, approach to speech studies. Very few answers gave attention to the latter parts of (a), which articulated some very radical points about possible pedagogic approaches to the teaching of speech/speaking. This is an issue which has been raised recently in popular journalism.

Candidates handled passage (b) with slightly less confidence. The initials BBC still attract far too much inaccurate history and too much Lord Reith and Wilfred Pickles. The passage was germane to understanding the importance given to the debates about correct pronunciation. It was essential to discuss why such forms were considered correct. It was expected that candidates would then give further illustration of the controversies which still exist about how certain words should be pronounced. This is often a feature in angry letters to the press and irate emails to the BBC. The uncertainty shown in the approach to this passage should remind centres that candidates are judged on analysis and further exemplification of the spoken voice and not on general social history.

Passage (c) gave many candidates the chance to air their knowledge of a popular television programme. This encouraged much interesting debate and illustration of Estuary/Cockney/London speech. Some enterprising candidates also used this passage to show basic knowledge of wider regional speech sounds. The most enterprising work across all three passages came from candidates who were prepared to illustrate their answers with relevant technical accuracy. This was most encouraging, especially when the passages were being used as stimulus material. Vowel quadrilaterals were very useful in defining specifics of RP. Illustrations of th-fronting, glottalisation, the dark-l and yod coalescence were helpful in steering through the complexities of Estuarine sounds. Such development of analytical skills, germane to

a formal approach to speech, is quite an impressive achievement. A minority of candidates do need reminding that Section A does not require detailed analysis of the lexis and syntax used in the stimulus passages.

Section B

The Language of Popular Written Texts

Candidates' responses to the passages in this section were good. Candidates appeared to have been encouraged to undertake basic secondary research on a broader range of fictional narratives, in order to enhance referential work supporting AO3. The song appeared to engage candidates and they were able to make differentiating links between its style and the basic conventions of magazine fiction and the romantic novel.

Many candidates who responded to the song drew upon previous literary teaching and the study of poetry. There were many comments upon basic prosodics, and discussion of metaphor and imagery. More analytical work noted parallelism in the structure and religious connotations in the lexical choices; pointing out that such choices appeared to give formal cohesion to the song. One or two candidates argued that the title was an interesting collocation, with connotations of the stellar nature of the search for individual emotional harmony. Perhaps the only notable omission was the absence of any discussion about how it might have sounded in terms of performance/speech.

In Passage (e) many candidates were able to deal with the fact that the passage was constructed largely through Louise's thoughts and feelings. This narrative internalisation reinforcing the level of fantasy and quasi erotic yearnings. Some of the adjectivals were noted as being stereotypical of an ideal romantic longing. Whilst the passage appeared to be realistic, candidates felt the language fulfilled the role of being 'typically' female about looks and emotions. Some compared this to the masculine being rather basically represented through sporting metaphors, the 'best mate' and the building industry. This seemed to be valid analytical reading and certainly was paying attention to the narrative patterning. The last paragraph was frequently commented upon for its three sentences, foregrounding the appeal of colour and looks as essential feminine attributes.

In contrast to this candidates seemed to feel the style and language of passage (f) was rather archaic and out-of-date, even for historical 2005. Candidates felt the title indicated a class-bound narrative, with Prince Charming meeting a woman in affluent circumstances. The speech was seen as being over formal and implausible. 'I would be honoured', 'our own dynasty', 'trying to seduce me you minx', seemed to be conversationally implausible. One or two candidates pointed out that this seemed to follow conventions quite common in certain older film genres. The style was analysed as being comprised of simple declaratives, especially in the final paragraph. One or two answers worked systematically through the connotations of the proper nouns and other nominals, pointing out how they bound the text in terms of social and aspirational status. One astute candidate's comment implied it was like a template for 'how to write a romantic novel without bothering about the boring bits'. Several answers to both (e) and (f) were quite good in discussing the production aspects of popular texts; pointing out their sustained popularity as both fictive and multi-media enterprises. This was excellent thinking in terms of enhancing the address to AO3.

Language and Cultural Production

Candidates who answered this question were prone to insecurity in addressing the linguistics of advertising in passage (g). The purpose of the passage was to show just how seriously advertisers took linguistics as a key structural and production feature of their work. Adjectivals and adverbials were given significant prominence in the passage and could have been used for exploratory investigation of both (h) and (i).The excellent exemplification of Fray Bentos might

have served as an analytical model to determine basic linguistic stylistics. It was possible, also, that candidates were unfamiliar with the noun 'copy' used in the question guidance section.

Passages (h) and (i) were more effectively addressed. There were some incisive comments upon the layout and colour signification in the perm advertisement. Candidates made effective narrative links with graphic novels, some remarking upon the archaic 'dash it' and 'don't talk rot' as amusing imperatives. One perceptive candidate seeing how the narrative closure linked to the exhortative sentence 'you too can be perfect'. The noun phrase 'pin-up girl' (archaic) invited much speculation, though one candidate sharply related it to the modern iconicity of 'celebs' selling products. A number of comments pointed out the instructional nature of the guide, with a discoursal pattern of guidance and resolution. One very alert grammarian pointed out the opening past historic tense compared to the conditional tense at the ending. The car advertisement was compared to the perm in terms of masculine/feminine, though it was also argued that the lexis of the car promotion could be read as equally feminine. Mention was made of the 'Kidson Hamper', and 'silk scarves by Clio' to support such feminine contentions. This was linked to the collocation 'chic accessories' as the way to attract the female driver. Whichever way, this was basic gender theory applied with complete relevance to the actual passage. The modern collocation 'chilling out' was seen as being intrusive against a lexical calendar full of 'freedom', 'heritage coasts' and 'justifiable indulgences'. The travel writing style was hinted at; candidates here lacking the breadth of cultural referencing to explore in detail. Few candidates saw the same adjectival drive that was exemplified in the linguistics of advertising passage. However, many candidates certainly could see the cultural manifestations in both passages and were able to draw upon a good range of linguistic terminology with which to explore these features.

As in Question 2, there was some good work produced on production features. There were comments made about iconicity and differing styles of font. One centre produced some valuable ideas about the discursive nature of the modern car advertisement and the fact that much of the syntax appeared to be about the countryside and 'me time', whereas the actual object of sale was often subordinated in language to this cultural ideal. Excellent thinking and preparation in producing a detailed AO3 approach.

Language, Power and Identity

There was an important issue raised by some responses to this question. There appears to be an assumption that power and/or identity presupposes a focus upon gender issues. The consequences of this assumption resulted in some candidates producing pre-packaged generalities about gender, which often do not fit the discourse patterns of the set passages. It is crucial that candidates address what is actually written in the passages, rather than setting up materials which do not bear upon the syntactic and cohesive patterns in the stimulus materials. This deviant approach tended to lead to the passages seen as representing varieties of maleness dominating the legal profession. Some candidates tied themselves into knots trying to show this on the slimmest evidence. There could be a case for some very basic gender investigative comments and syntactic analysis. However, even Carter-Ruck, who appear to be driven by very limited 'masculine' language, are not promoting any specific gender identity in their advertisement. The more alert centres, approaching the task by detailed address to syntax and lexical analysis, saw that the primary discourses were around varieties of media and its links to legal authority. Two passages were clearly reportage and followed the differing conventions of this type of writing. The third passage was a public relations web page, selling a brand image. So, there were clearly identities being established and differing forms of power manifested by legal processes and legal business acumen. Lily Allen, Richard Shillito and Mr Justice Eady represented different identities engaged in differing forms of power. Carter Ruck worked outside of this trio. The broad discourses - important term for narrative analysis - were foregrounded in the language of such activities.

Passage (j) was relatively lay person reportage, supported by an iconic visual. The reported incidents in the narrative opening up the litigious world of popular culture. Passage (k) was a little more complex. A small number of candidates saw this was a technical debate about the emerging power of the internet and how it was causing interpretative difficulties in legal terms. This needed the 'power' of an important legal representative to offer a quite unusual collocation in his judgements, talking of 'give and take'. Carter-Ruck was analysed, in focused responses, as creating identity by image. The powerful adjectives, 'dominant', 'forceful' etc., seemed to offer the best chance of some informed discussion of linguistic gender concern. Those candidates who followed this approach of narrative analysis and evaluation were able to give a balanced account of the actual passages as stylistic products. Only a few candidates took the opportunity to comment upon the production features of the passages. Perhaps candidates' relative familiarity with web-based work might have stopped them from commenting upon its effects upon the traditional reportage of the legal system. Certainly the idea of quite blatant public relations, exemplified in passage (l) was until recently not normal practice in the legal profession.

In conclusion, it may be helpful to point out that in the approaching this Topic, some candidates only tentatively addressed the narratives and stylistic features, often limiting linguistic responses to very basic observations about lexis. This restrictive focus upon AO2 is one to which centres might wish to give further informed consideration in preparing candidates.

F654 Media Language

General Comments

Candidates had obviously been well taught and well prepared in a variety of aspects of the A2 course and they applied their learning to the analytical and creative work within this coursework component.

Most candidates had been guided to select appropriate written, spoken and multimodal texts as source material for Task 1 with a variety of interesting and challenging themes being adopted. Quite a few candidates chose to link their texts with political themes, looking at various aspects of British and American politics. Themes included aspects of war, human rights, political campaigns, law enforcement and the EU crisis.

Many submissions centred around famous personalities from the world of comedy (Peter Kay, Michael McIntyre, The Two Ronnies, Karl Pilkington and James Corden) and popular music (Leona Lewis, Rihanna, Lady Gaga, Eminem, Paramore, My Chemical Romance.) TV and Drama produced themes such as reality TV, Eastenders, The Inbetweeners, The Mighty Boosh and Phantom of the Opera. Others chose broader themes such as body image, fashion, bullying, racism, humour, conflict and love.

It is important that the theme is clearly stated in the introduction to the analysis as, where this was not the case, it was often difficult for moderators to ascertain the perceived links between the media texts.

Some candidates had problems with text selection where texts containing significant images and other multimodal features were used as source material for the written text analysis. It has been stated many times before but needs repeating that written texts should contain no visual images. Where these are present the text must be identified as multimodal and the visual features analysed in detail alongside the written aspects of the text.

Task 1: Independent Investigation: Comparison and Analysis

In most cases spoken and written features of language were generally analysed and compared successfully but candidates should be encouraged to give greater consideration to features of multimodality. Some candidates selected appropriate multimodal texts but then went on to refer only to the written part of the text, ignoring visual or phonological features which had clearly been incorporated to enhance meaning. It is important to include discussion of the impact that multimodality has on the language, style and overall meaning of the source text.

Task 2: Original Writing and Commentary

The level of expertise and creativity demonstrated in Task 2 was impressive, as was the range of writing tasks attempted. Magazine articles and reviews were the most popular choice alongside articles for tabloid and broadsheet newspapers. Webpages, adverts, leaflets, poems and posters all figured prominently. Spoken language pieces included scripts, persuasive speeches and transcripts for films, TV programmes, and comedy performances.

Application of Mark Scheme and General Administration

The marking of both tasks was generally accurate but, in some cases, no annotations were made on the body of the work to indicate where and how particular Assessment Objectives had been met. In these cases the moderator had to rely on summative comments which were sometimes rather vague. This makes the moderation process less straightforward as it is sometimes difficult to decipher why marks have been awarded. Teachers should annotate the

work throughout making direct reference to the relevant Assessment Objectives (AOs 1, 2 and 3 for Task 1 and AOs 2 and 4 for Task 2) in the margins of the work, as and when they are addressed. Many Centres did include such annotation and this was very helpful.

In the majority of cases, the mark scheme was applied appropriately and assessment was deemed to be accurate. Assessment often focussed on the content of candidates' work, but lapses in written expression and coherence also need to be acknowledged by assessing teachers. Basic errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling hamper the overall quality of the written communication and this must be reflected in the final mark awarded.

Administration was generally well done but care needs to be taken when completing cover sheets as some had inaccurate candidate numbers which led to some confusion. Also, please note that it is not necessary for candidates to include drafts or more than one copy of source texts. Each candidate's completed folder should simply consist of the coursework cover sheet, a clean copy of the three texts (individually labelled as 'spoken,' written' or 'multimodal') and the written work for Tasks 1 and 2. The work of each candidate should be secured, by a treasury tag or paper clip, to separate it clearly from the work of other candidates.

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