Examiners' Report

June 2012

GCE English Language 6EN01 01

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Introduction

The paper has two sections, which invites candidates to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of linguistic concepts across all ability ranges. Section A is progressive. It allows candidates to test the range of their skills by building on concepts and language features over four questions. Section B offers an opportunity for extended analysis and discussion in a longer single comparative question.

The June 2012 series has proven to be a very successful paper for many candidates across the ability range.

Most candidates managed their time effectively and were very well prepared for the demands of each question. Centres should be aware that the amount of space provided in the booklet is more than ample for an effective answer. Despite this not being a recommendation of the amount that candidates should write, candidates are not advantaged by over-writing and should aim to contain their answers within the booklet. However, responses should be extensive enough to be effectively assessed over three assessment objectives.

The purpose of this report is to give an insight into the ways in which this examination has been assessed. An approach to each individual question can be gleaned from the outline of candidates' performance within this report.

Before starting to write, candidates should not only read all the texts, but also read through the five questions. They should have a clear understanding of how the questions differ before tackling them.

Question 1: candidates must focus only on the underlined material. There are no marks for observing what is outside the highlighted area. Also the example must be from the source booklet and not be an example drawn from the candidates' existing knowledge or understanding.

Question 2: candidates should consider the over-arching contextual factors of the genre the particular series focuses on. The recommended factors are field, function, tenor and mode. However, we are very open to alternative systems e.g. audience and purpose, as a way of embracing innovative teaching and learning.

Question 3: the focus for this question moves to particular sub-groups for more detailed comment. Candidates need to focus on the language features used within the texts and support this with critical discussion.

Question 4: this question is synoptic of Section A. Candidates should note what they have learned in their responses to previous questions and apply this knowledge to the new texts they have been given.

Question 5: candidates should note that AO2 marks are for discussion of presentation of self through language issues and AO3 marks are for their exploration of the presentation of self through the contextual factors and key constituents. There should be balance of the exploration of each text and also of the contextual factors and key constituents.

Question 1

This question aims to test a candidate's knowledge and understanding of linguistic terminology.

There are 15 marks drawn from AO1.

AO1: Select and apply a range of linguistic methods to communicate relevant knowledge using appropriate terminology and coherent accurate written expression.

Bold font is used to illustrate the language feature that the candidates are required to comment on.

For this series the suggested responses were as follows:

a) verb / progressive / continuous / elliptical elements

b) noun phrase / alliteration / elliptical elements / minor sentence

c) verb / imperative /capitalisation / connotations of Christian ethos

d) pronoun / deixis / subject

e) antonym / semantic contrast binary / adjective.

Mostly this question was very well answered. There was clear evidence that candidates had explored a wealth of experiences to equip them for this examination. It appeared from the varied responses produced by candidates that centres are teaching and learning in innovative ways. Candidates clearly got to grips with the structure of English and showed confidence in analysing grammatical features in numerous ways.

a) Candidates identified the use of the verb, and its progressive aspect. Positive connotations were also popular. A number of students analysed this feature as gerund, which was duly awarded.

b) Mostly the responses for this question related to the noun phrase, alliteration and minor sentence. Some candidates noticed the prepositional phrase and were awarded for this. However, there were a number of responses identifying declarative. This was not awarded any marks as it is difficult to know what the elliptical elements might be. It seems that candidates often opt for this answer without discrimination. This can actually distract them from awardable responses.

c) This was, again, a high scoring question. Mostly candidates identified the imperative, and the capitalisation.

d) Candidates spotted the pronoun often with knowledge of third person singular. Also, deixis and context bound were correctly quoted. Few candidates drew on their knowledge of phrases. The determiner was a popular but incorrect answer, along with monosyllable. These answers were not awarded marks.

e) Most candidates identified the antonym or semantic contrast and there were abundant references to the use of adjectives and modification, which were correctly exampled.

Candidates mostly wrote enough, to make themselves understood and there were few occasions where candidates did not make themselves clear.

However, this successful question was slightly hampered by candidates repeating responses (they can only be awarded once). This tended to occur as deixis and context bound were quoted as separates, and verbs and adjectives were overused in a variety of different places across the paper. Declaratives and polysyllables tended to be used by a minority of candidates for all of the questions. Centres might like to remind candidates that quoting out of the bold area attracts no marks.

Question 2

This question draws marks for AO3.

AO3: Analyse and evaluate the influence of contextual factors on the production and reception of spoken and written language, showing knowledge of the key constituents of language.

Most candidates used the mode, field, function, tenor format and achievement mostly fell into the middle band award. Whilst the majority of responses covered a range of contextual factors this was often at a descriptive level.

There were a few candidates confused by the requirements of the question and who did not manage to refer to the text at all. A number of candidates were confused by the audience of the primary school texts and thought that they were aimed at the pupils about to attend them.

In contrast some candidates demonstrated a sophisticated awareness of the addresser/ addressee relationship of the slogans. Top band achievement prioritised tenor as the most pertinent contextual factor and offered a subtle critical analysis.

2 Explain the contextual factors that influence the use of language in slogans in educational publicity.

(AO3 = 10)

In your response, you must refer to the data provided on pages 2–4 of the Source Booklet.

PLAN

Mode – written, poster, leaflet, advertisement, on a website

Field – semantic field of education, achievement, ambition, community.

Function – to persuade – appealing factors

Tenor – potential students + staff at high members parents of students the school. of authority

age of the people Reading them. who will make the choice

slogans – short, concise, key info, play on words, rhetorical devices

Primarily, these slogans will be written texts available in a manner of different formats whether it be on posters or leaflets in the place of education, on the establishments own website or on advertisements for the school, college or university. The expected choice of lexis for these slogans is largely from the semantic field of education with many references to achievement or ambition and creating a sense of community. Factors such as 'value in people' and 'achieving excellence' play a key role in the purpose of these slogans which is most likely

to persuade potential students and their parents to consider enrolling in their school. Despite the age gap in children, teenagers and their parents, these slogans need to appeal to everybody and so minor or simple sentences have been used throughout. The person who created the slogans for the establishment will have been aware of their target audience and so needed to ensure that they were inclusive. Many of the slogans use direct pronouns, such as 'your future' which personally involves the reader through use of the 2nd person, and 'we provide' which emphasises the idea of a joint community through the 1st person plural pronoun.

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Examiner Comments

In this response, there is clear understanding of the written mode, linked and exemplified with illustration of lexical choice. The discussion of tenor is good and exampled, but the points are very general.

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Examiner Tip

In relation to mode, this candidate's approach cannot be faulted. However, this response could not be placed in band 3, because the discussion of tenor is general and without focus. Had this piece prioritised a detailed discussion of tenor in the same way that it discusses mode, it could well have been placed at the top of band 3.

Question 3

Here candidates pick up an extra assessment objective and are marked for AO2 and AO3. There are 5 marks for each assessment objective.

AO2: Demonstrate a critical understanding of a range of concepts and issues related to the construction of meanings in spoken and written language, using knowledge of linguistic approaches.

AO3: Analyse and evaluate the influence of contextual factors on the production and reception of spoken and written language, showing knowledge of the key constituents of language.

Many scripts identified the use of direct address and convergence to develop a rapport with the audience. Some good answers noticed the difference in audiences between each group and the impact of this on language use.

The excellent demonstration of terminology in Question 1, was used to good effect in most cases but could have been exploited further in others. Many candidates missed the hints and tips picked out for them in Question 1, when tackling Question 3. It is possible to use the highlighted features of Question 1 as a guide or plan for Questions 3 and 4. Although in fact, fewer candidates missed these hints in this series, as most used Question 3 as an opportunity to analyse the text's use of verbs, modified noun phrases, imperatives, pronouns and semantic contrasts.

However, simple, minor and complex sentences were at times misunderstood in some lower band 2 scripts. Similarly verbs, adjectives and nouns were sometimes confused. Whereas sentence moods were well represented, they often were not linked to the language issues or concepts. Ellipsis and pronouns were usually identified well and linked, at times well, to tenor or audience.

The successes of Question 1 are clearly being harnessed to support the analysis of language issues and concepts within the sources.

Group B appear to have the grammar features of Indpersonal pronouns 'your' which makes the text seem more personal towards the reader and direct, making them feel more interactive with the slogan and the higher education place, therefore using an influencial power on them to consider them more. They also use ~~futter~~ rhetorical interrogatives, which also interacts with the reader, giving them something to think about 'looking for your future?' There are many simple sentences, making them brief and not overriding the reader with information, therefore following Grice's maxims, quantity and relevance as ~~in pasytage~~ they say things you'd want to hear.

Question 4

Again there are two assessment objectives: AO2 and AO3. There are 5 marks for AO2 and 10 for AO3.

AO2: Demonstrate a critical understanding of a range of concepts and issues related to the construction of meanings in spoken and written language, using knowledge of linguistic approaches.

AO3: Analyse and evaluate the influence of contextual factors on the production and reception of spoken and written language, showing knowledge of the key constituents of language.

This question showed a significant improvement on previous series. The responses benefited from a heightened demonstration of technical awareness and most candidates across the ability bands tackled an analyisis of some of the mystery slogans. There were plausible suggestions made about most of the slogans, which were usually related to relevant language features. This was often offered as a rationale for their choice.

Popular responses discussed a link to growth, the use of the listing device, and the relevance of mind. However, most candidates focused on the obvious lexical choices but ignored the grammatical points. To move more candidates into higher bands they need to engage in discussion about grammar and discourse.

Higher band achievement showed a key link to the original texts. It is possible to use Section A in a progressive way and as a basis for Question 4.

The key to the question is the strength of the interrogation. The educational slogan could be any text, it does not matter. Centres have clearly underlined the importance of the exploration of possibility using contextual factors and key constituents. Few responses showed a lack of engagement with the texts in questions.

ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

This response starts well, the candidate identifies the use of pronouns in the original slogans and discusses the mystery slogan's potential. Slogan f is then discounted through plausible but uncritical conjecture.

ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

Had this candidate continued to relate the mystery slogans to the features of the sources, then this script might have attracted awarding at the top of band 2. However, to move into band 3, the candidate would have had to engage with the grammatical features of the slogans.

Question 5

Here, three assessment objectives are assessed. AO1 has 10 marks, AO2 15 and AO3 25.

AO1: Select and apply a range of linguistic methods to communicate relevant knowledge using appropriate terminology and coherent accurate written expression.

AO2: Demonstrate a critical understanding of a range of concepts and issues related to the construction of meanings in spoken and written language, using knowledge of linguistic approaches.

AO3: Analyse and evaluate the influence of contextual factors on the production and reception of spoken and written language, showing knowledge of the key constituents of language.

Throughout the paper candidates were able to demonstrate a thorough, wide ranging understanding of terms and terminology. This was illustrated throughout the ability range.

This question seemed to engage the candidates well. They wrote extensively, charting the discourse of each text. Candidates managed to compare both texts and wove in a discussion of the ways by which participants presented themselves to some extent.

However, the presentation of self is the focus of the question and it did not often take shape within the responses. At times the presentation of self took the shape of value judgements. Sally was described as snobby, ignorant, annoying and arrogant, whilst Mark was noted as spineless. Comments about Aleixa's wealth and background were linked to snobbiness and were widespread. It would be useful to encourage some critical reflection with regards to this issue.

Many candidates mentioned theories, but not all candidates discussed these. Candidates who analysed the ways in which theories could be applied to the data were rewarded.

The main theorists were Lakoff, Fishman, Grice and Trudgill. There were many theorists misquoted which included Grice Maxim's theory, Gracie Maxim and Brice's gracious Maxium theory. Although we do try and empathise with candidates sitting this exam, the curb appeal of such names does not do the work justice.

Personality:- Text A it is conversation between three person sally, Gemma and Mark. I think they all are around 25 year old because in the text they telling that they just finish the degree and sally and Gemma is a women and mark is men, I can see by the name and by the way the talking. Mark, he talk very less, according to Petter theory Men is talk less than women. Text B, from the text I can know that, she is a women because of her name and she like to write about her life alot. She is around 23 year old because she telling that "this is her first year at cambridge."

Paper Summary

There were some very pleasing scripts produced by candidates this series. This was a very successful series, as candidates seemed to engage well with the texts. This report has tried to give an overview of how the candidates performed and illustrate the observable strengths and weaknesses of the responses produced.

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