

# Examiners' Report

Summer 2016

Pearson Edexcel IAL in English  
Language (WEN02)

Unit 2: Language in Transition

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## **Introduction**

The purpose of this report is to provide centres with an insight into the assessment process and give an overview of how students approached each question.

In this series some students performed well, engaged positively with the texts and produced some developed and analytical responses. However, the majority of students demonstrated a lack of knowledge and understanding of the requirements of each question highlighting they were unprepared for the standard of the examination. This was evident by the lack of content within responses with many students applying a descriptive approach or writing brief responses which did not attempt to cover all aspects of the question.

students are encouraged to dedicate a realistic amount of time to each question and use the amount of marks available as a guideline of how much to write.

Centres should provide students with opportunities to familiarise themselves with the content and format of the examination paper, ensuring that they have a clear understanding of the requirements of each question before the exam.

It is recommended that students should read through both questions, as well as the extracts in the source booklet, before beginning their written response.

The paper is divided into two sections providing an opportunity for a comparative analysis in Section A and a discussion based essay in Section B. Students are invited to analyse three texts representative of the spoken and written modes of language. Each section contains one question worth 25 marks each. Students must answer both questions.

### **Section A: Spoken Language Today**

This section provides an unseen piece of spoken language from the 21<sup>st</sup> century which is a variety of English. Question 1 engages students in an analysis of the development of this variety in relation to Standard English. In this series the spoken language was an example of Hawaiian Creole English.

### **Section B: Written Language of the 19<sup>th</sup> -21<sup>st</sup> Century**

Students answer one discussion question on two written texts in the Source Booklet that look at the issue raised in Section A from a wider perspective. This series, the two extracts were a newspaper article and a blog post which presented contrasting attitudes towards English based Creoles developed in Singapore and Trinidad. Students were asked to discuss how English based creoles reflect the changes and development of English across the world.

## Question 1

Students tended to perform better on this question with some producing good responses and engaging well with the data. More successful responses approached the question using the bullet points as a scaffold addressing the different language levels. This allowed students to structure their response and engage in a systematic analysis of the text. A lot of students did limit themselves by focusing only on phonology or lexis which meant their response was hampered by a lack of range.

No marks were awarded at level 5 as an 'evaluative response' was not achieved. Top level 4 responses covered a range of features including grammar, phonology, lexis, used terminology and discussed theories such as Accommodation Theory and overt/covert prestige. Points were supported with lots of examples from the text and made links to the discourse and prescriptivism. Level 3 students tended to lack the range of features in their analysis which is required for the higher bands and may have limited discussion on theories or discourse.

Weaker students tended to feature spot and describe what was there particularly with phonology. Some students expanded on this mentioning terminology such as dental fricatives and were able to link one or two features to American English or Native Hawaiian such as 'homies' or 'tutu'. Explanations of how the language differed from Standard English and some knowledge of the development of creoles allowed for marks awarded in level 2 demonstrating general understanding.

Students awarded at level 1 and lower band 2 described and paraphrased what was there and identified the language as non-standard. References to Hawaiian Creole as being incorrect/wrong were common. Students also showed evidence of not recognising the data as a spoken transcript, referring to micro pauses as excessive full stops and analysing the text as written language. Some students shared their personal opinion of Standard English, stated general differences of short and long sentences, identified omission and substitution of words but were unable to recognise them as a feature of Creole language or explain how varieties of English develop. Weaker responses were brief at 2-3 pages.

## Question 2

There was a wide range of approaches to this question with some students focusing on one bullet point to develop the answer. This was often 'the role of international English' and students went into detail about the spread of English in general linking to technology, and business without referring to creoles. Some of these responses were good but their marks were limited to level three as they only addressed one part of the question.

Some students did a general essay on the global spread of English without applying it to the data. Some contained good points citing their own examples which could have been further supported with examples from the

sources but not all students did this. Students can use their own examples of language use but they must link it to language in the source data as well.

Level 4 marks focused on all the bullet points in their discussion, referred to the source texts, applied theories and structured their answer around Creoles. Strong responses were detailed, used terminology, explained the formation of Creoles, identified their features and discussed stigmatisation linking to the Accommodation Theory. Some responses also addressed Covert Prestige in Text A and Text C. Level 3 responses may have addressed all three bullet points but focused more on one which limited them.

Low level responses tended to focus on the spread of English via technology, Hollywood and the general benefits of one global language without addressing Creoles or the sources. Some responses discussed Modern London English (MLE) from the sample assessment materials and built an answer around Creoles in London which was not relevant and showed misunderstanding.

### **Paper Summary**

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

- Employ effective time management in the examination to ensure that appropriate time is spent on each question in relation to the assessment objectives.
- Use terminology throughout your response.
- Ensure you refer to the sources in both questions and support your points with evidence from the texts.
- In Q2 consider all three texts in your discussion. Do not limit your response to one set of data or to one discussion point.
- Use the bullet points as a scaffold when writing your response to make sure all parts of the question are addressed and you have the opportunity to achieve full marks.

## **Grade Boundaries**

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>







