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Examiners' Report

June 2011

GCE English Language 6EN01 01

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Introduction

Generally speaking, most candidates engaged well with each question and managed their time effectively to produce full and lengthy answers. However, the breadth and depth of analysis needed to perform well at Advanced Subsidiary level remained a challenge for some candidates.

This report intends to give insight into the patterns and trends that emerged in this series.

Question 1

This question was answered very well and showed the least amount of differentiation. This high performing question clearly showed that candidates are to some extent equipped with sufficient technical knowledge to tackle the more demanding questions.

Although Question 1 was answered well generally, there were a few low mark awards. Lower achievement was usually signified, as grammatical terms were cited in everyday ways, e.g. question or command. Also, there was a tendency of weaker responses to merely copy the language patterns in the example e.g. 'We are the Canaries!' was exemplified with 'We don't care'. In addition to this, there was sometimes confusion over the identification of word class, e.g. adjectives were stated as adverbs. Or responses quoting 'diexis' and 'context bound' were listed more than once throughout the answer.

This section offers candidates the opportunity to demonstrate their linguistic knowledge and understanding. It is the purpose of this paper to assess this; therefore subsequent questions have been designed to build on these foundations. As this report serves to help teachers to raise achievement, I will refer to this knowledge base throughout the report, as a means of offering insight into how candidates can enhance their performance.

For each of the extracts given:

(i) Describe the underlined language feature using **two** linguistic terms.

(ii) Identify another example of the underlined feature from the data provided in the Source Booklet.

(a) Extract: We are the Canaries! [No. 1].

(i) (2)

1 *Personal 1st person plural pronoun*

2 *Subject of sentence*

(ii) (1)

..... *You're a bunch of fairies*



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Here the candidate clearly spotted the pronoun, and found a good example from the source booklet. This demonstrated good linguistic knowledge and was awarded full marks.

Question 2

In contrast, although this question showed a wide differentiation of responses it mostly highlighted weakness. It was common for candidates to confuse the demands of this question with the demands of Questions 3 and 4. Candidates rarely engaged in meaningful ways with the range of contextual factors outlined in the specification and guidance.

In lower bands, answers talked about the context with limited linguistic focus.

Education is another thing. It takes creative flair and rhythmic understanding to create a chant. So the education in basic english would be essential. Education can coincide with the environment. Such as a playground and this could lead to chants. Number 17. is a common chant that is connected to childrens games. 'p. dip, dip, you are not it' it a declarative that tells the person they are not selected for the game, whatever that may be. This would not be common in a working



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Following this example, one might speculate how focussing on the contextual factors might have improved this response. For example, had the candidate expressed this answer through the framework of tenor, it is possible that it may have taken shape into a response that was awardable. If the 'declarative' has been linked to the mode of the chant, it is possible that the candidate could have found the focus to express their ideas.

In band 2, candidates tended to use the framework, mode, field, function and tenor but in a formulaic way.

Function can be described as the reason for writing or talking about something. Again the function varies within each group. The sporting chants in Group A tend to show support to the football teams and players they are directed at. The Political chants are used in a persuasive way and to protest against schemes and Government decisions. An example is 'cut the funding'. The Playground chants appear to be more general and more fun.



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It is evident from this example, that the basic principle behind the function of chants has been grasped. However, had this candidate chosen to expand on the 'support', 'persuasion' and 'fun' aspects, with discussion and concrete examples from the texts, substantiated with linguistic labelling, this response would have gained more marks.

In band 3, candidates able to demonstrate some understanding of contextual factors were able to offer some insight into chanting.

2 Explain the contextual factors that influence the use of language in chants.

(AO3 = 10)

In your response, you must refer to the data provided on pages 2–5 of the Source Booklet.

There are 4 main contextual factors. One of them is 'mode', and this describes what the text, or this case chant, is. All of the chants are of the spoken mode, as they are chanted by people. They are not spontaneous and instead are planned, and are not used in a small conversation, but instead used while singing in groups. They are aimed to be sung by many and so are short, for example, "He's big, he's red, his feet stick out bed, Peter Crouch, Peter Crouch." These chants do not have a ^{high} formality level and do not contain full standard English.



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This candidate was awarded for their discussion and example, as it offered some insight into their thinking. Had the candidate developed this further by labelling the contraction or the monosyllabic rhyming adjectives and linked it to mode or function, it could well have taken this response to the top of the band.

Question 3

This was by far the most successfully answered question. Most candidates seemed to answer the question and made some attempt to deconstruct and discuss the features of the text. However, there seemed to be a discrepancy between an evidently clear knowledge base and a fundamental misunderstanding of linguistic analysis. Candidates did explain the differences in language use that they noticed, but it was very rare to see this analysis go beyond lexis or semantic meaning. The application of grammatical enquiry remained to be a worry. There was limited exploration of the key constituents and linguistic methods, as a means of enquiry. This remains at the heart of this specification and the questions are designed to enable the candidates to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and skills in a range of different ways. The structure of English and grammatical enquiry underpin the key constituents. Often candidates would start with 'Grammatically speaking...' and then go on to make general comments about sentence moods. In order to gain higher marks candidates would benefit from focussing on the technical aspects of texts, as the basis of their analysis.

Despite this, this question showed the candidates starting to employ their understanding of theorists and theories. These were clearly understood and the best responses came from discussion relating to convergence and divergence.

Band 1 responses often lacked linguistic rigour, ranging from discussion in general terms, through to analysis with some lower level terminology.

Firstly, Graphology is quite similar between the groups as they follow the same type of structure. The chants are all very short, with the exception of number 1 in Group A. This would be to have a good effect and be clear in what they are suggesting. However Group A has a high amount of exclamation marks, unlike Group B. An example is "We are the Canaries!" and "Peter Crouch, Peter Crouch!" These would be used to emphasise a sentence and would back up the idea of showing support. Group B doesn't use any exclamation marks and this is probably because they think that the government would be more likely to listen to their suggestions if they made them in a more orderly fashion. Group B



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The candidate's reference to graphology for a spoken chant demonstrated a fundamental misunderstanding of the key constituents. Had this candidate focused on simple sentences and minor sentences and explored the relationship between language use and form/genre, then it would have been awarded more marks.

Band 2 responses tended to analyse lower level language features in more detail, often with examples.

taken into account. On the other hand, in Group A, the football chants, there is a high use of exclamation, ~~such as~~ and such as "wonderland!" and "Emmanuel!" to add emphasis to what they are trying to say. This is because football and ~~political~~ political chants have a very different function. The football chants aim to add support to the team, in a more upbeat manner, as well as trying to add to the atmosphere in matches by being ~~led~~ led, unlike in political chants where they are trying to provide a different response and appear angry towards their audience.



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Here the candidate noticed that the exclamative mood added emphasis, however this lack of technical understanding warranted a lower mark. Should the candidate had used the examples to go beyond mood, they would have been awarded more marks.

Band 3 responses dealt with language features in a more advanced way. However, the range of key constituents still required greater breadth.

- 3 Explain the differences in language use that you notice between the chants in Groups A and B.

(AO2 = 5, AO3 = 5)

In your response, you must refer to Groups A and B on pages 2–3 of the Source Booklet.

In group A, we clearly see rhyming couplets in some form in each one of the texts. This gives them a nice ring and makes them memorable and easy to pick up for large crowds at a football game. On the other hand, group B's chants are often, but not always rhymes, and are often much more venomous and negative. The use of lexis such as "lies", "war" and "kill" gives the chants a much more bitter edge than Group A's, due to the connotations of the lexis chosen, compared with "brilliant", "win" and "wonderland".



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In this text, the candidate secured an interesting discussion of the lexis, but would have benefited from linguistic labelling e.g. verb, noun etc. Also by employing more of the key constituents, they might have performed better on the task, as a wider breadth of coverage prevented the candidate obtaining the full marks.

Question 4

Candidates performed least well on Question 4. Candidates are expected to interrogate a range of texts using key constituents and linguistic methods. To obtain full marks the candidates needed to analyse each text thoroughly.

Responses ranged from a competent enquiry through to the 'guessing of the real answer' and the production of an uncritical 'whodunit' style approach.

In band 1, candidates were led primarily by the lexis of the text. They often tried to link the choice of vocabulary to the origin of the language user.

I think that Text 20 appears to be more of a playground chant, this is because of the non-complex lexis used and the basic rhymes, typical of a young child. Although there is a reference to football "Man United" which could indicate that it is better suited to Group A, the clear immaturity of the speaker or speakers indicates that it is being chanted by a typical young child. Furthermore, what is being chanted "They wear stickers on their knickers" appears to have very little relevance to football, ~~to the fact~~ It is more similar to



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Here, had the comment about non-complex lexis been supported with an example and labelled with a linguistic term, the development of it being typical of a young child would have gained it more marks.

In band 2, there was a tendency to discuss the texts with very general comments about the grammar, usually with limited exemplification.

belong to these. Text 21 has a similar discourse to Group C texts as it is fairly long, rhymes and sounds like a song. It seems to have no protest function as neither the declarative, an interrogative or imperative is used, which means it's less likely to belong to group B, and is similar to group C as it is light and playful instead of aggressive. As playground chants are sung by children they often accompany a game and so are happy, 'lolly', 'blue ship', 'heart beat', 'apples'. Text 21 is intended to be



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In this case the pertinent and interesting comments about discourse and function, and general comments about interrogative and imperative moods lack rigour. To obtain more marks, the candidate would need to explore with more focus.

There were very few candidates falling in band 3 for this question. This was mainly due to the lack of key constituents and use of theorists and theories.

Repetition in Group C; 'Double double' creates a rhythmic feel to the chant and this is evident in text 20; 'tra la la la la'. Never-the-less this is purely made up of morphemes and has no lexical meaning.

Colloquialisms are common in ^{group C} 'stuff it' and 'arse' as they fulfil an entertaining function. This is also evident in text 21; 'loo' and 'poo' which when alongside the less mature suggestion; 'She is having a poo' may indicate this text is from the group C. However, 'Maggie Thatcher' is a political figure and so this subject specific lexis indicates a more sophisticated use of knowledge. Never the less the use of rhythm rhyming on every line; 'Stich - - - ick' can be found in group C, which suggests this is the place it is from.



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In this response, the candidate explored repetition, morphemes, colloquialisms and rhyming'. This range of features with development of the effects put the response in the lower end of band 3.

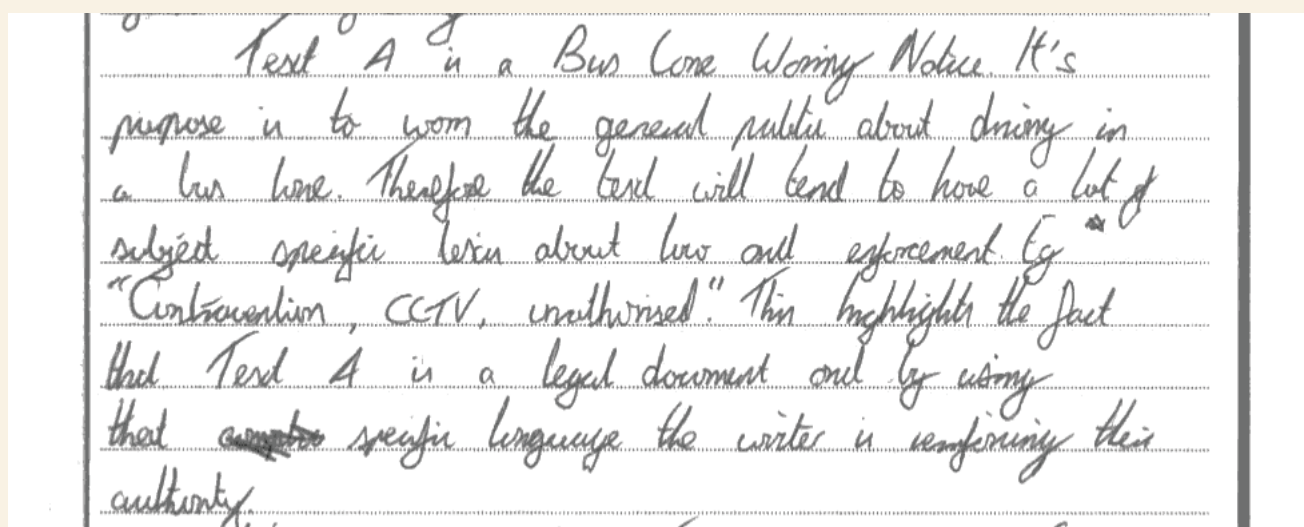
Question 5

This was generally a successfully answered question. However, due to a limited use of the key constituents, there were few awards at the top of the mark scheme. To achieve a top band mark, candidates need to be competent with linguistic methods of enquiry. Evidence of the analysis of the grammar of each text was very difficult to find, with the exception of a few astute candidates noticing the passive voice in Text 1.

Generally candidates dealt with theorists well, but tended to be over-reliant and uncritical of Lakoff. However, candidate's ability to demonstrate knowledge about language, through their discussion of theory remains to be the strength of this unit.

Few candidates discussed the relevance of presenting self. Some candidates carried on with a forensic approach and made misplaced value judgements about the real identity of Danuta Reah, whilst some other candidates carried forward the framework of the contextual factors.

Lower band responses tended to produce narrative accounts describing the features of the text.



Text A is a Bus Lane Warning Notice. It's purpose is to warn the general public about driving in a bus lane. Therefore the text will tend to have a lot of subject specific lexis about law and enforcement. Eg "Contravention, CCTV, unauthorised". This highlights the fact that Text A is a legal document and by using that ~~specific~~ specific language the writer is reinforcing their authority.



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In this response, the candidate described the purpose of the text well, however, he or she did not analyse the ways in which the writers present self. There is a clear attempt to discuss the lexis and provide examples, but this took shape in a feature spotting way.

At the middle of the banding, the theoretical aspects of study were dealt with well. There were some attempts to analyse the features of the text and acknowledge the effects.

The heading of the letter, 'BUS LANE WARNING NOTICE' is extremely clear, bold and obvious in the upper case font. Suggesting it is a letter to warn. Below are more side headings in bold which also indicate power and states the reader 'Ms Amy Richards' 'vehicle registration number' and where it was and at what date and precise time it was found there. This indicates that this knowledge is personal and is known or available to be 'Sheffield City Council'.



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Here the candidate has commented on graphology of the text in an insightful way, exploring the relationship between the visual effect and power, and then developed this idea well. As this was a follow up to a point made about Goffman's facing, this lower level key constituent obtained marks.

Higher band responses explored the impact of grammatical choices.

The writer of A uses the passive voice, using "The Council" as opposed to the the active voice "we" of text B. However, the ~~2nd~~ Second post by Danuta is in the third person, using the third person pronoun "~~her~~ ^{she}". This makes more grammatical sense as she was the feature of the electronic mode on Facebook in which the name of the poster precedes their status update. The use of Standard English is



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This was awarded at the bottom of band 4 for AO3. It is clear to see an attempted linguistic enquiry. Although some of the concepts are not secure, the candidate has chosen a relevant method of enquiry and this was duly awarded.

Summary

In this report, I have recommended some positive action to improve performance. To conclude I would highly recommend that candidates are exposed to the specific demands of each question. In addition to this, the application of technical grammatical deconstruction would greatly enhance achievement. As there is clear evidence that candidates have a good knowledge base of grammar and terminology from Question 1, we should be encouraged to see the application and development of this in future series.

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