Examiners' Report/ Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2016

Pearson Edexcel GCSE
in Chinese (5CN01/1F)
Paper 1F: Listening and Understanding
in Chinese

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GCSE Chinese (2016)
Unit 1F Listening and Understanding in Chinese
Examiner's Report

This year's Foundation Listening paper contained questions that on the whole focused on topic areas with which one might expect students to be familiar - food and drink (Q1), school subjects (Q5), free time activities (Q9). But, as in the previous year, it was not always the supposedly 'easier' topic areas that candidates coped best with under exam conditions. Of course, some of this will simply be due to the student having not reviewed the 'right' vocabulary for this exam, but there are several lexical areas that need further review if candidates are to perform well. Whilst some words - 鱼，电脑，电视 _- were known by most candidates, there were indications that many needed to review/expand certain topic areas such as colours.

As is often the case, the last question, needing answers in English, proved to be the most demanding despite not having the highest character count. Very few candidates scored well on this question as it needs the relevant information to be 'sorted out' from within the spoken sentence. The candidate does not have the comfort of knowing he/she will hear 我叫。。我喜欢。。。。followed by the answer. The answers themselves should not have been unfamiliar, but they are 'hidden' slightly.

Q1/3
Overall candidates dealt with these two questions well, although those at the lower end of the range tended to struggle with 饺子 and 水果，as well as with the colours.

Q4
Considering that this task is one of the crossover questions, it was done well overall. Candidates are now familiar with this type of question and were not thrown by the alternation of like/dislike elements. Despite the apparent difficulty of the vocabulary given in the questions, even weaker candidates were able to pick out phrases such as 英语，游泳（池），睡不（好）. The change in layout also meant candidates were not tempted to give too many answers as in the previous year.

Q5/6
Both Q5 (subjects) and Q6 (shopping) were overall both poorly answered across the ability range, showing a surprising lack of familiarity with some basic lexical areas. Admittedly, in Q5 the subject was not simply given as 'I like...', but knowledge of the relevant subjects would surely have allowed the candidate to identify the correct answer; the subjects were named directly, not given through a 'hint'. In Q6 the sentence structure was even simpler, yet a good many candidates failed to recognise such words as 书 and 鞋子. The latter was not widely known in the previous year either.

Q7
This question used a new format, but candidates reacted well to it and generally performed well despite the long sentences. It is important to stress to candidates that with such a topic as this, they must listen for information given and not use knowledge gained elsewhere. All the 3 cities have large

airports, for example, but only Shanghai was mentioned here in that context.

Q8/9
Whilst not all of the places in Q8 were correctly identified (the more able struggled with 图书馆 whilst at the bottom of the ability range, the indirectly indicated restaurant was a problem), it was the free time activities of Q9 that lower ability candidates were not familiar with, another example of a lexical set that perhaps needs to be widened. 起码 is perhaps not so widely known, but one might have expected more students to recognise 打网球.

Q10
As has already been stated, this question proved difficult as in previous years across the ability range. Possible reasons for this were discussed above. Whilst 'France' (10a) was generally well known (in contrast to the related 法语 in Q5 which was dealt with poorly by most), the other elements of the question were wrongly answered by most candidates. 圣诞节 has been identified in previous years as a cultural term (along with 春节 etc) that needs to be known, but the surely more widely known 电影院 was also recognised by very few. Most distressing perhaps was the failure of many to pick out the number given. It is true that the answer was 'hidden' in a sentence, but numbers are surely very familiar to students and words around can be rejected as 'not number'.

Paper Summary
Overall, then, this was a paper that was handled well by many but it also highlighted some gaps in the lexical knowledge of certain vocabulary groups (e.g. colours, food, school subjects, festivals). Candidates need to be familiar, passively at least, with as wide a spread of words within each topic as possible. As far as exam technique is concerned, candidates should be encouraged to use their 5 minutes' reading time to identify (and perhaps note down) words that they think they might hear, as well as to see if there are any question formats that they have not seen in previous question papers. Most importantly, they should be ready to be flexible and deal with each question as a separate item, rather than worry that 'it wasn't like this last year'.

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