Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2017

Pearson Edexcel GCSE
In Chinese (5CN01)
Paper 1H: Listening and understanding
in Chinese.

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GCSE Chinese
Unit 1H: Listening
Examiners Report

Paper introduction

Once again this year it was pleasing to see how well candidates across the ability range handled this Listening paper. The format was familiar, and even slight changes (as detailed below) did not seem to influence in any negative way students' ability to respond accurately. On the whole, according to the exam statistics the individual tasks did differentiate the candidates by ability as expected; the majority of learners had no problems dealing with the 'crossover' questions (those aimed at C grade candidates), and there were fewer correct answers for the B grade questions. As for the questions aimed at the top of the ability range (Qs 4 & 8), it was, as previously, Q4 that proved the most challenging, partly due to the testing of more challenging vocabulary items (同事，海鲜) and partly because of the need to write clear, unambiguous answers.

'Crossover' questions (Qs 1, 2, 5, 6)

As stated above, these questions were generally handled very well by all candidates, as should indeed have been the case.

In Q1 learners were not distracted by the apparently 'difficult' topic of Healthy Lifestyle, but focused on the (relatively easy) vocabulary that was needed to complete the task successfully. This was one question where the format was slightly changed, as Dai Ping's answers were given first, followed by Li Ting's (rather than jumping back and forth), and this may of course have helped some candidates, but it shows that those taking the exam are learning not to be put off when the question format is not 100% identical to previous years.

In Q2, only part (ii), testing knowledge of position words – in this case, 旁边 – was slightly too hard for those at the lower end of this range.

As for the remaining two questions, responses to Q5 were happily correct in most cases, whilst in Q6, it was only part (iv) (作业) that was relatively unfamiliar to the lower end of the cohort. This was the other instance of question format being slightly different from previously, but it was pleasing to find that candidates were not thrown by the difference in order between the printed questions and what was heard.

Higher questions

Q3 Cycling

Whilst there was of course no technical cycling language needed to answer this question, a surprising number of candidates across the ability range struggled with 3i and 3iv. In 3i, although there was no expectation that learners would necessarily recognise 安全, enough support was given ('too many cars on roads') to lead listeners to the correct answer. (No other option had any connection with this.) In 3iv it was perhaps the comparison with 地铁 that caused confusion, as there were two possible answers, success depending on recognising 慢 (as opposed to 快).

Q4 Booking a restaurant

As has already been indicated above, this was once again the task where some elements gave the lowest statistical success rate on the paper, and this not always just among the lower ability candidates. In some cases, this was due to poor and misleading English ('air condition' is not the same as 'air conditioning'), in some cases what was written was simply not an answer to the question ('food is delicious' as a response to question 4bi) . Some students also simply failed to think about the implications of what they were writing: in response to 4aiii, some candidates wanted to sit outside AND have air conditioning!

To look at some of the questions in more detail: **4aii** was challenging, but whilst candidates were not necessarily expected to recognise 结婚纪念日, there were enough 'hints' given (parents, 40 years) to help towards a correct answer. In the second half of the conversation, in response to question **4bi** many candidates wrote 'classmate'. They had perhaps diligently learnt 同学 from the 2016 paper (and certainly the correct word here 同事 has a roughly similar pronunciation), but from the general context of the dialogue, it was surely very unlikely that Dai Ping was still at school!

As for **4biii**, it was understandable that weaker candidates heard the more familiar 鸡肉 rather than 猪肉, but simply to write 'pork' is not a satisfactory answer to the question. Lastly, the date (**4biv**) again proved problematic, despite only being recognition of numbers in Chinese. Candidates are also advised to write the name of the month as a word; just using figures can be misleading.

Q7 Smartphones

Unlike Q3, there was an expectation that students at this level should recognise some simple technical vocabulary related to technology. (Students are also usually interested in this topic, so there is sufficient motivation to learn what could be seen as 'difficult' vocabulary.) Whilst no part of this question was answered better or worse to a really noticeable extent, the statistics do reveal that 7ii and iv were the parts found more challenging. In 7ii it was probably the 给 structure (给她打电话) that was problematic, candidates not recognising this and thus choosing option G instead of C. Although the 'troublesome' 给 appears again in 7iv, it is more likely in this question that the difficulty for the listeners was the less familiar vocabulary 发电子邮件.

Q8 Tourist Information

There were overall far more correct answers given to this question than to Q4, probably as a result of the helpful multiple choice format. Even at the lower end of the ability range, candidates managed largely to identify the correct answers. Although elements of the language used were sometimes tricky (建筑，看不见，买好了), candidates picked up on the supporting information given to help them identify the right alternative. The only individual lexical item that students struggled with (even at the higher end of the ability range) was 西, perhaps because it was 'disguised' within the phrase往西开.

Paper summary

Overall candidates responded well to this examination, most areas of vocabulary being familiar to them. Q4 again proved the most difficult to respond to accurately. In some cases this was due to vocabulary items not being known, but in many, it was a result of answers not being clearly expressed. Teachers must also make it clear to candidates that they must answer IN ENGLISH! A few candidates (who had heard the right answer) wrote in Chinese, thereby losing marks. In preparing for future exams, teachers might do well to spend a little more time on reviewing areas perhaps seen as slightly more 'difficult', such as technology.