Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

November 2020

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE
In Chinese (4CN1) Paper 2

Introduction

This paper consisted of two sections: A and B. Section A was composed of 5 questions. Section B was composed of 3 questions. Students were allotted one hour and forty-five minutes to complete the questions.

Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4 and Q5 were designed to assess students' abilities to comprehend and utilise information from a range of texts which included multiple choice questions, word drop questions, multiple matching questions, note-taking questions and short answer questions. All the questions were set in English and students had to answer questions in English. English grammatical accuracy was not assessed in this part of the paper. Q6 and Q7 were writing questions. Q8 was the translation question.

Students' Performances

Question 1
There were six multiple choice questions. Each question had four options. The vast majority of students responded very well in this question with individual students making mistakes in Q1(b), Q1(c), Q1(d) and 1(e).

Question 2
This was a word drop question. Students were provided with twelve words in a box (plus an example) which they must drop in to complete a correct statement about the stimulus text. This was a new question type for IGCSE. The vast majority of students showed a good understanding of the text and they were able to give at least five correct answers out of six. A few students made mistakes in Q2 (a) and Q2(b).

Question 3
This was a multiple matching question. Students were presented with three paragraphs, each spoken by a different person, and a grid with statements in each row which apply to one or more of the speakers. Students were expected to mark which speaker each statement applied to. Students were expected to identify eight correct answers. The performance in this question was very good. However, some students lost one or two marks because they had ticked either 7 or 9 answers. This suggests that they might have had less practice with examination technique and were not familiar with the question type.

Question 4

This is a note-taking question. Students were expected to read a piece of text and were provided with a short set of notes about the text with 10 gaps to fill. The performance on this question was good. Some students understood the text very well but were not able to gain marks because of serious spelling mistakes. Some students lost marks in Q4(d) as expected because of the harder Chinese characters for "book shelf". Very few students scored very low marks because they were not able to answer questions in English.

Question 5
Students are expected to read a longer passage and to respond to a series of questions in English. The students were required to understand the language of the original text and to use English to show their understanding. We came across some students who answered the questions with full sentences with no grammatical mistakes at all. However, the question served as a discriminator between students who had different levels of English language skills. Some Chinese native speakers understood the text but were not able to gain marks because they were not able to answer questions in English. Many students lost marks in Q5(a) because they missed the key phrase "the majority of" in their answers, some students failed to spot the answers in the text but answered the question with their own understanding and general knowledge. However, students did very well in Q5(c), which we had expected to be a more challenging question. For Q5(e), some students failed to obtain marks because they had failed to use the key verb "provide" to answer the question. This once again reflected the lack of practice with examination techniques. Very few students scored very low marks because they were not able to answer questions in English.

Question 6
Students were required to write 60-75 characters on a topic. Students were aided by four bullet points in both English and Chinese, to which they had to refer in their answer. This response was assessed for Communication and Content, Linguistic knowledge and Accuracy. The majority of students answered the question quite well, which showed their ability to focus on the questions asked, and ensured that they gave clear answers to each of the questions posed by the bullet points when they wrote about their favourite holiday destination, even if some responses were quite short and basic. A couple of very weak students struggled to respond to the question.

Question 7
Students could select one writing task from a choice of three. Students were expected to write a continuous response of 125 -150 characters. Students are also provided with four bullet points in both English and Chinese to help structure their answer, to which they

must refer. This response was also assessed for Communication and Content, Linguistic knowledge and Accuracy.

The Task (a) and (c) were favoured by more students. Task 7(b) was not as popular as the other two topics.

Task (a)
The differing complexity of the bullet points given differentiated the writing abilities of students. The performance in this task was generally good. Many able students managed to describe their teacher as an individual, expressed their opinions on his/her lessons and explained how their teacher could help students to learn better in the future. However, a few able students did not respond to the second bullet point properly and lost marks. Some weaker students only managed to write some simple sentences.

Task (b)
The performance in the task was quite good though fewer students attempted it. However, students who chose to answer the question performed quite well in general. Many students responded to the bullet points with detailed information about their local public transport, describe their interesting experiences on a bus and expressed their opinion on public transport in their area and how public transport should be improved.

Task (c)
The majority of students performed well on this task with full responses to the bullet points. Strong students were able to express their thoughts on sport and demonstrate their range of writing skills; even some weaker students were also able to respond to all the bullet points with some simple sentences. However, some students didn't add more sentences to develop their ideas, such as giving and justifying opinions or providing additional details and showing their ability to use a greater range of vocabulary and grammatical constructions in the last two bullet points.

Question 8
Students were expected to translate four separate sentences from English to Chinese. The majority of students performed well in Q8(a) and Q8(b). A lot of students scored full marks. However, some students lost one mark as errors occurred in translating "best" into Chinese. Some students scored full marks in Q8(c) and Q8(d). Many students used mostly accurate linguistic structures and vocabulary. However, some marks were lost because students confused "last summer" with "last summer holiday"; the characters for "invite" seemed to be quite challenging for some students.

Paper Summary

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

- In reading tasks, answers should be given to an appropriate level of detail. Marks can be lost for vague answers or answers which do not demonstrate complete understanding.
- In reading tasks, all answers should be based only on the information in the text – no additional information should be necessary.
- In the translation task, students should attempt to translate all characters, vocabulary or phrases in the translation task as leaving out any individual piece of meaning would result in loss of marks.
- Ensure the spellings are correct and syntax is accurate throughout.
- Check the marks available for each question to ensure the correct number of answers have been given and search for the most appropriate/related answers for the questions.
- Take care to read the instructions in the question and be mindful of the requirements in answering: eg give answers in the appropriate language.