

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2016

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE
in Sinhala (4SI0) Paper 01
Written Paper

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Qualification content

Knowledge and understanding

The Edexcel International GCSE Sinhala qualification requires students to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- application of grammatical rules with accuracy
- appropriate formal style and tone in the target language
- language conventions such as correct punctuation and accuracy in spelling
- the grammatical system and a range of structures.

Skills

The Edexcel International GCSE Sinhala qualification requires students to demonstrate:

- translating English into the target language
- translating the target language into English
- writing essays in the target language
- flexibility when communicating in writing
- manipulating the language accurately to organise facts and ideas, and presenting explanations, opinions and information in writing.

Overview of content

This qualification enables students to gain an accurate understanding and appreciation of the target language. Students will develop competence in:

- reading and writing in the target language
- translating from English into the target language and from the target language into English with accuracy, using a broad range of vocabulary and idiomatic expressions, as well as adopting an appropriate formal style and tone.

Overview of assessment

This qualification is assessed through a 3-hour examination paper, set and marked by Edexcel.

The total number of marks available is 100.

The paper consists of four questions:

- question 1 (15 marks): translate sentences in English into the target language
- question 2 (25 marks): translate a passage in English into the target language
- question 3 (25 marks): translate a passage in the target language into English
- question 4 (35 marks): write an essay in the target language (students have to write an essay on one of four subjects given).

Dictionaries must not be used in the examination.

Summary of performance

Question 1

There were five sentences given in English to be translated into Sinhala involving some complex grammatical structures. All these sentences covered general information. The majority of candidates found this question accessible and managed to translate very well. Less able candidates understood the content but could not apply the required grammatical structure to make an appropriate sentence.

Q1(a): candidates were required to write "Vishwa Vidyyala" but less able candidates mixed up the information and wrote "Iskolaya" and these candidates were awarded marks according to the information they provided. The majority of candidates could not use the correct format of the gender category in encoding.

Q1(b): was attempted well by the majority of candidates but some of the candidates translated the word "Eithihasika" incorrectly.

Q1(c): appeared to be more challenging than other sentences in this question. Most of the candidates were not aware of the correct Sinhala term for 'lungs'. Words such as 'Ganja' and 'Beedi' were used as an alternative to 'smoking' and were not accepted as the correct terminology.

Q1(d): the majority of candidates did well using appropriate punctuation mark. Less able candidates translated the word "vases" incorrectly.

Q1(e): The majority of candidates did very well but less able candidates could not translate this sentence correctly and mixed up the information.

Overall, this question was equally challenging in comparison with the previous years' paper. All candidates were awarded marks for their knowledge of grammar in accordance with the quality of their work, and the mark scheme was applied rigorously.

Questions 2 and 3

These two questions were translations – from English to Sinhala and Sinhala to English.

Question 2

This was an article on global warming. Lower level responses to question 2 show the inability to find the appropriate English equivalent for 'alarming discovery', 'Global warming', 'ice caps' and 'renewable energy'. Majority of candidates could not score well as they incorrectly translated most of the sentences. Most of the candidates, who scored low marks, were mainly due to inadequate linguistic competence. Violation of basic rules of grammar, tenses and incorrect spellings were in evidence.

Question 3

This question was about the healthcare system in Sri Lanka. Candidates performed better in this question. The text was accessible to candidates of all abilities. Low level responses show the inability to find the correct translation. Some of the words and phrases which were not translated correctly are as follows: 'daridrathawaya' poorest, 'wisheshshkanaya' specialist care, 'Yatithala pahasukum' infrastructure etc.

This inadequacy of lexical skill and insufficient command of English were the reasons for lower scores.

The majority of candidates did very well on this question but there were a few who could not translate the text in an appropriate manner. They were awarded according to the quality of their work and the mark scheme was applied rigorously.

It was noted that there was an error in the original text relating to the year '1970' which was printed as "1070" in the text. This error did not disadvantage candidates as numbers are not translated, and no marks were deducted for those candidates who copied the incorrect date as "1070".

Question 4

Candidates were expected to write an essay up to 250 words in Sinhala, and had a choice of four topics. The most popular topic was, '*Do you think sports lessons are necessary in schools*'.

Essays were well written with good reasons and explanations and the candidates scored well and demonstrated good knowledge and understanding of the Sinhala language and its grammatical structure. Less able candidates obtained lower marks because of inadequate command of the language and weak lexical skills.

Conclusion

Some candidates performed well, but the majority of candidates did not manage to achieve high marks. There was evidence of poor spelling, syntax errors particularly the tendency to mix standard constructions with colloquial usage.

In places where the candidates failed to find the appropriate standard (written) words and phrases, they opted to use the spoken Sinhala, heavily mixed with English borrowed words.

Teachers are advised to train candidates to read and understand a range of texts. Furthermore, it is advised that teachers should discuss how the language works in terms of grammatical structures as this is clearly advised in the IGCSE specification.