

Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2010

GCE O Level

GCE O Level Bengali (7606) Paper 01

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General comments

1244 candidates were entered for the GCE O Level Bengali examination in January 2010 mostly from the existing centres. The majority of candidates found the paper accessible. A good proportion of candidates performed well and scored high marks in the paper. The demand of the paper is generally comparable with the January 2009 paper. It was also pleasing to see that overall candidates' performances this series were slightly better than last year.

Candidates had every opportunity to produce good and proper translations. Some key words and phrases helped to differentiate between good and adequate performance of the candidates. Also a number of outstanding pieces of translations including examples of continuous pieces of writings were evident from a number of responses.

Question 1

Question 1 required a Bengali passage about a boy's, Manik, morning routine to be translated into English.

Compared to question 2, this passage proved slightly difficult to average candidates. The average candidates were often unsuccessful to transmit some key ideas of the passage which resulted them scoring low marks in the content. However, the majority of the candidates translated most of the passage accurately. The stronger candidates were able to transmit the major key ideas from the Bengali passage into English with only a few spelling mistakes. They also applied the use of correct grammatical structures and the appropriate use of tense. The weaker candidates on the other hand, often struggled to translate some words and phrases such as উষ্ণ পশমী, শিয়রের, বিড়বিড় করে ভেলকি বাজি, উধাও, ঝাড়া দিয়ে, ব্যতিক্রম, চিং হয়ে, চুমুক and কুয়াশা. As such, proper transfer of those words were, often unsuccessful and quite a few candidates used the transliteration of these words instead. In fact, a number of candidates even transmitted "উষ্ণ পশমী" as the name of 'a girl', and 'ভেলকি বাজি' as 'bat.'. Also they had difficulty in transmitting structures such as 'কেন রে ভাই, ..?' 'এ সবই কি যথেষ্ট নয়?' or রোজকার মতো আবারও স্যারের বকা খেতে হবে যে! It was due to the fact that often weaker candidates were unable to transmit and manipulate these phrases successfully in the correct person and tense forms which has resulted in scoring lower marks. The average score recorded for this question was 17.

Question 2

This is a passage about the struggle and rise of a poor boy, Shumon Ali, who managed to succeed in life due to his perseverance, enthusiasm and hard work. Compared to question 1, this passage was more accessible to most candidates and so majority of the candidates succeeded to transmit the content of the passage fairly well. The stronger candidates performed the translation task in standard Bengali with a good flow. There has also been occasions though where the time sequence and the tense concept was not transmitted appropriately. Weaker candidates often struggled to transmit words such as, affluent, dedication, bed-ridden, District Horticulture, enthusiasm, fourfold, high breed and manure. It could be due to their lack of knowledge or unfamiliarity re the corresponding Bengali meaning of these words. However, on the whole, candidates performed quite successfully, displaying good literacy skills in both languages. The average score recorded for this question was 18.

Question 3

It is quite pleasing to see that almost all candidates were able to translate all five sentences though at varied levels where they were tested on specific grammar points. 3(a), (3b) and 3(c) were pretty straight forward and very well responded by stronger candidates. Weaker candidates on occasion struggled transmitting in the appropriate tense though in 3(d) and 3(e). The average score recorded for this question was 13.

Question 4

4(a) and 4(b) were well responded by the stronger candidates. Stronger candidates were able to demonstrate a wide range of vocabulary and grammatical structures followed by comparisons, personal feelings and reactions, so scored good marks. However, on occasions, candidates overlooked the main focus of the content and so scored less marks than expected. Amongst the essay/letter options, 4(d) was quite popular & well attended. Again, there was a requirement of an anticipation of facts, good flow, analysis and opinion. Unfortunately, it was not evident amongst majority candidates. On average, the responses were mainly descriptive. Also not very many candidates used high level vocabulary or idiomatic phrases. The manipulation of languages was very basic on occasions. The use of syntax and wrong use of tenses gave the impression as if it is the second language for a number of candidates, so they scored less than expected. On the other hand, candidates who fulfilled these criteria and displayed coherent pieces of writing, obviously scored the top range marks. Amongst the essay options, 4(c) was the least popular. But those who attempted this scored good marks. The average score recorded for this question was 24.

Conclusion

On the whole, this paper appeared to be fair and well balanced. The overall performance of candidates showed that the standard of literacy including the transmission skills to and from the target language has improved. Although, on occasion, candidates' performances were not as good as expected. This was mainly due to their lack of a good grasp of a range of structures and tense concepts and knowledge of grammar. Also, a wide display of transliterated words/phrases were evident in the candidates' performances across the board.

Statistics

Grade	A	B	C	D	E
Lowest Mark for award of grade	73	65	57	52	43

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