

BURMESE (SYLLABUS Y)

Paper 3249/01

Paper 1

General Comments

This year's pool was a strong one. Most of the candidates had a good understanding of written and colloquial forms, and a few candidates produced beautifully-written essays in terms of imagination and style. Choosing between colloquial versus written style did not appear to be a problem this year.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1: Composition

- (a) What should be done about global warming?

Most candidates chose this topic, and all of them had a good understanding of it. While many could produce well-argued answers on the topic, a few focused more on what contributed to global warming rather than what should be done about it.

- (b) A letter to a newspaper or magazine pointing out and correcting an error

Only two candidates attempted this question.

- (c) What happened when one moved to another school

Most candidates seemed to have had this experience, and the topic therefore was a popular, indeed almost overwhelming, choice. The highest marks were awarded to candidates who could describe their feelings and emotions on the first day of new School or the last day of old School. A few candidates spent a good portion of the composition on why and when the family moved to another place, rather than how they felt about moving.

- (d) Favourite place

Highest scores in **Section A** came from candidates who attempted this topic. Most of them could write a vivid description of their favourite places and their sentimental attachments to them. One candidate wrote beautifully about why his/her bedroom was his/her favourite place.

- (e) A conversation between friends

Not a very popular topic, and a few wrote a letter to their friends instead of reporting on or composing a conversation they had had with their friends.

Question 2: Translation into English

Candidates did well generally, but few could translate "funeral of a monk" correctly. Most mistook the word for "flying monk" (same pronunciation, different spelling), and only about half could translate "toddy-palm" correctly.

Question 3: Translation into Burmese

Most candidates could translate correctly and faithfully, with only a few cases where candidates used their imaginations in the translation. Translating “Northern Hemisphere” for “Southern Hemisphere” was one of the common mistakes. Standard spellings of continents and animals should be learnt, and candidates should not transliterate the English names.

Questions 4-8: Comprehension

Most candidates achieved very high scores in this section. Only **Question 6** proved to be difficult, since candidates were required to explain a Burmese phrase, using examples or another phrase. Overall, candidates understood the paragraph very well and were able to give accurate answers to most of the questions.