

Examiners' Report Summer 2008

GCE

GCE English Language (8178/9178)

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6371/01: Textual Commentary

General Comments

Overall, examiners felt that there was a significant improvement in the quality of scripts, particularly in the middle bands, with many more thorough and thoughtful responses. Examiners saw very few answers in Band 1 and a reduction in the number in Band 2, with a marked increase in Band 4 scripts. Moreover, significantly fewer students resorted to simply listing features and examples this session.

For this examination there was a preference for Question 1. One reason for this could have been the opportunity to explore texts which were instructive in nature.

In response to the spoken texts, many candidates offered a good selection of general comments on the significant features of spontaneous speech such as pauses, fillers and back-channeling. In the lower bands discussion was not always related to either the context or the participants. At higher bands more of these comments were related to the function of particular features and candidates were able to offer a range of interpretations.

The use of unusual lexis, such as 'hither' and 'pinny' in Text A and 'chuffin'' in Text C, was a major discussion point demonstrating real engagement with the context.

There is still a trend to try and apply theories to the spoken texts and in many instances these were applied too broadly and did not take into account specific functions and contexts. For example in Text A many responses linked the mother's role to her gender rather than her position as the 'learner' in the exchange. Other linguistic theories were also applied to little effect.

Examiners noted a growing tendency to forego an analysis of grammatical features in texts A and C given the wide range of, perhaps more obvious, speech specific features. This over-reliance on one framework can lead to more mechanical responses to spontaneous texts and candidates should be encouraged to not only distinguish features of transcripts but also explore why features are appropriate and effective.

As in previous sessions, lower band responses tended to rely on graphological features in their responses to the written texts and more general and narrative comments were common.

Lexical comments often centred on the semantic field. More successful responses did include interesting and thoughtful comments on the use of more abstract words, 'dovetailing' and 'explosiveness' in Text D for example.

Higher level candidates successfully demonstrated their wide knowledge of grammar and terminology in Text B, linking form and function. Many candidates mentioned sentence type and function as well as commenting on the use of adverbs and pre-modification. Similarly in Text D there was some in depth treatment of grammar with some exploration of relative and non-finite clauses.

Examiners commented that in both spoken and written discussions, candidates could improve by concentrating on quality rather than quantity. Higher band responses tended to be of an average length, but were more detailed and secure when relating interpretations to audience, purpose and context.

6372/01 Desk Study

The Desk Study Unit assesses the candidates' skill in comprehension, editing and summarising; their knowledge of audience and purpose and their ability to shape the pre-release source material to achieve a different outcome through the selection of appropriate genre, format and register. A separate commentary assesses their application of linguistic knowledge to justify the language choices they have made.

This Unit targets AO2 which has double weighting and assesses the ability to write expertly and accurately for a specific audience and purpose. It also assesses AO1 which is demonstrated by the quality of writing in Task (a) and the ability to use a range of appropriate linguistic terminology with accuracy and confidence in Task (b). AO4 is assessed by the selection and shaping of the material to suit the spoken context with clear links between form and function.

Task A

This task required candidates to reshape pre-released material to produce the text for a magazine article aimed at young people aged 14-17 as part of a national campaign to raise awareness of the issues surrounding underage drinking. The question asked them to write as a post-16 student and prompted them to consider a secondary audience (parents). Additional prompts embedded within the question and the bullet points provided further focus in terms of audience and purpose.

This was a generally successful task which generated an inventive range of responses, some of an extremely high quality.

Most candidates seemed to find the source material accessible - and there was a genuine attempt to reshape it in all but a few responses. The scaffolding afforded by the structure of the question (as in previous series) enabled all but a small minority to cover a reasonable range of source materials although the weakest struggled to fully assimilate the more technical information - 'social facilitation' 'peer guidance', 'individual benefits'- presented most difficulty in this respect and in some cases this resulted in awkward shifts in register/lapses in cohesion which proved to be something of a discriminator for Task a).

There was some difficulty in accommodating the primary and secondary audiences which led to inconsistencies of tone and tenor as candidates sometimes veered wildly between extremes of formality/informality. The best responses also conceded to the student voice/perspective embedded within the question and used this as a 'hook' to engage with and persuade their audience. A key discriminator was the secondary (parent) audience which many simply ignored or others struggled to accommodate

Most managed to produce a text suitable for the article/written context although there was variability in the approach to layout, with some providing detailed 'mock-ups' while others concentrated on the writing with little concession to visual appeal.

A significant differentiating factor in the responses was the degree by which the source material was reshaped or 'slanted' to task. Good reading and absorption of the pre-release texts showed clearly in the selection, the editing, the organisation and the 'slant' towards audience and purpose. When reading was sketchy the level of inappropriate detail rose, the selection of material became more random and levels of textual cohesion diminished.

At the higher levels of achievement students generated significant amounts of new text which made full concession to the potential of the spoken context. They targeted the given audience with flexibility and imagination, often demonstrating their absorption of the subject matter with fluid movement over the source texts.

Task B

Task b) asked candidates to comment on the language choices they had made in order to complete the first task.

The commentaries produced reflected the general trend in improvement in this task - although some responses were extended 'checklists' and the prompt to consider language choices proved a discriminator in this respect.

The most able candidates produced good linguistic analysis. These offered a clear and focused justification of the choices they had made, giving clear and appropriate exemplification and applying linguistic terms and features with focus and incision. They best contextualised their choices within the remit of the task, moving beyond the formulaic to stand back from their own work and reflect analytically on their approach.

Less able candidates applied a system which spotted (and often exemplified) features but which went on to generate generalised definitions/comments which did not fully relate to the specific context or the choices candidates had made in order to fulfil the brief. Many centres used acronyms to ensure that a range of features were covered, but this sometimes produced mechanical responses across whole centres which failed to move on to the discriminating factor - the justification of language choice.

Many candidates made points which sometimes lacked exemplification, thus not revealing their full understanding. The candidates with less security with analytical terms and frameworks tended to concentrate on describing their methodology rather than analysing their choices.

Overall some candidates were clearly better prepared for the commentary than others and the effectiveness of this preparation significantly impacted upon performance. Those with a good grounding in theory and terminology were keen to show what they could do. Others described content and/or intention that did not always live up to the lively responses to the first task. In some centres the focus shifted significantly from Task (a) to Task (b) with the commentaries outstripping the achievement of the creative task due to the thorough and systematic teaching of analysis. In some such centres there was an emerging tendency to consciously incorporate features in task (a) with the commentary in mind - effective in some cases but limiting in others.

6373/01: The Language of the Media

General Comments

The majority of centres are now encouraging candidates to produce genuine investigations modelled on the format for 6375/01. This is very good practice and excellent preparation for A2 Coursework as it encourages candidates to be systematic and discriminating in their approach. Most of the investigations were produced in an appropriate format, using well structured headings, which acted as a guide for candidates as they engaged with their material.

Choice of data and tasks

Moderators commented on the interesting range of data and topics, although a very popular choice, (and one which was often not highly successful) was a comparison of two newspapers. These tended to be traditional in approach, relying on stereotypes of tabloid and broadsheet newspapers and usually lacking recognitions of current newspaper style. This tended to be the option where candidates were less personally engaged and involved with the material, approaching the data with pre-conceived ideas about formality and bias and ignoring the real evidence supplied by the texts themselves. There was a tendency to generalise in terms of class, gender, age and ethnicity.

Although advertising was equally popular, this was much better handled: candidates who chose a mixture of written and spoken adverts tended to produce more interesting analyses with a clearer address to spoken language features. Some centres had opted to set the topic of advertising for all candidates. This was still effective if the data for each candidate was unique to them and reflected their own personal interests. Analyses of skin products aimed at men and women often led to perceptive studies of language and gender. Political speeches and spoken texts in general were not as popular as in previous years and moderators commented on the disappointing lack of analysis of the spoken word.

One very popular topic this year was the investigation of horoscopes from magazines. This was often very well managed, with some candidates producing searching investigations with careful identification and categorising of features. This topic worked particularly well when the investigation was given a specific comparative focus such as age or gender.

Examples of particularly interesting topics which were also well-executed were:

Language features of the Royle family

Comparing different levels of formality in film trailers

A comparison of adverts from 'Gay Times' and 'FHM'

Analysis of the language of the press release and announcement video for the Harry Potter theme park

The language of 'Torchwood', specifically relating to the Sci-Fi genre

The language of humour in 'Never Mind the Buzzcocks'.

Some candidates had chosen too much data or their tasks were far too broad. They would have benefited from guidance about this from their teacher at an early stage.

There was also evidence of candidates not adhering to the word limit (sometimes claiming a word count of 1500 when it was clearly much more). This could have been addressed with more centre guidance on choice of topics and the value of editing.

A large number of candidates devoted a complete page to the aims and description of the data.

This issue of the word count is of particular relevance given the guidance about coursework length for the new specifications.

We recommend that teachers make a point of discussing the significance and purpose of word counts and editing when introducing the AS Coursework.

Assessment Objectives

Most work showed that candidates had understood each of the assessment objectives and the need to address them. Technical terminology was usually used appropriately and accurately. One flaw with the structured investigation approach was the dutiful inclusion of a conclusion which in most cases was ineffective and merely summarised findings or attempted a type of self-evaluation which did not enhance the investigation (eg, 'I feel I have been successful'). If conclusions are to be worthwhile they must refer back to the original hypothesis of the investigation.

Internal Moderation

There was some excellent practice in terms of internal moderation with moderating focused on the assessment objectives and evidence of cross-marking within departments. Work was generally well annotated and centre decisions and judgements clearly evidenced. A relatively small number of centres did not provide annotations or any real evidence of assessment apart from a brief comment on the cover sheet. This is a disadvantage for the external moderator as they do not have any guidance on how the centre arrived at the marks.

Presentation of work

The organisation and presentation of the actual written work was of a high standard, however, data was often carelessly presented with pages ripped from magazines and often not securely attached to the folder.

Conclusion

Centres are to be congratulated for their efficient processing of administrative tasks. There were fewer problems this year with the completion of cover sheets (except for the word count) and there was a great improvement in the sending of accurate samples with the highest and lowest candidates included.

6373/02: The Language of the Media

Q1 featured two texts linked by the topic of 'Interview With The Vampire': an online film review and an interview with Anne Rice, the writer of the novel. Q2 had a thematic focus on school, featuring an advertisement for school clothes from the high street store Matalan and an article from the Channel 4 website about the eating habits of school pupils.

The majority of responses were coherent and well organised. Although AO3i is the principal assessment objective for this unit many answers focused more strongly on AO4 (language in use) resulting in more discussion of pragmatics than close analysis of linguistic features. Candidates usually made effective use of the bullet points in both questions to provide a structure, although Q1 did sometimes attract unnecessary (and unhelpful) observations about graphology.

Q1

Successful responses to Q1 were characterised by the ability to contextualise the website review and interview situation. A number of candidates found it difficult to establish the tone in both texts and there seemed to be some misunderstanding of the purposes of a film review, with many candidates assuming that the task of reviewers is to persuade the reader to see the film.

Responses to Text A did demonstrate clear ability to discuss how the writer creates a friendly and lively tone to engage the reader: however, this was sometimes at the expense of being able to identify her attitude to the film being reviewed.

The specific purpose of Text B seemed to be elusive for some candidates, which led to paraphrase of Rice's comments rather than a discussion of the impact of the language used. The concept of an interview between two people being for a separate audience of readers (rather than the participants themselves) also confused some candidates whose awareness of the spoken word framework seemed centred on private spontaneous speech. Comments on Text B were often flawed by an insistence on treating it as spontaneous speech and searching for non-fluency features which were not apparent. Evidence from coursework indicates that both film reviews and interviews with celebrities are very popular choices so it was surprising that many answers lacked real focus on the linguistic elements.

Q2

Candidates seemed to find both texts very engaging and Text A in particular prompted some very detailed, thoughtful analysis. Discussion of the Matalan advert enabled many candidates to demonstrate their analytical skills, finding precise features to discuss and showing some confident understanding of the persuasive advertising techniques employed, thus making effective links between AO3 and AO4. Candidates found much to comment on in Text A and in some cases this limited the time spent on Text B, which was then given a rather superficial treatment.

A number of responses ignored the informative function of Text B and focused on it as a persuasive text in favour of the live register and healthy eating. Better answers included clear, precise comments about the typical tabloid style news report structure, linking them to the swift conveyance of key points made relevant and of interest to the target reader. The underlying positive reporting and assumptions could then be discussed with more focus, raising AO4 achievement.

Very few candidates discussed the significance of the two Text Bs appearing on the Internet; in fact, many candidates became distracted by trying to discuss the audience of broadsheet and tabloid papers, bringing in prescriptive stereotypes connected to class, level of intelligence/education or wealth. This can lead to a misplaced assumption that the text will contain particular features (eg, level of syntax and lexical complexity) rather than actually checking to see if this is the case. There was a missed opportunity here to explore websites and the language of the Internet. Given the fact that most candidates are very familiar with web pages and use the internet with proficiency, it was disappointing that comments on these texts seemed to be stuck in a time warp rather than relating to real-life experience.

Terminology

When technical terms are used relevantly and accurately, this adds clarity to the response and makes clear the use of frameworks and AO achievement. However, terms such as 'plosive alliteration', even if accurate, rarely add anything unless linked to a very specific point about the impact and effect. Some candidates were labelling linguistic features at the expense of demonstrating focused exploration skills. For example, lengthy (and confusing) discussion of anaphoric and cataphoric references, when the point being made is relatively minor, only detracts from the overall impact of a script. Terminology should be treated as a tool to aid precision, not the driving force of analysis. The ability to accurately and succinctly illustrate features is also key to a successful analysis; lack of examples or lengthy sentences quoted without focus means that even the most detailed use of terminology cannot be highly rewarded.

The distinction between confident and less secure responses was often the ability to discuss the structure of sentences *relevantly*. Although most candidates illustrated their answers well, this was one specific area where they failed to support their commentaries with examples to show their understanding. Examiners noted increasingly imprecise and casual use of some technical terms:

Slang: often used to replace 'colloquial' or 'informal', eg 'kids' and 'telly' were incorrectly identified as slang.

Alliteration: a very popular term but often used to refer to any repeated sequence of letters, even if they do not produce the same sound. Many were not able to distinguish between alliteration used as a deliberate technique (eg, 'dark and dusty') and coincidental use of two words with the same initial letter (eg, 'school meal subsidies'). 'A+ for Attitude' was constantly incorrectly labelled as alliteration.

Phatic: some candidates are now using this term to describe a conversational style or imitation of spoken language rather than the precise meaning of 'small talk' or talk used solely for the purposes of social interaction. A number of candidates made a brave effort to respond to the texts but clearly found it difficult to communicate their ideas as they seemed limited in their ability to discuss effects of linguistic features in any depth. Many relied on repeating phrases such as 'grabs the reader's attention', 'draws the reader in', 'is effective'.

The most successful responses were those where candidates engaged with the actual texts, using the frameworks indicated in the bullet points to help find a range of features and considering the impact they have in these texts, rather than applying preconceived ideas of what, for example, alliteration 'does'. Background knowledge of genre and context should be used sparingly to help focus points, rather than being allowed to take over the discussion.

Conclusion

The majority of candidates responded with commitment and were eager to demonstrate subject knowledge. There was some good understanding of genre conventions and awareness of the text producer/text receiver relationships. Most answers were clear, systematic and interesting to read but the highest achieving candidates will always be those who apply their knowledge with thought and discrimination, and who spend time carefully reading the texts to understand and absorb what is actually there rather than approaching them with a pre-determined checklist.

6374/01: Varieties of English

6374/01

General

1. The entry for this unit was 1,590 The unit is worth 15% of the overall mark. The dominant Assessment Objective is AO5ii. AO1 & AO4 are used to determine and refine marks.
2. Two questions were set. Candidates were required to answer either one. Question 1 presented three texts for analysis and discussion, question 2 had four. The rubric for Question 1 asked candidates to analyse the ways in which the speakers and writers used language in the texts, taking into account relevant contextual factors. Question 2 required an analysis and evaluation of the texts, commenting on the variations in their language.
3. The materials were either generically or thematically linked. The texts for Question 1 were all concerned with “creatures which live in the sea”. Text A was an extract from a treatise by William Strachey, giving an account of some of the “critters” which lived in Chesapeake Bay on the east coast of North America. It was first published between 1610 & 1612. Text B was a written record of part of a current affairs programme initially broadcast on the Australian ABC television network in 2004 in which the anchor, George Negus, introduced a report from Simon Watt, who was interviewing Dr. Mark Norman, a Marine Scientist. Text C was an extract from a folk-tale from The Orkney Islands of Scotland. In the story, “The Goodman of Wastness” captured one of the “selkie-folk” - a mythical race of seal-people. The version reprinted was taken from a website in 2005.

The texts were intended to provide the opportunity for candidates to analyse and explore language variation both synchronic and diachronic. Although the texts were written versions, B recorded direct speech and C contained some speech-like features. Candidates were able to explore variations in language not only according to time and medium but to provenance (America, Australia and the U.K.), intended audience, and genre (early ‘scientific’ information / television journalism / moralistic narrative). All three texts dealt with their subject matter rather differently.

In Question 2, the rubric instructed candidates to analyse and evaluate the texts, commenting on the variations in their language. All four texts, D, E, F and G were lyrics. In each, the voice was that of a forlorn lover. Text D was taken from a Middle English lyric written by John Lydgate. Text E was an Elizabethan lyric written by Thomas Campion. The third text, (F) was the lyric of a blues song recorded in 1941 by Brownie McGhee. Text G consisted the words of a popular twentieth century song from the Caribbean region. The texts were intended to allow candidates to analyse and evaluate language use related to context. Here, Texts F & G were the most obviously “speech-like”. There was plentiful material for comment regarding historical and regional change and variety in the language.

4. Question 1 proved to be more popular than Question 2. However, this was not totally unexpected and the relative imbalance in responses (roughly 3:1) had no effect at all on the marks awarded - both questions provided equal opportunities for students to explore the texts and the issue raised by them after their own lights.

As in other recent sittings, almost no candidate appeared wholly under-prepared for the demands of the paper and centres are to be commended for their hard work in ensuring that students were aware of and attempting to address the Assessment Objectives.

5. Timing was not a problem for the majority of entrants. This said, the challenge of analyzing “precisely and fully in all texts” as well as evaluating “incisively”, as demanded by the mark scheme for Band 5 answers is still considerable, especially given the time limit of one hour and thirty minutes.

Three texts per question is obviously a good model for 6374. However, four shorter texts appeared to work effectively in the case of Question 2 and this pattern may well be repeated at some point in the remaining life of the unit.

6. The quality of written communication continues to improve overall - there were no candidates whose expression was an impediment to the comprehensibility of their work.

7. Candidates should continue to be exposed to as wide a range of varieties of English as resources allow, including materials from as far back as Middle English and from both literary and non-literary sources. They should be encouraged to “think laterally” about the texts with which they are presented, transferring skills and subject knowledge as purposefully as they are able.

8. Assessment Objectives.

Some indicative comments about the general nature of candidates’ responses follow. In the main, the discussion will relate to better answers although some guidance regarding what might constitute less positive characteristics is included.

A05ii. Analyse and evaluate variations in the meanings and forms of spoken and written language from different times according to context.

Question 1:

A range of approaches was once again adopted, with the vast majority opting for a linear organizing principle, others choosing a more genuinely comparative scheme. As ever, the stronger responses engaged with all three items equally whilst those doing less well tended to offer minimal coverage of one or two texts. The vast majority of candidates seemed to be able to access these texts and there was definitely a wide range of responses.

Most identified Text A accurately, as falling into the EME period, and were able to recognise orthographical patterns, if not fully explain them. Most commented on the use of lists and some linked the format with an early attempt to produce a reference book. Higher band answers recognised the anecdotal, personalised view of the writer, often deeming it as unusual in this kind of text. Many of the good commentaries picked up on the register and formality issues, moving through discussions of lexis purposefully. Contextual awareness was usually very good here, with some candidates appearing very well informed about Early Modern English, though a surprisingly high number of students placed Strachey in the Middle English period. Many observed the influence of French and Latin as well as the emerging process of standardization for example. As in previous years, many middle and lower band responses were able to identify and discuss the evidence of inflection or inflectional decay (if not always with perfect understanding). The analysis of grammar, syntax and semantics ranged from the systematic, ambitious and relevant to the observational, narrative and limited. However, the majority of candidates at least essayed some comment in these areas.

Many candidates were comfortable with Text B, with higher band responses recognising some subtle differences in the lexis used by Negus, Watt and Dr Mark Norman. They were also able to distinguish between what were probably the scripted and unscripted sections of the text. Many spotted humour in the exchange, relating it to metaphorical language and the use of the exclamatory - 'O, yuck!' Some lower band candidates reasoned that the text was aimed at children, citing the 'Mr Men' simile as evidence. A surprisingly large number of approaches to B lacked precision and focus however. Given that Unit 6371 deals with spoken language (at least in part) and that 6373 is concerned primarily with the media, it was expected that a written record of a television broadcast would present plenty of opportunities. However, a proportion of the candidature seemed under-confident with the material and once again, there was a good deal of partially informed, speculative work here. A conjectural approach is not a bad thing at all, indeed candidates are to be encouraged to work up hypotheses about the texts and follow them through, but where a position is taken and then barely explored in terms of specific language analysis, the outcome will almost certainly be indifferent. This said, there was some interesting commentary, particularly around the mediated nature of the report, its tonality and the contextual elements germane to its provenance.

The folk tale was not as well handled as might have been expected, given that past papers have included this kind of material. Many recognized the attempt to render a Scottish accent and dialect in the speech of the selkie woman and a considerable proportion could see that the story was almost certainly descended from an oral tradition. Nonetheless, a good deal of response was broad stroke and general. Where students managed to analyse this text (and it is important to stress that they did not have to deal with anything like the whole thing to gain credit) rather than simply describe it, they were likely to stand out.

Question 2:

Most candidates found plenty to say about these texts. The more insightful were able to explore features of diachronic change, particularly in Texts D and E, tracing and accounting for orthographical, lexical and syntactical variation. Lower band candidates tended to pick out lots of spelling features, in particular, without fully accounting for the reasons for them. Some candidates were much more confident however, engaging fully for example with phonology and the Great Vowel Shift, tracking changes in the sound system through these lyrics.

As with Text A, there was in most cases a sound or better understanding of the context of D and a good ability to discuss the formality features that were apparent, though some responses were over-reliant on the glossary. There were plenty of interesting comments about orthographical and lexical issues. Candidates have taken to writing more intelligently about such matters however and tend to accept that words with which they may not be familiar are not necessarily "archaic". This Middle English extract was largely well covered and it is very pleasing to see that a lot of very effective teaching has clearly gone on in this respect, though there remains amongst some students a propensity to see anything pre-Johnson as simple chaos.

Text E drew a variety of responses - it had been anticipated that there would be a good deal of recognition of the medium and mode, though it was an ostensibly literary piece.

Text F was chosen primarily because it fitted the bill in terms of the paper's structural requirements. However, there were other reasons for including it, not least what it demonstrated about the growth of English as a global language and its mutation into contemporary regional forms. Many candidates highlighted typical features of BEV here,

with better responses picking up on syntactical variation and the maintenance of rhythm through dialectal clipping, for example.

Regarding G, some candidates seemed particularly uninformed about pidgin/creole languages; some lower band answers simply assumed that the writer was uneducated and working class, failing to fully acknowledge this as a regional variety. Equally however, there were many strong answers, with a high proportion deploying a wide range of skills and subject knowledge in relation to this variant.

The most striking omission in many responses was a meaningful discussion of the lyric genre, despite some references to rhyme schemes and metaphor. Some candidates presented a literary discussion and whilst many of these were impressive on the language of literature, others concerned themselves with tracing the writers' intentions rather than focusing on language use.

General:

Comments on orthography and lexis remain indicative of a pragmatic approach to framework-based analysis and are therefore clearly welcome. It is still true, however, that those who supplement this with meaningful discussion of grammar, syntax, phonology and semantics, for instance (assuming that this aspect of the work is both accurate and relevant) generally fare better than those who are less "ambitious".

The examining team continues to be impressed by the depth and detail of the candidates' contextual subject knowledge (notwithstanding the provisos mentioned above). Understanding of the historical development of English continues to show signs of excellent teaching and, even more pleasingly, far more responses are using their awareness much more relevantly in their discussions.

AO1. Communicate clearly the knowledge, understanding and insight appropriate to the study of language, using appropriate terminology and accurate and coherent written expression.

There are always some routine and some other more surprising errors and occasionally candidates are not nearly as coherent or articulate as might be hoped of students at this stage of their education. The assessment of written expression remains a minor component in the overall marking profile - however, where the volume of error makes comprehension difficult examiners are bound to look less favourably on that response.

The use of terminology remains an important factor. "Feature-spotting" unsupported by evaluation is still not desirable but it is at least preferable to an answer wholly devoid of relevant meta-language. Generally, the need for precision remains paramount for those aiming at the higher bands. The use of "word" as a catch-all is not sufficiently specific, for example. The terms "simple", "complex" and "compound sentences" continue to be deployed with variable effect and accuracy - "complex" often appearing to be intended as a synonym for "complicated". For some reason this year, a large number of candidates seemed confused about pronouns, erroneously labeling *I / we / our* as third person or *he / she / it / they* as first, for example. This is particularly strange, given the quality and accuracy of so much of the other identification of language techniques and features. Generally, however, a lot of students present themselves in a thoroughly informed manner, offering a rich and relevant supply of terms, which they apply to fine purpose.

AO4. Understand, discuss and explore concepts and issues relating to language in use.

A descriptive approach remains the ideal and most responses both adopt this attitude, explaining their reasons for it to sound purpose. The evaluative aspect of the task is also developing, though there is a stubborn proportion of candidates whose attitude appears to be that anything remotely non-standard is simply "wrong".

10. No entrants reacted problematically or negatively to this exam.

Examiners felt that, after a slight hiatus in 2007, they were seeing a return to the high standards of 2006 here. There was a large quantity of excellent response and those in the middle bands were at least attempting informed analysis, where in the past they might have fallen back on a narrative or entirely feature-spotting approach. Even the least successful answers suggested that they had learnt something in preparing for this exam, even though they weren't quite sure how to apply it.

Once again, our colleagues in schools and colleges are to be commended for the generally excellent way in which they teach their charges to cope with the varieties which we offer them for consideration.

6375/01: Spoken or Written Study

There was a range of interesting and thoughtful investigations this year. Many candidates had been encouraged to pursue personal interests and there was evidence of careful research.

The A2 unit offers candidates the opportunity to carry out an investigation into a spoken OR written aspect of English Language. A few centres seemed confused about the definition of spoken data and treated transcripts of speech as if they were written texts. A few candidates did not include the data because it was lost: copies of data should be kept and centres need to ensure that candidates include the data in their folder. However, there were as always candidates who enclosed huge amounts of data, particularly if the topic was children's reading books. This results in very bulky packages and is unnecessary as moderators only require the data which has been analysed.

Folders should have a clear organisation which follows the guidelines in the specification. It was disappointing to see some otherwise very good submissions which had been presented as essays in continuous prose.

Knowledge of relevant language theories should be used to inform and support the chosen area of investigation but references to theories should not be allowed to dominate: there were a few examples of studies of Child Language Acquisition which were textbook-style essays, relying almost totally on secondary sources with little exploration of the original data. Close analysis of the data should form the focal point of the investigation. It is also worth noting that some language theories may now be somewhat outdated eg, language and gender is a popular topic and studies by linguists are definitely relevant but the more inspiring investigations questioned the validity of the studies rather than routinely accepting them by approaching their analysis with a pre-determined idea of what would be found.

To aim for high achievement candidates need to show independence in their choice of topic and task. The investigation should have a clear focus with a hypothesis or a specific question to be addressed. Aims should be precise and manageable and should provide a clear indication of what the candidate hopes to find out. The evaluation is an important part of the study and should not be treated merely as a summary ie, the evaluation should consider whether or not the analysis supported the hypothesis or answered the question the candidate had set themselves. It is also relevant to include a comment indicating how the scope of the research could be extended.

Choice of data and tasks

Written studies are increasing in popularity and there were probably an equal number of submissions of spoken and written investigations this year. Some experienced centres encouraged candidates to investigate areas of spoken language and had clearly provided excellent guidance as there were many accurate, detailed transcriptions and penetrating analyses. In some cases linguistic knowledge was impressive.

Examples of spoken investigations included:

The study of gender differences in informal conversation

Studies of the language of bi-lingual and second language speakers of English

The linguistic codes and conventions of football commentaries
The characteristic features of the language of baseball commentaries
Language and formality in television celebrity interviews
The language of humour in television comedy and stand-up comedy (popular programmes were 'Skins', 'Never Mind the Buzzcocks', 'Mock the Week')
An investigation into how language of humour was used to portray gender in the film 'The Full Monty'.

Examples of written investigations included:

Language Change through:

newspaper reports

diaries (one very sensitive study compared a private diary written in the 19th century by a young lesbian woman with a 21st century female blog)

A study of the Queen's idiolect and level of formality in public speeches over 50 years

The language of different versions of the Bible

Investigations into how the language of horror induces fear

The street vernacular of rap music.

Political speeches were very popular, usually with an historical perspective.

Earl Spencer's obituary speech on the death of Diana, Princess of Wales continues to appeal to candidates and has now become a classic choice.

Centres could, however, encourage candidates to be aware of the vast range of non-political speeches that are available through anthologies and internet sites.

The language of children's literature and studies of young children's own writing are both increasingly popular and in both cases there is much fascinating data available.

Candidates who choose these options should be encouraged to develop their analysis of spoken language features which are usually present in this type of data.

The language of e-texts (emails, text messages, chatrooms, blogs) is now a highly popular and potentially productive area. There were some focused and intelligent studies but also some which were merely lists of features with very sparing analysis or linguistic comment. Data for this aspect of language is readily available and often very interesting but investigations do need a clear angle to create a focus eg, an exploration of idiolectal and dialectal features, comparisons of e-texts based on age, gender or relationships, comparisons of emails or blogs with written letters and paper-based diaries.

In addition to the popular choices listed above there were also some unique, personal investigations which demonstrated perception or were handled with great sensitivity.

These more unusual investigations included:

An investigation into the variety of English used in a mathematical context.

A comparison of the language of the Quran and the Bible.

A study of language disorder (Asperger's syndrome).

The language of a 10 year old with cerebral palsy.

An investigation into language change and levels of formality in sex education materials from 1950 to 2008.

A comparison of the language, tone and formality of two travel writers (Paul Theroux and Bill Bryson).

Advice on choice of topics.

Some topics this year were more suitable for AS coursework and tended to be approached in a superficial, formulaic manner, lacking the close analytical focus required at A2. Examples of these topics are: comparisons of different types of newspaper reports, make-up advertisements, problem pages and horoscopes.

These topics are not prohibited and could, in fact, lead to very successful and satisfying studies if they are sufficiently academically robust eg, one successful study compared the

language, tone and stylistic choices of a male and female journalist. Studies of the language of problem pages were well executed when given a clear focus eg, across time, age or gender.

If this type of topic is chosen the investigation needs to have an added dimension to distinguish it from AS.

Internal Moderation

This was usually accurate and many centres provided evidence of rigorous and searching internal discussion and moderation. There were many examples of excellent practice, with carefully annotated folders and detailed summative comments closely cross-referenced to Assessment Objectives.

A number of centres did over-reward candidates by placing them in Band 5 or top Band 4 when the analysis did not have a strong enough linguistic focus or lacked discrete framework headings to organise the investigation.

But in general internal moderation was precise and recognised specific AO achievement.

Centres should once again be congratulated on their commitment to preparing candidates for the unit.

6376/01: Editorial & Language Topics

The Editorial and Language Topic paper is the synoptic element of the specification. It therefore tests the skills learnt throughout the study of this subject. Candidates and centres need to bear in mind that marks in higher bands are achieved by good performances in rewriting a text for an audience and purpose, in analysing changes linguistically and relating to context, in applying knowledge about language issues to a topic and in arguing a case well. This all needs to be done fluently and accurately. There are detailed comments below, especially on Question 1 which give an indication of how best to tackle and not to tackle Section A and Section B type answers.

Section A: Editorial

Q1 Early Modern English Loan Words for A Level English Language Textbook

In their 'rewrites', most candidates understood the gist of the extract and made an attempt to modernise the language. Lower band answers tended to struggle to grasp the meaning of some parts of the original, sometimes misinterpreting extracts, for example, taking 'then' in line 2 ("then left out of it"), as literal, rather than meaning 'than'. Obviously, this totally altered the meaning. Some misunderstood lines 6 and 7, with the EME declarative auxiliary DO, as interrogatives.

The approach with lower band answers was usually a very literal translation. In addition to not being able to understand some of the original, they also demonstrated an inability to control the fluency of the new text they produced. The style and tone adopted was usually inconsistent with fluctuating levels of modernisation, occasionally to the extent of being totally unidiomatic. Some candidates had some difficulties in understanding the content of the original, and the attitude of the author in Text A. When producing their extract for a modern textbook, some either grossly underestimated or overestimated the range of knowledge likely to be typical of A Level English Language students.

Few frameworks or features were explored in lower band 'commentaries'. Some candidates just presented changes rather than exploring them. There was little linguistic terminology or exemplification in such answers. The analysis was sometimes self-limiting because so much of the original was a literal paraphrase rather than an attempt to 'transform' the text.

Most candidates opted for a 'translation' approach in their 'rewrites'. They made a reasonable attempt to modernise spelling, punctuation, vocabulary, and to some extent, grammar. 'Commentaries' generally tended to concentrate on orthography and lexis, with general rather than detailed comments on syntax, but usually little on semantic shifting.

Higher band answers took a divided approach. Some produced a modern idiomatic text suitable for the new audience and purpose, and justified staying relatively close to the original because the new text was to appear alongside the original in the A Level English Language textbook:

My aim was not to provide a literal translation but to get the message across without losing much of the structure of the original and to keep as near as reasonably possible to the original. This would allow the new audience of A Level English Language students to get correspondences and exactly what changes have occurred.

There was a clear indication in the 'commentary' of such responses that the purpose of the new text was to inform and educate, whilst the purpose of the original text was to convey concerns about the amount of 'borrowing' in EME, and to explain various views about it. In higher band answers, the 'commentary' typically contained points about the historical context covering the influx of Romance words, with French from the Norman Conquest onwards, and 'inkhorn' terms from Latin and also Greek, or lexis from the New World during the Renaissance period. Points were sometimes made about Classical languages being the vehicle for education in EME, with an ongoing attempt to make English fit for this purpose. Occasionally, the belief that new words could be made in the Germanic tradition, from words already in the language, was explained. There was often also an awareness that standardisation had started with Caxton's printing press, but had not been completed until after Johnson's Dictionary in the mid eighteenth century. Some higher band answers commented on the effect on the original spelling resulting from the continuing Great Vowel Shift, the justification of margins in printing, and the paying of writers or printers by the amount of text. These were given by way of reasons for differences alongside examples of changes made in candidates' 'rewrites'.

A minority of higher band answers created totally new texts. Some of these contained introductory explanations or controlled narrative interventions in their 'rewrites':

The following extract from Richard Verstegen's 'A Restitution of Decayed Intelligence' (1605) discusses the formation of the English Language from borrowing loan words from other languages, and the various views about it, including the author's. It has been 'translated' into Modern English below:

or

What Richard Verstegen is saying here is that throughout the Middle and Early Modern English period, French, Latin and other loan words began to flood into the English Language. Some people were in favour of this; others against it.

A few candidates produced a textbook style suitable for A Level English Language students, focusing on learning and interesting the audience. The example below shows a reworking of the original text to include questions as headings and sub-headings, with paragraphs beneath in the actual 'rewrite', covering the information from the original text, and an activity for students at the end:

The History of English

- *Has our Language been Discredited by the Excessive Use of Foreign Words?*
.....
- *Is it Still Considered a True Language?*
.....
- *When did it all Begin?*
[Explanation of date of Chaucer, the writer]
- *Has This Increased Over Time?*
.....
- *Is it Popular with the Majority of Native Speakers?*
.....
- *Have we Borrowed Too Many Words from Other Languages?*
.....
- *Is it Too Late to Make a Change?*
.....
- *What were Verstegen's Views?*
.....

Class Exercise

What do you think? What evidence do you have? Discuss opinions on this topic in small groups and report back to the class.

Higher band answers commented on a wider range of frameworks. Points on orthography were developed more with mention of positional variants and other reasons for differences between the original and modern versions:

<u> tends to be used for <v> medially in a word: 'haue' rather than: 'have'. <v> occurs in the initial position where today a <u> would be used: 'vp' for 'up'. This related to the fact that in EME, the letters <u> and <v> were interchangeable. They were different forms of these two letters. In Modern English, they are two different letters, associated with different sounds.

The runic symbol <Ƀ>, now employed in the IPA, is also used inconsistently. It appears in some words in initial position: 'Ƀtrangers', 'Ƀpeak'. However in others, a standard <s> is used: 'since'. It is also used in the medial position of a word:

Ƀcarlly'. It does not appear in final position.

Other orthographical variations may reflect the pronunciation of words during the 17th century. The doubling of the vowel <e> in 'bee' and 'mee' could indicate a long vowel /i:/. This may be linked to changes going on in the Great Vowel Shift in words with /e:/, which were moving their place of articulation.

Redundant <e>s on 'patche' and 'claime' could have been used merely to justify the margins, rather than as the remnants of earlier inflections. The early printers were also paid by the inch of type. They sometimes introduced these <e>s because it was financially rewarding.

Higher band answers also extended comments on archaic lexis to include semantic shifting, figurative language and negative connotations:

I used the word 'language' instead of 'tounge'. Although technically correct, it has all but fallen out of use, except in set expressions such as 'mother tongue'. It is a metonym in which the implement of speaking stands for the whole language itself. 'Tongue' is more commonly used nowadays in its anatomical sense.

Sometimes the retention of non-PC or negative words such as 'dumb' and metaphors such as 'scum' were justified in order to convey disgust, or for the sake of scholarly objectivity. They were occasionally kept in quotations and explained in the commentary, along with other words which had changed connotations:

Due to subtle semantic shifts, certain words have different connotations now. For example, I felt that 'non-native speakers' would be a more appropriate word than either the modern 'foreigners' or the EME use of 'strangers'. The word 'strangers' is now used for 'unknown or unusual people' and can be viewed as very sinister.

Grammatical changes were explored in more depth in higher band answers:

Grammatical changes have also been made to the original text. For example, 'hath', which includes the archaic '(e)th' ending of the 3rd p sg present tense has been changed to the present day 'has'.

The original text is one long compound-complex sentence with multiple coordinating and subordinating clauses, starting with 'but', 'and', 'that', 'which' 'albeit' and so on: 'Since the tyme of Chaucer...but of late.. that it had bin beyond... which albeit...and think...' This represents speech much more than Modern English writing does. However, as I felt that this would be too unusual for modern readers to extract information from, I used a mixture of simple sentences, with some pre-modification rather than post-modification:

(pre-mod) A S P O
'Since Chaucerian tymes / many foreign words/ have entered / the English Language (simple sentence),

as well as compound-complex sentences:

S P O coord conj P O
'Others / think / less highly of borrowing / and / feel / that
(SP...)

we have been used...

I felt that A Level students should be able to follow quite complicated sentences, and I used a variety of sentence structures to maintain interest.

Overall, higher band answers were full, fluent, relevant, technical, well-exemplified and showed a good awareness of both the modern and the historical content.

Q2 Early Modern English Text on Child Raising for a Modern Audience

Most candidates who answered this question took the audience as being parents and sometimes students learning about child care. The modern purpose was seen as informative and advisory.

Lower band responses struggled with how to convey the 'non-PC' gender values to a modern audience. Some omitted this section of the original altogether in their 'rewrites'. Others retained the sexist sentiments as if they were instructing modern parents, but gave no explanation of this 'non-PC' attitude in their 'commentaries'. Lower band answers sometimes struggled to engineer the required transition between Early Modern and Modern English. They found it difficult to understand some of the lexis and syntax of the original.

A few candidates used the first paragraph of their 'commentaries' simply to identify the context and author of the original, as already outlined in the question and task. Most recognised that the original contained orthographical variations and some archaic lexis. Some 'commentaries', however, did not strike the right balance between historical comments about the original and contemporary points made about their modern versions. Usually, lower band answers focused on the latter, showed insufficient knowledge of Early Modern English features, and could not deploy enough relevant linguistic frameworks in their analysis.

Higher band answers demonstrated the ability to create new texts, whilst still conveying the information of the original, but pointed out to the new audience that, in the past, there was a difference between the way that males and females were treated with regard to education:

One of the earliest people to say how children should be taught was Richard Mulcaster. Writing in the late 16th century, he was concerned with the health and educational development of young boys, although there were comments on the introduction of girls to education and training.

The emphasis in the content of higher band 'rewrites' was on education, training, health, fitness, and behavioural appropriateness, rather than straying extensively on to other aspects.

Higher band 'rewrites' and 'commentaries' showed an awareness of the mixed registers used in modern texts. They often pointed out examples of the chatty, colloquial and directed styles they had used, as well as including explanations about the deployment of technical-sounding and polysyllabic lexemes to reinforce the 'expert' credentials of the writer. Some relished commenting on the change of attitudes towards young boys and girls, and on the patriarchal values and authoritarian stance of the original. 'Commentaries' in the higher bands used a wide range of frameworks to discuss not only the generic linguistic demands of the new text, but to make productive explanations of Early Modern orthography, lexis, grammar, syntax and semantics.

Section B: Language Topics

The range of choices of topic in Section B made the questions accessible. An important point to remember in Section B is to answer the actual question and not to stray on to a previous question on the same topic. Better answers maintained a descriptive but balanced stance throughout. They often set the scene with a brief introductory paragraph. Usually this contained a definition such as of 'Political Correctness' or Standard English, RP, accent and dialect. Very brief background information such as on spelling or texting and technological development also helped. Some awareness was shown in such answers about recent research or studies.

Q3 Spelling Difficulties with Reasons

Many candidates were well informed about issues related to spelling. However, lower band answers tended to stray on to the need for spelling reform and discussed reasons for and against this, rather than concentrating on answering the actual question. Other digressions involved those on language academies or especially modern technology, including texting conventions and sometimes American English spell checkers. All of these could be discussed productively within certain limits but spelling reform in particular could lead responses away from the focus of the question which was: current problems with spelling and the reasons for them, rather than solutions to the problems and an outline of the work of spelling reformers. A few answers became so sidetracked giving examples of texting, it was surprising that they hadn't chosen to answer Question 5 instead. Other lower band answers sometimes just listed difficult spelling features rather than exploring and explaining them historically. They often took exception to the book title in the question as being very prescriptive, without realising its irony.

Higher band answers were often both specific and wide ranging. They were able to provide detailed historical explanations for the current state of English spelling, often relating to the influence of other languages on English. They showed a clear understanding of the way pronunciation is an aspect of speech that is fluid and subject to rapid change and variety. They were aware that spelling is an aspect of writing which tends to fix or freeze language with certain symbolic conventions. They noted that, in staying the same, such symbols could often become ill-suited as visual representatives of sound.

The better answers managed to transcribe some phonemes or words effectively using the IPA. For example, a few candidates were able to point to the spelling of the homophones 'read' and 'reed' /ri:d/ as probably being the result of Great Vowel Shift changes. These words which were originally differentiated in pronunciation, and therefore spelling, had come to be pronounced the same, but had retained their earlier spellings. Better answers also engaged effectively with the sensationalist title of the book:

The title of the book is a multi-layered question. It is deliberately provocative, possibly raising questions of education standards and the poor literacy of students, which has been claimed, for example, by some universities. However, the title could also attract people to buy a book which might explain the reasons why some people have spelling difficulties. It might also provide a sympathetic approach to the problem, and possibly some solutions.

Q4 Politically Correct Language Including 'Winter Lights'

Overall, candidates generally engaged well with this question. Lower band answers, however, tended to be very prescriptive, and against most of the changes, except those associated with race. For some candidates, the question seemed to provoke an emotional response that appeared to distance them from the objective study of language and a descriptive perspective. Lower band answers were more judgemental and sensationalist in approach, with less technical awareness of language features. They did not really explore the origins and rationale of the 'PC' movement in language. Some examined a few areas, but tended to treat them as of identical importance, even when they appeared to be extreme, untrue and humorous examples. Some lower band answers focused on one area, and gave a couple of very brief but sensational examples. Others spent too long concentrating on 'winter lights'. Occasionally, some responses were sweeping, intolerant or very digressive, including those answers which strayed extensively on to euphemisms and taboo.

Higher band answers were able to define 'PC'. Their responses were informed by detailed knowledge of the history of the movement and some of the underlying theories of 'PC':

Political correctness as a concept is closely linked with the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis which says that our language defines our world view. This would mean that, if our language is filled with prejudice, then so too will be our view of the world.

Higher band responses resisted the temptation to provide emotional and anecdotal responses, and explored a number of areas, noting technical linguistic features associated with for example: morphology, pejoration, amelioration, marked and unmarked terms, euphemism, or pre and post-modification of nouns:

In the late 1990s, the charity, the Spastics Society, changed its name to Scope. They were aware of a semantic derogation in which the term 'spastic' was used as an insult. A more 'politically correct' phrase, 'people suffering from cerebral palsy' was then adopted. This emphasised the concept of 'people' coming first, as a part of society. However, further changes were made, as it was felt that the expression 'suffering from' was disempowering. The 'politically correct' term is now a noun phrase with post-modification: 'people with cerebral palsy'. Since the head word is 'people' and it is not pre-modified, this means there is less of a tendency to highlight an aspect of a

minority group which might reduce them to their medical condition, thus avoiding what is called a 'label of primary potency'.

The main argument for 'politically correct' language regarding gender is that the language has been created around a majority power group i.e. men. The language did not include women. Nowadays the compounds 'mankind' and 'manmade' are therefore not usually regarded as politically correct terms. 'People' or 'human beings' and 'manufactured' or 'artificial' tend to be used instead.

Similarly the marked term 'chairman' has been changed to 'chair' or 'chairperson'. These are not without their problems, however, as some complain that the former is an inanimate object; others that the latter, with its three syllables, is longwinded, and, unlike 'chairman', does not contain an unstressed enclitic like 'man'. A former classification of 'Madam Chairman' relating to females in that role, still makes a gender distinction, could be regarded as having dubious connotations in the word 'madam', and is even more of a circumlocution.

Overall, higher band answers were wide ranging and balanced. Some were gratifyingly open-minded and humane responses showing enlightened social attitudes.

Q5 Text Messages and Possible Decline in Quality

There was an interesting range of responses to this question. Generally, candidates were able to provide a good range of examples of 'textese', often from their own experience. Lower band answers, however, tended to present examples rather than exploring them technically and explaining them contextually. Their responses were sometimes anecdotal. They were less confident about defying the 'academic' in the question and became partly or wholly prescriptive in approach. It was surprising how many candidates agreed with the claim about a decline in quality, and seemed to accept the prescriptivist view referred to in the question uncritically. Some answers focused on spelling only. Other lower band responses strayed extensively on to other technological influences and language generally, so ceased being strictly relevant to the demands of the question.

Higher band answers showed an awareness of language change as neither progress nor decay, although there was a sense that text messaging was associated with the evolution of a new medium. Some candidates linked this innovation and creativity to similar pre-standardised or non-standardised developments associated with writers such as Chaucer and Shakespeare.

The best responses were consistently descriptive in approach. They stressed that text language was developing in response to technological and social change. They were technically knowledgeable when describing features, using terms such as: elision of vowels, ellipsis of words, graphophonemic or alphanumeric characters, homophony, and conventions of punctuation, as well as initialisms and acronyms. The latter feature gave rise to some interesting comments relating to their use in some business texts to enable the company to provide a more efficient service: 'wcl' and 'omw' are apparently used now in some businesses to send speedy messages meaning 'will call later' and 'on my way'.

Higher band answers showed an awareness that, given the instantaneous nature and other contextual factors of texting, the language used would understandably be chatty. Such

responses usually commented on the fact that all people learn how to code switch between contexts, modes and mediums very early in life:

A recent study showed those who text creatively generally have few problems with code switching or spelling accurately. They are well able to use Standard English grammar in formal written situations.

Higher band responses resisted any temptation to indulge in prescriptivist comments relating to a Golden Age, or the 'purity' of language, or a decline in standards.

Q6 Standard English, RP, Accent, Dialect and Schools

In this question, some lower band answers were either not able to convey the difference between Standard English and RP, or were not aware that they are very different things. Such responses also tended to confuse accent and dialect generally, and were often unable to describe or explore any features of a local accent and dialect, other than in a very brief and general way. The radio speaker was sometimes seen as having a purely prescriptive approach. The descriptive stance inherent in the 'whenever appropriate' quotation in the question was ignored. Such answers were either very disparaging of the speaker's opinion, or sometimes wholeheartedly agreed that both Standard English and RP should be taught in schools.

Higher band responses were able to define Standard English and RP, as well as accent and dialect. Some provided a brief historical explanation of the origins of Standard English and of the later rise of RP as a prestige accent. Better answers demonstrated a control of the argument in a way that maintained the distinction between Standard English and RP, as well as a descriptive approach at all times. Candidates were able to illustrate dialectal variation through lexical and grammatical exemplification, and to illustrate variation in accent through examples of pronunciation, sometimes using the IPA accurately. Usually only very good answers showed the ability to employ the IPA extensively, accurately and appropriately. The most popular varieties chosen for description seemed to be Geordie, Scouse and Estuary English. Although often described well, there is some debate about the extent to which Estuary English employs many non-standard dialect features. Typical local dialect features which were described, illustrated and explained included: double comparatives 'more fiercer', unmarked count nouns of measurement 'three mile', prepositional use 'I went up town', and 'I got off of the bus', and double negatives 'I haven't done nothing'.

Higher band answers generally demonstrated an insight into the stereotypes associated with local accents and dialects, and were aware of changes in attitudes and the nature of research associated with these. Some candidates responded to the educational slant of the question:

In the wake of all the changes in education in the 1980s and 1990s, there was some focus on the nature of 'correct' English and what children should be taught in schools. The National Curriculum highlighted what children should be taught about Standard English. It was the language of wide social communication and was often required in formal contexts. However, there was a concern that non standard varieties of English would be undermined on the basis of non-linguistic judgements. The focus was altered slightly to establish non-standard varieties in a position of respectability as rich in diversity, with the implication that children would be offered a choice rather than being forced to use one form of the language.

There was some evidence of wider reading:

Crystal describes how different varieties of English can co-exist with Standard English in 'the global village'. Individuals can be taught to use Standard English for wider communication, but their own dialect in appropriate circumstances.

A few candidates noted that it was the social stratification ideas which needed to be examined, rather than forcing everyone to attempt to speak RP. They felt that such an approach was now much more associated with the social climate of earlier decades of the twentieth century. There was much comment on the relatively small percentage of RP speakers anyway, and on the benefits of teaching a standard dialect in schools for equality of opportunity purposes, and to ensure that modern society has a shared code, but with speakers able to switch code according to context.

Overall, examiners were pleased to note the progress candidates had made in this paper in acquiring the knowledge, understanding and skills crucial to the study of English Language at Advanced Level.

Statistics

Unit 1: Textual Commentary (6371)

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	50	34	31	28	25	23
Uniform boundary mark	90	72	63	54	45	36

Unit 2: Desk Study (6372)

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	50	35	31	27	24	21
Uniform boundary mark	120	96	84	72	60	48

Unit 3a: Language of the Media (6373/01)

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	50	39	33	27	22	17
Uniform boundary mark	90	72	63	54	45	36

Unit 3b: Language of the Media (6373/02)

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	50	31	27	23	20	17
Uniform boundary mark	90	72	63	54	45	36

Unit 4: Varieties of Language (6374)

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	50	38	33	28	24	20
Uniform boundary mark	90	74	63	54	45	36

Unit 5: Spoken or Written Study (6375)

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	50	40	34	28	23	18
Uniform boundary mark	90	72	63	54	45	36

Unit 6: Editorial and Language Topics (6376)

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E
Raw boundary mark	100	75	67	59	51	43
Uniform boundary mark	120	98	84	72	60	48

Notes

Maximum Mark (Raw): the mark corresponding to the sum total of the marks shown on the mark scheme.

Boundary mark: the minimum mark required by a candidate to qualify for a given grade.

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