

Examiners' Report
January 2012

GCE English Language 6EN01 01

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Introduction

The paper has two sections, which invites candidates to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of linguistic concepts across all ability ranges. Section A is progressive. It allows candidates to test the range of their skills by building on concepts and language features over four questions. Section B offers an opportunity for extended analysis and discussion in a longer single question.

The January 2012 series has proven to be a very successful paper for candidates, showing a wide range of abilities.

Centres are asked to be aware that the amount of space provided in the booklet is more than ample for an effective answer. It is, however, not a recommendation of the amount that candidates should write. Candidates are not advantaged by over-writing and should aim to contain their answers within the booklet. However, candidates should write enough to make sure that they can be effectively assessed over three assessment objectives.

The purpose of this report is to guide centres on the ways by which this examination has been assessed. An approach to each individual question can be gleaned from the outline of candidate performance within this report.

Before starting to write, candidates should not only read all the texts, but also read through the five questions. They should have a clear understanding of how the questions differ before tackling the question.

Question 1: candidates must focus only on the underlined material. There are no marks for observing what is outside the highlighted area. Also the example must be from the source booklet and not be an example drawn from the candidates' existing knowledge or understanding.

Question 2: candidates should consider the over-arching contextual factors of film taglines (or whatever the genre the series focuses on). The recommended factors are field, function, tenor and mode. However, we are very open to alternative systems e.g. audience and purpose and embrace innovative teaching and learning.

Question 3: the focus for this question moves to particular sub-groups for more detailed comment.

Question 4: this question is synoptic to Section A. Candidates should note the content of their investigations for the previous questions and switch their attention to the sub-group which has not been tackled.

Question 5: candidates should note that AO2 marks are for presentation of self and language issues and AO3 marks are for their exploration of contextual factors and key constituents. There should be balance to the exploration of each text and also the contextual factors and key constituents.

Question 1

This question aims to test the candidates' knowledge and understanding of linguistic terminology.

There are 15 marks drawn from AO1.

AO1: Select and apply a range of linguistic methods to communicate relevant knowledge using appropriate terminology and coherent accurate written expression.

Bold font is used to illustrate the language feature that the candidates are required to comment on.

For this series the expected responses were as follows:

- a) verbs / balanced list of three / semantic contrast
- b) ellipsis / minor sentence / verb omitted / subject omitted
- c) adjective / superlative / positive connotation
- d) pronouns / deictic or context bound
- e) word play / allusion to idiom or cliché/ similar phonology of 'air/hair' (credit for using IPA).

Mostly this question was very well answered. There was clear evidence that candidates are exploring a wealth of experiences to equip them well for this examination. Centres are clearly taking advantage of the training and publications offered by Edexcel. In addition to this, it was also refreshing to see a range of different approaches to teaching and learning as candidates got to grips with the structure of English.

- a) Candidates identified the use of verbs, listing and semantic contrasts and quoted relevant examples. There were, however, some responses that used a one word response, 'struggle' for example. This response is not appropriate, as 'struggle' is used as a noun and as the infinitive in the taglines. The ambiguous nature of this response was enough to question the candidate's understanding of their response. Please could centres encourage their candidates to write enough to make themselves clear.
- b) This was the least successful element. A few candidates identified minor sentences. However, most misunderstood this construct and answered declarative or simple sentence. One or two identified the noun phrase or the infinitive in the non-finite clause but without terminology for the latter.
- c) Candidates spotted the use of the intensifier, superlative and the modification. The examples were good.
- d) Most candidates identified the pronoun but there was an equal split between the naming of 2nd and 3rd person. There were lots of examples where candidates lost the opportunity to gain a mark for quoting an example that already used 'she'.
- e) Here, there was a two way split between candidates responding with pun / parody and others using a word class approach identifying prepositional phrase/ adverbial. Candidates who identified individual world classes within the phrase were given some reward depending on what they identified and how it was supported in the example. Centres are reminded that candidates should identify the complete phrase.

This successful question was slightly hampered by candidates repeating responses (they are only awarded once). Also, candidates quoting out of the bold area did not gain marks.

Question 2

This question draws marks for AO3.

AO3: Analyse and evaluate the influence of contextual factors on the production and reception of spoken and written language, showing knowledge of the key constituents of language.

Most students used the mode, field, function and audience format, and achievement fell usually into middle band awarding. There were a few candidates who were confused by the requirements of the question and who did not manage to refer to the text at all. In contrast, some candidates were aware of the tagline's need to work beyond the written mode of a film poster and as multi-media text in audio. Whilst most responses covered the differences in semantic field and noticed differing techniques such as puns in comedy and ellipsis in horror, generally this tended to happen at a descriptive level. Had candidates related this to audience consumption and the tenor this would have attracted more marks.

2 Explain the contextual factors that influence the use of language in film taglines.

(AO3 = 10)

In your response, you must refer to the data provided on pages 2-5 of the Source Booklet.

Mode - frozen ~~spoken~~ written

Field - lines ~~the~~ film to describe it

Function - To tell the audience what the film is about

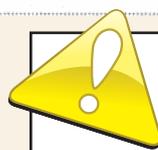
Tenor - The audience watching it ~~the~~ distant relationship

The contextual factors of the film is that it is a frozen ^{written} ~~spoken~~ piece which stays the same. The piece is taglines for a film which sum up the film as a whole in one sentence. It is written to help describe the film to the audience what the film is about, without giving too much information. It's written to convince the reader to go and see the film. The relationship between the writer and the reader is distant and non-existent. They do not know each other, but the writer makes the piece formal as he is trying to connect to a wide spread audience as he doesn't know who is going to read it. The text is frozen as it's not going to change.



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Examiner Comments

Here the candidate has a limited understanding of the mode and function. However the candidate's awareness of audience shows some development. This operates on a descriptive level.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

Should the candidate develop the three contextual factors in a systematic way, whilst referring to the text, it would be possible to move this response into band 2.

The mode affects the use of language in several ways. Firstly it's the ~~subgenre~~ genre of (film) advertisements, ~~depending on~~ which can be either written in the form of posters and advertisements in magazines or these taglines can be spoken and/or written in radio adverts or television commercials. Due to the limited space on all forms of advertising the quotes and taglines used are often very small for example [No. 0] "Double-o behave" only consists of a compound word 'Double-o' and a nominalised verb acting as a noun "behave". ~~This is also makes the information~~

The function of the ^{*tag-lines} ~~adverts~~ is to attract the viewer to watch film that has been made by the film studio. They do this by using short taglines which are created so that they are memorable or catchy. Comedy taglines often have a play on words to entertain the reader, which makes the reader believe the writers of the film will have made the rest of the movie as funny, such as 'Double o-behave', is an advert for 'Austin Powers' a spoof on the Ian Fleming character "007 or James Bond", so they incorporate the name of the original with a catch phrase of the new film character for humorous effect. ~~The~~ The other two types of film use similar tactics to entice the viewer.

The field of the taglines is film production and writing, but the terminology varies as there are sub-fields within them that affect the language. The semantic field of humour is featured in comedy taglines by ~~using~~ using words with positive connotations such as ~~to be~~ ~~laugh~~ "laugh" and use of taboo such as "Hurt". Whereas the semantic field of romance includes language that would only feature in love and relationships such as "love" and "heart". Horror films include dramatic language to induce fear "sin", "dread", "screaming" which gives the

reader negative connotations

The Tenor between the addresser and addressee is that of a consultative or informative. The film studio is advertising their product and they are telling us as the reader why ^{we} they should see their movie, such as 'No.6' which is informing the reader why they should see their movie as it's so funny that the reader will lose control of themselves with laughter so badly they vomit. This last quote also shows another point by showing the film studio trying to create an informal register, this is beneficial for them as if they were distant and formal they would alienate readers, driving them and preventing them from buying their product.



ResultsPlus

Examiner Comments

The candidate is clearly aware that taglines are adverts. There is understanding that the genre needs to work in a range of multi mediums. The knowledge of how taglines are displayed is linked to form. A clear understanding of target audience and complex functions, to entertain and entice, allows the candidate to develop an implicit understanding of tenor.



ResultsPlus

Examiner Tip

Candidates writing in band 3 should feel confident to abandon the formulaic chart of the contextual factors and respond to the question by sharing their understanding. An understanding of contextual factors can be implicit.

Question 3

Here candidates pick up an extra assessment objective and are marked for AO2 and AO3. There are 5 marks for each assessment objective.

AO2: Demonstrate a critical understanding of a range of concepts and issues related to the construction of meanings in spoken and written language, using knowledge of linguistic approaches.

AO3: Analyse and evaluate the influence of contextual factors on the production and reception of spoken and written language, showing knowledge of the key constituents of language.

Many scripts discussed convergence and the use of direct address to develop a rapport with the audience. Some good answers noticed the difference in function between romance and horror taglines (to engage and to scare). Some responses applied gender theories to describe the difference in language use, which worked well in some cases but was mishandled in others.

However, despite a demonstration of terminology in question 1, so many candidates missed the hints and tips picked out for them when tackling this question. It is possible to use the highlighted features of question 1 as a guide to plan for questions 3 and 4. Sadly lots of candidates missed out on an opportunity to analyse the text's use of ellipsis, pun, lists of verbs, premodification etc.

In addition to this, simple, minor and complex sentences seemed to be misunderstood. Similarly verbs, adjectives and nouns were often confused (and these were identified well in question 1). Whereas sentence moods were well represented, they often were not linked to the language issues or concepts. Also ellipsis and elision were well noted but not always used to evidence a point.

If the successes of question 1 could be harnessed and used as evidence to support language issues and concepts then answers to this question would attract more marks.

3 Identify and explain the differences you notice in language use between the taglines in Groups B and C.

(AO2 = 5, AO3 = 5)

In your response, you must refer to pages 3–4 of the Source Booklet.

Taglines in group B ~~are~~ contain Love, and sexual connotations, and ~~a~~ mostly positive connotations and some motivational factors like "the most incredible thing that ever happened ~~to~~ is about to happen to you", the writer of the taglines ~~might~~ have ~~also~~ used pronouns which are highly personal to develop a relationship between the consumer and the movie, and relates you the consumer to the movie in

some way. These taglines contain a semantic field of "the world", "Earth", the writer might have chosen such Lexis to also relate the consumer to the universe and give you a motive of believing. The Romantic film taglines might appeal to female consumers according due to the semantic field of Love, sex and Relationships which proves the difference theory that relates women to being ~~going~~ ~~and~~ more into love and sex.



ResultsPlus

Examiner Comments

This script related audience involvement to the use of pronouns. The analysis of the semantic field was idiosyncratic and imaginative.



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Examiner Tip

The discussion of gender is stereotypical and could have been more critical through the use of the key constituents. This would have taken the candidate into band 3 for AO3.

Question 4

Again there are two assessment objectives: AO2 and AO3. There are 5 marks for AO2 and 10 for AO3.

AO2: Demonstrate a critical understanding of a range of concepts and issues related to the construction of meanings in spoken and written language, using knowledge of linguistic approaches.

AO3: Analyse and evaluate the influence of contextual factors on the production and reception of spoken and written language, showing knowledge of the key constituents of language.

This question was the weakest question answered. Most candidates focused on the obvious lexical choices but ignored the grammatical points. To gain higher scores the candidates need to engage in discussion about grammar and discourse points.

Many candidates were able to describe the contradictions / juxtapositions / puns but few reached higher bands. The few high scoring responses understood the relevance of wordplay and pathos in comedy.

The key to the question is the strength of the interrogation. It could be any text, it does not matter. Could centres please emphasise this point to their candidates and underline the importance of the exploration of possibly using contextual factors and key constituents.

4 Read the following taglines.

- Two amazing secret agents. One diabolical madman. Conditions are dark. The forecast is deadly. Tea, anyone? - *EARLIER REFERENCE TO RANDOM*
- Check in. Relax. Take a shower. - *POSSIBLE STONER FILM (joke)*
- A homespun murder story.
- See our family and feel better about yours. - *crazy family (closets to heads)*
- More merciless, more shameless.
- He is out to prove he's got nothing to prove. - *Why prove it? coming of age?*

Choose two taglines which you think are for comedy films, and explain your decision with close reference to the language use in Group A.

(AO2 = 5, AO3 = 10)

The two tag lines I have chosen are 'See our family & feel better about yours' and 'a'.

In tagline 'a' because of the field specific lexis, and the use of simple sentences for dramatic effect we envision the film to be of a ~~lighter~~ ^{dark} nature. Such as a horror and then with the end line randomness sets in again (as before mentioned)

and a person's mindset uncontrollably switches to a possible comedy. The same as in Group (A) no 3) when the words used invoke a certain feeling or even a foreboding sense of the type of ~~fiction~~^{film}. The lexis used 'diabolical, madman, forecast is deadly' are all words from the semantic field of horror and they are usually used by people with a higher class or even hinting into the theory by Lakoff 'language and power' as it has been stated that people in a position of power do not have to use



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This script starts very well. The point about simple sentences used for dramatic effect was very good, although minor sentences would have been a better choice. There was also a general understanding of the juxtaposition of the tag question. The discussion of lexis is also potentially strong. However, the interrogation then loses shape abruptly.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

The answer had great potential but the decision to move into audience reception and theories was mishandled. Had the candidate continued with the language analysis and related this to tenor rather than stereotypical groups it had the potential to be placed towards the top of band 3.

Question 5

Here three assessment objectives are assessed. AO1 has 10 marks, AO2 15 and AO3 25.

AO1: Select and apply a range of linguistic methods to communicate relevant knowledge using appropriate terminology and coherent accurate written expression.

AO2: Demonstrate a critical understanding of a range of concepts and issues related to the construction of meanings in spoken and written language, using knowledge of linguistic approaches.

AO3: Analyse and evaluate the influence of contextual factors on the production and reception of spoken and written language, showing knowledge of the key constituents of language.

Throughout the paper candidates were able to demonstrate a thorough, wide ranging understanding of terms and terminology. This was illustrated throughout the ability range.

This question seemed to engage the candidates well. They wrote extensively, charting the discourse of each text. Candidates managed to compare both texts and wove in discussion of the means by which participants presented themselves in successful ways.

Many candidates used theories. They were mentioned but seldom discussed. Those that did critique the relevance of the theory were rewarded. Candidates should be encouraged to support observations about theory with reference to key constituents to clarify the points they are making. The main theories were gender theories, Goffman's footing, politeness strategies and Brown and Levison's face theory.

Language + power comes into play in this text as there is an obvious hierarchy in the family of the dead over the 12 year old child. With there ~~po~~ being another adult present there, it's clear the father uses his power over the child to make a scene of oversteering and to reduce both the young girl and her brother from talking in slang or using colloquialisms or rubbish words in front of (R).

The way the 16 year old boy presents himself is not of a stereotypical 16 year old lad, surly & grumpy as when he is addressed for the only time, his response is inaudible.

The father in the text uses a lot of Tag questions which are purely Transactional as they are rhetorical. 'F-26 on line' and though he seems as if he has overruled power over the child she still shows negative face by interrupting her dad. Show clearly by the crossed symbol.



ResultsPlus

Examiner Comments

Here language and power is discussed well. There is an awareness that the family friend alters the dynamics of the usual speech community. The function of the tag questions is handled well, as is the observed interruption discussed as negative face.



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Examiner Tip

Had the candidate been explicit about the ways that the father used 'overpoliteness' through the key constituents, this would have attracted more marks. There is no evidence that S or A attempt to use slang or colloquial language, so evidencing the analysis with language features can be a useful way of keeping the argument on track.

Paper Summary

There were some very pleasing scripts produced by candidates this series. This report has tried to give an overview of how candidates performed and illustrate the types of challenges that they face in moving forward.

The main areas that centres could consider for the future are:

- 1) Train candidates to write enough for question 1 to make themselves clear.
- 2) Encourage candidates to refer to the text for question 2 and cover the contextual factors without a formulaic system.
- 3) Concentrate more on the key constituents in their analysis.
- 4) Use the content of questions 1, 2 and 3 as a basis for question 4.
- 5) Focus less on theorists and spend more time analysing the key constituents.

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