



Examiners' Report Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2025

Pearson Edexcel International Advanced Level
In English Language (8EN0)

Component 1: Language Variation

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Introduction

The vast majority of candidates showed that they had been well prepared for the exam by centres and had a clear idea of how the paper was structured and the focus and approach for each section. For section A, candidates were clear about the need to focus on the ways in which the contextual factors of the three texts influenced the language used and to make clear reference to mode, field, audience and function. For section B they understood the need to focus on how language was being used in the presentation of self in relation to the context of the data. Across both sections, most candidates were able to support their ideas with relevant examples from the texts while integrating at least some relevant theories, concepts and issues. The use of at least some linguistic terminology was evident in most responses this year, especially at the level of word class, but lower-level responses were often characterised by either not discussing or becoming confused at phrase, clause and sentence level. Timing did not seem to be an issue for most candidates but some, especially at lower levels, wrote less for section B, despite the sections being equally weighted.

Section A

For this section candidates were asked to analyse how language choices were affected by contextual factors in three texts related to outdoor pursuits. Nearly all candidates were able to outline and make comment on mode, field, audience and function with some accuracy and showed understanding of these terms. Additionally, the familiarity with the structure of this section was shown by the fact that the vast majority of candidates recognised the need to make comparisons between the texts. Similarly to previous series, the strongest candidates regularly shifted between the three texts with sections/paragraphs dealing with two or all of the texts, drawing out similarities and differences. The effect of this tended to be not only higher achievement in AO4 but also a more effective and detailed analysis. At lower levels, the texts were often discussed separately and, if included, comparisons were only briefly made at the end or beginning of sections.

Candidates often engaged very well with Text A, an advert for clothing, perhaps because the context was most familiar. Most candidates recognised the mode of the text as planned written with some lexis from the field of science and clothing and most were able to relate these to audience and function. Many also spotted the personal address and the use of adjectives, using accurate terms to describe these. However, the strongest candidates moved beyond word class/pronouns to consider phrase structure and/or the use of imperatives in relation to both function and audience. Candidates moving out of level three showed more confidence when discussing issues such as the minor sentences and the effect these had.

The spoken nature of Text B and its status as a transcript of possibly rehearsed/semi planned speech was recognised by nearly all candidates and many were able to effectively link common features such as pauses to its instructive/informative function. Similarly to Text A, candidates at lower levels focussed mainly on word class and direct address but there were many instances of these comments being effectively linked to the field of the text with a number identifying a connection to Text A in this area. Candidates in higher levels often noticed similar features but were more insightful in their analysis and spotted that while there were similarities with text A, such as the persuasive function, there were also differences, with A being to promote a particular commodity but B also being to instruct. Many candidates spotted the sequencing of the events and discourse markers in Text B but this tended to be described at lower levels, whereas candidates with more confidence used terminology associated with syntax to describe these differences.

Text C was the most challenging text for many candidates and, especially at lower levels, this text was often the most underdeveloped. The majority of candidates identified the context (as either written journalism relating to an experience or a type of narrative with entertaining aspects) as one which would influence the form of the language and create differences from Texts A and B. Similarly, most candidates were able to identify the specialist language in the piece and make connections to the audience of the other texts in Section A. In the same way as the previous texts, candidates at lower levels struggled to move beyond identification of word classes and pronouns while those at higher levels were able to include reference to other features such as the mix of imperative (sometimes contrasted with Text B) and interrogatives and the effect on the audience. Even at higher levels, few made productive reference to the complexity of the sentences and why this was different from Texts A and B.

Candidates referred to a range of theoretical frameworks in their responses with very few having no reference. The majority made links to Giles' Accommodation Theory and Goffman's Face Theory when looking at how the writers/speakers sought to position themselves in relation to their audience. At lower levels, these were not always convincing with some inaccurate identification of informal lexis but at higher levels there was an awareness that the slight difference in audience often meant that different features could be used to converge/diverge with their reader. Ideas from the study of language and power also helped candidates to work towards a detailed and coherent analyses of the texts. Norman Fairclough was frequently referred to by candidates and in particular his concept of 'synthetic personalisation' which was often accompanied by relevant quotations from the texts but, at lower levels, few challenged the theory and candidates tended to over-write. As in the previous series, Shane Wareing's analysis of different kinds of power in discourse was often referenced.

Section B

In this section candidates are presented with a single piece of data and are required to analyse the strategies used by the authors to present themselves. This year the data was from a Nobel Prize acceptance speech by Malala Yousafazi.

Most candidates were able to identify and describe, and in some cases contrast, at least some of the identities that Malala was promoting in her speech. Comments relating to the close bond she enacted with her audience ('Dear brothers and sisters'), her close relationship with her family and how she is perceived by her brothers ('annoying bossy sister'), her gender activism, and the importance of the history and culture of Pakistan in her life were commonly identified by the vast majority of candidates, as was the relaxed but formal tone of the speech.

As in Section A, candidates often commented on the author's use of pronouns, especially the frequent use of 'I' but only candidates in mid and upper bands tended to spot the shift to 'we' in the later part of the text and to productively analyse this change. Similarly, most candidates recognised the semantic fields in the data and the contrast between Malala's experiences as the culture of Swat changed (such as 'paradise home' and 'flogged') and showed effective knowledge of word classes, with more confident candidates considering phrase structure and in some cases sentence and discourse.

With regard to the application of theoretical frameworks, there was much similarity with those applied in Section A. Gender was applied by a significant number of candidates and for mid to higher level candidates there was a clear move away from the blanket application of older theories such as Lakoff which are not always wholly convincing. Politeness and Accommodation theory were also common with the stronger candidates considering how the language may have been affected by the seriousness of the topic and Malala's attempt to engage with not only the audience present for the speech but also the 'public' who may access the speech at a future date.

While many candidates identified similar aspects of identity, weaker candidates had aspects of description to their approach and paraphrased parts of the text while using a very limited language terminology. Some produced very short responses which did not have the range to achieve the mid to higher levels. In these cases, it was hard to award marks above the lowest two levels of the assessment objectives.

