



Examiners' Report Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2023

Pearson Edexcel GCE Advanced Subsidiary
In English Language
Paper 2: Child Language (8EN0/02)

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General Overview

For this series, there were 207 candidates entered for the AS English Language Paper 2: Child Language. Although this is a small cohort, it is very pleasing to see that there are a number of centres who find the educational value in the teaching and preparation of candidates for this particular topic. Candidates' experience of this paper will support them in their preparation for 9ENO_02 Child Language at A level. There appeared to be no significant issues in the length of answers produced for both questions, indicating that generally the cohort had managed their time effectively across both sections.

Candidates scoring highly on the paper demonstrated very clear and consistently good levels of knowledge about both children's written and spoken language development. They engaged with the data provided in a very detailed and thorough manner. It was noted that for both questions 1 and 2 there were only a relatively small percentage of descriptive responses in relation to engaging with language concepts, issues and contextual analysis. The vast majority of responses showed at least general knowledge and clear application of language frameworks with a small number achieving more detailed consistent responses to the question set. It was rare to see any candidates achieving Level 5 responses, which would require them to demonstrate a more discriminating response to the data and questions set. However, some answers were on the verge of producing this quality of work.

Question 1 required candidates to produce a written guide for parents provided by primary educators explaining the common features of children's literacy development and to support them with their child's learning. Question 2 required candidates to analyse the language of a 3-year-old boy conversing with his father whilst they played with some action figures.

Question 1:

This question continues to pose a challenge for candidates to reconcile the demands of AO2 in demonstrating child language written language development concepts and issues, whilst demonstrating expertise in creatively writing a non-fiction task (AO5).

Overall, the performance in this question demonstrated that students had a secure understanding of the key issues surrounding children's development of literacy. A number of students were able to discuss links between the text and the curriculum in Early Years education. Some students successfully identified the role of the media, environmental print and the parental support as factors which were aiding literacy development, with logical connections between adverts and Christmas cards being explored.

A lot of students were comfortable glossing key research surrounding children's literacy development, however, there were still a large number of candidates attempting to force concepts associated with spoken language acquisition to the written data e.g., LAD and telegraphic stage. These are not helpful in terms of showing a secure and relevant understanding of concepts and should be avoided.

The most successful candidates were able to accurately discuss the syntactical choices of the child, noting the importance of the politeness markers and the shift in syntactical position. Candidates were able to discuss how the child's literacy development had allowed Bobby to write for a specific purpose. Less successful candidates only focused on graphology and orthography, often making repetitive or generalised points about the data.

The following is an example of a discriminating paragraph from a candidate's response who successfully engaged with the data in exploring genre, audience and politeness issues raised and wrote effectively for the non-specialist audience:

1 It is ^{also} clear ~~also~~ through Bobby's grammar that he understands his genre and audience, ~~the~~ features of a letter, and that his letter will be read by another person (Santa ~~for~~... you!). His letter can be described by famous linguist Britton as transactional, as Bobby shows an understanding of the genre through the coda (sign off) of "Happy Christmas". He also shows a cognitive understanding of his audience through politeness features such as ~~on~~ ^{the} repetition of "pluz" / "pleas" (please). This is important as ^{of the need to} it shows an awareness to protect his audience's ~~face~~ negative face needs, the innate human need not to be imposed upon according to Goffman's face theory through the use of said politeness features, as he most likely realises that to get what he wants, he needs to not offend his audience. Although slightly cheeky, this shows that Bobby is fairly cognitively advanced, as he is aware of his audience and their feelings.

In respect of AO5, there were a small number of candidates who produced essay-type responses which did not fulfil the requirements of the non-fiction guide conventions. The majority of candidates produced guides which had appropriate headings and subheadings with some indicating where appropriate images should be placed. The most successful guides were stylish, engaged parents throughout the piece and made them aware of the educational identity of the language producers. There was also appropriate explanation of more specialist theoretical concepts and terminology for the non-specialist audience.

Question 2

Candidates were able to produce a sufficient essay response to the question and data supplied.

In this question, the majority of candidates were able to effectively discuss how the activity supported Lucas's ability to converse with his father, with a number of candidates recognising the positive impact that the activity had on Lucas's development e.g., being able to use complex lexis such as "incredible".

Students were able to recognise the role that the father was undertaking in order to support the interaction, with some students exploring the father's attempt to broaden the child's understanding of characters to make the play more effective.

The least successful candidates tended to focus only on Lucas's phonology and often made broad and generalised comments about his speech and accent. It is important that candidates consider a wide range of frameworks when exploring data. In addition, some candidates did not address the role of the father and focused solely on Lucas' language development and, therefore, did not address the analysis of Lucas' language "in the context of his interaction with his father". Some candidates, however, did refer to the single utterance by the mother seeking clarification from Lucas.

The most successful candidates looked at the data holistically, drawing connections between key parts of the interaction and offering discriminating and increasingly sophisticated discussions about the ways in which parents and play supported language acquisition. An example of a more discriminating type of analysis is provided below:

Inter lexically, for a child at the telegraphic stage, Lucas' language is developed and this could also be attributed to his sociodramatic play with his father. His father, acting as a more knowledgeable other (according to Vygotsky) scaffolds language for Lucas and uses and exposes him to new words such as the noun phrase "jet pack" or concepts like "martial arts". Lucas learns to associate this new terminology with the semantic field of fighting and action and we see evidence of this when he starts referring to the toys as "bad guys" showing interaction with his father is broadening his understanding of different contexts and discourse.

The examining team enjoyed reading candidates' responses for this component and thank centres for their hard work.