



Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2024

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 a little over 200 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 9EN0_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.

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. Candidates who scored higher in the marking grids were able to showcase their knowledge about both children's written and spoken language development effectively, offering explanations rooted in secure understanding of context. These responses demonstrated consistency in their discussions but overall, there was a limited number of responses that showed discrimination, therefore preventing many candidates achieving level 5.

Question 1 required candidates to produce a script for a talk aimed at teaching assistants explaining the common features of children's literacy development and to support them with their work in the classroom. Question 2 required candidates to analyse the language of a child aged 4 years and 6 months conversing with her mother in relation to how the child created and sustained a narrative.

Question 1:

As in previous years, this question remains challenging for candidates as they must balance AO2 requirements by showcasing their understanding of child language development in writing, while also demonstrating their skills in creatively crafting a non-fiction piece (AO5).

Overall, the performance in this question demonstrated that students had a secure understanding of the key issues surrounding children's development of literacy. The majority of students also had some awareness of how to select an appropriate register and tone to suit the audience of professionals within the educational sphere.

The most successful candidates made direct connections between the shared aims of the audience and elements of Early Years education, looking at ways to discuss Jasper's writing as a platform for supporting literacy development in a school environment. A number of students were able to offer sensible comments about the link between environmental print and the correction of 'Fifa' in the

text, as well as drawing links between the layout of this independent task and Jasper's school experience. Some good responses looked at where teaching assistants fit into supporting children in their literacy development.

A number of students were able to effectively apply concepts and issues surrounding the writing of diaries, drawing on traditional offerings from Rothery and Britton, as well as looking more broadly at comments from more recent research, e.g. John Abbott. There were some sensible applications of traditionally spoken theory, e.g., Tomasello's pattern finding; however, comments about the LAD and telegraphic stage are always less useful when analysing writing. 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 discourse markers that allowed Jasper to construct a chronological recount. At the higher levels, candidates were able to use knowledge of KS1 teaching strategies to discuss the overextension of the 'wh' digraph and the use of split digraphs in other parts of the text. This was particularly effective when paired with the context of the audience they were writing for. Candidates were able to discuss how the child's literacy development had allowed Jasper to write for a specific purpose without explicit teacher instruction and discuss how the importance and difference of the home environment to the school environment.

In respect of AO5, there were a small number of candidates who produced essay-type responses which did not fulfil the requirements of a script. Some candidates misunderstood that a script and transcript are different and tried to create a precise transcript with features such as micropauses and audience interactions, which often did not support candidates in their actual discussion of the key issues but did, at points, demonstrate an understanding of audience. Candidates across all levels were able to shape their response into a script for a talk, utilising signposting, aspects of humour, appropriate registers etc. to engage their intended audience. The most successful scripts appreciated the role that teaching assistants play and the salient elements they should be aware of when it comes to supporting children. There was also appropriate explanation of more specialist theoretical concepts and terminology for the audience. Whilst the audience may be aware of some key terms in literacy development, methodically starting each paragraph with a different level of language with no explanation of what these were (e.g. 'in terms of orthography...') did not always demonstrate a clear understanding of audience.

Now let's discuss his orthography, also known as spelling. Spelling can be quite tricky so that is why infants in KS1 are taught to spell words using the Read, write Inc method. I'm sure you're all aware of. This method teaches children to learn to spell by using their knowledge of the phonics and by segmenting and blending words. This has been done by Jasper, who is in KS2, in the common noun <chipmunks>. The segmenting and blending method has proven useful as Jasper spells this word phonetically. He omits the digraph <ck> and substitutes it with the grapheme <c>. This is known as phoneme grapheme correspondence and is carried out by children when they make certain spellings of words more accessible to them so that they are able to

clear meanings. This has also been done in 2 other places - he phonetically spells the proper noun <Grase> substituting the grapheme <c> for the phoneme /s/ as ^{past tense material} they sound similar and another is in the verb <wharout> where he substitutes the suffix <ed> for the phoneme /t/ as he continues to phonetically spell. Through these examples, we see that Jasper isn't yet at the transitional stage of spelling but is ~~staying~~ transitioning there. It is important to note the reasons as to why Jasper makes such spellings and we could focus on the fact that he's at home in a comfortable environment and may be rushing due to the want of finishing his homework.

Question 2

In this question, the majority of candidates were able to identify how the grandmother supported Eleanor in the creation of her spoken narrative and made sensible links to the concept of sociodramatic play and the importance of CDS. Those candidates who focused on the question were able to correctly identify aspects of Eleanor's narrative that had been affected by external factors, such as the wedding taking place in a church and the burglars going to jail. Many candidates commented on Eleanor's understanding of the importance of making the narrative engaging through her use of voices and other prosodic features.

The best students were able to apply what they knew to the transcript rather than using pre-prepared structures of language levels to discuss the data. As mentioned in previous reports, some candidates were keen to start with or focus firmly on phonology. A number of candidates became fixated on Eleanor's pronunciation, focusing on her use of substitution. At the higher levels, candidates gave sensible explanations for the reasons behind substitution and noted that it did not hinder her ability to sustain a narrative, recognising that the grandmother was aware of this aspect of Eleanor's language. At the lower end, candidates simply described what was in the data without making explicit links to the question. Whilst phonology is often an important element of discussion in studies of children's language, it is important that candidates consider a range of relevant frameworks when exploring data.

Explicit links to the question were probably the biggest differentiating factor between successful and less successful candidates in this paper. At the higher end of the scale, candidates were fully focused on how Eleanor structured her narrative, incorporating elements from her external experiences to craft and sustain an engaging storyline in her play. Less successful candidates concentrated only on discussing Eleanor's stage of development, rather than the function of her language as a whole. There were cases of students demonstrating excellent knowledge and who had clearly prepared well for the exam, but who lost marks through not answering the question that had been asked.

In terms of lexis development, Eleanor can be seen to use a wide range of lexis in order to create and sustain an effective conversation. This ~~can be seen~~ in shows her to be developed in Katherine Nelson's early words concept as Eleanor uses a variety of nouns like the Compound Concrete noun 'makeup', the action words like the ~~verb~~ auxiliary verbs 'have' and 'got' and the dynamic verb 'change', ~~the~~ and also the use of modifiers like the ^{coordinating} Conjunctions 'and' and the Correlative Conjunctions 'if' and 'but'. This display of a wide lexeme vocabulary expressed Eleanors ability to sustain a conversation that is effective, as she is developed and confident enough to use and apply her lexical knowledge to her speech. Furthermore, a semantic field of play and toys is created through the use of lexis like the Common Concrete noun 'princesses' and

'princes' and also the Common Concrete nouns 'ponies', ~~castles~~, 'castle' and 'audience'. Her interest ~~in~~ in this semantic field of play and interaction signified that Eleanor is more successful in her spoken language when it follows a topic that attracts her interest or attention, allowing her speech and influence of this semantic field to create a more developed overall conversation with her grandmother. Furthermore, Halliday's functional approach can be applied to her lexis use as Eleanor is using specific, polysyllabic lexis like the Concrete noun 'audience' and ~~the~~ 'banana' in order to create an imaginary environment, supporting earlier analysis that Eleanor is motivated to learn language as it alludes to a favoured semantic field of hers, resulting in effectual communication.

In terms of Syntax development, it is clear that Eleanor is in the Post-telegraphic Stage as she not only uses lexical words like the proper nouns 'Mummy', 'Daddy' and 'Joccy' that would be found in the telegraphic Stage, she also uses grammatical words like the ~~coordinating~~ coordinating conjunctions of 'and' and also a repetitive use of Correlative Conjunctions like 'if' and 'but'. This conveys her to be well developed in forming sentence and phrase structure and this development would overall guide her in creating and sustaining an effective interaction. Furthermore, on a clause level, Eleanor can successfully ~~form~~ form subordinate clauses to add to her main clauses like 'so this is the makeup' and also

'and the bean bag'. Additionally, Eleanor can be seen to use a range of prepositional phrases like 'at the moment' and also the verb phrases 'she's been very naughty' and also ~~to~~ 'the audience can sit'. Her productive and effective use of clause^{and} phrase types allows the impression of Eleanor's development to be extensive as she can communicate in a sustainable ~~man~~ and understandable manner, and it alludes to her post-telegraphic stage of grammar development and understanding in terms of word structure. This development allows her to sustain effective conversational speech.

