Examiners' Report
June 2022

GCE English Language 9EN0 03

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Introduction

As with previous years, the Language and Gender topic proved to be the most popular with almost two thirds of candidates answering Questions 2 and 7. Language and Power was the next most popular choice, with almost a quarter of candidates answering Questions 4 and 9, while Language and Journalism responses made up around 10 percent of the total. The Global English and Regional Variation topics remain the least popular choices.

Despite concerns about the impact of the pandemic, examiners found that the majority of candidates had clearly prepared well for this exam and had undertaken detailed investigations into their chosen topic, demonstrating their ability to reference both primary and secondary data sources in their responses.

However, there was a greater prevalence this year of candidates who had either rehearsed an investigation response or been heavily taught, which not only goes against the spirit of the paper but actually, in some cases, significantly hindered candidates' performance. In these cases, candidates either ignored the statement in Section B and presented their rehearsed investigation, or mentioned it in passing and then failed to reference it again. It is important that candidates understand that the statement is not an optional element to this part of the exam paper but must be discussed in detail if they hope to meet the criteria of the exam. For example, some candidates had clearly investigated the role social media plays in the development and spreading of fake news, and chose to write about that rather than addressing the question about the techniques employed by both fake news and genuine news stories to manipulate the reader.

Following the comments in the 2019 report, it is clear that candidates are becoming more relevant when presenting their research methods and chosen data sources. It is worth encouraging candidates to ensure that they can also do this in a relatively succinct style as some candidates had overly long introductions, which clearly reduced the time they could spend responding to the statement.

It would be worth also noting that some lower achieving responses lacked understanding of their data, typically those who appeared to have data given to them rather than those who selected it themselves. It is vital that candidates collect sources that they are knowledgeable about and understand fully.

Across all the responses, candidates were referencing a range of theories and research papers about their chosen topic. It is worth reminding candidates that the most successful responses carefully and judiciously select the most appropriate concepts and theories to examine the data, whereas less successful responses attempt to reference every theory or concept, regardless of relevance.

In **Section A**, the most successful responses had a detailed awareness of the typical language features of their chosen topic and were able to apply a range of frameworks and language methods to the data in order to explore it in detail. Candidates in the higher levels were also able to use the contextual information about the text to examine and evaluate the producers' language choices.

In **Section B**, the most successful answers fully tackled the statement, using it to critically discuss their chosen data sources in detail. In a number of successful responses, across all levels, candidates often considered different elements of the statement, tackling different parts in sequence rather than exploring many elements simultaneously. Either approach is valid and secure responses were seen using both methods.

As with previous years, candidates who had a manageable and clearly understood data set were frequently more successful than those who appeared to have a vast quantity of data sources, but a limited understanding of the linguistic features and concepts within the set.

Question 1

Global English – Hinglish

This topic was chosen by approximately 3% of candidates. The majority of responses demonstrated a secure understanding of the development of Hinglish and many of its key linguistic features.

Most candidates were able to make sound observations about the speaker's use of code-switching and the influence of the platform and mode used by the text. Candidates who discussed the phonology of the text were able to do so using the IPA effectively, and were able to draw sensible conclusions regarding some of the accent features of the speaker. The most successful candidates were able to examine when and where the speaker used elements of Hindi and English, and were able to examine the reasons behind her choices. There was a secure understanding of the influence of technology and the function of a film review in higher level responses as well.

Less successful responses tended to simply go through the text and list the features seen without exploring why those features may be included. Lower responses also tended to make sweeping and generalised comments about the data, offering comments such as "the speaker doesn't know how it should be pronounced." Taking a deficit approach to the language used frequently hindered candidates from being able to examine the reasons behind the speaker's language use, limiting discussions about contextual factors.

The data offered candidates the opportunity to discuss features of syntax, lexis, and phonology, while also looking at the impact of globalisation on the presence of words such as 'woke' and 'totes'. Stronger responses tended to cluster features of the data, enabling them to offer a more considered interpretation of the language used. For example, discussing the interchanging uses of the /w/ and /v/ phonemes allowed some candidates to discuss the influence of other languages on Hinglish. Again, weaker responses tended to identify these points with little discussion.

The following is an extract from a Level 5 response and is exploring aspects of phonology:

The interchangeability of /v/ and /w/ is often seen in Hinglish due to these sounds not being distinguished in Hindi - instead using /v/ in substitute of both sounds. In the data /vɜtɪklɪ:/ is pronounced /wɜtɪkaelɪ:/, substituting the initial /v/ for /w/. The opposite is also demonstrated in /vɪ:ltʃɜ/ which differs from the standard /wɪ:ltʃeə/ by swapping the initial /w/ for /v/. While not wholly representative, the example of /wɜtɪkaelɪ:/ can support the intrusive schwa feature of Hinglish. In words like /bɒtl/, Hinglish speakers typically insert a schwa to pronounce /bɒtəl/ which is similar to the presence of the /ae/ phoneme in vertically which isn't present in standard↑ English [British] pronunciation. Another feature supporting how this data is phonologically representative is the influence of British English. Since the introduction of Caxton's printing

Notice how the candidate has used multiple examples from the data to illustrate their point about the influence of British English on Hinglish as well as discussing the fact that it is not a typical feature. There are smooth transitions between the points about the phonological aspects of the data.

The candidate is using the IPA with confidence and their comment about the intrusive schwa allows them to integrate evidence of their own research into their analysis of the data.

The full response from this candidate continues to explore the influence of British Standard English on the speaker's use of language as well as contrasting traditional and almost outdated uses of words such as "terrifically" and "preposterous" with more modern lexemes, "totes" etc.

The candidate consistently grapples with the data, exploring both representative and less representative features.

Clustering elements of the data together can help candidates make smoother transitions between points as well as evaluate why certain features may be inconsistently used.

Question 2

Language and Gender Identity – Representation of Gender in Sports Journalism

Language and Gender Identity was the most popular choice this year with around 60% of respondents focusing on this sub-topic. It was clear that the majority of candidates had undertaken significant research and read widely around the topic, drawing on a number of academic studies about the way sports journalism represents gender.

The data for this question was made up of two broadsheet articles about tennis players and their recent victories. Text B1 focused on Serena Williams and B2 on Nick Kyrgios. While the majority of candidates used the two data sets to compare the ways in which men and women were represented by sports journalism, some candidates took a text-by-text approach to exploring the language used. There were high levels of success with both approaches.

Many candidates were able to integrate their own wider research into their responses, exploring the representative features of the sub-topic. For example, many candidates used references to Toni Bruce's work regarding the key issues surrounding the representation of women in sports journalism.

Stronger responses were able to explore the focus of family and emotion in Text B1, as well as discussing the lack of gender marked terms, drawing conclusions based on the nature of the publication or Serena Williams' status as a champion in the field. Stronger candidates were also able to identify the atypical representation of the male players, commenting on the way gossip was used as a way of heightening interest in the players. The two articles allowed candidates to examine the contrasting use of dynamic verbs and to consider the implicature behind the negative representation of Williams' victory.

At the upper levels, candidates were increasingly confident at discussing both typical and atypical aspects of gender representation and offering sound and well-reasoned contextual comments as to why those features were present. Candidates recognised that the relative newness of the texts may have had a significant impact on the way gender was represented, as well as the status of the players and the nature of the sport itself.

Less successful candidates attempted to bend the data to fit their preconceived ideas about gender representation in sports journalism, in particular the sexualisation of female athletes. At this level, candidates attempted to discuss the description of Serena Williams' dominance in tennis casting her rivals in an 'unflattering light' as meaning that they were obsessed with her appearance as well as making broad comments about the term "decorated champion." At lower levels, there was also evidence of some misunderstandings about the implicature of the text, with some responses suggesting that the reference to Steffi Graf's retirement meant the journalist thought Williams was too old to play 'good tennis.'

Another key differentiating factor between the most successful and the least successful responses was the application of theory and research regarding the representation of gender. At the higher levels, candidates were able to discuss their wider academic reading as well as drawing on relevant contextual factors to help illustrate their arguments. At lower levels, attempts to apply Lakoff's politeness principles to the way the Williams sisters showed 'love and respect' to each other, showed a limited understanding of both the concept and the data.

The following extract is from a response which just gained a Level 4. Although the majority of the response met the criteria for Level 3, there were some stand out moments of analysis which helped move it to Level 4. In this extract, the candidate is discussing the journalist's decision to include comments from Serena Williams' coach over comments from the player herself.

way. Despite Williams being the article's focus, there is a pragmatic reference to ~~two of~~ her coaches. ~~braf~~ ~~who is described as having~~ "won" one of her majors and the deciding "verdict" of her coach Mouratoglou suggests ~~that~~ what we would understand as men taking the dominating approach in women's victories. It is not at all necessary to include what these men think of Williams, and in text B2 there is no mention of a coach. As the pragmatic reference to "grand slams" and the "Australian Open", we can see that although the texts ought to display a similar background, they convey the ideal of a ~~man~~ powerful man being behind every woman. In sports journalism this shows that gender representation of women is an extention of a man's world.

In this extract, the candidate has made a sophisticated point about the inclusion of the coach's words over any words from Serena Williams. This is then securely linked to stereotypical attitudes within the field of sport and the representation of gender in sports journalism. The subtle comparison to Text B2 helps illustrate that this treatment is not often used for male athletes, reinforcing the candidate's point.

The close connections between the two pieces of data allow the candidate to develop their argument and provides the opportunity to make inferences about the effect of the language used.

Although the rest of the response was clear and relevant, the discriminating discussion of this carefully chosen point pushed the response into Level 4.

Encourage candidates to look carefully at the mark scheme to ensure they understand the demands of the question. Looking closely at how to construct inferences within their essays will help to boost the quality of their responses.

These clips are extracts from a Level 5 response. The first section demonstrates a critical discussion around the use of the phrase "swept aside" in Text B1.

the dynamic verb 'swept'. In the declarative sentence 'she swept aside sister Venus', swept has been used to recognise the ease of previously beating Venus - referencing her success in her proffesion as an athlete. This of course has ameliorative connotations of her sporting ability and does not immidiately appear a gender biased. However, it could be argued that the elegant nature of the verb indicates a gracefulness

and lack of aggresion or competetiveness when describing Serena's sporting ability - potentially playing on the dominant ideology of what it means to be 'feminine'.

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In this extract, the candidate is closely examining both the surface and the potentially implied meanings behind the writer's representation of gender, offering a critical discussion of how meaning is constructed.

The candidate then goes on to discuss how femininity is further shown through aspects such as gender marking and references to the familial relationship between Serena and Venus.

In fact, the common use of neutral terminology like 'champion' would suggest that the journalist is not trying to emphasise the significance of gender, and instead focuses on physical power. The common noun 'champion' presents Serena as victorious and a force to be reckoned with. This, reinforced with the pre-modified noun phrase 'a chilling warning', works against the notion of 'singular masculinity'. This is due to the presentation of Serena as threatening and powerful ('warning' with connotations of fear and severity) which are characteristics typically associated with hegemonic masculinity. Therefore, the use of these hypermasculine connotations with a female player recognises the media's use of multiple subjectivities. This is a theory by Allan Johnson suggesting that there are multiple types of masculinity which are not defined by gender but personal characteristics. Consequently, and can therefore enable text R1 is reflective of the way gender equality is showcased through sports journalism. 'masculine traits' to be applied to women.

The candidate then goes on to exploring aspects of the text that are less representative of sports journalism, drawing on a number of concepts and areas of research. In particular, the challenge to the concept of a singular masculinity is used critically to explore the data.

Candidates are encouraged to use research and theories critically – challenging and refuting them if appropriate for the data.

Question 3

Language and Journalism – Fake News

This topic was the third most popular choice and it was clear that candidates had read widely about the form, features, and functions of fake news. Many candidates were able to examine and analyse the typical and atypical features of the text, offering a number of insightful comments about the way the text was written and the effect on the audience.

A lot of responses demonstrated a secure understanding of the political bias of Fox News as a corporation and were able to identify the moral panic being constructed around immigration. Candidates were also able to identify the hedging within the text and the importance of vague language in modern news reporting.

At lower levels, candidates tended to comment on the more obvious features of language e.g. exaggerated descriptions and vague terms, but struggled to clearly discuss why these features were so typical for this type of text. Lower level responses also tended to work through the text almost chronologically, meaning that they often repeated ideas, limiting the breadth of their discussion.

Higher level responses, on the other hand, often clustered pieces of the data together, examining how different aspects of the text worked to give the story credibility. For example, how the dismissal in simple declarative language of prior reports of shooting or stabbing gave credibility to the report, allowing the repeated but more vague claims of immigrants using rocks as weapons to have more persuasive force. The best answers honed in on language from across the piece, rather than working through it chronologically, and teased out the implications of words such as 'appear' 'possibly' 'likelihood' and 'foggy, using word-class labels not simply as a 'tag' to show they know them but as a way of showing how different lexical and syntactical resources are deployed to lead to the same semantic and pragmatic ends.

A number of candidates were also able to discuss the concepts of cognitive bias and confirmation bias, recognising how the audience of Fox News are stereotypically more likely to be predisposed to believe negative stories about illegal immigrants.

Some responses also successfully incorporated ideas from their study of language and power to explore ideas around influential power and audience positioning, reflecting the somewhat synoptic nature of this paper.

In the example below, the candidate offers a clear and relevant discussion of a specific language feature, connecting its use to the influence of external agencies and the intentions of the text producer.

Throughout the article, there is repetition of
non absolute
indefinate lexis In order to demonstrate to
audie readers that this is possible speculation.
An example of this would be 'possibly', 'most
likely', 'according' and the use of the main
witness 'Judd' who is providing Fox News
with information and quotes, stating 'we
don't know exactly what happened'. The use
of Indefinate lexis and lack of real eye
witness accounts are both common features
of fake news Journalism, as it is important
that they don't confirm the information, in
order to avoid getting in trouble from
regulatory companies such as Factchecker.org

This candidate clearly and relevantly discusses the data alongside typical features of fake news. The clustering of elements that reinforce the article's purpose allows the candidate to discuss the common nature of vague lexis while also identifying a clear and relevant aspect of context that may have influenced the language used.

However, the bluntness of Judd's statement, admitting that he does not know what has happened, could have been further explored in terms of the implied honesty and vulnerability created by such an admission. Drawing inferences about the data is a key element of Level 4 responses.

Try to draw inferences about the data and consider some of the implicit meanings behind a text's language use.

Question 4

Language and Power – Advice Letters

This was the second most popular choice for centres and the majority of candidates clearly had a secure understanding of the key linguistic elements of advice letters, carefully exploring both typical and atypical features of the data.

For this question, it was clear that candidates were extremely confident at applying and analysing different language frameworks, frequently exploring ideas around lexis, semantics, pragmatics, syntax and discourse. Candidates were able to use clear and well-chosen examples to support their points, and had a clear understanding of the relationship between the reader and the writer, despite the original advice letter not being part of the data source.

Strong responses frequently integrated concepts around power, looking at issues of Face Theory, politeness, and influential power, and used these concepts to critically discuss the strategies and approaches used by the advice giver. There was also clear evidence of candidates' wider reading, looking at key developments in the language of advice letters and the changing approaches to dealing with issues surrounding mental health.

Candidates at this level were also able to identify the impact that the letter's placement in The Guardian had on both the content and the strategies used within the data and were able to draw sound conclusions about the way the writer used language to reassure and persuade the reader.

Higher level candidates were also able to make subtle links between their own research and the text, with many candidates recognising referral strategies from their own investigations. Many also used their research to evaluate the use of atypical features, including the use of taboo lexis, references to anger, and the political bias of the text.

Less successful candidates offered concepts and theories in a broad, simplified manner, typically only focusing on pronoun use to discuss synthetic personalisation, reflecting only a general understanding of the concept.

Responses at this level tended to select isolated examples, e.g. the friendly salutation, and often listed the typical features of advice letters rather than exploring the way Frostrup was using them. More successful responses drew conclusions about the data by linking and connecting different elements and then evaluating how they combined to create successful (or unsuccessful) approaches to advice giving.

The following example is taken from a response that just met the criteria for Level 5. In this extract, the candidate weaves together comments about language features and power concepts to create an increasingly sophisticated discussion of the data.

common Mariella uses positive politeness, as theorised by Robin Lakoff to help establish a comfortable tenor with the letter writer, therefore creating a casual register (according to Joos' 5 levels of formality). Mariella's discourse structure opens with the salutation 'hello out there. I'm so glad you wrote', which pragmatically suggests that Mariella carefully uses language to initially create a relationship with the advice seeker. A common convention of advice responses is politeness, in which Mariella uses, as an attempt to protect the positive face need (as described by Brown and Levinson), to help support them. Mariella uses positive adjectives such as 'great' and 'brilliantly' to describe the advice seeker, which will make guide them to feel good within themselves, and take Mariella's advice on board.

Moreover, Mariella uses her personal power

As theorised by Wareing, by making it seem like a shared experience to the reader, Mariella uses collective pronouns like 'we' and all inclusive phrases like 'many thousands of young people', not only to prevent any sort of imposition, but also to suggest to the advice seeker that they 'are not alone', and as many million of people on a day to day basis experience a very similar feeling.

Mariella demonstrates and exerts her influential power, as she recognises the extent to the advice she can offer, and makes wider referrals to websites and organisations, which is also a common convention in advice letters. Locher's referral stage in this advice letter is evidenced through Mariella's suggestion to 'try rethink.org as a first step', to help get the advice seeker back on track. Making wider referrals allows the advice seeker to explore alternative options, and as Mariella encourages her to maximise her option, as she

has loads of opportunity to seek advice.

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In this example, the candidate is critically integrating a number of concepts and issues into their sophisticated discussion about the language used by the writer.

What is a particular strength of this section is the way that the candidate continuously makes links to the question, considering features that are "common" within advice letters while also presenting a range of wider research to support their ideas.

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Focusing on the question is extremely important. Candidates must consider why representative or non-representative features have been used within the data, using their wider research or references to contextual factors to explore how language is used.

This is the opening from a high Level 3 response.

Text D is representative of *traditional* advice letters to a certain extent. Through my research I have found that modal verbs and conditionals are key features within advice letters to offer options as well as allowing the space for a personal initiative to be taken by the one looking for help. Mariella does this through her use of modal verbs 'might' to provide additional ways a situation may go as well as the use of the conditional "If i were your age..." ~~to~~ which allows readers to see things from a different prespective and perhaps gain insight on what others may do which can help gain clearer ideas of what they'd prefer ~~woo~~ personally as agony aunts ~~are~~ have been encouraged since the start in the 17th century to give declarative clear advice but with the space of own initiative from readers to do what they feels best after gaining a different prespective. This supports Talmy's modal verb theory where there should be uncertainty from both sides to ensure the advice remains neutral and ~~not~~ not subjective.

Mariella however subverts a typical advice

letter through the use of personal pronouns 'I' to offer her own opinion. She says 'I think' to give an insight on what she believes should happen, however previously this would've been seen as innappropriate and informal from an agony aunt however as advice letters have progressed personal opinions have slowly been seen as more acceptable and the use of these personal pronouns have allowed Mariella to create a closer bond and relationship with readers allowing them to feel more as friends rather than 'agony aunt' and stranger.✱ Furthermore Mariella subverts ✱ Tannens

✱ The use of personal pronouns however make the advice seem biased and subjective almost as if its what must be done rather than what should be done as it can influence readers, especially if they are unsure rather than advising them.

In this opening, the candidate immediately launches into their analysis, making a clear link between the data and the typical features of advice letters.

Throughout the opening paragraphs, the candidate offers clear examples to support their points and frequently uses terminology accurately to identify the typical language features of advice letters.

There are some clear discussions about how and why Frostrup has used language in the way that she has, explaining how meaning is constructed. There is a broad comment about how things have changed over time, but this could have been a little more precise and discriminating in its discussion.

Make sure that the opening paragraph is focused and analytical from the beginning. Some candidates struggled to balance their time on this paper and often spent too long rewriting the contextual information on the exam paper and summarising the data, limiting their ability to analyse and explore a range of points across the data.

Question 5

Regional Varieties of English – Merseyside English

This topic was chosen by approximately 3% of candidates. It was clear that candidates had undertaken a great deal of research to discuss the key features of the accent, working well with the IPA to explore the data.

The question offered candidates two pieces of data and, as with Question 2, candidates varied between a comparative approach and a text-by-text approach. Successful responses were seen in both cases.

Candidates who did compare the data were able to draw tentative conclusions regarding the common features between the two speakers, using this to help support their ideas about the representative features of the variety. Candidates who elected to follow a text-by-text approach often looked at the presenters' construction of identity as a way of exploring the nature of Merseyside English.

The majority of responses made sound judgements about the texts contexts, recognising the impact of dialect levelling over time as well as the fact that both videos were posted on YouTube. Candidates were able to identify the commercial interests of the producers and the need for a less distinctive form to appeal to a wider audience.

A number of candidates referenced research regarding the resurgence of regional pride in the variety and used it to make sensible comments about the aspects of the variety that had been retained by the speakers.

At the higher levels, candidates were able to confidently and accurately use the IPA, using terminology precisely to explore the accent features present in both texts. Candidates were also able to cover a wide range of frameworks, including grammar and lexis, to discuss the dialect features present in the two sources.

Strong responses also took a somewhat synoptic approach to the data, drawing on their study of language and identity, power, and gender, to offer an in-depth analysis of the texts.

At the lower levels, candidates tended to make descriptive comments about the accent and often without using the IPA to illustrate their points. At this level, candidates tended to fixate on the phonology of the texts at the expense of other frameworks, making their comments extremely narrow.

It was clear that the majority of candidates had looked at the historical development of Merseyside English, but where less successful responses tended to simply offer an almost narrative account of the history, higher level responses used ideas about historical context to make pertinent comments about the data.

In this example, the candidate is looking at key aspects of the data and making increasingly discriminating and sophisticated links to both context and the question.

Phonologically Text E1 presents a large variety of Merseyside phonological features. The long lasting, typical phonological feature of the "Tapped-T", is seen several times in text E1. In words such as "get out /gɛraʊ/", "bit of /bɪrəvə/" and "get on /gɛrɒn/", the plosive "T" is realized as the "r" phoneme, influenced by the Irish population who immigrated to Liverpool and the surrounding buroughs from

1848 to 1852 during the Great Potatoe famine. Similarly, text E1 presents no "strut-foot split" (v)in the word "but /bʊt/" which derives from the neighbouring borough of Lancaster. In Wold War one, the Irish and Lancaster residents soconlized as part of the war effort, developing the scouse accent, and Mersyside dialect that we recognise today. Therefore, both the "Tapped-T" and "No strut foot split are both greatly representative of the Mersyside Dialect. Futhermore, Text E1

This response effectively clusters a number of features together to examine how representative the data is of the Merseyside Dialect. There is confident use of the IPA and, although there are some minor lapses with terminology, the discussion is well-supported by increasingly sophisticated links to the context and development of the variety.

The acknowledgement of the two main influences on the Merseyside dialect is used to make a clear link to the question, citing the development of the variety as evidence for certain features being representative of Merseyside English.

Ensure that comments about historical developments of language are used to illuminate and add inferences to the exploration of the data rather than simply describing historical factors.

Question 6

Section B – Global English

There were a number of very strong responses with an impressive array of data sources selected, including primary data collected from a student's own family. It was pleasing to see that candidates had managed to source such diverse corpora of data.

The question asked candidates to discuss whether Hinglish was a potential threat to other Indian languages as well as hindering communication. Many candidates elected to tackle the elements of the question separately, giving them the opportunity to explore and evaluate their data in light of the issues raised.

Many candidates were able to discuss the development of Hinglish and how it was used to aid and encourage communication rather than hinder it. The general positive approach to the language was pleasing and there was less evidence of the deficit approach than previously seen. Less successful approaches simply offered a historical account of Britain's relationship with India, which was not always relevantly linked to the question.

Some candidates were able to consider the threat to other Indian languages quite deeply, with some drawing on their research to discuss the fact that Hinglish was adopting features of other languages as well. It was evident that candidates had undertaken considerable wider research to explore different aspects of Hinglish as well as its uses.

Understandably, detailed discussions about code-switching and the role of Hinglish as part of a youth identity were frequently seen, with candidates drawing on the attitudes towards Hinglish as an appealing quality, making it popular in things such as billboard adverts or texts aimed at young adults.

At the higher levels, these contextual factors were used to draw conclusions about their own data as well as offer evaluative comments about the creation and future of Hinglish as a method of communication.

Less secure responses tended to list features of Hinglish and make broad, sweeping statements about the difficulty in understanding the variety.

For many candidates, the opening of their investigation proved to be quite challenging, with some candidates offering a detailed but rarely relevant account of the history of Hinglish and others simply listing features of Hinglish without connecting their research to the statement.

The following extract is an effective and discriminating opening from a top Level 4 response, that clearly establishes the candidate's stance regarding the statement.

I believe this statement regarding tunglish to be inacurate partially inacurate in its view of tunglish as of a newer language being used in the modern world. Its estimated population of users being between 30 and 50 million, including both inside and outside of India suggests its rising status to be more enduring than the statement suggests. It currently exists as one of many languages used within India, and its growing popularity in comparison to smaller and less frequently used variations could be argued as potentially marginalising other indian languages in comparison.

The opening paragraph firmly establishes the nature of the debate that the candidate will explore, weaving in discriminating contextual references to support their views.

The inferences drawn from the number of speakers and the dominance of Hindi over smaller languages allows the candidate to prepare their response in a focused and increasingly critical way.

In this example, the candidate has almost segmented the statement, taking a different argumentative stance for different aspects of the question. This can be a very successful approach as it often encourages candidates to evaluate their data more effectively.

The statements can be argued for, or against, or candidates can offer a balanced argument. Whichever approach they choose to take, it is vital that the statement forms the backbone of their responses.

Question 7

Section B – Language and Gender Identity

This was perhaps the question where candidates' selection of data to investigate had the biggest impact on the quality of the responses. Some candidates had selected data sources e.g. articles about the top ten sexiest footballers, without discussing the nature and function of these texts. Higher level candidates were able to integrate discussions about the function of their chosen texts as part of their context, but less successful responses seemed to treat all articles as if they were identical in purpose. Centres are encouraged to question candidates about their data choices to ensure that candidates do have a clear understanding of the purpose and form of their selected texts.

There was also perhaps more evidence in this section of candidates who appeared to have been given data to analyse rather than selecting their own, frequently resulting in some misunderstandings about the material and therefore limited effectiveness in terms of the analysis. It was clear that the majority of candidates had carefully selected a number of appropriate data sources, with the most successful candidates offering a succinct explanation for their choice and weaker candidates listing in detail each source chosen. By far, the most successful investigations were presented by candidates who had personally selected data about sports that they either had a passion for or a great deal of understanding about. Candidates who had a secure knowledge of their data were able to effectively offer clear and relevant examples to support their points, ensuring that responses retained a linguistic focus.

There was clear evidence that candidates had undertaken considerable wider reading around the issues of gender representation in sport, looking at regulatory changes as well as prior research to help illuminate their own points, with the most successful responses being able to evaluate this research in light of their own findings and changes in the way sports journalism represents women.

In terms of AO2, less successful candidates often misapplied elements of the dominance model of language and gender, referencing Zimmerman and West as support for the disproportionate amount of coverage male athletes received in comparison to women.

As with the other questions on this paper, there were two elements of this question. Firstly, the idea that women had always been seen as inferior in the world of sport and secondly that the language of sports journalism perpetuated this view. There was a mix of approaches to this question, with some candidates taking a diachronic approach, allowing them to explore how the language of sports journalism has changed over time, whilst others compared the representation of different athletes from the same sporting field in a more synchronic approach. At the higher levels, both approaches resulted in detailed and sophisticated analysis of a broad range of data sources.

Successful responses to this question explored a range of linguistic methods regarding the representation of women as inferior and the strategies used by journalists to reinforce stereotypes about both genders. Candidates were also able to examine the attitudes of different journalists and publications, as well as the changes in representation and the influence of various social and cultural movements.

While more successful responses used ideas about the perceived inferiority of women to illuminate their discussion of the language employed by sports journalists, less successful responses appeared to get fixated on this aspect, offering lengthy discussions about the history of women in sport and issues such as the gender pay gap and crowd figures, that were not always relevant to the discussions about language. There were also a small number of candidates who focused primarily on the images of women in the media rather than the language used.

The following is an extract from a Level 3. AO4 asks candidates to make connections across their data and this candidate makes a number of clear and relevant links between their chosen articles.

a career. In addition, the journalists uses Ankier talks about marriage and writes about it being an "aspiration". Which indicates the journalists view that family life should come before a career for women. The way Ankier talks about her personal life and marriage could links to Coate's theory regarding womens languages being targeted towards home life and "home talk". However this is up for speculation considering the journalist seemed to only select certain quotes to use.

My next article is about runner "mo farah" from "the guardian in 2018" entitled "Mo Farah to be a runner at the 2019 races". This article has a different approach to my other articles, it contains short paragraphs that constantly intertwine quotes from farah about him coming back to running. "I never thought I would return" "I thought that was the end" were quotes used by the journalist when discussing the "exiting" news of him making a comeback. Whats interesting about this article is that eventhough it is not in relation to recounting a recent running event, Farah's personal life, and family expectations are not mentioned. All of the quotes seleted by the journalist were in relation to sports, which is a major contrast

to "Jo Aniriers" Article, where she was spoken about as if she had a modelling career rather than a sporting career. This again demonstrates that within the sporting world, men are majorly seen as being superior to women and gives the impression that women aren't given the time of day unless they have an interesting personal life.

within this article verb "such as "beat" are continuously used, along with the constant Semantic field of competition. This goes hand in hand with Weatherall's competition theory whereby men are constantly seen as to be in competition with one another.

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Examiner Tip

Ensure data has been carefully selected so that it is manageable, memorable, and malleable. The mark scheme asks candidates to draw connections across the data and there should be clear links between their sources. This also typically allows candidates to examine contextual factors more easily.

Question 8

Section B – Language and Journalism

For this question, the majority of candidates had sourced a broad range of data texts from a number of platforms, demonstrating an awareness of the changing nature of fake news distribution and the influence of modern technology.

There was also a clear understanding of the different forms of fake news from satire and hoaxes, to the more insidious forms of propaganda, misinformation and disinformation.

The first element of the question asked candidates to explore the methods used by fake news stories to manipulate their readers and distort the truth. Less successful responses for this question tended to simply list the techniques used by the producers of fake news and tended to repeat ideas about clickbait and user-generated content, while more successful responses explored the strategies employed by fake news outlets to increase the credibility of their pieces, often citing power theories as an evaluating factor.

The second element of the question argued that manipulation strategies were used by all forms of news allowing candidates to fully explore the topic of language and journalism and also examine common strategies such as audience positioning and confirmation bias. The most successful candidates were able to review their data in light of both features of fake news and general features of journalese.

Highly successful responses often explored both the implicit and explicit methods of manipulation, identifying how news stories were shared and reinforced to make them believable, whilst acknowledging that the distortion of facts tended to be within the remit of fake news only. Higher level responses were also able to explore ideas around modality and power as strategies for increasing the adoption of fake news stories.

While the most successful responses briefly acknowledged the long history of forms of fake news, using this as a springboard for discussing the methods employed by journalists to manipulate their readers, less successful responses often gave an overly detailed and descriptive timeline of key moments in fake news history with limited connection to the statement in the question.

The following extract is taken from a Level 4 response and carefully looks at the methods employed by both fake journalism and genuine news stories to generate interest and revenue.

emotional reactions from its readers. When researching I found an example of fake news

that mimics reliable reportage, and therefore supports the statement. The fake article's heading

"An Environmental Activist was attacked in the Indian Ocean, when the Great white shark he was trying to hug, suddenly bit his arm off." Straight away The heading identifies the protagonist, and establishes the location. These details would all indicate to the truth of the article. Further on in the article it goes onto to more informal and conversational style, "some 100 nautical miles." This is a typical convention of human-interest stories, that which this article purports to be. This idea of fake news accurately exhibiting the characteristics of real news, poses the question of whether all news is distorted and manipulated to some extent.

However, there is evidence of some language checkmarks and indications to whether a story is reliable. When comparing many fake articles, some language techniques, unconventional to mainstream media and reliable sources, consistently reappeared. Many fake stories elicit their emotional reactions through hyperbole, audiences should be aware of exaggeration if unsure on the intentions of the 'news.' Throughout fake

news we witness subjective lexicon, words like "terrible" and "brilliant," which subtly allude to the writers opinion. Linking back to hyperboles many articles use clickbait titles to generate clicks, which ultimately generates money. I also found an

Question 9

Section B – Language and Power

The focus of this question was asking candidates to explore how advice letters used power strategies to reinforce social norms despite trying to appear neutral. This question is perhaps where lower performing candidates who had focused on a very narrow investigation e.g. the way gender affected the language of advice, struggled the most to adapt their research to the statement. It is important that centres impress upon candidates that the statement is not an optional part of the question and must be addressed in their responses.

The majority of candidates, however, were able to identify where their advice letters promoted social norms of the time, with many candidates having adopted a diachronic approach to their investigation.

Responses that were placed in the higher levels of the mark scheme showcased candidates who were able to debate the statement fully, examining how some platforms deliberately went against social norms while others overtly reinforced the values and beliefs at the time of writing. A number of interesting investigations looked particularly at the changing advice associated with relationships, sex and sexuality, and were able to make insightful comments about the influence of context on the way these texts were written.

Many candidates also focused on the varying strategies of advice givers to influence and persuade their readers, with some candidates noting a trend for more blunt advice and the impact that is having on the genre.

Less successful responses often ignored the statement, failing to acknowledge the social and cultural context of their data. It is worth reminding candidates that the pre-release material always asks candidates to look at social, historical, technological and cultural factors which may have had an impact on their chosen sub-topic and these aspects should form part of their research.

With regards to the element of the question addressing the attempts of advice givers to appear neutral, candidates interpreted this statement in a number of ways, with the most successful candidates being able to use it to debate the validity of the statement. Some candidates considered the emotional neutrality of the writer, discussing ideas about footing, convergence and social networks within their own data set. Other candidates interpreted the phrase to mean political neutrality and used it to discuss the promotion of social norms through a range of linguistic approaches. Both were equally effective and allowed candidates to critically examine the influence of contextual factors on their selected data.

The following response just hits the criteria for Level 4. In this extract, the candidate has used the fact that the advice seeker longs to be 'normal' as evidence that advice letters often promote social norms, ensuring the response is focused on the statement.

The first a text I research advice was written between a mother and resident agony aunt Mariella Fostrup. From my research I belive there is some publication bias only stories that are relatable to most seem to be published. The advice seeker states that she is unable to " re establish a normal level of maternal anxiety " after expressing her worries regarding her grown up daughters she immediately makes a point that linus to social norms. She even

uses the adjective 'normal' which is the lexical item which norms stem from. In this declarative she makes herself vulnerable by exposing her inability to fit in to social norms. Her aim is to be like other mothers so she seeks help from Fostrup. This declarative links to Tannens theory of status vs. support as she looks to form a network of support with the advice giver in order to feel like she fits it with other mothers in society. In Fostrups response she promotes that it is fitting into social norms is what she should be doing to overcome her problem. Fostrup provides her with options of how she could achieve this. For example " your GP could point you toward counselling" The advice ~~seeker~~ giver in this referral ~~suggest~~ implies that the advice seeker needs psychological treatment to help her to be like a 'normal' mother. The advice seeker clearly realises ~~her~~ the limits of her personal power due to her occupation - in terms of Wareing power theory so she offers more professional help as a solution. ~~The~~ Her honesty and acknowledgement of the

limitations of her occupation show the advice seeker that she has her best interests at heart this makes her power more likely successfully exerted as the advice seeker will trust Fostrup when she uses her status to make the advice seeker in what would be regarded as 'normal'. Another piece of advice Fostrup provides is " we must put thing into perspective" the use of the plural pronoun makes everything less overwhelming for the advice seeker in order to to allow Fostrup to exert her power to its full potential. The modal auxillary 'must' too shows signs of obligation, that there is no other option. Again this necesity shows that the advice seeker must not remain an anomily in society but she must fit in with social norms. The advice giver also uses statistics this creates and establishes Fostrups knowledge and credibility. This is another technique used to allow the advice giver to influence the advice seekers actions. " most of us will

The extract opens with a close analysis of the advice seeker's problem and how it links to the statement. Although the point is slightly laboured, there is still a sense of increasing control in terms of the way the candidate handles their data in light of the statement.

The candidate also makes reference to a number of researchers regarding language, power, and gender. These concepts do show an emerging sense of discriminating control in terms of their application (AO2) as the candidate is shaping the research to support and illuminate their point. In some responses, candidates who used Tannen would simply say something about women using advice letters because that's what women do, with little thought about the pragmatic role between the seeker and the giver. By acknowledging the effect of a social, supportive network on the way the advice is received, the candidate is beginning to link their analysis of the construction of meaning to both the context and key concepts.

As the response progresses, the candidate carefully selects examples from the text to support their points, considering the role of modal verbs and pronoun use. Although this terminology is perhaps not the most technical vocabulary the candidate will have learnt on the course, it is used precisely and accurately.

The candidate is also attempting to explore a range of frameworks across the response, offering increasingly smooth and well-handled transitions between them.

ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

Always ensure that terminology is used precisely and accurately, even if it is some of the less complex terminology learnt. Ensure that examples are carefully selected in order to demonstrate the secure knowledge of terms.

Question 10

Section B – Regional Varieties of English

The statement in this question posed the argument that although the accent of Merseyside English remained distinctive, key dialect features were being lost.

The majority of candidates were able to effectively discuss key features of the Merseyside accent, drawing on a range of primary and secondary research to debate the issues raised by the statement. There was a strong understanding of the relationship between accent and identity, and stronger responses were able to effectively examine the influence of celebrities and accolades, such as the gaining of City of Culture status, on the retention of key phonological aspects of this variety. Mid and upper level responses also showed a secure understanding of the IPA with many working within the limitations of it to describe aspects such as debuccalization and fricative pronunciations effectively.

Most candidates were able to discuss the concept of dialect levelling, making reference to lexical and grammatical features that are either generic across many dialects, so not distinctive to Merseyside English (use of 'me' instead of 'my', for example) or that have been lost over time, e.g. webs meaning trainers.

Strong investigations were presented by candidates who had carefully selected data and had a secure understanding of the contextual factors that may have influenced the language used.

Less successful responses tended to only focus on the distinctive features of the accent and tended to answer this question in a similar style to Section A, focusing on representative and typical features of the accent with limited links to any contextual factors or issues surrounding the variety. One of the differentiating factors between successful and less successful responses was also the exploration of context. More successful candidates made secure links between the historical development of the variety and the statement itself, exemplified by features seen in their data. Less successful responses tended to offer a detailed history of the variety with little reference to why key features have either remained or been lost.

As with previous series, candidates were able to draw on their study of language and identity to make relevant and appropriate links between their data and researchers such as Trudgill, Milroy and Kerswill.

This response just hit the criteria for a Level 5 and offers a wide ranging exploration of data in light of the statement.

Grammatically, a lot can be said about the 4 speakers syntactical variation. Henry, for example, recounts how his children, after the tragic disaster, didn't attend school for a while - "they aint goan gone school /skɪʊl/". Here, he uses the non-standard negative auxiliary 'aint' and ommits the preposition 'to', showing that there is clear grammatical variation

within the Merseyside dialect. Beal would theorise that this variation comes from a place of regional pride, which is contextually relevant as perhaps Henry, after the tragedy feels as though his linguistic idiosynchrasies provide him with a community of homogenous speakers, which would perhaps act as comfort for him in the face of tragedy. Nevertheless, there are distinctive features outside of phonology that differentiate Merseyside English. $\times^2$

A2 What is interesting to note about Henrys pronunciation of "school" as /skʊɪl/ is the dipthongisation of the GOOSE vowel according to Well's lexical sets. The high central /I/ vowel is merged, which is a feature very distinct to Merseyside English. Henry displays this phonological feature again when pronouncing /livərpɪʊl/, which is especially distinct as ME speakers emphasise this dipthongisation when saying liverpool to display a sense of regional pride, especially emphasised by the preaspiration, a feature also phonologically distinct to ME being used when proudly pronouncing 'Liverpool'. This again links to Beals theory that despite Macdonaldisation, features are being retained due to a sense of regional pride.

In this section, the candidate has made an increasingly sophisticated interpretation of the data, looking at the motivations behind Michael's speech (AO3) and accurately using terminology to identify key elements of the language. The role of regional pride, identity, and linguistic idiosyncrasies, is discussed in light of both the nature of the data and the statement itself. The candidate clearly has a secure understanding of the context of their data and a strong understanding of the impact the Hillsborough disaster had on the people of Liverpool.

The candidate also draws on a number of different frameworks and linguistic methods to reinforce their argument (AO1), exemplifying terminology and ideas with carefully selected and precisely integrated examples.

As part of their investigation, candidates are advised to consider a wide range of linguistic frameworks and methods that can be applied to their data to ensure that they can explore a breadth of ideas in their responses.

Paper Summary

Based on the performance on this paper, candidates are offered the following advice:

- While having a working hypothesis can help draw conclusions about their data, candidates must ensure that they can adapt their research to any statement. Candidates need to treat the statement as they would any other form of exam question and ensure that their responses are focused on it.
- Candidates are encouraged to briefly frame their data for the examiner but are also encouraged to make this as succinct as possible so as not to waste time in their exam.
- Candidates should find their own data sources and ensure they have a detailed understanding of the context of their chosen pieces. It is helpful for candidates to be able to reference their data directly, using paraphrasing or direct quotations, as a way of exemplifying their points.
- Candidates are encouraged to challenge existing research and theory within their sub-topic, especially if their investigation refutes the findings. Evaluating the validity of prior research can help to offer a broader debate around the issues within the sub-topic.
- For **Section A**, candidates are encouraged to explore a wide range of frameworks, not simply lexis or phonology. Candidates are also advised to ensure they are confident when it comes to applying relevant terminology to their data.
- Also in **Section A**, where appropriate, candidates may consider clustering aspects of the data to offer a more evaluative interpretation about the way language is used. Candidates can use this to argue whether a text is representative or otherwise, and should continue to be encouraged to consider atypical aspects of the data and the contextual reasons for these occurrences.
- Candidates are advised to consider how useful and relevant different elements of research and theory are to their data, ensuring that the links they make between AO2 aspects and their data are valid and clear. Candidates are also reminded that the pre-release materials are only a springboard for their research and are by no means an exhaustive list. Candidates are encouraged to read widely around their chosen topic, including academic texts, to ensure they are fully immersed in the debates and linguistic features of their chosen sub-topic.

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