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Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2017

Pearson Edexcel GCSE
In Chinese (5CN01)
Paper 1F: Listening and understanding
in Chinese.

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GCSE Chinese
Unit 1F: Listening
Examiners Report

Paper introduction

As always this year's Foundation Listening paper focused mainly on topic areas that one could reasonably expect candidates to be familiar with: free time activities (Q1), school teachers (Q7), places of work (Q8), drinks (Q9). Whilst a few questions might have seemed more challenging on first viewing – 'Healthy lifestyle' (Q4), for example – or did not clearly signal a particular lexical area – 'Problems' (Q6), for example – it was not necessarily the case that candidates found these tasks harder. With the exception perhaps of workplaces (Q8), there were no specific lexical areas that were weaker across all abilities, but it is true to say that most questions had at least one item of vocabulary that was problematic for most students, not necessarily only for those at the lower end of the ability range.

Q1

Although this question is designed to be a 'gentle' starter, weaker candidates struggled to identify the correct answers, 打网球 proving surprisingly to be the most difficult.

Q2

Overall this question was dealt with successfully across the ability range. Part (iv), testing a detail about the weather, was least well answered; it was also disappointing to note how many candidates, particularly at the lower end of the ability range, failed to correctly identify the month (part iii). Once again the importance of knowing basic numbers is highlighted.

Q3

This question too was generally well answered; only part (ii), testing knowledge of position words – in this case, 旁边 – proved too hard for some.

Q4

Although this question is targeted at the C grade learners, candidates overall performed well and are presumably now familiar with the format of the task. Key words, such as 上学, 水果, 跳舞, were generally well known. As noted above, the apparent relative 'difficulty' of the topic area (health) was not an obstacle to candidates; the fact that Dai Ping's answers were given first, followed by Li Ting's (rather than jumping back and forth), may of course have helped some candidates, but it shows that those taking the exam are learning not to be put off when the question format is not 100% identical to previous years.

Q5

Although this question was targeted at the middle of the ability range (for this paper), part (iii) particularly and part (iv) also to some extent proved surprisingly difficult. In part (iii) one might have expected candidates to recognise 在 as an indication of position; thus only H or I is possible and surely 桌子 even if not known actively as a word is clearly not 沙发 which one would hope even weaker students would recognise. Perhaps listeners were distracted by the

first sentence of this question, which only tells you where the phone is NOT to be found. As for (iv), there is clearly a need for learners to know some basic adjectives.

Q6

As noted above, this question did not focus on any particular lexical area. However, the task content was very general, with support given in some cases to help with identifying the meaning (iii没吃=饿). It was adjectives again (as in the previous question) that were problematic, 忙 proving difficult for all candidates despite the 'hint' of not having time.

Q7

As one of the crossover questions, this task was clearly targeted at the stronger candidates. Whilst weaker candidates as expected found the whole task difficult, the only element of this question that C grade candidates struggled with was part (iv), the noun 作业 probably being the stumbling block. It was pleasing to find that candidates were not thrown by the difference in order between the printed questions and what was heard.

Q8

As noted above, this question proved surprisingly difficult across the ability range. Only 飞机场 was recognised by a good percentage of candidates, they presumably picking up on the transport element 飞机. This is clearly an area of vocabulary that needs greater attention.

Q9

This question, focusing on drinks, was generally well handled by learners; the only vocabulary item here that was not so familiar was 汽水.

Q10

In comparison with recent years, this question, the only one requiring answers written in English, was relatively well done. Parts (c) and (d) generally had correct answers, showing both an encouraging ability to use numbers to identify days of the week and a good knowledge of relative time words (in this case, 明天). Whilst in part (a) one might not have expected all candidates to recognise the place the man wanted to visit (博物馆), there was yet again a disappointingly low level of recognition of the number given in (b), this time used to indicate a period of time (十分钟).

Paper summary

Overall, then, this paper was handled well by those who decided to take the Foundation level. Some questions, Q10 particularly, were dealt with statistically 'better' than in previous years; most questions as one might expect had at least one vocabulary item that proved challenging to at least one part of (if not the entire) ability range. Perhaps most encouragingly, candidates were not put off by elements of the exam that were slightly different from previous tests that they might have used as mock exams; this flexibility is vital if learners are to perform in the exam to their full potential.

