

IAL Language Unit 1 Section ASB Exemplars

Taken and adapted from:

<http://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/A%20Level/English%20Language/2015/teaching-and-learning-materials/A-Level-Paper-1-Section-A-Exemplars-Pack.pdf> [QP and Source Booklet]

<http://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/A%20Level/English%20Language/2015/Specification%20and%20sample%20assessment/AS-EnglishLanguage-SAMs.pdf> [adapted table: mode, field, function, etc]

<http://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/International%20Advanced%20Level/english-language/2015/specification-and-sample-assessments/IAL-English-Language-Collation-SAM.pdf>
[marking grid and AOs; use of indicative content]

Original Question:

Read Texts A and B on pages 3-4 of the source booklet before answering Question 1 in the space provided.

1. Analyse and compare the ways that both writers use language to convey personal and social identity.

You should refer to any relevant language frameworks and levels, as well as social, cultural and other contextual factors.

Exemplar response 1

Text A is that of a blog post written by a woman in her twenties – Ciretta. Similar to text A, text B is also in first person as John Ravenscroft writes about his time as an “infant” from the “smell” to “even the taste” of the time. Both pieces could be recognised as written to entertain. Text A and B are entertaining pieces being sourced from a blog and a book. This purpose to entertain could be recognised in text B through the narrative style and declarative sentence moods – “I was born...”, also through the use of adjectives to describe and formulate imagery to engage an audience e.g. “brown”. Text A and B are arguably very similar, being conversational and informal in their style evidenced in text A, for example where she writes about “blurting out” facts about moose. The texts audiences could be different with a blog audience stereotypically younger, and presumably the audience of an autobiography of an older man with a “grandson” born “before the outbreak of the Second World War” older.

The differences in the age and gender of the writers will mean there are obvious differences in their personal and social identity – so there could be differences in the way they convey this. One of the most obvious ways that this can be recognised is the way in which they are communicating with the audience. Ciretta uses a blog to reach her audience, this blog page is also able to be “shared” on social networks evidenced through the iconic logos from “facebook”, “Twitter” and “Google +”, for example. This could suggest that the writer is a technocentric, or simply perhaps (stereotypically of her younger age) a confident user of modern technology – which could further be supported through her statement about her “x box” being one of her “favourite things”. This, however, is not stereotypical of her gender – to be interested in gaming, but then again in Ravenscroft’s autobiography he talks of “babysitting” which could be recognised as more of a woman’s role, or topic discussed. The fact that Ravenscroft states “SHEILA” first, however and has it capitalised before stating that they are babysitting may suggest that socially it is expected that the woman has a bigger or more key role in caring for child.

There is evidence of social change in the texts as Ravenscroft compares his dad to the characters from “Enid Blyton’s faraway tree”, to explain how “improbable” his existence really was. The reference to books, however is key to the evidence in social change as in Text A (written about modern days) Ciretta talks of blogging for “pleasure” and playing on her “x box” showing a change in what people have done in their leisure time. Social change can also be seen where Ravenscroft refers to his dad as “father” which could now be seen as archaic.

Both texts have talk of food, whilst Ravenscroft refers to the “strange powdered foods” he ate, Ciretta speaks of “cheeseburgers”. This reference to fast food could represent Ciretta’s fast-paced life – which could also be evidenced through the fact that she is blogging – being an instant service.

Ciretta never talks of her second name, making the text more informal (supporting Fairclough’s informalisation theory), perhaps than Text B, but could also be because of her want to be more anonymous in the age of the internet where information is accessible by anyone – supported where she states to leave Ciretta as a “mystery”.

The texts show that both writers identify themselves very differently with Ciretta through her “favourite things” and “aspirations” whilst Ravenscroft through his life experiences that have perhaps made him the person he is such as his father “being away”.

The conversational tone of text A could represent a woman’s love of phatic communication – as stated by Jennifer Coates. This could be shown when she mentions her love of food several times with the audience arguably not interested. She also talks of how she “usually blurt[s] out” about moose – again being phatic, perhaps socially significant. The fact that she ‘blurts out’ things could be argued as more of a woman’s trait by Cameron. Ciretta also uses tag questions where she states – “so why bother yourself with it?” for example supporting Fishman’s theory that women use more tags than men; or her lack of worry/carefree attitude. It is also said by Tannen that women talk of more trivial topics than men and this could be supported through multiple features within the texts analysed. Ravenscroft mentions “war”, “aircraft” and “roads”, which not only are more stereotypically male topics but less trivial than her “favourite things” or her “xbox”.

Exemplar 1: First Marker’s Comments

The student produces a detailed linguistic analysis equally balanced across both texts. A range of language levels are addressed with references to the writers’ personas, discussing how the age difference of authors will influence personal and social identities e.g. second world war and gaming. The student identifies the semantic field of food in both texts linking to difference in lifestyles ‘cheeseburgers...fast paced’ vs ‘babysitting grandson’. The analysis is developed further with confident application of gender theories (although these theories are now outdated) and they are able to relate to the differences in mode to the audience. The age difference of the writers is explored with discussions on social change in the texts identifying cultural references linked to a specific generation- Enid Blyton and Xbox. This is a confident response demonstrating strong understanding and awareness of the construction of meaning in texts.

Second Marker

Review the response in the light of the first marker's comments and make your own notes on a separate sheet showing how the response itself covers the following areas:

	Text A	Text B
Mode		
Field		
Function		
Audience		
Discourse/Pragmatics		
Graphology/phonology		
Grammar		
Lexis/Semantics		
Social/Cultural Concepts and Issues		
AO4 - explore connections across data Connections and contrasts can be made using any of the contextual, linguistic features and social /cultural concepts and issues outlined above.		

What overall mark and level would you award the script? Why? Original Question:

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Exemplar Response 2

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Both in texts A and B, the writers use different methods of conveying their personal and social identity such as with comic asides and dynamic verbs to convey different meanings.

In text A, no contraction is used in the verb phrase 'I have an emotional connection'. This conveys that the author is slightly more formal than most people while suggesting a slightly sarcastic, awkward tone considering she doesn't like to talk about herself.

The dynamic verb 'blurt' is used which, personally, suggests to me that she is balancing out the formal nature of the lack of contractions by choosing to use a fairly informal word that suggests lack of care for what she is saying. Again, this adds to the awkward nature of her personality since she cannot think of appropriate things to say during social interactions.

She addresses herself (using the proper noun 'Ciretta') in the third person ('let's leave Ciretta') in order to convey more about how she is a 'mysterious' person and also to shed more light on her personality as she talks about herself in a different perspective.

Sarcasm is used with the adverb 'surprisingly'. This conveys humour with the fact that her love of food is played down by making it appear a shock that she loves it amongst other things.

Her age is conveyed through the fact that she uses the proper noun 'Photoshop' as a verb to describe that she will put her face onto 'The Arbiter'. This is because the verb 'Photoshop' is often used as slang by younger generations. Her age is also conveyed by the mention of a Halo character since it is stereotypically young people who play this game.

Humour is conveyed within parenthesis with 'writer, psychologist or archaeologist' as it appears a shock in contrast with when she mentions the 'worksheets' because it is unusual for a young person to be so set in their career path so early on.

In comparison, the age difference between the two writers is clear when we look at text B. This is because the writer mentions frequently about his 'birth' which was in a few days before the 'outbreak of the second world war'. The writer of text B also uses more formal forms of address 'Mother' 'Father' and lexis which suggest old-fashioned objects such as 'harness' 'air-raid shelter' and 'barrage balloon.' The formality and standard form of the lexis presents the writer as older but creates a contrast with some of the more creative uses of language, which suggests that the writer has a dry sense of humour, and an eccentric persona, for example 'Father was away, eyeball to eyeball with the Germans in North Africa.'

Whereas in text A, the author talks about herself in a lot of description, text B talks more about other people such as where the author uses the complex noun phrase in apposition 'his mother, Alexandra, our daughter'. This packs in a lot of information in a small amount of words, allowing the reader to learn more about his family and what they are like. We realise his daughter is health conscious about her baby since she feeds him 'tomato, yam and basil', which he dislikes and this might also suggest a class difference between how John Peel was raised, and how his grandson is being brought up 'I am not sure I would either'. This is one of the ways humour is conveyed in text B in the form of comic asides, creating a light-hearted tone.

Text B also uses humour to convey a sense of her identity. She shows herself as being awkward or geeky with lexis related to technology 'xbox' 'photoshop' 'the Arbiter' which helps to give the sense of her being younger than the writer of text B. She is also self-deprecating as a form of humour as even though she is writing a blog, she criticises her own writing 'Also please don't refer to this About Me section as some kind of indication of my quality of writing. Ever.' This shows she does not take herself too seriously. Also, it shows how she is trying to relate to her audience and for them to like her. The use of punctuation and the single 'ever' is similar to opinion columns and magazine articles for younger audiences, which shows how she is influenced by these factors. John Peel's references also add to his presentation as someone who is older and more traditional, for example 'The Blue Fairy Book' and the expectation is that the readers will understand these external references, which suggests that they might be a similar age to him.

Both text A and B show their writers are not taking themselves too seriously and presenting themselves as funny, by using interesting facts or saying unusual things about themselves. For example, Ciretta uses a fact about moose, which emphasises her geeky persona. John Peels also presents himself as unusual, for example 'I was born, I have always told people, at the age of four.'

In both texts, the writer directly addresses the readers. This is due to the form of the texts, being a blog and an autobiography and in order to fulfil their function of being entertaining. Being a published autobiography, text B is a more formal form, although John Peel using direct address to the audience to show he is easy going and friendly 'you'd be surprised'. This contrasts with his joking reference to burying people who have questioned him 'in shallow graves on B roads'. His identity is presented as being friendly and funny but at the same time a person that you would not want to cross. This makes him appear more confident, whereas the writer of text A seems less self confident, firstly with her self-deprecating humour and also with less secure verbs choices 'attempt' and 'blurt.' Although, as she is writing a blog, she cannot be too shy, so possibly this is a way to create a likable persona that her readers will relate to and not appear self obsessed.

Overall, I believe text A conveys a young woman who is slightly awkward and sometimes doesn't know how to interact with people while text B conveys an older man thinking of memories from his past.

Exemplar 2: First Marker's Comments

This student has produced a comprehensive, well-structured analysis which discusses various aspects of both writer's identity and personality. The student effectively compares the awkward, mysterious self-deprecating writer of text A with Text B's more mature, traditional humorous writer. The response is confidently written, well supported with relevant examples. This scored in the top ... [range of marks]... but would have been awarded marks ...[higher up the scale]... if the student had included theories within their analysis.

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