

Examiners' Report/ Principal Examiner Feedback

June 2011

International GCSE Bengali (4BE0)
Paper 1

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General comments

A good proportion of candidates performed well and scored high marks in the paper. The demand of the paper is comparable with the previous paper. It was also pleasing to see that overall candidates' performances this season were slightly better than last year.

Candidates had every opportunity to produce good and proper translations. Some key words and phrases helped to differentiate between good and adequate performance of the candidates. Also a number of outstanding pieces of translations including examples of continuous pieces of writing were evident from a number of responses.

Question 1

It is quite pleasing to see that almost all candidates were able to translate all five sentences though at varied level where they were tested on specific grammar points. However, the weaker candidates while transmitting 1(a) and 1(c) often struggled or ignored to translate key words e.g. 'novel' 1(a) and 'must' in 1(c) The rest of the sentences were pretty straight forward and easily answered by stronger candidates. However, the global accuracy mark led weaker candidate to score less than expected. The average score recorded for this question was 12.

Question 2

This required an English passage about green living to be translated into Bengali. The majority of the candidates succeeded to transmit the content of the passage fairly well. The stronger candidates performed the translation task in standard Bengali with a good flow. However, on some occasions the time sequence, syntax and basic grammar was not transmitted appropriately. Weaker candidates often struggled to transmit words such as, 'climate', 'crucial', 'reduce & reuse'. A good number of candidates had struggled to translate the last couple of sentences of the last paragraph properly. However, on the whole, candidates performed quite successfully, displaying good literacy skills in both languages. The average score recorded for this question was 18.

Question 3

This required a Bengali passage about an unemployed youngster and his struggle in to seek a job, to be translated into English. The majority of the candidates translated the passage accurately. The stronger candidates were able to transmit the major key ideas from the Bengali passage into English with only a few spelling mistakes. They also applied the use of correct grammatical structures and the appropriate use of tenses. However, the weaker candidates often struggled to translate some words and phrases such as **covered, imaginative, thoughtful, cruel reality of life, weren't much use, jerked** and **scrambled**. The average score recorded for this question was 18.

Question 4

Amongst the essay options, 4a was the most popular option. Again, there was a requirement of an anticipation of facts, good flow, analysis and opinion. It was evident amongst stronger candidates. On average, the responses were mainly descriptive. Also not very many candidates used high level vocabulary or idiomatic phrases. The manipulation of languages was very basic on occasions. On the other hand, candidates who fulfilled these criteria and displayed a coherent piece of writing, obviously scored better marks. Amongst the essay options, 4c was the least popular. But those who attempted this scored good marks. The average score recorded for this question was 27.

Conclusion

On the whole, this paper appeared to be fair and well balanced. The overall performance of candidates showed that the standard of literacy including the transmission skills to and from the target language has improved though on occasion, candidates' performances were not as good as expected due to their lack of good grasp of a range of structures and tense concepts, knowledge of grammar. Also, a wide display of transliterated words / phrases was evident in the candidates' performances across the board. Centres are reminded to read the specification to ensure candidates are fully prepared for the requirement of the exam.

Grade Boundaries

The modern foreign languages specifications share a common design, but the assessments in different languages are not identical. Grade boundaries at unit level reflect these differences in assessments, ensuring that candidate outcomes across these specifications are comparable at specification level.

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