

Examiners' Report/ Principal Examiner Feedback

June 2011

International GCSE English as a
second language (4ES0) Paper 2

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Background to the paper

The listening paper is divided into three parts. In this session, the first part was a monologue by a presenter giving a podcast on a forthcoming schools' science and engineering exhibition. Candidates were required to complete notes based on the information provided. In the second part, candidates listened to a dialogue between a student and a vet in which the student interviewed the vet about his job. Candidates were required to answer multiple choice questions. In the third part, candidates listened to a monologue on chewing gum. Candidates were required to complete summary sentences based on the talk.

Candidates' responses

Generally candidates did well or very well on this paper although each section of the paper presented challenges for the candidates.

Detailed comments

There were two general types of questions on this paper: multiple choice and sentence completion.

Multiple choice (Part 2)

As a rule, candidates followed the instructions given in the rubric for this type of question.

Sentence completion (Parts 1 and 3)

Generally these questions were well attempted, although there were some candidates who did not adhere to the word limit given in the rubric.

Two issues arose out of these types of questions which require candidates to provide the word or words for the answers themselves.

Spelling

This proved to be a problem for some candidates. The general rule applied during marking was that if the answer affected communication, candidates were not awarded a mark. Candidates were not penalised for mis-spelling a word if it sounded like the target word. For example, Q5 (answer (solar) (water) heater a spelling such as soler (water) heater was accepted. However, if the word sounded like a different word or was a different word (e.g. Q5 solo (water) heater, candidates were not awarded a mark.

Grammar

In a few questions, e.g. Q 30 (answer a/one month) candidates were required to complete a sentence using the correct grammatical forms. Although these forms were given in the recording, many candidates made errors in their answers. These were the most demanding of all the questions on this paper.

Comments on sections of the paper

The paper is devised to become increasingly difficult although in this session, Part 2 proved to be the easiest section for candidates.

Part 1

Part 1 required candidates to listen for specific information such as numbers or high-frequency vocabulary items e.g. football. The best candidates found this section straightforward and scored well. Less able candidates had difficulty with some of the questions in this section, particularly questions 3 and 5. There were a number of candidates who did not adhere to the word limit (three words maximum in this instance). It is important for candidates to follow these instructions as they were not awarded a mark if they did not.

Part 2

Candidates generally performed well on this section. Less able ones struggled with this section, however. There were a very few candidates who provided multiple answers for some questions and did, in consequence, lose marks.

Part 3

This section required candidates to complete sentences by providing the correct word or words (two words maximum in this instance). This was the most difficult part of the paper as candidates needed to process the information they heard more in order to provide the answer. As in Part 1, a number of candidates did not adhere to the word limit. Less able candidates had the most difficulty with this section and some attempted to produce phonetically what they heard. Some of these candidates scored few, if any, marks in this section. The best candidates were able to identify the correct words and provide grammatically correct sentences. Several candidates repeated words that were already given in the sentence which resulted in no mark being awarded.

Advice to centres

It is recommended that candidates listen to a wide range of different types of texts such as current affairs, TV and radio programmes in order to familiarise themselves with a wide range of topics.

Centres should prepare candidates for the listening examination by familiarising them with the style of the test and with the types of questions they can expect to find on the paper.

Candidates should make good use of the time before the tape is played to predict possible answers and consider the context when providing their answers.

Candidates should be advised to follow the instructions in the rubric when answering the questions and to adhere to the word limit.

Candidates should consider the grammatical fit of their answers in sentence completion questions.

Candidates should consider the spelling of words when providing their answers.

Task types vary from year to year, centres are advised to practice all task types as indicated in the specification.

A small number of queries were received about the duration of the recording. Edexcel will be offering guidance for this on the front cover of the examination paper and on the recording to provide more clarity.

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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