

# ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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| <p><b>Paper 9093/12</b><br/><b>Reading</b></p> |
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## Key messages

- In preparation for this exam, candidates need to read a wide range of material from a diverse range of sources, such as advertisements, brochures, leaflets, editorials, news stories, articles, reviews, blogs, investigative journalism, letters, podcasts, (auto)biographies, travel writing, diaries, essays, scripted speech, narrative writing, and descriptive writing.
- Candidates need to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the linguistic elements and features of texts, such as parts of speech/word classes, vocabulary, figurative language, phonology, morphology, rhetorical devices, voice, aspect, tense, modality, narrative perspective, word ordering and sentence structure, paragraph and text-level structure, formality/informality of tone, and pragmatics.
- Candidates should develop an intimate knowledge and understanding of the conventions and discourses associated with a diverse range of genres, styles and contexts, enabling them to respond reflectively, analytically, discursively and creatively, as is appropriate to the task or context.
- For **Question 1(a)**, the accompanying instructions and text provide the context and background information to guide the candidates as they produce their directed response. Candidates should use these to make carefully considered choices of appropriate lexis, register and tone to suit the task set and ensure they achieve the highest possible standards of accuracy and expression in their writing.
- For **Question 1(b)**, candidates need to ensure they compare the form, structure and the language of the original text and their own, with a clear emphasis on selecting elements from both texts that may be analysed to demonstrate how writers' stylistic choices relate to audience and shape meaning.
- For **Question 2**, candidates need to comment on the form, structure and language of a text. They are required to identify characteristic features of the text, relate them to the meaning, context and audience of the writing, organise information in their answers, and write using clear and appropriate language.
- A secure degree of technical accuracy – especially in the use of spelling, punctuation and tenses – is required at this level.

## General Comments

Candidates accessed both texts well and engaged with them to varying degrees. The rubric was generally understood, with only a few candidates omitting either a part of a question or a full question. However, there were still numerous overlong responses to **Question 1(a)** again this series. Candidates are required to write between 150 and 200 words. While there is no direct penalty for failing to adhere to this requirement, this is an aspect of the response's relevance to purpose. Candidates should remember that they are being marked for task focus and relevant content as well as expression and accuracy. Largely speaking, though, the paper was handled with understanding and competence. Only a few responses demonstrated a lack of the language skills necessary for text analysis.

**Question 1(a)** is a directed response task. Candidates need to follow the instructions carefully to produce a written response informed by the language, style and structure of a given text to fit a specific form, purpose and audience – in this session the original text was an article. Their reworking (or recasting) of the original text should incorporate recognisable conventions of the text type identified in the instructions; in this session it was a podcast. Careful consideration of the target audience is required. Candidates are expected to write clearly, accurately, with relevant content and effectively for the prescribed purpose and audience.

A good working knowledge of linguistics is indispensable in responding to **Question 1(b)**, where candidates are required to compare the text produced for **1(a)** with the given text, analysing form, structure and language. Here, candidates are assessed for their ability to demonstrate comparative understanding of texts with clear reference to characteristic features, and comparative analysis of form, structure and language, including how a writer's stylistic choices relate to audience to shape meaning. It is very important that candidates employ some form of comparative approach in their response to **Question 1(b)**. A topical approach guarantees continuous comparison in which a conclusion can be used to emphasise the essential similarities and differences between the two texts. Those who adopted a topical approach tended to demonstrate the most comprehensive understanding. It is important to recognise that candidates are not asked to write a reflective commentary – which is a requirement for Paper 2 – for **Question 1(b)** in Paper 1.

In **Question 2**, a sound knowledge of linguistics is again required as candidates are assessed on their ability to demonstrate understanding of a text in terms of meaning, context and audience with reference to characteristic features, and their ability to analyse form, structure and language.

Specific language features were generally well understood, but candidates must ensure that the features they identify are genuinely present in the passage and that they use specific examples of language use to support the identification of those features and link them to effects created. Most candidates clearly understood the need to make precise connections between language features and their contribution to the full effect of the passage. There was also attention to the effects of punctuation, especially dashes and commas.

In the case of most candidates, there was a clear understanding of the need to make precise connections between language features and their contribution to the full effect of the given text.

Less successful responses could often have been improved through more precise use of language to link evidence with explanatory comments. General descriptive phrases such as 'the writer is trying to persuade the reader' and 'this helps the readers to imagine' cannot be considered useful text analysis.

### Comments on specific questions

#### Question 1

- (a) Candidates were asked to read an article about the use of horses instead of motor vehicles in France. They were informed that their teacher had asked them to write the text for a podcast discussing the advantages of using horsepower in modern towns and cities.

Responses to this question often gave some sharp and convincing pictures of the reintroduction of draft horses as a sustainable approach to alternative energy; there were some lyrical accounts of the advantages of using horsepower; and a few responses dismissed the use of draft horses as complete nonsense. Some responses were humorous and showed a courtesy to their audience that was a pleasure to read. There was generally a good understanding of podcast conventions.

In effective responses, tenses were clear and consistent, lifted material did not dominate and there was a credible sense of a podcast. These responses included podcast conventions more obviously, such as building a relationship with the audience, showing passion about their subject or experience, offering an appropriate variety of formats – i.e. interview based (often with speakers from the passage), narrative, educational – and offering different approaches to engaging listeners. The most successful encouraged listener interaction through various means like comments and questions, or invited feedback. These successful responses aimed to foster a sense of community among listeners, reflected a host 'personality' and displayed features of building a connection with the audience, for example through reference to regular releases. There were some effective horse-related puns and neologisms as titles, offering engaging introductions.

Quite a few limited responses were written explicitly for the teacher, their audience simply being fellow students; this affected their purpose and audience for **Question 1(b)**. Although there was confusion between horsepower and horse powered in some responses, this was minor and did not overly compromise understanding or content relevance.

In weaker responses, particularly where 'speakers' from the passage were guests, there was a lot of lifting directly from their comments on the use of horses in towns and cities. Some weaker responses focused on sustainability per se and these often quoted large amounts from the given

text, which was rarely justified. Furthermore, these weaker responses often showed errors with use of grammar and incorrect tenses, frequently as a result of being over ambitious with language choices. There was some non-standard spelling, for example 'gonna', 'wanna' in the recreation of an informal style, which is not appropriate in the repurposed text.

The need for careful reading of the question was highlighted by a number of responses that did not achieve what was required, particularly the need to focus on *advantages of using horsepower in modern towns and cities*. Candidates should reflect on the issues in the passage rather than introduce completely new material such as extensive information on sustainability or extended content on, for example, new technologies.

Getting the balance between showing understanding of the passage and crafting an effective response is key to this question and the tendency was perhaps to be a little too safe. It is important for candidates to be aware that understanding is not necessarily demonstrated by rearranging chunks of the text. Often, the most effective writing came at the end of responses when candidates freed themselves from 'checklisting' the text.

Most of the candidates abided by the guidelines concerning the length of their responses (150–200 words). However, this series a greater proportion of candidates wrote considerably longer pieces that did not best suit the form and purpose specified.

**(b)** Candidates were asked to compare their podcast with the article, analysing form, structure and language.

To do well in this task, candidates need to analyse form, structure and language and to directly compare different approaches and features in the two texts available to them, i.e. the text provided and the one that they have just created. A themed approach is more effective for this type of comparative task than dealing with each text separately. More detailed responses gave comparative analysis that considered elements of form, structure and language together with a detailed analysis of how writers' stylistic choices relate to audience and shape meaning.

Most candidates wrote effective introductory paragraphs, showing their understanding of both texts and their purpose and audience. They showed understanding of the difference in terms of the purpose of the article and the podcast and elaborated on this. Almost all responses identified the clear differences of first- and second-person address and recognised the formality and neutrality of the article. Generally, responses commented on the differences stemming from one text designed to be read and another to be heard. Differences between point of view were generally commented on, as was the difference in paragraphing and the use of onomatopoeia (which was mostly spelt accurately). The text was generally judged to be formal and the podcast semi-formal. The effect of different audiences upon style and language was another consideration which was generally handled well. Form and structure tended to be covered more briefly and with greater generalisation. It would be useful for candidates to focus on syntax and sentence types as well as the structure of the whole text.

In addition to this, a common feature mentioned was the use of voice, including personal pronouns and direct address, and the distinguished differences and similarities between the two texts in terms of how this was appropriate to their purposes. Candidates who had clearly used the podcast form effectively in **Question 1(a)** had a firm basis and greater range of material on which to comment.

Limited responses were often brief, focused more on the article than on the directed response, and tended to summarise content rather than to analyse comparatively. These responses generally focused on one or two elements of form, structure or language. Some candidates mainly listed the conventions of an article or a podcast. Some merely pointed out the variety of sentence types or length of paragraphs without reference to effect. Candidates should be advised that although they are not required to focus on form, structure and language in separate sections and they should organise their response in any appropriate way, responses that address all three elements tend to be more successful.

Clear responses compared the two texts throughout and referred accurately to specific techniques used in both, quoting them early and explaining the precise effects they created. For these responses, there was little generalisation such as 'this created a picture in the reader's mind', 'it creates a rhythm' and 'this engages the reader', but precise consideration of the impact of

individual examples of both writers' stylistic choices upon the reader. Responses such as these often fell into a clear pattern of identifying the technique, giving the example and the subsequent effect of its use, as well as highlighting the broader effect in the passage. These answers also related the tone and purpose to precise features of the writing, realising that language use creates tone, rather than relying on a broad identification of tone unconnected to specific language use.

In detailed and sophisticated responses, candidates made use of their linguistic knowledge to structure their writing, for example by proceeding from a line-by-line approach to whole-text level in their analysis. They correctly identified pertinent elements of form, i.e. the typical text conventions used in the original article and the candidate's podcast and the ways in which the different purposes affected the content and style of the two texts. They also commented successfully on the ways in which the article extract and the podcast were relevant to their respective intended audiences, e.g. through the tone and register used in each text. These responses offered a themed comparison of these elements with their own writing.

In terms of language, these stronger responses referred to the use of details from the given text as a basis for comparison: the use of onomatopoeia to indicate the sound of the horses (*clip-clop*), the lists of three to emphasise the advantages of using horse-drawn vehicles, (*it saves on pollution, petrol and noise*); the positive language used by those interviewed to describe the experience of seeing/hearing/working with the horses (*so much nicer with an animal; it makes people smile*, repetition of the word *nostalgia* which is refuted), the use of factual information, dates, figures to add credibility (*at the start of the 20th century, there was one horse for every five people in France, a town of 15 000 people in the west of Brittany, brothers aged 8 and 9 who weigh about 900 kg (1,984 lb) each, 6–8 km/h (3.7–5 mph)*), and the fact that the duties of the horses are not onerous (*pulled a small cart, electric assistance for horses going up gradients*) and contrasting with times past (*draft horses often did perilous work in industry or down mines*).

The very weakest responses offered no comparison. A very few focused only on the given text.

## Question 2

Candidates were asked to read an online sports article about a cricketer who had adopted a vegan diet. They were then required to analyse the text, focusing on form, structure and language.

The text was generally well understood and was answered with obvious engagement by most candidates. There was wide range of responses, with a significant number showing sophisticated understanding and analysis. There was a great deal of sympathetic alignment with Kane Richardson's world view and his veganism in particular. Most responses commented on the juxtaposition of the 'scary' Australian bowler stereotype with the 'warm and softly spoken' Richardson. The shape and progression of the passage was also consistently well understood: the description of his diet, the inclusion of his child and the final 'call to action'. Most commented upon the mixture of third- and first-person point of view. Some responses became increasingly attached to Richardson's views as their answer progressed, most noticeably from the line, 'But Richardson does have some hope for the future'. Weaker responses showed more affirmative agreement than analysis.

Stronger responses showed awareness of the characteristic features of the form, an article. They understood the need for a clear, catchy and informative heading, *World Vegan Day: Kane Richardson on veganism & cricket*, on which they commented. Many also noted the subheading, *There's an old stereotype of the typical Australian fast bowler: big, scary, intimidating, and a win-at-all-costs mentality*, which was not confused with a byline this series. They also commented on: the introduction; the use of facts, examples, explanations and in particular use of anecdotes; style and use of persuasive language; formality; the use of rhetorical devices; 'expert' quotations; the need for an impactful ending; and how these enabled purpose to be achieved, which they saw as blended – mostly informative and persuasive.

Detailed responses commented on specific language use: the use of listing to describe the stereotypical Australian cricketer (*big, scary, intimidating, and a win-at-all costs mentality*), which they contrasted with the reality of Kane Richards that *he is warm, softly spoken, and, above all, acutely aware of the bigger picture outside of cricket*; the use of dialogue to bring Richards to life and help to explain his story (*I never really thought about if it would impact my cricket because I didn't care, to be honest*) and show the contrast between Richards' views and those of more stereotypical cricketers (*you've got beautiful drinking water in a tap, but you see guys around the hotel that are drinking from plastic bottles all the time*); lexical fields associated with concern for the environment (*plastic bottles, reusable cups, the animals, the environment, sustainable*); the inclusion of humour and mockery (*Some guys used to go if you get hungry, 'are you going*

*to start eating the grass?*); and in particular the lexical choices associated with some vegan food choices (*scrambled tofu, that's godliness, I actually love tofu*).

Stronger responses were often characterised by greater clarity in the critical terminology employed in analysing form, structure and language. Conversely, weaker responses often described style, mood, and vocabulary as having 'positive connotations' or 'negative connotations', with little further elaboration or definition. Similarly, a range of precisely constructed language effects were sometimes summed up as 'creating an interesting image' or 'stopping the reader from being bored'. It is important that candidates use precise terminology to access the higher levels. For some responses, there was muddling of subject terminology and identification of techniques so that similes were called metaphors, stream of consciousness was applied very loosely to the text, and imperatives were named as declaratives. The wider the candidate's critical vocabulary, the more able they will be to describe the precise effects of how meaning is created.

Clear and detailed understanding about structure was exemplified through engagement with the article's structure: the ways in which short paragraphs are used in the text; the way in which the text contrasts with the initial description of a stereotypical Australian cricketer; and how the development of the article mirrors the development of Kane Richards adopting a vegan lifestyle. Stronger responses examined the interview style and structure of the passage.

Limited responses focused on basic points about the arrangement and number of paragraphs in the text. Many candidates also focused on sentence types, but this generally amounted to feature spotting rather than effective, critical engagement. Some of these limited responses offered over-earnest reference to the presence of short, long and complex sentences, without any reference to specific sentences nor clear analysis.

In many limited to clear level responses, candidates had adopted a paragraph-by-paragraph approach, using the phrase 'in the ...paragraph'; others' analysis ranged haphazardly across the text. It would be helpful for candidates to be aware that the discriminator 'analysis is coherent and effectively structured' is a feature of the higher levels; a whole text approach can often provide sophisticated and coherent analysis. Another consequence of the line-by-line approach was repetition of the same point, such as the author's use of specific characteristic features. It is worth remembering that the same point can not be rewarded twice.

Less successful, basic responses offered very generalised and often repetitive comments. These responses identified some language features but offered limited analysis. Unnecessary repetition of such comments should be avoided, for example, 'alliteration adds rhythm', 'colloquial language helps the reader connect with the writer', 'figurative language is immersive'. These weaker responses tended to summarise the contents of the text, generally at great length. Furthermore, selection of evidence by way of quotation was not always expertly used in these weaker responses, with some candidates quoting at far too great a length or merely referring to a range of lines rather than the writer's specific choices. Some candidates referred the examiner to a line number or gave the opening two words of a quotation followed by ellipsis; similarly, a line might be quoted and then two or three features mentioned without proper specific identification of any of them from the line provided. Quotation from the text should always be precise, as concise as possible and linked to explanatory comments.

# ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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| <p><b>Paper 9093/22</b><br/><b>Writing</b></p> |
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## Key messages

- Candidates should manage their time carefully, allocating an equal amount of time for each section of the paper. Quite frequently, the time spent on **Section A** seemed to have left candidates insufficient time to meet the required word count in **Section B** or to satisfactorily complete the task.
- Candidates should be aware that relevant content in the correct form is a key aspect of the overall assessment of responses for **Question 1(a)** and **Section B** tasks. To ensure that candidates understand the key requirements of each question, it may be helpful to underline key words within the question which indicate the specified form, content, audience and purpose of the tasks chosen. For example, in **Question 1(a)** the key instructions were to write the text for the *opening of a story* which begins with a given sentence and to create a *sense of drama*. In order to achieve the task, these instructions need to be followed.
- Candidates must understand the importance of writing in clear, properly punctuated English, with accurate sentence demarcation, to perform well in this exam. Punctuation is a vital and essential aid to communication, especially as a guide to the structure of sentences, so it is imperative that candidates know and understand the basics of sentence construction if they are to succeed on this paper.
- Clear expression in simple and compound sentences without much variety is preferable to expression that does not flow, in long, rambling sentences. Often, weaker candidates lose control of grammar when they attempt to write in long, complex sentences. One error that again occurred quite regularly was that of separating sentences with commas rather than full stops; another common error was writing in sentence fragments. Clear and accurate sentence demarcation is crucial, followed by the accurate use of a wider range of punctuation.
- Candidates need to write legibly and clearly to ensure communication is not impeded. Centres should make use of appropriate access arrangements for candidates who are unable to produce legible handwritten text.
- Candidates who have difficulty with tense selection should focus on writing in one tense, preferably either the present tense or the simple past tense.
- Candidates should be encouraged to proofread carefully, particularly for accurate sentence demarcation and for tense confusion/inconsistency. Such errors impede, sometimes seriously, the overall sense of fluency and cohesion.
- Candidates must be aware of the need for clear paragraphing in their responses, including paragraphing for direct speech. A secure focus on structure is crucial since it helps the reader to feel that the candidate is in control of their writing.
- Candidates should not be overambitious in their choice of less common lexis, unless the precise meaning of the selected word is properly understood.
- Candidates should be exposed to a wide variety of different text types, as outlined in the syllabus, so that they become familiar with the conventions of a variety of writing forms and purposes. They should be taught key features of those text types to enable them to replicate these in their own writing.

### **General comments**

A number of candidates self-penalised on the grounds of rubric infringement: some candidates wrote well over 400 words for **Question 1(a)**, often at the expense of **Section B**, which was under the minimum requirement of 600 words.

In responses to **Question 1(a)**, stronger responses focused clearly on the question, constituting engaging story openings which left the reader wanting to know what happened next. Weaker responses were often lacking in a sense of drama.

The strongest responses to **Question 1(b)** maintained a close focus on linguistic and stylistic choices, with the relationship between these features being explained and explored successfully. They used relevant terminology consistently and confidently, using language precisely and appropriately. Weaker responses sometimes focused too much on content and therefore only provided minimal analysis, often by indirectly outlining the structure of the piece.

Stronger responses on **Section B** generally had a strong sense of the appropriate form for the task; (speech, descriptive piece or review), a clear focus on the question and included appropriate stylistic conventions as well as relevant content.

Weaker responses on **Section B** often contained frequent errors or lacked focus on what the task required. For example: some responses to **Question 2** were repetitive and lacked variety and balance; some responses to **Question 3** did not focus closely enough on describing the sky; while some **Question 4** responses were simply recounts of the writer's experience in the competition, needing more in the way of critique or personal opinion.

### **Comments on specific questions**

#### ***Section A: Shorter writing and reflective commentary***

##### **Question 1**

Your teacher has asked you to write the opening of a story which begins with the following sentence: 'As I approached my seat on the plane, I couldn't help noticing the person sitting behind me.'

- (a) **Write the text for the opening of your story, using no more than 400 words. In your writing, create a sense of drama.**

A few candidates chose to write the narrative from a third-person point of view. Responses offered a range of scenarios, including hijacking, child abduction, kidnapping, and a diversity of characters – a fake pilot, a child runaway, a drug baron, and long-lost friends or relatives. One story told of a trainee doctor having to deal with a medical emergency. Aspects where responses tended to fall short included where candidates had written complete stories, some which lacked suspense and drama, some exceeded the word limit, and others that were underdeveloped and therefore did not make effective use of the 400 words available.

Stronger story openings were well structured and provided a credible scenario, believable characters and convincing dialogue. The person in the seat behind the narrator often had a sinister appearance or something unusual about them. Carefully crafted details on appearance, attire and dialogue captured the reader's interest from the outset, for example: Who was the red-haired, freckled woman sitting behind me? Could it really be Anya? A gradual build up to a situation was evident in stronger responses too, as candidates made deliberate language choices to reflect the ordinary in particular instances. The 'brunette' and 'an elderly lady snoring' contrasted with a description of a more flamboyant character: 'He donned a tuxedo; a fedora was held, together with a cane.'

Intensifying the emotions of the narrator's feelings as they gradually become aware of a potentially difficult or dangerous situation was a hallmark of more credible and exciting stories. One notable situation and well-crafted response featured a young woman boarding a plane and noting a face seen somewhere from her past, though not being sure. The candidate made effective use of the rhetorical device as the protagonist struggled to process her feelings: 'was my vision betraying me? Could it really be who I saw? Was it really him?' The protagonist's feelings of horror increased as

she neared her seat: Fear voraciously clawed at my chest. A flashback to an earlier moment in the protagonist's life was employed as the reader was taken back to the woman's previous encounter with the male passenger on board the plane. The story opening concluded ended with the chilling words: 'I must take care. I must survive.'

Weaker responses often lacked narrative control, provided unrealistic scenarios and endings seemed rushed, suggesting the candidate had run out of ideas. Often there was an attempt at creating drama but it was unconvincing. Some weak story openings were nearly all about getting to the airport and contained only briefly explanations of what happened on the plane. Other weaker stories were complete, rather than story openings, and occasionally a candidate would digress, going beyond what might be termed a 'flashback'. Sometimes there was too much description of the passenger at the expense of development. Other weaker responses were hampered by language errors of different kinds.

Humour appeared in several responses where the protagonist had made a mistake, thinking there was a terrorist on board as seen in this extract: 'the constant rustling and shifting of bags made me fear that at any moment my life, indeed all our lives were in danger. I peered again through the gap in my seat only to see a kitten!'

**(b) Write a reflective commentary on your text, explaining how your linguistic choices contribute to fulfilling the task set by your teacher.**

One effective approach to this question was to use a Point, Evidence, Explanation format to analyse form, structure and language. They named, one by one, the techniques used, giving precise evidence from their response and explaining the effect on the audience. However, many responses were limited in detail and clear evidence from the **Question 1(a)** response.

Most more successful candidates approached this question in one of two ways: addressing form and structure, going through the content of the story opening and then concentrating on language; or going through the text, simultaneously analysing all language devices. Stronger responses included a range of features, such as anaphora and hypophora, and discussed their usage confidently. They gave precise examples and attempted to analyse how stylistic choices related to audience and shaped meaning, for example: 'I use a polysyndeton "tall and dapper and unmistakably charming" mimicking how someone who is zoned out may feel as it time slows down. I juxtapose this with an asyndeton "leaning against his curled-up fist, eyes closed, dozing off" to create a contrasting effect. I also use personification "screaming motors" to describe the plane to depict it as an antagonist.'

In stronger responses, candidates consistently supported their points with close reference to their language choices, as in this example: 'Structurally, the story relies on fragmented and paratactic sentence construction to mirror the protagonist's heightened alertness and growing tension. The opening line – "He was already looking at me. Not a glance, not an accidental meeting of eyes – he was waiting. Watching." – immediately establishes an unsettling atmosphere. The use of asyndeton eliminates unnecessary conjunctions, creating a clipped, urgent rhythm.'

In weaker responses, candidates had often used valuable time to inform the intended readers what the task was or summarised their story openings, rather than focusing on the techniques that they had used to build drama. They often wrote in general terms without specific examples: many such candidates wrote at some length about tone, register and audience without providing any examples. Many candidates went on at length about the benefits of having chosen to write in the first person, when that was what the prompt directed them towards.

Other weaker responses tended to mention linguistic techniques without providing examples from the story opening and then explaining how these different techniques and elements helped to build drama. For example, a lot of candidates commented on the chronological order of events written in their text but didn't expand on the effect of the order. Some candidates merely listed linguistic features they said they had used without any supporting evidence: 'I used similes, personification and short sentences.'

Some responses lacked demonstrable understanding of what an analysis of the writer's stylistic choices requires. Some candidates had clearly been taught a range of terms, for example pathos and onomatopoeia, and were able to identify them in their responses to **Question 1(a)**; however, they then need to explain how a technique's use furthers the writer's purpose beyond the creation

of drama or helping the reader to understand the character. Often, candidates mentioned that they had included rhetorical questions when, in fact, many of the questions they asked in their stories were not rhetorical.

### **Section B: Extended writing**

#### **Question 2 – Speech**

**You are going to take part in a debate at school about whether fast food should be banned or not. Your headteacher has asked you to open the debate by giving a speech on the topic. Write the text for your speech, discussing both points of view and creating a sense of interest in the debate. Write between 600 and 900 words.**

Most candidates were well-informed about the ingredients of a healthy diet, the many unhealthy substances included in the making and serving of fast foods and the economic implications, both for individuals and for nations. Few recommended a complete ban, with most saying fast food items were admissible for occasional treats. Most candidates presented both pros and cons, but not always in a balanced way. They commented that fast food was cheap, accessible, fast, filling, tasty, convenient, provided jobs and was therefore good for the economy too. Conversely, candidates stated that fast food contained chemicals such as dyes and preservatives, gave rise to health issues such as obesity and coronary heart disease, and the hygiene of some establishments was brought into question.

Stronger responses were very clear in terms of purpose and audience. They showed full awareness of the context of the response, the style was clearly appropriate, and the audience of peers was addressed at several points, not just at the start and end of the speech. Such candidates adopted an appropriate register and engaged with the audience well, citing the enormous success and popularity of fast food, notably amongst the young and busy working household. Effective speeches had a strong opening address, often with an arresting comment, for example in this speech opening: 'When was the last time you had a McDonald's, or a Domino's, or any other fast food? Pretty recently, right? Good morning everyone. Today I'll be talking about the significance and rise of fast food in our daily lives, and whether it should be banned or not.' Another effective opening statement was: 'It is widely believed that food industry giants such as McDonald's and KFC are playing with our precious lives in order to create just as precious profits.'

In stronger responses, arguments developed in a structured way, signposting to the reader the direction of the argument by employing effective transitions such as 'Another option to consider' and 'On the other hand'. They often introduced each new paragraph with a clear topic sentence, for example: 'Additionally, fast food is cost effective and provided a good "bang for your buck".' Many candidates referenced the World Health Organisation in their opening address and provided startling statistics, such as: 'Billions of people around the world are victims of obesity' and '80% of the working population consumes fast food on a daily basis.'

Highly emotive language and scenarios were sometimes employed in stronger responses; phrases such as 'suspicious and shady ingredients' were employed to reinforce the argument for a ban. Other factors were used to address the harm to the environment because of the huge surge in the consumption of fast food in the western world. The 'lowering of biodiversity' was referenced in one response together with 'the harmful and obsessive use of packaging.' Strong, engaging responses reflected passion and concern, notably for the health of individuals later in life. Arguments against a ban focused on the mass unemployment if an all-out ban was to come into effect in the real world. Well balanced responses communicated the economic impact on restaurants together with the freedom of the consumer being restricted to choose what and how they consume food.

In many stronger responses, candidates provided a personal point of view at the close. One candidate summarised the debate by accepting that fast food is 'a life jacket and can provide instant ecstasy; but education is key to minimising health risks.'

In contrast, weaker responses tended to focus only on either the 'good' or 'bad' aspects of fast food. Ideas were not developed well with relevant examples. The over-use of the rhetorical question was more distracting than useful, for example one candidate wrote: 'Do you think you should eat fast food? Is it healthy? Why is it so popular?' Such candidates sometimes used several exclamation marks or excessive capitalisation when trying to stress a point. Their arguments were underdeveloped, with some vague points, insufficient evidence, and no consideration of opinions. They failed to use persuasive language and rhetorical devices effectively, resulting in a lack of engagement and interest. Their conclusions were weak, with no recap of main points, unclear positions, and abrupt endings without thought-provoking statements or calls to action.

Other weaker responses were impeded by frequent errors, which meant that the writing was not always clear. For example, one candidate wrote: 'There are many people who prefer fast food only because they are very tasty and can be really mouthwatering most of the time. There is not much advantage of fast food in my prespective only thing I can think about the taste students.'

### Question 3 – Descriptive piece

**Write a descriptive piece about the night sky. In your writing, focus on light, colour and movement to help your reader imagine the scene. Write between 600 and 900 words.**

The requirement to focus on light, colour and movement was carefully noted by most candidates. Most candidates focused on the oncoming darkness of the night, the night itself – including the stars, moon, planets and clouds – and descriptions of the aurora borealis featured in some. Nearly all responses were appropriately descriptive, though some were short, giving the feeling the candidate had run out of things to write about.

Stronger responses were well structured, many starting with the sun setting and working through till dawn. There was evidence of wide-ranging lexis used precisely and imaginatively, as in this example: The fiery sky mellowed down to a golden light before darkness overtook it. It came in swooping and sweeping over the valley, leaving behind nothing but stygian tenebrosity in its wake.

Stronger responses were creative, with imaginative and effective use of language. For example, the night sky 'provided hope in a pool of misery' for one star gazer. Stars featured large in all responses, e.g. 'shiny like gemstones' with the sky showing 'a brilliant array of stars and planets.' One candidate imagined the scene as 'some abstract painting as if some celestial artist ran his brush from one end of infinity to the other.' More confident candidates managed the technique of personification well, for example: 'clouds of gas fused to give birth to millions of new stars'

In stronger responses, candidates created a convincing tone, with use of effective language, for example in this response: 'Winters in Norway saw the sky always dark, a deep black the colour of squid ink. Tonight the sky was different: the sky was filled with a million bright stars – each one a speck of sand in the vast sea of darkness. Red and green streaks cause the stars to twinkle and the sky to blush with joy. The green ribbon stretches over a vast distance, moving as smoothly and meticulously as a ballerina.'

Weaker responses often showed a lack of structure and cohesion, describing a seemingly random selection of different elements of the night sky. Responses sometimes showed a good range of vocabulary but this was used imprecisely and there was a lack of sentence control. Some candidates tried hard to create imaginative effects by the use of figurative language, but this was sometimes not fully clear and was therefore unconvincing, as in this example: It was only when Nyx had finished her walk – three quarters into the endless ocean of verdant green when the orchestra of movement, howling, padding and dancing stuttered to their ends.'

Other weaker responses lacked control in terms of sentence construction, with frequent sentence fragments and comma splice errors throughout, such as in this example: 'There I layed on the rooftop, I was living on the edge quite litially. I was facing the ocean. The cool breeze hitting my face. The surface layer of my skin erupted with goosbumps, I could feel shivers going down my spine.'

### Question 4 – Review

**You recently took part in a national competition. You decide to write a review of the competition, which will be published in your school magazine. Write between 600 and 900 words.**

Candidates offered a good range of competitions in the response to this question, ranging from sport, cookery and motorsport to more unusual competitions such as a painting competition in Japan, robotics, frisbee and Rubik's cube. They nearly all organised their text in paragraphs and commented on various aspects of the event, such as the venue, management, recreational facilities, catering and accommodation. Candidates were generally good at adjusting their register and tone appropriately for an audience of a school magazine; the degree of informality varied, only occasionally to an excessive degree that inhibited ambition and variety of expression. Candidates focussed on different aspects of the competition, such as qualification, facilities, food provision and presentations.

Stronger reviews opened effectively, engaging the audience from the outset, as in this example: 'Dance, as an art form, has always been integral both to me and our school. The informality of the next two sentences contrasted in a way which successfully reminded the reader that it was intended for an audience of peers: 'This is a big deal, peeps! Let me tell you about their technology: top-notch, I tell you! The 360 degree sound system made me feel as if the beats carried me seamlessly through my routine.'

Other engaging reviews focused on the importance of the competition in terms of personal journey. Comments such as 'a great way to test my skills, whilst meeting new people' provided a personal touch. One candidate described the experience at the National Sports Cup competition as giving him a 'roaring energy' to continue with the sport.

A simple yet effective choice, and appropriate for a review for a school magazine audience, was to structure the response with subheadings, which avoided the repetitive structure of 'Next, we... and then we...'. One example of incorporating simple subheadings included the following: 'How to apply; Transportation and costs; Food Arrangements and Stalls; Recommendation.' Within each section, the candidate was able to provide selected, concise commentary with their own point of view.

In weaker responses, candidates had approached this question by treating it as step-by-step log of the activities instead of as a review of the experience of the competition. In many less engaging responses, candidates spent too long explaining the accommodation, food, and layout of the venue, overlooking more relevant details of the requirements of the competition. They logged their activities in a chronological fashion, taking the audience through a tedious account of the day and friends they had made. Others forgot to clearly address the audience. Some responses needed more in the way of development of ideas, were occasionally written without paragraph breaks, and fell short of the minimum requirement of 600 words.

# ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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| <p><b>Paper 9093/32</b><br/><b>Language Analysis</b></p> |
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## Key messages

Paper 32 of syllabus 9093 presents candidates with two compulsory questions: **Question 1** in **Section A** (Language change) and **Question 2** in **Section B** (Child language acquisition).

In each section of the examination paper, candidates need to evidence their analytical findings with a thorough selection of data from the stimulus material. Ideas should be supported by references to candidates' wider study of the language topic contained in each section.

## General comments

In the March 2025 session, candidates engaged well with the stimulus material to an extent. There was evidence of measured examination technique in that responses tended to be equally sustained between **Section A** and **Section B**.

The level of detailing seen in **Question 1** was generally lower than that presented in response to **Question 2**. At times, analysis in **Question 1** was only at surface level, with some candidates relying on discussion of sociological factors which brought about language change to sustain their response. Such discussion may have been better placed in response to questions on 9093 Paper 4.

Overall, responses were organised clearly into logical sequences of paragraphs, and content was mostly relevant. Control and clarity of expression were usually clear, with some effective development of ideas.

## Comments on specific questions

### **Section A**

#### **Question 1**

The question required candidates to refer to Texts A, B and C in their analysis of how these texts exemplified the various ways in which the English language has changed over time. Text A presented a diary entry about the text originator's visit to Ambergau in the Austrian state of Tyrol. This had been published in the book *Notes of a Wanderer* in 1839. Text B was a word table which presented the top five collocates of the verb phrase *repair to*, taken from the Early English Books Online Corpus (1470s–1690s) and the English Web Corpus (2020). Text C was an *n*-gram graph for the words *unleashed* and *unloosed* (1820–2000). Candidates were further required to support their analysis with ideas and examples from their wider study of *Language change*.

Assessment Objectives 2 (Writing – 5 marks), 4 (Conceptualisation – 5 marks) and 5 (Data handling – 15 marks) were applied.

Overall, responses to **Question 1** demonstrated some clear engagement with the stimulus material, resulting in generally clearly developed analysis. However, candidates should be reminded that it is Assessment Objective 5 which is most heavily weighted in **Question 1** and not Assessment Objective 4; therefore, the depth of analysis should be the main focus of their response.

## Writing – Assessment Objective 2

In March 2025 there was more overall cohesion in the analysis of the three texts than had been seen in previous sessions. There remained, however, fewer attempts to make deeper analysis of Texts B and C.

In terms of control of expression, most candidates maintained an appropriate tone throughout their response. Although colloquialisms were not generally seen, technical terminology was not always used fluently or accurately, with data selections frequently being described using generalised terms. Discourse markers were used appropriately to separate or develop ideas, and paragraphing therefore tended to flow in organised sequences.

Generally, there was some attempt to focus the analysis through a limited number of linguistic frameworks such as graphology, orthography, lexis, grammar, syntax or etymology. This approach led to presentation of a linguistic standpoint to an extent. However, there was confusion at times as to the meaning of labels for linguistic frameworks, usually between graphology and orthography.

As in previous sessions, historical detail was presented in some introductions. Candidates are reminded that a long introduction is not necessary in an analytical essay and can lead to part of the response being irrelevant material. Stronger responses demonstrated immediate focus on the texts provided, demonstrating a more effective engagement with the requirement of the question.

## Conceptualisation – Assessment Objective 4

Most responses identified Text A as Late Modern English given the date of publication (1839), with a good deal of discussion concerning the standardisation of spelling and the influences of Lowth or Johnson. In these responses referencing was secure, as was that to the industrial revolution and some sociological discussion of how international travel had become more widespread by 1839.

However, where Jespersen's notion of the Great Vowel Shift or the evolution of printing technology (citing Caxton) was used to support the analysis, there was some implausibility between the referencing and the context of Text A. More relevant was support citing the more recent theories of Crystal (technological development), Halliday (lexical gap), Goodman (informalisation), Aitchison (Progress or Decay) or Romaine (sociological influence on language change).

A number of responses attempted to reference de Saussure. However, as in March 2024, limited understanding was demonstrated of the complexities of the semiological system, with relevance remaining largely unexplained.

More appropriately, the concept of broadening was generally relevantly and accurately explored in consideration of Text B.

## Data Handling – Assessment Objective 5

Lexical analyses revealed a number of common errors, the most frequent of which classed the term *lads* as obsolete. In fact, this term is very widely used as a mild colloquialism or even a term of endearment when describing a young male. Candidates are reminded that if a particular lexical item seen in the stimulus is not part of their own day-to-day lexicon, it does not mean that the item is obsolete or even archaic. A further error which was seen frequently concerned the term *coy*. Even though the definition was provided in the Notes section at the base of Text A, in one response *coy* was defined as meaning 'sly or cunning' indicating that close reading had not been carried out prior to writing the response. There was also some confusion in discussion of the name of the Roman historian Sallust, again described in the Notes section at the base of Text A, in that it had been described as a German word which had become obsolete. Candidates are further reminded to make a thorough reading of the whole of the data presented as stimulus material.

Nonetheless, there was clear engagement with the terms *rude*, *spheroidal* and *quitting*, with some relevant explanations of how they had undergone pragmatic or semantic shift over time. Misunderstanding of the term *frigid* was demonstrated in responses which reported narrowing into the contemporary term 'rigid' which was a further error. Also less well explained were the contents of Texts B and C. Text B's *repair to* was understood to have narrowed to the extent of only meaning mending or fixing something which was broken, with the application of *repair to* as seen in the first column of the word table now being obsolete. That application is not obsolete although it is a low frequency term perhaps used in a register of a higher level of formality.

Interpretation of the form of the *n*-gram graph in Text C was clear in all responses. The term *unloosed* itself presented some difficulty in that it is a heterological word in which morphological analysis reveals its opposite semantic meaning. Some effective responses demonstrated a detailed attempt to demonstrate how, morphologically, the expected meaning of *unloosed* would indicate tightening rather than release, with commentary outlining the somewhat literary or imaginative nature of the language used by the text originator.

To an extent, development of ideas concerning the text originator's stylistic choices was plausible, including the phrase, '*round as the shield of my fathers*,' (from Ossian's 'Address to the Sun' and which was not expected to be known by candidates), *the fountains of heaven*, and *the fury of the elements*. At times, such discussion took more of a literary than a linguistic standpoint. However, this was usually regained in consideration of contemporary presentation of dates (from Text A's *the 2d*), compounding of *down stairs* and some syntactical analysis of phrases including *The children are three in number*.

## Section B

### Question 2

**Question 2** required candidates to analyse a transcription of a conversation between Fabian (age 4 years), his sister Effie (age 8 years) and their grandmother, whom they call 'Granny'. The conversation had taken place after the child interlocutors had just arrived home from school.

Analytical responses needed to demonstrate ways in which Effie, Fabian and their grandmother were using language during their conversation. As well as references to specific details from the transcription, candidates were required to supply ideas and examples from their wider study of *Child language acquisition*.

Assessment Objectives 1 (Understanding – 5 marks), 4 (Conceptualisation – 15 marks) and 5 (Data handling – 5 marks) were applied.

#### Understanding – Assessment Objective 1

All candidates demonstrated a clear understanding of the conventions of conversation analysis transcription. In March 2025, there was less evidence than in previous sessions that candidates had relied on the transcription key to aid feature-spotting. Indeed, the interactive nature of the conversation had highlighted a wide range of characteristic features, many of which were identified in candidate responses. In most responses, there was evidence of understanding of how and why such characteristic features were present according to age, stages of acquisition and levels of caretaking responsibility.

Characteristic features most frequently described, usually using linguistic terminology, included turn taking with some overlap, incomplete acquisition of pluralisation as in *TWO CUPPA TEAS*, repetition for emphasis as in *all all all*, emerging phonological competence with substitution or deletion in */frəʊ/* and */gænz/*, inconsistent tense marking as in *maked*, fulfilled adjacency pairs in the older child interlocutor, pitch variation in interrogatives, volume control for emphasis, pronoun use, negation and some stressed syllables.

Understanding was clear where responses included evidence from the transcription which was pertinent to the point being raised.

#### Conceptualisation – Assessment Objective 4

Most responses provided accurate indication that Fabian, at age 4, could be placed firmly in the post-telegraphic stage of acquisition. A number of responses also placed Effie at the same stage although there was considerable evidence in the transcription (including her polysyllabic terms such as *microwave* which indicated full phonological competence) to show that she had entered a stage of continuing development. Although examples of differentiation between the child interlocutors were not always exemplified in responses, those which referenced Piaget usually indicated correctly that Fabian's egotistical nature could evidence the preoperational stage whereas Effie's powers of reasoning in *fabians wont be empty granny* (.) *he never eats his lunch* could indicate the concrete operational stage. Some responses, although correct in terms of explanation of Piagetian stages, were hampered by labelling errors.

The grandmother was seen as a Language Acquisition Support System as according to Bruner, or Vygotsky's More Knowledgeable Other, even though examples of her scaffolding technique were difficult to find. However, there were some effective comments as to how the transcription evidenced Effie as the More Knowledgeable Other in this case, as she explained the household routine to her grandmother in *its cos hes allowed to have the small ball inside but only to roll it and not to throw it*. More plausible in terms of analysis

of the grandmother's utterances were references to Skinner, including her multiple uses of negative reinforcement, for example in *better* (.) *but not perfect*.

Although there was infrequent clear understanding of Chomsky's notion of the Language Acquisition Device, most candidates had selected Fabian's *made* to illustrate the child's absorption of morphological rules to construct the past tense. Similarly, Fabian's instinctive pluralisation in *two cuppa teas* was discussed in terms of virtuous error. Where there was discussion of the asymmetry of Fabian's comprehension and production, some responses included relevant reference to the Berko and Brown Wug Test.

A number of Hallidayan functions were evidenced in the transcription. These were seen for example in *i want* (Instrumental), *i like* (Personal), *one was for him* (Representational) and *i make up the names* (Imaginative). At times, there was confusion in the labelling of functions, which were also described as 'stages' in some weaker responses.

Overall, a limited number of theoretical references were made in each response although these tended to be explained well and were mostly relevant. Whereas it is better to adopt this approach rather than providing a number of briefly mentioned names of theorists without explanation of their relevance, candidates are reminded of the weighting of Assessment Objective 4 in **Question 2**, as 15 of the 25 marks are available under that AO – therefore, to maximise the potential of a response, more thorough detailing of conceptualisation could be useful.

### Data Handling – Assessment Objective 5

A number of responses had attempted phonological analysis of Fabian's utterances with some detailing but also with some inaccurate labelling of individual phonemes, for example where the rhotic /r/ was described as a fricative. Nonetheless, it was clear that candidates had engaged with the child's phonological competencies more deeply than had been seen in previous sessions.

A common inaccuracy was evident in responses which had selected Effie's *i do it in the microwave*. Instead of commenting on her fluency with polysyllabic terms, there were many descriptions of a perceived virtuous error in her use of *do* rather than 'make'. This was not a virtuous error, rather an example of relaxed register appropriate to the domestic situation. It may have been more fruitful to analyse and exemplify Effie's wide range of linguistic competencies instead of searching for 'mistakes' which were not present.

Most responses analysed the utterances of each interlocutor in turn, beginning with the grandmother and then each of the children separately. A different approach may have been to identify a particular characteristic feature, for example negation or pluralisation and to compare or contrast the ways in which each of the child interlocutors demonstrated their competencies and performances. In using this alternate approach, responses might present their analytical findings more markedly from a linguistic standpoint because Understanding (AO1) and Data handling (AO5) would interweave more tightly together. A number of responses presented a modest selection of examples from the transcription, which meant that at times identification of characteristic features was not evidenced.

# ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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| <p>Paper 9093/42<br/>Language Topics</p> |
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## Key messages

Paper 42 presents candidates with the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of two language topics – *English in the world* and *Language and the self*. Unlike Paper 32, there is no analysis required of the language content of the stimulus material – it is the ideas that the texts contain that should be discussed in detail. Therefore, two compulsory questions (**Question 1** in **Section A** and **Question 2** in **Section B**) require responses in discursive essay form. Each question carries 25 marks, meaning that there are 50 marks available in total. Ideas need to be supported by a careful selection of evidence from the stimulus material, together with relevant reference to linguistic issues, concepts, methods and approaches. Responses are required to be sustained, logically sequenced and cohesive. Focus on the language topics and relevant question frame should be maintained throughout.

In the March 2025 session, there was a tendency for candidates to provide a long response to **Question 1** and a shorter response to **Question 2**, indicating that less time had been spent on **Question 2**. Often, responses were generalised with limited reference to the stimulus texts and some irrelevant material presented as evidence of wider study of the two language topics under consideration. Candidates are reminded that secure examination technique in terms of dividing the available time equally between both sections of the question paper may assist them to maximise their potential. They are further reminded that Assessment Objectives 1 and 4 are weighted equally at 10 marks each per question, therefore it is important to retain focus on the stimulus material and the question frame and cite only theoretical references which are relevant to the specific discussion.

## General comments

In March 2025, the broader language topics themselves were discussed with some clarity. However, as there was a tendency to supply insufficient evidence from the stimulus material, even where responses made clear to effective reference to the wider study of the language topics, some essays lacked cohesion. Thus, a number of responses could have been improved by making a greater selection of detail from the stimulus material.

Some very lengthy work was seen which evidenced loss of control in the writing. Candidates are reminded that Assessment Objective 2 requires not only accurate spelling, punctuation, grammar and paragraphing but also covers the extent of development of ideas and whether ideas bear relevance to the focus of the stimulus material and the specific focus of the question frame.

## Comments on specific questions

### **Section A**

#### **Question 1**

The stimulus material for **Question 1** was an extract from an article titled *ChatGPT Is Cutting Non-English Languages Out of the AI Revolution* which had been published on the American website *Wired* in 2023. Candidates were asked to discuss what they felt were the most important issues raised in the text relating to the causes and effects of the expansion of English around the world. Specific details from the text were required as well as ideas and examples from their wider study of English in the world.

### **Assessment Objective 1 – Understanding**

Specific details from the stimulus material included the presented evidence that chatbots are *less fluent in languages other than English*, the ways in which the text originator's statement that chatbots are *threatening to amplify existing bias in global commerce and innovation* might take effect, whether or not technology does in fact assist us in being able to *bridge language barriers*, whether chatbots could indeed *further a spiral of imposition and influence of English* resulting in the issue that Americans are not *incentivized to learn another language*, and how chatbots could *kill diversity or innovation*, including Fung's suggestion that *Non-English speakers tend to be punished professionally*, perhaps specifically in scientific fields.

Most responses demonstrated a clear understanding of at least some of the specific points raised, where they had been selected for discussion. There was some development made in consideration of how multilingualism may become less widespread throughout the world because of the influence of technological developments, and whether languages using different writing systems may need to adopt the Latin alphabet in favour of their own form of script as chatbots continue the expansion of English.

Although the content of the stimulus material had been engaging and had contained a wide range of points on issues which were particularly meaningful to a contemporary audience, a limited number of responses offered ideas on the phenomenon of artificial intelligence and its inability to translate from non-Latin scripts. Those which did explore this idea, referenced DeepSeek as an alternative to ChatGPT at times.

Overall, fewer specific details from the stimulus material were seen compared to responses from previous sessions. Moreover, there was some loss of focus on the question frame, which was specific to *the causes and effects of the expansion of English around the world*.

### **Assessment Objective 2 – Writing**

In March 2025, responses to **Question 1** tended to be sustained or lengthy, even where the essay did not fully address the stimulus material or the question frame. A number of responses began with a long introduction which provided information of the history of the English language from its beginnings, including details on standardisation, colonisation, its reputation as a global lingua franca and statistics on the approximate number of speakers worldwide. At times, such introductions formed as much as a third of the overall response and often comprised material which was not made relevant. Candidates are reminded that a more fruitful approach to beginning writing is to address the stimulus material and to establish the context of the main body of the essay.

In general, responses were crafted into logical and fluent sequences of paragraphs. Effective control was seen where points raised were evidenced by succinct and pertinent selections from the stimulus material and supported by relevant theoretical examples. Most responses, however, drew only limited examples for discussion, focusing instead on the broader topic of English in the world and presentations of knowledge and understanding gained from wider study – at times with some repetition.

Overall, however, tone and register were maintained in clear to effective responses. In such responses, a linguistic standpoint was evidenced by use of technical terminology.

### **Assessment Objective 4 – Conceptualisation**

Responses referenced a wide range of linguistic issues, methods, models and approaches. These included generalised discussion of colonialism and language death or more specifically Phillipson's notion of linguistic imperialism, Crystal's ideas on language and power, English as a 'killer language' (sometimes ascribed to Pakir) and Diamond's metaphor of English as a steamroller.

Kachru's concentric circle model was frequently cited although weaker responses provided too much detail on this one particular model instead of applying it directly to ideas on causes and effects of the expansion of English. Other conceptual referencing which was relevant to the decline of multilingualism as an effect of technological development was made to the Rose and Galloway Channels of English model and MacArthur's Wheel.

In discussions on emergence and establishment of hybridisation resulting from *imposition* of English, Jenkins' work on Chinglish or the Singaporean government's policies on Singlish were plausible inclusions. Other relevant and appropriate models and approaches included those of Labov's substrate and superstrate, often used to strengthen discussion on Schneider's Dynamic model.

## Section B

### Question 2

The stimulus material for **Question 2** was an extract from a personal essay titled *Generation Amazing!!! How We're Draining Language of Its Power* which had been published in 2022 on *Literary Hub*, an American website. Candidates were required to discuss what they felt were the most important issues raised in the text relating to the ways in which *language can shape and reflect how individuals think about themselves and others*. They were further required to refer to specific details from the text as well as to ideas and examples from their wider study of Language and the self.

#### Assessment Objective 1 – Understanding

A range of points relevant to the question frame was presented in the stimulus material. These included how *words meant to convey a certain level of magnitude ... no longer carry their original weight* due to the concept described by the text originator as semantic bleaching and notion of how *stale language is both a symptom and cause of the deterioration of critical thought*. This quote enabled, as illustrated in the text provided, development of how the use of *tired language* might give the impression of a speaker *turning himself into a machine*.

Most responses included Martin Hilpert's statement: *Words with evaluative meanings lose potency as speakers apply them to more and more situations* with the point being developed with examples of other lexical items which were once used to indicate an extreme, such as 'awesome', now being used in commonplace contexts.

Weaker responses tended to lose focus on the requirements of the question, concentrating instead on the wider issue of the influence of popular media on contemporary lexicon. In general, there was limited reference to key points raised in the text in connection with the way language affects thought, in particular how we think about ourselves and other people, which was the main focus of the question.

#### Assessment Objective 2 – Writing

In March 2025, responses to **Question 2** were not always as sustained as those to **Question 1**. Overall, therefore, development of ideas was limited and was usually rooted in discussion of the broader language topic rather than retaining specific focus. A response of this type does not generally maximise potential in relation to Assessment Objective 2 where content of the essay is not made fully relevant.

A number of responses opened with a generalised discussion on how language is related to the establishment and development of the self in terms of idiolect or sociolect. As in **Question 1**, candidates are reminded that introductions are clear or effective where there is immediate focus on the stimulus material, thereby grounding the context for the main body of the essay.

A linguistic standpoint was maintained in those responses which demonstrated fluency in technical terminology. However, even where descriptors were more generalised, an appropriate register, logically organised paragraphs and accuracy of expression were seen in most responses.

#### Assessment Objective 4 - Conceptualisation

Many responses attributed the evolution of *semantic bleaching* to the widespread use of social media, cinema, television or more generally to technological development. Goodman or Crystal were frequently cited in discussions of the concept of informalisation. The concept of slang was also explored in relation to use of *over-the-top words* which was mostly plausible.

More appropriate were references to Goffman's notion of face, particularly positive face, in assessing how and why we need to use *particularly emotive* words to express ourselves. Also included in such discussions were ideas on avoidance of face threatening acts and developed reference to the concept of politeness according to Brown and Levinson.

A further appropriate model used to support ideas was the Communication Accommodation Theory of Giles, despite its frequent mislabelling. Nonetheless, as discussion of how and why the *scheduler* had been made to feel *grateful* developed, there was relevance to CAT in terms of convergence.

Other conceptual references included citation of Tajfel and Social Identity or Milroy and Milroy on Social Network. In both these cases, however, the approaches were not well-defined and the theoretical aspects were offered only at surface level. This was similar to the way in which the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis was introduced with a limited understanding of linguistic determinism or relativity being demonstrated even though with this latter citation it was directly relevant to the concept of language and thought.

Although not regularly ascribed to Pinker, his Euphemism Treadmill and the concept of political correctness were frequently discussed in relation to pragmatic shifts of lexis which previously held *magnitude*. This inclusion was largely plausible although it tended to digress to examples of contemporary euphemism, leading to some loss of focus. Similarly, although the issue of genderlect did not appear in the stimulus material, many responses provided accounts of the notions of Tannen, Cameron or Lakoff in relation to female speech patterns. Interestingly, although the veterinarian's scheduler was described as a *person* by the text originator, and the caregiver of *Matthew and David* and their companion only as *parents*, there was a strong tendency in responses to assume that these interlocutors had been female. Reasons for this assumption were not provided, however.

Overall, in March 2025, responses to **Question 2** could have been improved with a more streamlined focus on the question frame, more frequent inclusions of evidence from the text and more complete referencing to linguistic concepts, models and approaches which were those relevant to the ideas presented in the stimulus material.