



**Cambridge Assessment  
International Education**

Example Candidate Responses – Paper 3

**Cambridge International AS & A Level  
English Language 9093**

For examination from 2024



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## Introduction

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The main aim of this booklet is to exemplify standards for those teaching Cambridge International AS & A Level English Language, and to show how different levels of candidates' performance (high, middle and low) relate to the syllabus requirements. This document helps teachers to assess the standards required to achieve marks beyond the guidance of the mark scheme.

In this booklet, candidate responses have been chosen from the June 2024 exam series to exemplify a range of answers.

For each question, the response is annotated with examiner comments about where and why marks were awarded or omitted. This is followed by comments on how the answer could be improved. There is also a list of common mistakes and guidance for candidates for each question.

Please refer to the June 2024 Examiner Report for further details and guidance.

The questions and mark schemes are available on the [School Support Hub](#)

**9093 June 2024 Question Paper 31**

**9093 June 2024 Mark Scheme 31**

Past exam resources and other teaching and learning resources are available on the [School Support Hub](#)

## How to use this booklet

This booklet goes through the paper one question at a time, showing you the high-, middle- and low level response for each question. In the left-hand column are the candidate responses, and in the right-hand column are the examiner comments.

Example Candidate Response – high	Examiner comments
<p>The text given is an extract containing evidence and interrogations, concerning a court case in 1793. Being that this was after the publication of Samuel Johnson's dictionary in 1755, which profusely helped to standardize the English language, there are some inconsistencies present. For example, in the clause '...and gave them me.', the connective 'to' is missing, a feature unrecognizable in modern-day English. Elsewhere, we see 'examined from some little time', here <del>of</del> the <sup>conjunction</sup> 'for' is missing.</p>	<p>1 The candidate makes an accurate reference to Johnson's dictionary and, briefly, to standardisation to introduce 'inconsistencies' which had been identified.</p>
<p><b>Responses</b> are written by real candidates in exam conditions, demonstrating the types of answers for each level. These could be used to discuss and analyse the answers with learners in the classroom to improve their skills.</p>	<p><b>Examiner comments</b> explain where and why marks were awarded. These help to interpret the standard of Cambridge exams to help learners refine their exam technique.</p>

## How the candidate could improve their answer

- The response was sustained and written using low-frequency lexis and mostly accurate linguistic terminology. However, most of the response focussed on linguistic concepts and theoretical approaches rather than on the data in the stimulus material. This meant that although the candidate's expression was sophisticated at times, the response overall was discursive rather than analytical. The answer could have been improved with a wider selection of data for analysis.

This section explains how the candidate could improve each response. It helps learners to improve their exam technique.

## Common mistakes and guidance for candidates

- Such attempts as made by this candidate to translate items from an early text into contemporary English can take up a considerable amount of time and are not necessary. Misinterpretations are often made when this approach is taken. Candidates are advised to take a more analytical approach to a wider range of the data presented in the stimulus material.
- Where a candidate describes the texts in generalised or technical terminology inaccurately, this detracts from the minimised or not present.

This section lists common mistakes as well as helpful guidance from the examiner. This will help your learners to avoid these mistakes. You can use this alongside the relevant Examiner Report to guide your learners.

## Question 1

## Example Candidate Response – high

## Examiner comments

The text given is an extract containing evidence and interrogations, concerning a court case in 1793. Being that this was after the publication of Samuel Johnson's dictionary in 1755, which profoundly helped to standardize the English language, there are some inconsistencies present. <sup>1</sup> For example, in the clause '...and go = them me.', the connective 'to' is missing, a feature unrecognizable in modern-day English. Elsewhere, we see 'eliminated from some little time', here ~~or~~ the <sup>conjunction</sup> 'for' is missing. Moreover, we see some archaic lexicon and constructions. Archaives are lexical units that are no longer in use and have been replaced in contemporary English. For instance, 'She made a motion to come into the shop', sounds archaic today, and instead, where ~~to~~ 'motion' would not be expected to be used in this manner. What is more, the reference 'linen draper' would be replaced by sales person or in <sup>2</sup> contemporary society.

These irregularities can be explained by Michael Halliday's Functional Theory. Halliday posits that language change ~~occurs as a result of~~ is closely intertwined with social practices and cultural norms, which can drastically influence language patterns over time. The 'norm' here ~~is~~ could have been the fact that people did not concern themselves with accuracy, so long as they ~~speech~~ were understood. <sup>3</sup>

In terms of grammar, the text seems to have no paragraph breaks. Paragraphing is

<sup>1</sup> The candidate makes an accurate reference to Johnson's dictionary and, briefly, to standardisation to introduce 'inconsistencies' which had been identified.

<sup>2</sup> The 'inconsistencies' are not entirely plausible and the candidate makes an error in finding a contemporary equivalent of 'linen draper'. However, they deliver their argument clearly and in a developed manner.

<sup>3</sup> The reference to Halliday is correct and the explanation is tied to the point in the preceding paragraph.

## Example Candidate Response – high, continued

## Examiner comments

a prominent feature in modern-day text and would have been expected between lines 16 and 17 to indicate the shift between the reasons for William Rota being suspicious and ~~his~~ <sup>his</sup> meeting the 'young men' that <sup>made</sup> him aware of his ~~goals~~ <sup>goals</sup> being stolen. <sup>4</sup>

Elsewhere, we would have seen a paragraph break right before the <sup>interesting</sup> dialogue. Moreover, the text ~~seems~~ <sup>is</sup> written using long sentences with clauses being separated by commas and semi-colons & ('I suspected her...'). This would <sup>5</sup> not be seen today, where brevity <sup>is</sup> and efficiency are prevalent. <sup>although it could have been due to it being a conversation</sup> The contrast between dense, verbose prose and today's clippy sentences with many full stops and paragraphing can be explained by prominent linguist, David Crystal. Crystal argues that technology is the largest driving force of language change. With new technologies emerging, people have become accustomed to instantaneous ~~instant~~ information delivery mediums. Therefore, we have lost our fondness for extracting meaning from decipherable text.

In text A, we see 'figure' being used to in the same sense as 'pattern'. From the <sup>6</sup> collocation table in text B, we see pattern being used alongside words ~~as~~ ('similar' and 'different', (so as to describe the different patterns) which is ~~in the same sense~~ relative to its usage in text A. However, text B 'figure' seems to be used alongside words such as 'cooling and central to reference a person of authority. This shift in semantics can be explained by

<sup>4</sup> The candidate's expectation of paragraphing in Text A indicates a misunderstanding of the form of the text.

<sup>5</sup> The candidate's commentary on sentence length supplies brief evidence from the text and is supported by Crystal's notions of language change, with particular reference to technology. The explanation of Crystal is much more involved than the explanation of the sentences in Text A, however.

<sup>6</sup> Although a full quote from Text A is not given, the candidate creates cohesion between Texts A and B in their comments on 'figure' and 'pattern'.

## Example Candidate Response – high, continued

## Examiner comments

Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic system theory. Saussure posits that words have an essentially symbolic, with two parts – the signifier, which in this case is the denotative meaning of 'figure', and the signified, the connotative meaning we see abruptly shift from 1793 to the 19th century (late ~~Early~~ Modern English Period). This semantic shift can be regarded as lexical amelioration, whereby 'figure' went from connoting a shape or pattern <sup>connotative terms</sup> to a figure of importance.

From text C, ~~the~~ & we see the <sup>non-</sup>hyphenated ('Oxford-street') and ~~non~~-hyphenated one with the long 'f.' The graph shows that they both started out being relatively <sup>comparable</sup> similar in usage frequency, but later diverged, with the hyphenated version plummeting, and the non-~~to~~ alternative proliferating in usage. Research has shown that hyphenated words were ~~prevalent~~ in commonplace in the 1800s, before which they ~~were~~ were written with spaces in between, and after which ~~it~~ (in the 1920s), they became written solidly. However, this does not seem to be in line with this trend as we see it written they way it <sup>8</sup> would have been in 1800s, interestingly enough. Similarly, text A showcases the hyphenated version, as it ~~was~~ was a period close to the 1800s. Though it was written ~~in~~ ~~at~~ 1793, where the spaced version would be expected. These random and unsystematic changes can be explained by Hockett's Random Handwritten Theory. Hockett argues that language change occurs as

7 The candidate applies a theoretical reference from de Saussure with some precision to their argument on semantic shift. The process of amelioration would be more accurately described as broadening, however. There is no further discussion of any elements of Text B.

8 The response moves to consideration of Text C and explores the use of hyphenation plus the appearance of the Long S in Texts A and C. Development is mostly effective, although it is weakened by the generalised comment, 'Research has shown...'.  
 8



## Example Candidate Response – high, continued

## Examiner comments

a result of random factors, such as changing sounds in neighbouring countries, or in this case it could have been the fact that the Caxton printing press that was established in 1476 was rather, unadvanced and its editors had poor proofreading abilities. Therefore, Hockett concluded that language change is a 'by-product' of the inherently unpredictable nature of communication between humans.

In terms of graphology, we see some anomalies that would have been inconceivable today. For example, the curly 't' and the long 'j's. ~~The long j particularly~~ it is speculated that these were utilized as a way of improving readability, though, they were rendered obsolete around the 19th century. ~~As the~~ "What is more, the long j, for brevity, is thought to have been a product of ~~borrowing~~ borrowing from the Greek. The Greeks used the <sup>classical</sup> sigma symbol in different ways depending on its position in a lexical unit; here it is used in medial positions. The reason for this borrowing being so in early times the Greek and Latin were only used by the educated elite and the clergy. Hartl and Clark's cultural transmission theory states that humans adopt a linguistic innovation when they see a benefit in doing so. The 'benefit' here that borrowing and accommodating to Greek and Latin would result in one being associated with wealth, social influence and higher statuses. ~~that was a too rigid barrier in 1748.~~

9 The candidate provides another complete and plausible conceptual reference to Hockett and random fluctuation. This section of the response also introduces Caxton to develop the argument.

10 With some loss of tone, the candidate discusses archaic graphemes ('the curly t'). They take the opportunity to discuss borrowing from classical Greek and Latin. This discussion develops with reference to cultural transmission according to Hartl and Clark.

11 Despite effective expression and detailed reference to the candidate's wider study of language change, there is only minimal inclusion of commentary on the stimulus material.

**Total mark awarded =  
17 out of 25**

## How the candidate could improve their answer

- The response was sustained and written using low-frequency lexis and mostly accurate linguistic terminology. However, most of the response focussed on linguistic concepts and theoretical approaches rather than on the data in the stimulus material. This meant that although the candidate's expression was sophisticated at times, the response overall was discursive rather than analytical. The answer could have been improved with a wider selection of data for analysis.
- Although cohesion was attempted by examining limited data from Text A alongside Text B, and then Text A alongside Text C, comments were brief and used to demonstrate the candidate's knowledge and understanding of linguistic theory. In Question 1, AO5 is weighted at 15 marks out of 25, therefore, demonstration of analytical skills in data handling are extremely important.
- Although the response was written with fluency, there was some loss of tone towards the end of the analysis. The response would have been improved by a consistent register. Further improvement would have been made with fewer inconsistencies in applying technical terminology and had all conceptual references remained accurate and precise.

## Example Candidate Response – middle

## Examiner comments

In text A an extract from a criminal court case in 1793, there are various examples in which the English language has changed overtime.

Since the court case takes place in 1793, it ~~was~~ is apparent that ~~the~~ the era it is in is Early Modern English. Additionally, the concept that it is a court case may require a more formal lexis. 1

In the beginning, text A may demonstrate <sup>morphological</sup> orthographical changes. 2 The name "JABAH WILLIAMS" is capitalized which ~~is~~ in present day English it would not be common to do this. The author possibly did this to attract attention or place emphasis on the name as it was the person being indicted. This demonstrates a change in the English language as in present day English, this would not have been done and would be considered improper. 3

The court case also demonstrates the ways the English language has changed as it possibly the use of dead letters. These may be referred to as morphological changes. Throughout the extract, the long s, a dead letter, is utilized in place of the standard 's' that would be utilized today in words such as 'prisoner' or 'Oxford-street'. This letter has resemblance to an f 4 which may be confusing to the users of present day English. This letter may have

1 The candidate correctly positions Text A at a point on the timeline of evolution of the English language. There is an undeveloped comment on the expected level of formality which is not supported by evidence from the text.

2 There is some inaccuracy and imprecision of linguistic terminology.

3 The candidate selects and contrasts the graphological feature of capitalisation with contemporary English use, although there is some inaccurate discussion.

4 The discussion of the grapheme Medial (or Long) is generalised. However, the candidate selects data to support claims.

## Example Candidate Response – middle, continued

## Examiner comments

been utilized because English had not been completely standardized therefore it was still common to use what today we call dead letters. Referring back to "Oxford-street" in Text C it is evident that in 1790, <sup>5</sup> "Oxford-street" with a long s instead of the ~~short s~~ standard s of present day English, was more common amongst users. This may be due to the non-standardization ~~of~~ of English that was present during that time. Although, it is apparent that as of 2019, <sup>6</sup> ~~late~~ modern English, "Oxford-street" is more common than with the orthography of the long s. <sup>7</sup> A theory that may explain this change could be Halliday's functional language theory which suggests that language changes based on the needs of its users. Since the standardization of English made ~~the long~~ dead letters less common, <sup>8</sup> it may explain the shift of the spelling of "Oxford street" and make evident the way the English language has changed over time. Additionally, with the idea that standardized English makes it easier for individuals to communicate another theory that may apply to text C is the cultural transmission theory which highlights that language changes when there is a perceived benefit. In this case, the benefit may be that English is more standardized and allows for easier commun-

<sup>5</sup> The concept of standardisation is only minimally introduced, although there is much further discussion to follow.

<sup>6</sup> The candidate brings some cohesion to the response by introducing Text C for comparison to use of the Medial S as seen in Text A.

<sup>7</sup> There is relevant and mostly accurate reference to Halliday, which includes a more developed discussion of the process of standardisation.

<sup>8</sup> The candidate's reference to cultural transmission is incomplete and not wholly accurate or relevant.



## Example Candidate Response – middle, continued

## Examiner comments

ication amongst people ~~of~~ that speak the English Language. This ties back to why "Oxford-street" is no longer spelled with includes a long s or a dead letter.

Throughout text A, there are multiple instances where there is a lot of punctuation to separate clauses. By taking use of semi-colons various times throughout the extract, it is evident ~~that~~ the way that language has skewed over time. In present day English, it would be more usual to separate clauses with periods and include complete sentences although text A includes more fragments.

A difference in grammar ~~that~~ and syntax is also notable in text A. For example when Rotten says "catched" instead of "caught" or "se" instead of saw. Today, this would be seen as a virtuous error although in <sup>the early</sup> modern English era, this may have been ~~seen~~ common. This could be as in this era English was still in the process of being standardized as well as grammar ~~the~~ rules were continuously being changed therefore the lack of ~~standardized~~ standardized rules led to virtuous errors although back then they were not highlighted as virtuous errors. In present day English, "catched" would be an incorrect way of saying caught therefore it is evident that the English language changed due to the standardization of English.

9 The candidate's generalisation in 'there is a lot of punctuation' detracts from the control of expression.

10 The inclusion of the verb 'catched' from Text A is described imprecisely as a 'virtuous error'. The ensuing commentary returns to the concept of standardisation, which, by this point in the response, is forming repetitious material.

## Example Candidate Response – middle, continued

## Examiner comments

A skew in syntax is also notable in text A. The ~~questi~~ person asking the questions <sup>ask</sup> "did she have a cloak on, or not?" In present day English, people would most likely formulate this question by saying something along the lines of "did she have a cloak on or not?" These changes in syntax along with many others present in text A demonstrate how the English language has changed overtime possibly following the standardizing of English as a perceived benefit to these changes was to facilitate communication amongst English speakers.

In text B, collocates of the words <sup>11</sup> "figure" and "pattern" are presented in a corpus. Both words are utilized in text A. Although a semantic change in the word "figure" may be seen. In text A, the word "figure" is utilized to describe a shape or "pattern". Although, this word may ~~not~~ have undergone a semantic change of broadening, as it can be seen in text B, it <sup>may also be</sup> utilized in ~~text~~ late modern English to refer to a person or the role something specific may play on something else. ~~Contra~~ In contrast, the word pattern did not undergo significant changes as in text B it is ~~utilized~~ utilized alongside the word "different" which is ~~see~~ highlighted as a collocate in text B. <sup>12</sup> Evidently, the English language has

changed overtime and words ~~semantic~~ have undergone semantic changes.

<sup>11</sup> Exploration of Text B supplies mostly meaningful analysis with reference to broadening and a direct comparison of the way the items in the table demonstrate change over time.

<sup>12</sup> Overall, the candidate demonstrates clear expression. Despite some spelling errors, there is a reasonable level of development of some ideas, although repetition is evident at times.

Total mark awarded =  
11 out of 25

## How the candidate could improve their answer

- To address AO2 more effectively, more attention could have been given to precision in spelling of linguistic terminology, for example as seen in 'ortography'.
- More care could have been taken to ensure that the response did not become repetitive. This was particularly pertinent with the candidate's commentary on the concept of standardisation used on most points raised. Any repetition detracts from the overall relevance, as well as from the impression of the extent to which the candidate has employed writing skills and techniques.
- Although each of the three texts were analysed to an extent, the response could have been improved with a greater selection of data being made from Text A. If the candidate had not focused so heavily on the concept of standardisation, there would have remained time to provide more analytical findings extracted from the stimulus material.
- The conceptual reference to Halliday was secure, however, reference to cultural transmission was not. The candidate needed to ensure that the theories they cited were directly relevant to the discussion. The term 'virtuous error' was possibly used in an attempt to introduce more technical terminology; however, it was used inappropriately and would have been better applied to data seen in Question 2.

## Example Candidate Response – low

## Examiner comments

Over time, the English language has undergone many changes. Text A is an example of Early modern English, since it occurred in 1793. Text A uses many features that differ from the new style of contemporary English. ①

To begin with, instead of using the letter 'f' as we would today, 'þ' is used. This character or symbol has become archaic in today's English and it has been replaced by the letter 'f'. ② For example, instead of saying, "I loſt the cotton on Thursday..." it would now be spelled, "I loſt the cotton on Thursday..." ③ According to text C, this character or letter was used very frequently from about 1830-1860. It reached its peak usage in about 1860. After this, its use declined and it was succeeded by the use of the letter 'f' when spelling Oxford street. By 1940 the use of the 'þ' in Oxford street had completely died out, while the spelling with the 's' is still used today. ④

Moving on, Text A also uses a slightly different sentence ~~order~~ lot of semi-colons. While semi-colons are still used today, they are used infrequently. Text A, uses a lot of semi-colons to add thoughts to their sentences. They may be showing pauses as William Rotten is recalling the details in court. In today's English we would likely use a comma or period instead. ⑤

Text A also helps to show how English has become more informal over time. This text is pretty formal compared to today's English. ~~Another that may cause~~

① The introduction succinct and expression is clear. The candidate gives an overview of Text A, but Texts B and C are not mentioned.

② The candidate uses the term 'archaic' where the term 'obsolete' would be more accurate. However, an appropriate selection from the text is made to demonstrate the point.

③ The candidate's attempt to translate the selected example into contemporary English is unnecessary.

④ The candidate appropriately selects data from Text C and interprets the graph, though in generalised terms.

⑤ The comments on punctuation are somewhat repetitious. Moreover, the candidate focuses on what is only a minor feature of Text A.



## Example Candidate Response – low, continued

## Examiner comments

This helps to support the crumbling castle theory. This theory says that over time English is weakening and becoming less formal or breaking down the way that a ~~castle~~ castle would crumble. Today's English contains many clippings, blends or ~~ban~~ transformations while text A <sup>6</sup> does not. The sentence structure of text A slightly differs from our more modern sentence ~~structure~~ structure which also may help it to appear more formal. Text B also helps to demonstrate some of these changes. Text B shows that when the word 'figure' was mentioned, it's collocates related to important <sup>7</sup> people. ~~It~~ While today, when the word 'figure' is mentioned people are likely to think of their appearance or their body. The collocates for 'pattern' are likely similar to contemporary English, but instead of the word pattern many people would use the term trend.

~~Overall, these texts use~~  
~~in a nutshell, while these texts are~~  
 Overall, English has changed a lot since 1793, but it still has many similarities to today's contemporary form of English. <sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> In an attempt to develop comments on the concept of informalisation, the candidate discusses features which are not present in Text A, therefore irrelevant material is offered.

<sup>7</sup> The candidate introduces Text B, but it is explored in general terms constituting explanation rather than analysis.

<sup>8</sup> The candidate provides a weak and generalised conclusion. Overall, the response is brief.

**Total mark awarded =  
6 out of 25**

## How the candidate could improve their answer

- The response was a little short and could have included a selection of a wider range of data for analysis.
- Although expression was clear, terms were generalised rather than technical. To improve the response, a range of linguistic terminology could have been used.
- There was some repetition of comments, which weakened the analysis; candidates should take care to ensure that their writing is succinct and focused. This will maximise examination time, enabling a more thorough analysis of any remaining points.
- There was only one reference to the candidate's wider study of language change, despite 5 marks being available for AO4. To improve the response, the candidate could have introduced more theoretical examples.

## Common mistakes and guidance for candidates

- Such attempts as made by this candidate to translate items from an early text into contemporary English can take up a considerable amount of time and are not necessary. Misinterpretations are often made when this approach is taken. Candidates are advised to take a more analytical approach to a wider range of the data presented in the stimulus material.
- Where a candidate describes the texts in generalised terms, rather than using technical terminology, or uses technical terminology inaccurately, this detracts from the analysis because the linguistic standpoint is either minimised or not present.
- A common mistake is to address Texts B and C by summarising the content of these texts. A deeper reading of the data presented would enhance responses by demonstrating understanding of more meaningful data.
- Comparison of features selected from Text A to corresponding features from Texts B and C provides cohesion to the overall response. Analysis of Texts A, B and C separately in the order in which they appear in the question paper does not allow for optimal synthesis. Furthermore, leaving analysis of Texts B and C until the very end of the response might lead to absence of full analysis due to time constraints.
- A more effective approach is to organise a response into a sequence of paragraphs which move through a series of linguistic frameworks. Frameworks might include graphology, lexis, grammar, orthography or etymology. This approach is not a requirement, although responses which use this structure demonstrate clarity of writing technique and control over analytical skills.

## Question 2

### Example Candidate Response – high

### Examiner comments

The unscripted conversation between Samir, age 4, and his mother demonstrates a good use of caretaker language from the mother and features of the post-telegraphic stage of learning a language by Samir. **1**

Samir and his mother have a good use of turn-taking despite some examples of clashing in their ~~envers~~ conversation. For example, Samir answers questions almost immediately with little distraction;

I Mother: Is the water warm enough for you?

R Samir: Yeah (1) bit hot

F Mother: "is it a bit hot?" **2**

This example demonstrates how Samir can answer questions in the form of adjacency pairs and also add some extra information, "bit hot". This is also an example of Vygotsky's Initiation Response Feedback theory where caretaker language is used by the mother to ask the learner a question and then provide feedback after the child's response. In this case, Samir has his answer relayed back to him to make sure he understood his question.

Moreover, Samir has learnt through imitation how to use prosodic features such as rising intonation to ask questions, "know the freezing water we had?" and also when making statements, "everytime you put it on me it tickles?". This indicates that Samir is in the post-telegraphic stage of learning and has developed the skills needed in conversations, such as rising and falling intonation to indicate the end of their **3** utterance. Also, Samir uses prosodic features when

**1** The candidate manages to include several details briefly in the first two paragraphs. The empty adjectival phrase 'a good use of' is imprecise and detracts from a linguistic standpoint.

**2** The concept of turn taking is exemplified with relevant data. The candidate develops commentary by introducing the notion of the IRF exchange.

**3** The candidate discusses prosodic features. They exemplify and use these as justification for positioning the child interlocutor correctly at the post-telegraphic stage of language acquisition.

Example Candidate Response – high, continued

Examiner comments

	<p>expressing his emotions through emphasis, "YOU" and "MUM". This capitalisation of the utterances suggests that Samir may be expressing his anger through stress on language. These features are examples of Halliday's personal function where he suggests that emotions are portrayed more through language than actions between the ages 2-5. <b>4</b></p>
	<p>Samir's mother uses a lot of caregiver language during the conversation. She stressed the use of first person pronouns e.g., "I've just" after realising that Samir forgets to them sometimes, "okay" instead of "I'm Okay". Moreover, the mother also uses prosodic features for emphasis on certain lexis in order to try and teach these new this new vocabulary to Samir;</p>
	<p>mother: it wasn't cold water but (:) it wasn't very warm (:) was it (1) tepid (1) Lukewarm          Samir: Lukewarm          mother: that's the word Samir</p>
<p>for example; "that's the word" and "it's all alright";</p>	<p>This is an example of Jerome Bruner's language acquisition support system (LASS). This theory demonstrates that through stress on words, repetition, praise and approval, children can learn language at a much quicker pace. Through the repetition and reassurance of praise, children learn not to be afraid to try. Moreover, Vygotsky also said that through scaffolding, which is what the mother is doing here, places the learner in the zone of proximal development where language is learnt in between the help of a caregiver and what a child can do alone. <b>5</b></p>
	<p><b>6</b></p>

**4** The candidate cites Halliday's personal function mostly accurately although they use the prosody (patterns of stress and intonation) as justification rather than content of utterance.

**5** The candidate uses more prosodic features to exemplify the mother's use of caregiver language. An accurate but brief description of Bruner's LASS follows; data from the transcription are included.

**6** Discussion of Bruner leads into further conceptual reference to Vygotsky's notions of scaffolding and the Zone of Proximal Development. There are no comments as to whether these concepts are seen in the transcription and the candidate selects no data to evidence descriptions.

## Example Candidate Response – high, continued

## Examiner comments

Samir also further demonstrates his conversational skills by using backchannelling, "Oh", after his mother's utterances to show that he is listening and he also has the ability to change the conversation without much time to think. For example, "I need to wash my neck" ~~etc~~ demonstrates Samir's ability <sup>7</sup> to relay and request information through Halliday's representational function. Another function of Halliday's is the imaginative where Samir plays on the newly learnt word "lukewarm" saying that "luke is warm", referring to ~~to~~ one of his friends. Therefore, Samir shows through his cognitive skills that he is in the Post - preoperational stage of learning where thinking <sup>8</sup> of the world in relation to himself is no longer an issue. Instead, he has entered the ~~concrete~~ <sup>Op</sup> Concrete Operational stage in Jean Piaget's theory of Cognitive development as he is now able to think in more definite terms, "I want some water on my head", which is very advanced for his age.

On the other hand, Samir does make some linguistic mistakes such as referring to his neck as "it" and forgetting to use conditional phrases in his ~~at~~ questions, for example "it's okay if I play and ~~get~~ my hair gets wet <sup>?</sup>" rather than the correct "is it okay". <sup>9</sup>

In conclusion, language is the creature and creator of human society but without assistance learning such a complex language ~~and~~ <sup>at</sup> a young age would <sup>10</sup> be nearly impossible. Interaction is needed in order to learn and improve language and conversational skills which is demonstrated with the caregiver language of

Samir and his mother.

<sup>7</sup> The candidate discusses more of Halliday's functions of language. The previous comment on the Personal function may have been better placed at this point in the analysis.

<sup>8</sup> There is some confusion in terms when applying the reference to Piaget. It is possible, though unlikely, given the age of the child interlocutor that he has reached the concrete operational stage. However, the data supplied by the candidate as justification are not wholly plausible.

<sup>9</sup> The candidate refers to the child's 'linguistic mistakes'. A more precise term would be 'virtuous error'. Use of that term instead would have provided an opportunity to introduce Chomsky as a relevant theorist.

<sup>10</sup> The conclusion does not refer to any analytical findings and therefore does not add anything to the response overall.

**Total mark awarded =  
18 out of 25**

## How the candidate could improve their answer

- The candidate could have improved the response by identifying more characteristic features and then evidencing findings by making a greater selection of data from the transcription. Most of those features identified fall under the general linguistic umbrella of prosody, but to demonstrate wider knowledge and understanding of child language acquisition, grammatical or syntactical features seen in utterances could have been analysed in more depth.
- Halliday was referenced twice: once near the beginning of the response and then later, more fully. The response could have been improved by reorganising the structure into a more logical sequence of ideas.
- There was a lengthy paragraph which merged discussion about Bruner and Vygotsky. An improvement could have been made by separating discussion of the two theories: first, the candidate could have selected features from the transcription and evidence with relevant data which clearly demonstrated how the mother operated as a Language Acquisition Support System (Bruner); a separate section of analysis could then have followed providing details on how the mother used scaffolding to bring about a Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky).
- The candidate missed an opportunity to demonstrate how the child had phonological competence yet there remained instances of virtuous error. In this section of the response, there was also discussion of the conditional. A deeper analysis here would have improved the response further.
- There were some empty phrases – ‘makes a good use of . . .’ and ‘. . . which is very advanced for his age’ – which detracted from the linguistic standpoint. The response could have been improved if technical terminology had been used more widely throughout.



Example Candidate Response – middle

Examiner comments

This unscripted conversation between Samir, who is 4 years old, and his mother follow many typical conventions of spoken discourse <sup>while</sup> ~~as~~ Samir is having a bath. 1

Elements of Samir's spoken discourse reveals that he is in the post-telegraphic stage, which is evident in his use of modal verbs "need", increased lexis "lukewarm" and humour "luke is warm". This shows that they are aware of the world around them, naming things such as ~~be~~ "head" and other features of the body such as "neck". Halliday's theory involves many important functions such as representational, which is evident in "bit hot" as Samir relays information back to his ~~near~~ mother; imaginative which is evident in "it always tells me when it needs a wash" as Samir makes it seem the neck is alive, actually telling him it needs washing; heuristic, which is evident in "who did it" as he ~~or~~ questions more about the world and people in it; instrumental, which is evident in "oh(.) yeah" ~~as Samir~~. 2 3

Throughout the extract, there is competent turn-taking between Samir and his mother. Also, the conversation is mostly fulfilled with adjacency pairs, although there is occasionally overlapping between Samir and his mother. 4

Mother: yes(.) i think  
 Samir: ~~oh(.) yeah~~ (oh(.) yeah) every time you put it on me it tickles  
 Mother: yes(.) i think  
 " "

Samir: and(.) um(.) every time you put it on me it tickles

1 Although the introduction is brief and relevant, candidates may note that introductions are not necessary in analytical essays.

2 The candidate identifies the stage of acquisition of the child interlocutor and provides evidence from the text to justify their claim. Characteristic features are mostly labelled using accurate linguistic terminology.

3 The candidate names some of Halliday's functions and exemplified, although the comment is weak on the Instrumental function.

4 In this section of the response, the candidate begins to identify and provide evidence of a number of characteristic features.

## Example Candidate Response – middle, continued

## Examiner comments

There are also interrogative utterances, "know the freezing water we had?", whilst using rising intonation to emphasise that he is asking a question. Samir is also able to use contracted forms "dnt", which shows he ~~has~~ is well into the post-telegraphic stage. Moreover, ~~he is able to use simple present tense "it dries up"~~ which shows he is well into the post-telegraphic stage. Moreover, Samir is able to use simple present tense "it dries up", which shows a good grasp on syntax accompanied by a level of understanding of the regular present tense form. \* 5

~~However,~~ This is further exemplified by the use of non-fluency features such as voiced pauses "and (.).um(.)" and repetition "my neck (1) my neck (.)", which allow Samir time to think of the rest of his utterance. \*\* 6

There is also evidence of Samir able to use stress and increased volume, "MUM (1) ? i want some water on my head". This is also an example of Piaget's preoperational stage, where the child is egocentric and sees the world in relation to themselves, which can be seen when ~~the~~ Samir changes the subject back to himself as the ~~mother~~ <sup>mother</sup> talks about washing her hair. 7

~~Throughout~~ <sup>In</sup> this extract, there is evidence of caregiver language (motherese in this case) throughout. The mother frequently asks questions such as "who tells you?" to help direct the child in the conversation and encourage them to elaborate what they are saying. The mother also uses positive reinforcement and praise to encourage her son "that's the word samir". This supports B.F. Skinner's behaviourist theory, where language is acquired by conditioning, a process 8

5 The asterisk indicates signposting to the candidate's explanation of Chomsky's Language Acquisition Device. The explanation is reasonably clear, but it is not clearly tied to the description of characteristic features.

6 The double asterisks point to a further selection of characteristic features with accurate labelling and relevant evidence.

7 The candidate correctly positions the child interlocutor in Piaget's preoperational stage using egocentricity as justification.

8 In this section of the response, the candidate explores the mother's use of language. Beginnings of an analysis related to motherese moves swiftly on to discuss positive reinforcement according to Skinner. Although there is evidence from the text to support ideas, the paragraph feels muddled.



## Example Candidate Response – middle, continued

## Examiner comments

whereby the child receives praise and approval to encourage them in their language learning and develop it further.

The motherese also supports LASS (Language Acquisition Support System), Jerome Bruner, stating that the <sup>9</sup> caregiver provides scaffolding (a key aspect of Vygotsky's ZPD 'Zone of Proximal Development') to help the child develop their language acquisition by providing ongoing support. Case studies are evidence of a lack of LASS, ~~is~~ like the case of Genie. A feral child, who was confined in a room, alone, until the age of 13 and unable to communicate, resulting in her missing the critical period for language learning.

Initiation - Response - feedback (IRF) is also another way to provide scaffolding for a child in their language acquisition. Vygotsky stated that a teacher asks a question, waits for a response, then provides an answer and feedback. In this case, the mother is asking whether the water is too hot for her son. This is <sup>can be seen</sup> ~~evident~~ in their interaction:

Initiation - Mother: is it a bit hot? <sup>10</sup>  
//

Response - Samir: yeah (.) but i dont mind it

Feedback - Mother: well (.) the house isn't very warm (.) so  
I thought (.) a nice warm bath

⊕⊕⊕

Overall, Samir has ~~a~~ good grasp on syntax and lexis with the support of his caregiver, resulting in him becoming a proficient language <sup>user</sup> ~~learner~~ during a critical period of learning.

<sup>9</sup> There is a further sense of disorganisation as the candidate references Bruner, then Vygotsky, and then introduces the case of the feral child Genie.

<sup>10</sup> The candidate fully explains and evidences the notion of the IRF exchange.

## Example Candidate Response – middle, continued

## Examiner comments

⊛ According to Noam Chomsky, the human brain has an innate ability to learn language, LAD (Language Acquisition Device), providing ongoing support <sup>during</sup> a critical period of a child's language development.

⊛⊛ Samir also ~~can~~ reformulates their sentence, "my neck always (1) i need to wash my neck", understanding ~~that~~ what he actually wanted to say to his mother, evidence that he is exceeding in his language learning.

⊛⊛⊛ Samir is seen to be phonologically competent, as there is no evidence of ~~any~~ speech errors. For example, he has no difficult with the /ə/ sound in words such as 'that', ~~them~~ and 'them', which is one of the common mistakes, in language acquisition. These mistakes are supported by The fish phenomenon by Berko and Brown, where children ~~could not~~ pronounced the word /fis/, showing that children could perceive certain phonemes but were unable to ~~re~~ reproduce them.

11

11 The candidate comments on the child's phonological competence and introduces the Berko and Brown study with an imprecise label. As no 'errors' are detected by the candidate, the reference is not wholly relevant.

**Total mark awarded =  
15 out of 25**

## How the candidate could improve their answer

- Overall, the response was sustained with a wide range of characteristic features being identified and evidenced, but the analysis was disorganised. The response could have been improved with a more careful selection of characteristic features demonstrating clear evidence of a linguistic concept or theoretical approach. For example, at point 8, there could have been a clear example of motherese tied to an explanation of Bruner's LASS, then a new paragraph could have provided a clear example of positive reinforcement with the candidate's explanation of Skinner's notions of behaviourism. Similarly, at points 9 and 10, a new and full paragraph could have discussed evidence demonstrating how the mother attempted to bring the child into a Zone of Proximal Development using scaffolding through an IRF exchange. Thus, the reference to Vygotsky would have been much clearer and more meaningful.
- The introduction of the feral child Genie was not relevant to the discussion, nor was that to Berko's Fis Phenomenon. The response could have been improved if the candidate were to ensure that all conceptual referencing was fully accurate, precisely labelled and relevant.
- It was clear that the candidate had knowledge of the functions of language according to Halliday and there was a clear selection of examples from the transcription which supported those functions which were identified. However, the candidate could have demonstrated fuller understanding by explaining the nature of the individual functions and how and why they evidence child language acquisition.

## Example Candidate Response – low

## Examiner comments

1 When analyzing the utterances between the adjacency pair, Samir and her mother, it is crucial to take a deep look at the language used in the conversation. Not only this, but it is ~~it~~ incredibly important to take into consideration Samir's stage of language development. When looking at Samir's use of the English language, it is most likely that she is at the start of the post-telegraphic 2

The post-telegraphic stage of language development, is where children begin to form more complex sentences. In this stage, children move on from only making declarative statements, and begin to create complex sentences with independent and dependent clauses. Not only this, but children also take on a much wider vocabulary, and are no longer bound to the few words that they used to ~~only~~ know. All of this is very evident in Samir, despite her only being 4 years old, her development in the English language is quite 3 advanced.

Samir's development in the English language can most likely be attributed to her Language Acquisition Support System, or LASS. While there is a constant debate between whether language is innate to us, like Chomsky believes, or it ~~must~~ <sup>whether</sup> be acquired through further guidance and teaching, like Jerome Bruner believes, I believe that language is most definitely something that ~~must~~ be taught. According to Jerome Bruner, and his spiral

1 Although 'adjacency pair' is a linguistic term, it is not clear here whether it is understood accurately by the candidate.

2 The candidate misreads the gender of the child interlocutor. This will have no effect on any analytical findings, therefore marks are not affected, but it is a sign that the candidate does not make a thorough reading of the information provided on the question paper.

3 The candidate correctly identifies the stage of language acquisition, but the explanation of the post-telegraphic stage is very long and contains no data selected from the transcription to support ideas.

## Example Candidate Response – low, continued

## Examiner comments

circullum, guidance, and then slowly weening away <sup>4</sup>  
 from providing guidance <sup>this is known as scaffolding</sup> is crucial to language acquisition. Samir's mother effectively utilizes Jerome Bruner's spiral circullum. She does this by guiding Samir with a tough word. For instance, in line 22, she says to Samir, "that's the word samir (1) <sup>5</sup>  
 lutewarm." This guidance helps to reinforce the proper way of saying something in Samir's mind. Additionally, Samir's mother, or anybody or anything that helps Samir understand and learn language is a part of her ~~LESS~~ LASS. By having a LASS, language can be learned more effectively, and efficiently.

Equally as important, when analyzing the transcription, there is an overall lack of turn taking between Samir and her mother. Often, at the <sup>6</sup>  
 end of the mother's utterances, there is a speech overlap from Samir. Additionally, since Samir is currently in the post-telegraphic stage of language development, her use of proper grammar is still developing. For example, <sup>he</sup> still does not understand past-tense verbs. For instance, in line 33, Samir <sup>7</sup>  
 says: "then it dries up," instead of "then it dried up." Additionally, in line 16, Samir said: "it tickles" instead of "it tickled." These errors are synonymous <sup>8</sup>  
 to learning language, and destined to occur.

The more that Samir practices and uses the English Language the better she will become. According to B.F. Skinner, he believes that language is learned through repetition which helps the mind to reinforce what it is being taught. ~~Through~~ this repetition, Samir is able to ~~for~~ effectively gain a better grasp on the English Language, as it becomes reinforced in her mind. An example of this

<sup>4</sup> The candidate demonstrates knowledge and understanding of innatism according to Chomsky and Bruner's Language Acquisition Support System, although there is some imprecision in using descriptors.

<sup>5</sup> The candidate makes a relevant selection of data, but these should have appeared earlier in the discussion.

<sup>6</sup> The candidate now introduces characteristic features. They should have appeared earlier in the response in order for analysis of data to begin.

<sup>7</sup> There may have been misinterpretation of the child's use of tense. The verbs selected would not necessarily have needed to be in the past tense, given the context.

<sup>8</sup> Even if the child had made an 'error', it would have been more accurately described as a 'virtuous error' with the example being incorporated into discussion concerning Chomsky.

## Example Candidate Response – low, continued

## Examiner comments

is in lines 18-22 where Samir's mother repeats words like "fickles" and "lute warm." Samir then tends to reduplicate the word. This repetition, often referred to as behaviourism by B.F. Skinner, helps Samir to effectively and efficiently learn a language. 9

All in all, after an in depth analysis of the transcription between Samir and her Mother, it is evident that Samir is in the post-telegraphic phase of language development. Not only this, but through her mother's usage of theories by linguists like Jerome Bruner, and B.F. Skinner, she is able to effectively teach her daughter the English Language. As time continues, Samir's lexis will grow along with her proper usage of grammar. 10

9 The discussion of Skinner is mostly relevant and accurate but could have been more succinctly described. Data could have been selected which exemplified positive or negative reinforcement.

10 The conclusion repeats material previously seen and has included a final thought which is irrelevant to any analytical findings.

**Total mark awarded =  
8 out of 25**



## How the candidate could improve their answer

- A wider range of features from the transcription could have been selected for analysis, including any of those identified according to the transcription key which is provided in the question paper.
- Any characteristic features identified could have been exemplified with data from the transcription as a way of improving the response.
- The response could have been more succinctly written. For example, there was much discussion of the post-telegraphic stage, and a lengthy explanation of Chomsky and Bruner's theories. In both of these paragraphs, the response could have been improved by relevant selections of data to illustrate points being made.
- Although Bruner's LASS was correctly identified, the response could have been improved with discussion on the mother's role as caretaker and the ways in which she uses child-directed speech, with examples.
- This was similar to the way that Skinner's behaviourism was presented. Although the candidate provided some relevant ideas, they could have taken the opportunity to discuss positive and negative reinforcement, which were fundamental to the concept of behaviourism.

## Common mistakes and guidance for candidates

- A frequently seen mistake seen in weaker responses is to cite theoretical examples, often describing them at length, but either to omit any examples from the transcription, or to insert examples only sparingly. It is likely that this mistake occurs because candidates understand that AO4 is heavily weighted in this question at 15 out of 25 marks, but it is important not to ignore the other 10 marks which are available, shared equally between AO1 and AO5.
- A better approach can be taken where characteristic features are identified, exemplified by data from the transcription, and then supported by accurate reference to relevant linguistic concepts or theories. Thus, responses overall would gain an organisational structure of sequential analytical points.
- Candidates should be reminded that a range of technical terminology, used precisely and accurately, will enhance the linguistic standpoint. It is a common mistake to discuss characteristic features in generalised terms, often with explanatory discussion rather than in-depth analysis.
- Weaker responses are often seen where candidates have selected only features which correspond with the key given at the end of the transcription. Although the key is provided for general guidance, it can only offer basic information: using only the key as a springboard for analysis may result in a basic response.
- Many candidates provide introductions which replicate the introductory information provided above the transcription. Introductions are not needed in an analytical response and it is a common mistake to spend time writing out these details. Furthermore, at times, lengthy conclusions are provided which merely contain material which has already been stated and which therefore constitutes repetition.

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