

SWAHILI

Paper 3162/01

Paper 1

General comments

Although the requirements of the examination this year are similar to those of last year's, and the performance of the candidates is, likewise, comparable, it is nonetheless noticeable that more candidates this year had difficulty with Swahili vocabulary. While such candidates, on the whole, performed well in passages of translation from Swahili to English, writing and constructing sentences in Swahili was somewhat difficult. Examples and, where appropriate, recommendations, are given below in the comments on individual questions.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1: Translation into English

- (a) As mentioned above, candidates tended to perform better in **Question 1(a)** which required them to translate the passage from Swahili into English. The passage is a straightforward narrative of a visit to the Jozani Forest on the island of Zanzibar, mentioning its rich and varied species of birds and trees. The following words were sometimes misunderstood or not known:

kisiwa: island. Surprisingly, many were not familiar with this word. Most tended to translate it as 'lake'.

Unguja: Zanzibar

msitu: forest

tuli: still (to sit still)

kima: monkeys

Mvuvi: fisherman (not to confuse with '*mvivu*': a lazy person)
(*watu*) **huja**: (people) come

It is recommended that teachers practise in class the habitual form of the verb (usually with *hu-*), so as not to confuse it with the negative (*ha-*). Other examples occur in **Question 1 (b)**:

hujenga *uhusiano*: they build a relationship;

huenda *kwenye miji mkuu*: (they) go to large cities;

huwafanya *wanafamilia*: it makes family members...

- (b) This passage was slightly more challenging than **Question 1(a)** as the nature of the passage, being sociological in its thrust, used vocabulary and constructions which required a better grasp of Swahili grammar. The passage describes pressures which families face nowadays – especially in cities – as its members are constantly engaged in their respective jobs. The following words were sometimes misunderstood or found difficult:

shauri: opinion, advice (confused with sharia: law)

unaodumu: which lasts

kulisisitiza: to emphasize, stress (it)

Haya ni mambo ya kawaida: These are normal things.

(*Ripoti*) *haipendekezi*: (the report) does not recommend

familia ijitahidi: a family should make an effort

Also, comments on the habitual tense – **hu-** – given under **Question 1(a)** also apply here.

Question 2: Translation into Swahili

Question 2 and the question on the essay give candidates the opportunity to express themselves in Swahili. Thus the combined marks of these two questions amount to fifty-five. As the candidates usually find the exercise of translating a passage into Swahili more challenging than translating a Swahili passage into English, it is recommended that teachers pay special attention to these exercises and the grammatical points which emerge from them.

For example, students should be advised to read the sentence in English as a *whole* prior to starting the translation. By not doing so, some students missed the negative point that was being made in the following sentence:

'Parents are warned to keep sharp knives in drawers and not to leave them in places where children can reach them.'

In translating this passage, some students translated the phrase 'where children can reach them' positively, forgetting that, in Swahili, the negative forms part of the verb in the same word (and is not a separate word as in English), i.e. some students gave the answer as:

'*wanaweza kuzifikia*': they are able to reach them;

Whereas it should have been:

'*wasiweze kuzifikia*' where the verb is rendered negative in the subjunctive (i.e. *wanaweza* to *wasiweze*).

Question 3: Essay

The topics this year were:

- (a) Describe your favourite game which you used to play when you were a child.
- (b) "Television should only show educational programmes." Do you agree? Give your views, mentioning your own favourite programme.
- (c) A factory is being built on the banks of a river near your home. Some people are objecting to its presence because, they say, it will pollute the environment. Write a letter to your local paper, giving your views in support for or against the building of the factory.

The essay question was generally well done, with topics **(a)** and **(b)** being attempted more than **(c)**. As in previous years, the best essays were those which had a plan and a structure. Teachers should therefore encourage pupils to think through the subject and make a plan of the essay.

Teachers are requested to note that some students this year wrote rather brief essays, shorter than the requirement of 120 words. It is recommended that teachers should impress upon their students the importance of reading and fulfilling the word requirement given in the rubric of the question.