

Examiners' Report
January 2012

GCE English Language and Literature
6EL01 01

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Introduction

This unit comprises the examined component of AS Language and Literature. With its explicit focus on aspects of **voice** it assesses understanding of how spoken voices are used and written voices are created in transcripts of authentic conversation and in literary, non-literary and multi-modal texts drawn from the 20th and 21st centuries.

Section A (questions 1(a) and 1(b)) involves the exploration of 3 unseen extracts and students are required to identify features of spoken language and examine how writers and speakers shape and craft the extracts provided.

Section B assesses understanding of how the spoken word is represented in literary texts and is based upon the text they have studied. An extract from their studied text is presented as a starting point for analysis and they are then required to make links to the broader novel/novella/collection.

Question 1 (a)

Question 1 required candidates to explore three unseen extracts provided in the source booklet - a transcript of authentic conversation (**used in conjunction with question 1(a)**), a series of emails between middle aged friends and an extract from an interview with James Cameron posted on the website affiliated to *Empire Magazine* (**used in conjunction with question 1(b)**).

Question 1 (a)(i) asked candidates to **identify** three spoken word features from Extract A (a transcript of an authentic conversation between a man and a hospital receptionist) and then to **provide an example of each feature** from the extract. Marks were awarded only when the feature **matched** the example given.

TIP apply specific terms; avoid generalised descriptions.

Question 1 (a)(ii) asked candidates to comment on the function of **two** of their selected features **within the extract**.

Issues relating to this question in the January 2012 series include what seems to be a general tendency to use 'colloquial' to label any feature that candidates are unsure of.

The essentially individual nature of 'idiolect' is still poorly understood. There was also considerable evidence of confusion between ellipsis/elision.

1 (a) (i) was marked out of a maximum of 6 marks at AO1 and although the majority did well it afforded the full range of marks. Some candidates failed to employ accurate terminology in the naming of features; others repeated the same feature and in this way restricted the potential for reward; some failed to match the feature named with an appropriate example from the extract.

1(a) (ii) had a maximum score of 4 marks (again at AO1). Responses here also covered the full range.

SECTION A: DIFFERENT VOICES

1 Read Texts A, B and C on pages 2–4 of the Source Booklet.

(a) **Text A** is a transcript of a **spontaneous conversation**.

(i) Identify **three different** spoken word features in Text A **and** provide an example from the text of each language feature identified.

(AO1 = 6)

Feature 1 Overlapping

Example "you have internet // WiFi"

Feature 2 False starts

Example "It says on the (.) It says on your board"

Feature 3 Fillers

Example "erm"

(ii) Comment on the function of any **two** of the identified features within Text A.

(AO1 = 4)

False starts are typical of spontaneous speech as participants need time to think about what they are going to say and they use them to ~~craft~~ craft their words in order to sound more specific. Fillers have a similar function, to give time to think about what is going to be said in the spontaneous encounter.



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Examiner Comments

Here the candidate offers an accurate definition of the features. However this definition is generic and the lack of specific links to the extract and the function of the feature restricts to a mark of 2 for this component. Had the response been extended to make this link the mark awarded could have been doubled.

Question 1 (b)

This second component of Q1 links to two unseen extracts provided in the Source Booklet. Text B was a series of **emails** between middle aged friends, Text C was an extract from, and interview with, director James Cameron published on the **website** linked to *Empire* magazine.

The question asked candidates to examine how the writers:

- Shape or craft the texts to meet the expectations of their respective audience/purpose/context.
- Employ aspects of spoken language in their texts.

Responses are assessed against AO2 with its specific focus on how structure, form and language shape meaning, and AO3 with its specific focus on the contextual factors which impact on the production and reception of texts. Each AO is marked out of 20, giving an overall maximum mark of 40 for this question.

Overall, candidates responded well to this question in that it gave them the opportunity to discuss a range of linguistic and contextual features. There were relatively few "rubric" type problems with this question this time round. In other words, most candidates had grasped that they needed to write in equal detail about BOTH texts and that they needed to tackle both bullet points. If they did miss something out, the most common problem was not analysing the "spoken language aspects" in sufficient detail rather than missing a text out entirely. Text B proved to be generally more accessible than Text C which provided a key discriminator for this question.

Higher band answers presented an integrated discussion of both texts, demonstrating a confident command of terminology and a good appreciation of purpose and audience. They were also able to explore the more subtle aspects of language and effect.

In responding to **Extract B** most demonstrated awareness of the conventions - linguistic and contextual - of emails. The majority were able to correctly (the best, cogently) discuss the two participants and the dynamic of their online exchanges. Many commented usefully on the adjacency features evident in the exchanges. Most were able to comment on the differences in register and language of each participant; the best moving beyond generic statements about formality (or the lack of it) to explore with relative security the conventions, 'text' language or the protocol of email and the interactivity of the medium. Most were able to identify some linguistic features arising from this relationship (abbreviations, initialisms etc). Features of spoken language were also quite readily spotted – however the quality of contextualized comment covered a wide range.

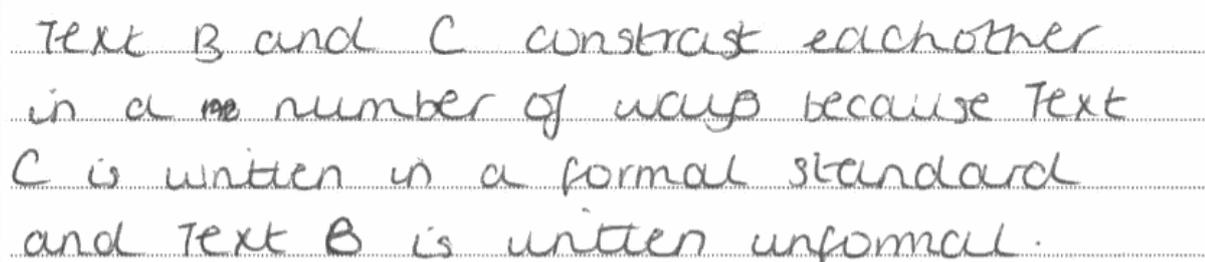
The exploration of the interview, **Extract C**, was less successful on the whole, and, as such, proved to be a useful discriminator. Most were able to make sensible comment on the link between the subject of the interview and the interviewee and the affiliation of the website to *Empire* Magazine, aimed, as it is, at an audience interested in film and therefore conversant with subject specific references. Most offered comment on the conventions of an interview, however many missed the range of spoken language features in evidence here.

At mid-lower bands of achievement the shifts in Cameron's register were commented on only vaguely, with students frequently sensing these shifts but struggling to say exactly why they occurred. Perhaps the biggest problem was in judging the tone of the piece which made many candidates unsure of the real purpose of the text.

At **A02**, successful responses explored a range of language features in **both** extracts. Exemplification was consistent and appropriate and the responses offered considered comment on the link between form and function. Terminology was fairly wide ranging and applied with accuracy. Less successful responses picked up on some general language features although coverage of the extracts was sometimes uneven. In lower band answers exemplification was inconsistent and sometimes inaccurate. Levels of specific analysis and links between form and function were limited and/or undeveloped.

At **A03** successful responses offered developed comment on the context of both extracts with consideration of the factors that influenced the production and reception of each. Investigation of the emails considered the conventions associated with this form of communication and linked this to the relationship between participants. Investigation of the interview considered its multiple function and linked this to convention and audience.

The following excerpts are drawn from a response that falls into the lower range of achievement.



Text B and C contrast each other
in a number of ways because Text
C is written in a formal standard
and Text B is written unformal.



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Examiner Comments

Overall the response strives for a comparison between Text B and Text C which is NOT a requirement of the question and is generally VERY difficult for mid-lower band candidates. This candidate certainly struggles in this respect and the result is a lack of specific focus on the language of either text.

This is another example from the same response.

Text B and C construct because the person writing is in completely different context, two friends speaking and someone in an interview. The language between (P to M) is less formal and vague written whereas the interview is written in detail with more intelligence and knowledge of the subject they are talking out. Text B exaggerate what they are talking about for example using four (!!!!) exclamation marks, whereas in the interview the punctuation is written correctly for example 'they're' and (.) when needed. Nothing is abbreviated in Text C as the words are written correctly whereas Text B the words are written with just one letter for example 'R' instead of out.



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Examiner Comments

It also illustrates the lack of specific focus on the language of the texts.

At AO2 the response picks up on some general language features.

'grt' great spelt like that is abbreviated
which is commonly used to suggest 'great'
over text messages and emails as its
just between two friends and they know
what each other mean.



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Examiner Comments

Exemplification is patchy and links between form and function are limited/undeveloped.

This is a further excerpt from the same candidate's response.

Text

C is written in a formal standard and Text B is written informal. Text C graphology is structured in paragraph and has a (bold) heading on each of the paragraph which shows its structured in a formal way.



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Examiner Comments

As with many responses in the lower bands of achievement there is greater security with Text B. Comments on the Cameron interview are mostly vague, observational or descriptive.

The following excerpts are drawn from a response that falls into the mid range of achievement which offers reasonably competent, if essentially straightforward, investigation. As is typical of many responses in this range the points made are generally valid but tend to be undeveloped.

There is also lots of

punctuation, more so in the e-mails from M, who uses more formal language and punctuation, as well as complex lexis such as 'jesting'. This indicates that perhaps the ~~at~~ writer is more educated than 'D', who ~~has~~ uses simple lexis and lots of colloquial language.



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Examiner Comments

This example successfully differentiates the 'voices' in Text B but makes generalised assertions about both.

At AO2 the response identifies a reasonable range of features.

Firstly, the writer 'D' of the e-mails uses an abundance of colloquial language, such as, 'foto', 'luv' and 'ok' which shows that it is informal, and it is her friend. 'D' also uses abbreviations, 'Bfn', 'k' and 'grt' which shows furthermore that it is not formal, but they are also used to entertain.

Furthermore, there are many ~~stated~~ questions throughout the text, such as 'whats bfn?' which is another spoken language feature. This engages the audience and it is common in spoken language.



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Examiner Comments

Although a range of features are identified the terms applied tend to be generalised.

As is typical of a mid band response, comments on Text C (the less accessible of the unseen extracts) are less detailed/developed.

Furthermore, throughout the text, specific lexis is used, and ~~the~~ film terminology, such as 'live action photography' and 'mixing scales', which perhaps a wider audience wouldn't know what ~~they~~^{was} meant, so this shows that it is aimed at a specific audience.



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Examiner Comments

Comments at word level seize the obvious opportunities afforded by field specifics.

The following excerpts are drawn from a response that sits at the top range of achievement and which offers a well balanced, accurate and discriminating investigation and analysis of both extracts. Analysis is full; integrated fluently into the investigation and offered at word, sentence and whole-text level.

Extract 1

The fact that "D" and "M" are ~~not~~ ~~close~~ friends means that you expect there to be an informal tone between one another. As such, D's first e-mail to M features "~~found photos~~", the elliptical utterance "found foto" which features a non-standard spelling of the noun "photo". D's use of non-standard grammar suggests that she hasn't spent time crafting or editing her e-mail, which creates an informal tone that you would expect considering the audience.

Extract 2

Commenting ~~on~~ uses subject-specific lexis, such as "the author's - photography" regularly. As the interview is done to an online audience and is written down, he can use technical terminology such as this, and with the knowledge that the interview can be repeated back to and if there is a lack of understanding from the audience they can research the technical terms themselves.



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There is a clear and sustained sense of audience, purpose and context across both extracts. Assertions in this respect are supported by well chosen evidence and attendant analysis.

Text C follows the conventional interview structure throughout. Adjectival phrasing is used, for example "It's been a very busy journey, hasn't it?" is directly replied to by the declarative "It's been four years. The tag question used by the interviewer allows him to shift the topic and control the conversation, whilst holding the floor. Cameron's factual response with the noun "four" used, takes into account the ~~star~~ ~~secretary~~ audience met is ~~watching~~ ~~a~~ reading online. Clearly the interviewer already knows the answer but Cameron's role and role is to convey information to the reader.



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Examiner Comments

The discussion on context and generic convention evidences a clear sense of production and reception.

A further example follows.

M meets the expectations of the structures of an e-mail with the more formal opening "Hi D". Whilst the high-frequency greeting "Hi" still maintains an informality to the conversation, 'M' is clearly adhering to the structural conventions of e-mail more than 'D'. She also adheres to the expectations of the ~~purpose~~^{genre} by using a mixture of transactional and phatic talk. For example "~~I don't mind what we do and will fit in with whatever~~" the declarative "I will ask V". Clearly M has the more formal voice and is however than 'D' to discuss and convey information, although she still ensures the conversation has a relaxed tone. "I don't mind what we do and will fit in with whatever": ~~Clearly she knows~~ This ~~statement~~ acts as hedging to her previous ~~tone~~ and declarative and ensures a relaxed tone is maintained. D is leading the topic shifts but she ~~is~~ cares for her friend and still maintains the phatic talk with ~~the~~ exclamation such as "I have no idea what 'bfn' means".



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Examiner Comments

Here the candidate is differentiating between participants via use of these conventions (i.e. context and generic).

Section B

Questions in this section cover the range of literary texts studied for the examination. Students were presented with an extract selected from their set text and were asked to explore aspects of voice it contained. They were then directed to comment beyond the extract to the wider novel, novella or collection (according to the text studied).

A successful response to the literary set text should offer detailed investigation of the given extract and extend beyond it into the broader novel/novella/collection. There should be relatively sustained focus on the central issues of the task (this varies, obviously, across questions and set texts) and selection of evidence should afford appropriate links to the extract and to the task.

Responses in this section are assessed against AO1 with its focus on fluency of expression and the identification of literary and linguistic features and use of accurate and appropriate terminology. AO2 assesses the details of critical and specific analysis and the links made between structure and form to shape and convey meaning.

At their best, responses were fluent, clear and technically accurate. Exploration of the extract was thorough and systematic and links to the broader text were well defined and appropriate. Exemplification was consistent and judiciously selected and examples were investigated using literary and linguistic approaches that were relevant to the task. Terminology was accurate and analysis extended to word, sentence and whole text level.

At AO1 successful responses were well structured and expressed and identified a range of literary and linguistic features in the extract and in the wider text. Key to success at this AO is the RANGE of features and terms applied at word, sentence and whole text level.

At AO2 successful responses demonstrated a degree of confidence in consideration of structure, form and language. Links between the extract and the wider text were well defined and exemplified accurately. Responses demonstrated confidence with the specifics of analysis and used this to explore links to how meaning is shaped by structure, form and language.

Less successful responses offered limited analysis of the given extract and were unlikely to extend **fully** beyond it into the broader novel/novella/collection.

There were also a significant number that offered limited investigation of the extract which, after a few limited remarks, launched into the wider work often resulting in unfocused generalities. A detailed exploration of the extract provides a clear and focused platform from which to approach broader considerations and candidates who clearly understood this almost always did better.

Focus on the central issues of the task (this varied, obviously, across questions and set texts) tended to be inconsistent and many digressed into generalised comment (for example the perceived feminism of Carter, the post-slavery context of Walker or the much investigated theme of paralysis in Joyce). Selection of evidence was inconsistent and at times supported general assertions rather than those that linked directly to the extract and to the task.

Exploration of the extract in these less successful responses was straightforward and comments on the wider text were generalised and/or descriptive. Exemplification tended to be inconsistent and not wholly appropriate. Investigation of examples was limited in terms of analysis and there was a tendency to describe. Terminology was offered in a very limited range and there was considerable incidence of error. There tended to be an imbalance of analysis at word, sentence and whole-text level with the majority focussing their analysis on lexical choice.

At **AO2** there was a lack of confidence in consideration of structure, form and language. Links between the extract and the wider text were weak and, at the lower bands of achievement, omitted. Responses demonstrated insecurity with the specifics of analysis and links to how meaning is shaped by structure, form and language were limited.

The following excerpts are drawn from a script that falls into the lower bands of achievement. It is a response to Question 6 (Kressmann Taylor) which offers a formulaic and very straightforward investigation.

Taylor starts the letter using dramatic irony from Max 'How I envy you!' This shows the affection and irony of Max. Max wishes he was in Germany and even relates back to their childhood. To develop, Max describes his childhood as 'breadth of intellectual freedom' which relates to his envy for Martin.



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Examiner Comments

The fondness, enthusiasm and idealism of Max, so very apparent in this opening letter, are not fully appreciated. Rather the response, probably prompted by the second sentence, ('How I envy you!'), concentrates on perceived jealousy and this leads to a loss of focus.

Martin jumps straight to business in his first response. 'The check and accounts come through promptly.' This shows Martin has taken no remorse for Max's affection and envy. To develop this also implies business comes before their friendship.



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Examiner Comments

Exploration of the wider novella is restricted to Martin's initial response and comments here are very thin with some evidence of misinterpretation/over-simplification. Such imbalance typifies certain responses in this lower band of achievement.

A hint of sarcasm is shown ~~in~~
when Martin says 'For which my thanks.'
Martin thanks Max for the check and
~~extra~~ accounts, however, nothing else
in which he has helped him with.



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Examiner Comments

There is minimal specific or critical analysis in evidence here.

In this letter Max uses a lot of
self-centered remarks and has no
concern for the welfare of ~~the~~ Martin.
This is shown ~~that~~ when Max says
'As for me, I am not happy.' This
portrays Martin as a self-centered
man. In development, this could link
to his affection for Germany and
perhaps jealousy against Martin.



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Examiner Comments

In this excerpt there is a sense of a valid point which is very unspecific; the evidence provided is not analysed to develop or to clarify.

The following excerpts are drawn from a script that falls into the middle bands of achievement. It is a response to Question 2 (Carter).

Exploration of the extract is relatively well focused on the task and evidence is well chosen in this respect. The choice of second story is appropriate and the investigation mostly links to the task and to the extract.

Free indirect speech has also been created by Carter to symbolise the Countess's destiny. 'Now you are at the place of annihilation, now you are at the place of annihilation'. Not only does the use of the noun 'annihilation' suggest impending doom, the repetition is similar to that of a mantra, ~~a prayer or a song~~ or a prayer which could represent a warning from the past. Furthermore, because the speech is free indirect we are unaware of who the pronoun 'you' refers to, however it is most likely to be the Countess because however it is most likely to be the Countess as it is her destiny to die sexually unfulfilled.



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Examiner Comments

There is an appreciation of Carter's crafting of the influential voices and also the methods used and the effects they create.

This is a second excerpt.

The third person narrative has been used by Carter in order to show that the narrator is aware of the Countess' destiny however she is not. 'She knows no other consummation than the only one she can offer him', this quote reflects the Countess' destiny because the only 'consummation' she can offer him is death, and therefore the Countess dies a virgin.



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Examiner Comments

It also illustrates the appreciation of Carter's crafting of the influential voices and the methods used and effects they create.

This is another excerpt from the same response.

Moreover, the Countess seems to ignore these omniscient voices from the past 'It is bed time' because she seems to think that they refer to the soldier; which is perhaps why she is so shocked at the role reversal at the story's end - when the soldier tastes her blood.



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Examiner Comments

This shows that the links between form and function are not always secure/clear.

wolves. 'She will ~~look~~^{lay} his fearful head'.
The pronoun of 'his' rather than 'it'
gives the wolf a human persona.
~~and the~~ And the fact that the
wolf has changed from being feared
to being 'fearful' is significant
because it makes him seem more
tame.



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Examiner Comments

Here terms are offered and those that are applied are mostly accurate. As is typical of a mid-range response analysis is handled more fully than that at sentence level.

This excerpt also offers a term.

Verbs such as 'seduction' and 'blushed'
suggest that she is shunning the
warning of the narrative voice.



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Examiner Comments

The term here shows inconsistencies and inaccuracies.

The following excerpts are drawn from a script from the higher bands of achievement. It is a response to Question 7 (Winton). It is a well focused and fluently expressed answer and affords a detailed, precise investigation of the extract and beyond.

It is clear that Dolly's affair has an unprecedented impact upon the usually jocular and humorous Sam, as it leaves him on the brink of suicide. Winton uses a free indirect style to explore the complex thoughts and feelings of Sam as he is left 'bewildered' by Dolly's actions.



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Examiner Comments

The answer begins with an emphatic and accurate focus on the question which is sustained throughout the response. Analysis is accurate and integrated fluidly.

Dolly's actions have clearly forced Sam to the point of suicide and Winton reflects Sam's perspective that life is futile and unfulfilling through abstract nouns such as 'hopelessness' which suggest that Sam's inner-voice and conscience are contemplating these complex themes. Winton cleverly ~~fluctuates~~ ^{alternates} between Sam's spoken word voice and the voice inside his head to give the reader a wider perspective of Sam's views on marriage and on life.



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Examiner Comments

This shows a real appreciation of Winton's manipulation of perspective and narrative voice.

This is the last excerpt from the response in the higher band of achievement.

relationships. In this instance, it is the physical incident of an affair which is the factor that impacts upon the husband and wife relationship. For Oriel and Lester, it is not so much a physical incident which is a factor, but a ~~for~~ more spiritual and ideological divergence. This is caused by the loss of Pishia factor which causes both husband and wife to lose their religion. The section 'country' conveys how the ~~was~~ husband and wife relationship has been profoundly affected.



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Examiner Comments

The links between the extract and the broader text are sustained and appropriate. The contrast afforded by consideration of Oriel and Lester is well drawn and exemplified and facilitates some sophisticated critical comparison and comment.

Paper Summary

In order to further improve candidates should ensure they read the question carefully and select examples appropriately.

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