

Examiners' Report/
Principal Moderator Feedback

Summer 2013

GCSE English Language (5EN03)
The Spoken Language

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General Overview

Unit 3 comprises:

i. Speaking and Listening Tasks (48 marks available):

Three Speaking and Listening activities which are internally assessed and externally moderated: Communicating and Adapting Language (16 marks available), Interacting and Responding (16 marks available) and Creating and Sustaining Roles (16 marks available). This work is moderated separately from the two pieces of written work.

ii. Two pieces of writing which are internally assessed and externally moderated (48 marks total available):

- **One Spoken Language Study:** (24 marks available) a commentary on two examples of spoken language which students have chosen and studied in advance. Students have two hours to produce a piece of writing of up to 1000 words.
 - Students need to exemplify and demonstrate their understanding of:
 - The way spoken language works
 - How language changes according to context
 - The ways in which language use may influence other speakers and listeners.
- **One Writing for the Spoken Voice task:** (16 marks available for A04 i and ii and 8 marks available for A04 iii technical accuracy).The students have two hours to produce a piece of writing of up to 1000 words. Students need to:
 - Express relevant ideas
 - Have a clear sense of purpose and audience
 - Select vocabulary for effect Organise their writing appropriately.
 - Students must also use accurate spelling and punctuation and demonstrate a range of sentence structures.

Centres had prepared students well for this component and as a result students produced responses which addressed the assessment objectives. Internal moderation was mostly evident and most centres applied the assessment criteria for each task in a generally accurate manner.

Spoken Language Study

Students engaged well with the tasks set by Edexcel for 2013 entry which were: using two examples of spoken language, comment on the way people use language for different purposes OR comment on how language is used in different places.

Most centres used the spontaneous speech resources produced by Edexcel; this allowed students to explore all of the assessment criteria. Some centres provided their own well-chosen resources which also allowed students similar scope. However, a few centres provided their own resources which did not allow students to address all of the assessment criteria, for example scripted speech, such as television scripts.

Most students performed well against the assessment criteria, understanding how language changes according to context and explaining clearly how language works. Some students relied heavily on describing and identifying or “spotting” features of spoken language, using a wide range of technical vocabulary, without analysing why these features had been used and what effects they might have. Some students were hindered by listing technical vocabulary which prevented them from analysing the spoken language have achieved. Centres are advised to focus more effectively on the fourth assessment criterion which asks students to explain how and why language use can influence the language of others. Centres are asked to please indicate the chosen sources within the moderation sample or to include copies of transcripts for the moderator if using their own materials.

A few centres tended to slightly over-reward at the top end of the range and awarded students marks in Bands 4 and 5, which require ‘assured understanding’ and ‘perceptive understanding’, where students’ work only showed ‘clear understanding’. Conversely, at the lower end of the mark range some centres tended to slightly under-reward responses.

While students need to show how language is used in different ways in two different situations, they are not required to make comparisons in this unit. Some students penalised themselves by trying to make comparisons which made their analysis unnecessarily clumsy.

Occasionally student responses were off task: in one single student centre, only one transcript had been used for commentary and the analysis focused on the written text rather than the spoken word.

Most centres obviously thoroughly understand the criteria and communicate this well to students; student responses demonstrate knowledge of how to achieve within a particular mark band.

Although centres have no obligation to annotate scripts, those which do, make the moderation process so much more effective; this process also demonstrates that individual teachers are secure in their understanding of how to apply the assessment criteria.

In summary, centres and students are engaging successfully with this task: many students have demonstrated a sophisticated understanding of the way language works in different situations. Some teachers have been inventive in their choice of resources. The Board’s popular resources have also provided students with a good range of opportunities. It still needs to be stressed to centres that the Spoken Language Study is the study of spontaneous speech and not the study of scripted words. Students do not need to use the terminology that might be expected of A level students; in some cases, partial understanding of linguistic terms has hindered rather than enabled students.

Writing for the Spoken Voice

Students engaged well with the tasks set by Edexcel for 2013: either writing a script for a television documentary/advertisement/sitcom (30 seconds-2minutes

of spoken language) OR writing the script for a podcast (up to 1,000 words) Or writing a short story (up to 1,000 words) in which dialogue was a key feature.

The tasks set by Edexcel allowed centres to select tasks appropriate to their students. Responses to The whole range of tasks were evident and students produced some very interesting writing. The Podcast option was the most popular choice. Most students chose to write a podcast about a topic of personal interest. Some of these were impressive and demonstrated sophisticated control of language. Rhetorical devices were used effectively and arguments developed convincingly; one student wrote a podcast about the difficulties of writing a podcast. However, centres still need to emphasise that the focus of this task requires writing for the spoken voice. Some impressive short story/dialogue writing was submitted demonstrating use of rhetorical devices and engagement with an audience.

Centres were confident in assessing their students' Writing for the Spoken Voice. Generally students had engaged really well here with their chosen task and strong student voice and awareness of audience and purpose were centre strengths.

Occasionally, moderators reported that students did not seem to be clear about the purpose and audience of their writing. Students did not always demonstrate an understanding of the conventions of their chosen genre.

Moderators commented that students fared better in Writing for the Spoken voice when given their own choice of topic: one centre had encouraged all students to write a sitcom script with varying degrees of success. Another centre, however, had encouraged students to write an extra scene for a novel focusing on dialogue to good effect.

Moderators noted some wonderful examples of speeches and monologues- for example in the style of Alan Bennett- that demonstrated a sophisticated understanding of the nature of spoken language; the best examples were where centres had given students clear instructions about audience and purpose. However moderators also noted some examples of unsuccessful writing: TV Scripts that did not have a purpose or audience and speeches which could have been newspaper reports. Problematic responses were narratives in which dialogue was supposedly a 'key feature' but where students had written stories with very minimal focus on speech.

5EH03/1B: Speaking and Listening

Three tasks are completed: Communicating and Adapting; Interacting and Responding; Creating and Sustaining a Role.

These are at the lowest level of control: the centre sets and marks each piece. Their standards are reviewed triennially by a centre visit of moderator.

In general, reports from moderators indicate that centres provide tasks accessible to the full range of student ability.

The area which presents the greatest challenge to centres is ensuring that the level of complexity built into the task is sufficiently rigorous to meet the Band 5

criteria. It is still sometimes the case that for Communicating and Adapting, students are asked to give a talk about a hobby or present their interest in a certain topic. Unless the topic itself holds a sophistication or complexity, accessing the highest Band can prove difficult.

Many centres use the monologue as the Task used for Creating and Sustaining role. This is partly driven by the exemplification of this approach on Edexcel Standardising DVDs. There has been some exceptionally good produced at the highest level. There is also a sense that, even for students in the lower mark bands, it offers a chance to perform to their full potential. Where there are a number of students involved in a role play scenario, an issue has been ensuring that each student has enough time to show a *sustained* role.

Interacting and responding is most commonly completed in group of three or four – an appropriate size for this task. Very occasionally, moderators have seen groups of 7 or 8 students and almost always this has meant that some are disadvantaged by not being able to participate.

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