

Examiners' Report/ Principal Examiner Feedback Summer 2010

IGCSE

IGCSE English as a Second Language (4357/03) Unit 3: Speaking

Edexcel is one of the leading examining and awarding bodies in the UK and throughout the world. We provide a wide range of qualifications including academic, vocational, occupational and specific programmes for employers.

Through a network of UK and overseas offices, Edexcel's centres receive the support they need to help them deliver their education and training programmes to learners.

For further information please call our Customer Services on + 44 1204 770 696, or visit our website at www.edexcel.com.

If you have any subject specific questions about the content of this Mark Scheme that require the help of a subject specialist, you may find our **Ask The Expert** email service helpful.

Ask The Expert can be accessed online at the following link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/Aboutus/contact-us/>

Alternatively, you can speak directly to a subject specialist at Edexcel on our dedicated **languages** telephone line: **0844 576 0035**.

(If you are calling from outside the UK please dial + 44 1204 770 696 and state that you would like to speak to the **languages** subject specialist).

Summer 2010

Publications Code UG024231

All the material in this publication is copyright

© Edexcel Ltd 2010

Unit 3: Speaking (4357/03)

Description

This speaking examination is in three parts and lasts about 12 minutes. Each candidate is interviewed individually by an interlocutor. All of the interlocutor's questions are scripted. The speaking examination is recorded on cassette tape or disc and assessed by an examiner.

In Part 1, the candidate is asked a set of questions on a familiar topic. This part of the exam lasts about 3 - 4 minutes. In this session, the topics were transport, using the internet, reading and films.

In Part 2, the candidate is given a task card and speaks at length (about 2 minutes) on the topic on the card. The candidate must answer the specific question mentioned on the task card. The candidate has 1 minute to prepare what s/he is going to say. In this session, the topics were having a job in the holiday, owning a car, the role of television in the candidate's life and the music the candidate likes to listen to.

In Part 3, the candidate discusses in more depth issues related to the topic used in Part 2. This part of the exam lasts about 3 - 5 minutes.

Assessment Principles

The test is assessed positively out of 20 using the grid printed in the specification (page 17): Communicative ability and content 5 marks, Pronunciation and fluency 5 marks, Lexical Grammatical accuracy and range 5 marks, and Grammatical accuracy and range 5 marks.

Candidates' responses

Generally, the candidates performed well on this paper. They responded well to the structure of the test and seemed engaged by the content. The topics were ones which were generally familiar to them and they could call on their life experience to answer the questions.

The paper is designed to become increasingly difficult and this proved to be so for less able candidates who struggled the most with Part 3.

There were some good examples of candidates who had been prepared thoroughly for this examination.

Part One

The aim of Part One is to ask candidates about familiar topics and most were able to answer questions with ease. However, there were candidates who were monosyllabic and some interlocutors did not ask the follow-up questions to help them extend their answers. These follow-up questions are an important feature of the paper and should be exploited whenever a candidate is less forthcoming. The purpose of the questions is to encourage the candidate to generate sufficient language on which to assess their ability based on the four criteria mentioned above. In consequence, the role of the interlocutor is to be aware of how responsive the candidate and help them to reply fully to all questions.

Some of the questions in Part 1 elicited the same response e.g. 'How do you usually go to school?' and 'What form of transport do you and your family usually use often?' most candidates answered 'by car'. This is an example where the interlocutor needed to ask the follow-up questions.

Interlocutors should also spend at least three minutes on this section. If the candidate answers all of the questions on one of the topics, a second topic should be selected.

This is the least demanding part of the examination and most candidates handled it well. In a small minority of instances candidates did not understand one or more questions.

Part Two

The aim of this section is to provide the candidate with an opportunity to speak at length on a topic for which they have been given 1 minute's preparation time. They are also required to answer a specific question.

The best candidates were able to expand on the topic in detail, giving examples and explanations to support their ideas and opinions. Their performance was also well organised and logical indicating that they had used the preparation time effectively to organise their thoughts. The task card contains prompts to guide the candidate. These are ideas which the candidate may or may not choose to use in their response. Less able candidates tended to use these prompts as a list of items to comment on.

Some candidates found Card 2 (owning a car) more challenging and a number of examiners observed that this card tended to be used more often for male candidates. Some candidate struggled with the term 'holiday job'. This was not helped by interlocutors using unsuitable synonyms.

Part Three

The aim of this part is to establish the upper reaches of the candidate's linguistic ability and it becomes increasingly difficult. There are also follow-up questions to allow the candidate every opportunity to show the extent of their ability. Many candidates had been well-prepared and quite naturally gave their opinion and then provided more information by way of support.

Less able candidates struggled with this part of the examination. Some misunderstood questions or asked for help in interpreting certain questions.

Interlocutors

The interlocutors play an important role in enabling the candidates to show their linguistic ability and although their performance is improving with each series, there are still problems which need to be highlighted.

Although most of the interlocutors conducted the examination appropriately, there were others who did not follow the instructions contained in 'Instructions for the Conduct of Examinations'. All of the wording and questions were provided either in the instructions or on the frame cards, yet some interlocutors did not keep to the questions both in Part 1 and in Part 3.

Those interlocutors who did not follow instructions did not appear to grasp the thinking behind the structure and purpose of each section of the test, and when they deviated from the script it made the task of the assessor more difficult. Indeed, it is felt that on occasion they disadvantaged candidates by asking closed questions thereby depriving them of an opportunity to extend their answers.

In Part 3, several interlocutors did not ask questions in groups as indicated on the frame card but selected questions somewhat haphazardly. The questions in Part 3 are grouped together thematically and aim to become increasingly difficult. This allows candidates to build on their ideas as this part of the test progresses.

In Part 3, several questions had a follow-up question to encourage candidates to talk more. Some interlocutors failed to ask the second part of the question, and this prevented candidates from developing their ideas more fully and thereby displaying their ability to use more complex language. A number of interlocutors did not ask an adequate number of questions in Part 3; this also prevented candidates from displaying the full range of their language abilities.

Other observations concerning interlocutors

1. Some interlocutors needed to prepare more for the examination and have a clear idea of how the exam was organised and what the questions were.

2. Some interlocutors invented their own questions and/or commented on candidates answers. In such instances, this was to the detriment of the candidate. Interlocutors are required to adhere strictly to the questions on the card, in the order in which they appear.
3. Some interlocutors used a limited number of frames or tended to ask male candidates questions about cars. Interlocutors should use all the frames provided.
4. Some interlocutors used words of encouragement such as 'that's good' and 'that's very interesting'. These should be avoided as they may mislead the candidates about their performance.
5. Some interlocutors did not give candidates' time to formulate their response to a question or paraphrased the questions before they were asked to do so by the candidate. On occasion, interlocutors provided vocabulary or even ideas when candidates faltered, not allowing time for candidates to overcome difficulty independently.
6. Some interlocutors gave more than a minute's preparation time. For reasons of fairness, all candidates should be given the same amount of preparation time.
7. Interlocutors needed to listen to what the candidates were saying to avoid irrelevant or repetitive questions from being asked.
8. Interlocutors needed to check whether a suitable recording of the candidate had been obtained before dispatching the tape for assessment. On occasion, blank discs, partial recordings or recordings at the wrong speed were sent for assessment.

Candidates

If a candidate is speaking quietly, the interlocutor should ask her/him to speak up.

Equipment

Some of the recordings were of very poor quality and it was hard for the assessor to hear what candidates were saying. This applies to both tape and disc recordings. Sometimes there was a lot of machine noise, particularly when the recording level was set too high. On occasion, the interlocutor was more audible than the candidate. This could be due to two factors: the position of the microphone and/or the volume of the recording. It is recommended that the equipment, recording quality and level as well as positioning of microphone be checked carefully before the start of the examination to ensure that the best possible recording of the candidate is obtained.

Room

The room selected for the examination was not always a quiet one, and many distracting noises can be heard on the tapes. Some candidates were also distracted by people moving in/out or around the exam room. This situation is always disadvantageous to the candidate and must be avoided.

Mobile Phones

Interlocutors should remind all candidates to switch off their mobile phones before entering the exam room. It is also requested that interlocutors do the same. In some instances, signals from mobile phones interfered with the recording and made assessment difficult. It is therefore in the interests of candidates for this advice to be followed.

Grade Boundaries

Grade	Max Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Paper mark	30	19	17	14	12	10	8	6	4

Centres are reminded that paper 03 (speaking) is an optional endorsement and it cannot be taken as a separate qualification.

Further copies of this publication are available from
International Regional Offices at www.edexcel.com/international

For more information on Edexcel qualifications, please visit www.edexcel.com
Alternatively, you can contact Customer Services at www.edexcel.com/ask or on + 44 1204 770 696

Edexcel Limited. Registered in England and Wales no.4496750
Registered Office: One90 High Holborn, London, WC1V 7BH