



**General Certificate of Education (A-level)
January 2012**

**English Language and Literature A ELLA2
(Specification 2720)**

Unit 2: Analysing Speech and Its Representation

Report on the Examination

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General

Candidates are required to answer two questions. The first question requires an analytical comparison of unseen spoken texts. Two pieces of speech, one transcribed spontaneous speech, and the second prepared speech or other form of speech representation from a non-literary context, are presented for analysis.

The second section of the paper requires candidates to focus closely on the way speech is used in an extract from the set text they have studied and to consider particular stylistic and thematic matters relevant to the text.

These questions test the ability of candidates to:

- use appropriate terminology to support their analysis
- compare different kinds of spoken texts
- analyse set texts with reference to representation of speech as well as exploration of stylistic and thematic issues
- write fluently and coherently.

Successful candidates:

- showed clear and detailed knowledge and understanding of speech features and their effects
- identified specific features, gave examples of them and explained the effects created
- offered an integrated comparison of the two speech texts
- showed detailed analysis of specific features of language and the effects created
- supported their ideas with examples and comment
- used the appropriate terminology to describe the features they identified
- wrote fluently and accurately
- answered the question.

Less successful candidates:

- offered general comments about speech without giving examples or analysing the effects created
- did not compare the texts in Section A
- did not sustain a clear focus on the question
- offered general comments rather than detailed analysis of the text passage
- ignored the set passages or paid them scant regard and wrote about other parts of the text of their own choosing
- did not focus closely enough on the question
- did not support or illustrate their comments
- did not use a language or terminology appropriate to literary and linguistic study
- showed basic technical inaccuracies in their writing.

Section A: Analysing Speech

Candidates generally found both texts accessible and were able to offer a fair range of relevant comments on the task set. Responses were mostly quite thorough, although many candidates still waste too much precious time by beginning with an often lengthy generalised commentary on context, audience and purpose. Often as much as one side of writing (in a few cases even as much as two sides) was devoted to this where time would have been much more profitably spent starting on some actual comparative analysis. As, often, candidate after candidate employed this approach, it seems that in some centres candidates are specifically prepared to use this way of starting their response. They would be well advised to cut much of this generalised introductory comment and begin answering the question and analysing the texts in detail at a much earlier stage. In any case, points relating

to context, audience and purpose will necessarily be brought out through the analysis and comparisons of the texts.

Both extracts offered opportunities for candidates to display their knowledge of speech and stylistic features, although some continue to ‘feature-spot’ and to miss out the vital explanation and analysis. Some candidates also continue to simply name features without giving examples, or list several features and then give a list of examples without any indication of which examples relate to which features. For example, a number of candidates made comments such as ‘adverbs and adjectives are used here’ and then gave a list of words. This does not help to demonstrate candidates’ ability to identify accurately the features. Some also continue to refer to ‘elision and ellipsis’ as if they are one feature. It was encouraging to see, though, that there were few references to specific theoretical models although there were still a few candidates who persisted in a determination to explain their ideas through the application of Grice or Labov. As ever, this rarely aided the analytical response but frequently hindered it.

Often candidates used a clear comparative framework; others left the comparison as an ‘add on’ or as an incidental aspect of the analysis – and some, inevitably, produced imbalanced analyses – neglecting specific emphasis on context, or attitudes, or spent too long on one extract (usually A) at the expense of a more balanced discussion. There were a number of frequent misconceptions, the most common ones being: Danny was the more dominant speaker in Text A, because he spoke more than Claudia and because Text A was a more spontaneous exchange, so the lexis must be more informal and of higher frequency than in Text B. One other point of concern was the lack of focus sometimes shown on the question of “films” with some very able candidates discussing many features of speech and word choices and relating them solely to attitudes in general, and not in relation to the films in question.

Overall though, more able candidates showed a sophisticated grasp of features of speech and were able to integrate their comparisons to great effect. Analysis of attitudes in these responses was thoughtful and detailed. Weaker candidates were at least able to identify a range of features even if their ability to comment on effects was limited.

Section B: Analysing the Representation of Speech

Question 2: *Great Expectations*

This was a very accessible question, and candidates often engaged with it enthusiastically. Most tackled the topic set well using some evidence from the extract to explore Estella’s attitudes towards Pip – notably, her uncaring attitude, the use of emphasis in the passage, and how questions opened up aspects of their relationship. They often wrote about the emphasis on “my”, the change from “boy” to “man” towards the end, and on the reporting clauses in particular.

Question 3: *Eden Close*

Few responses were seen on this question.

Question 4: *The Lovely Bones*

This continues to prove a very popular text. Good understanding of the relationship was displayed – candidates picking out the exclamations, questions and taboo language for

comment. There were a number of candidates, however, who evidently had a very secure grasp of the characters, but were less successful in using aspects of style or speech features within the extract to enhance their analysis. Some candidates were distracted into commenting on Susie's role as narrator and drifted off the set topic. Overall, though, some very good quality responses were seen.

Question 5: *Strange Meeting*

The candidates who answered on this text showed a sound appreciation of Hill's style of writing and of the broader characterisation of Garrett within the extract. Most grasped the description of the change in Garrett, and selected relevant details to illustrate this. There was also some effective comment on the use of questions within the piece, and the use of direct and indirect speech.

Question 6: *The Caretaker*

The exchange between Mick and Davies was well explored by candidates who obviously had enjoyed the play, but the longer section spoken by Mick was often almost ignored apart from the first line and last two lines. Candidates engaged with the quick-fire dialogue and numerous pauses and ellipses, as well as Mick's terms of address: "Sonny" etc. Some of the best responses were from candidates who understood that the text was a construct and never lost sight of Pinter's choices and intentions in their answers.

Question 7: *All My Sons*

This text has been well received, and overall candidates showed a good grasp of the issues within the play. Candidates demonstrated a sound grasp of characterisation and were able to draw on this knowledge to write convincingly about Kate. Some effective references to the use of stage directions, and the playful tone adopted early on were evident. However, some candidates lapsed into broad commentary on 'character' rather than exploring the extensive opportunities offered by the extract for more detailed analysis.

Question 8: *Othello*

A very popular text and the question produced a wide range of responses. There were some solid responses to this question with most candidates being able to find something relevant to analyse and comment on in the extract. The fact that Othello is reading a letter provoked varied responses from candidates, e.g. he was only pretending to read, or he could not help but overhear Desdemona's comment about "the love I bear to Cassio". Candidates often highlighted the exclamatory outbursts, contrasted with Desdemona's consistent innocence demonstrated by her naïve questions, and Othello's use of the demotic word "mistress".

Some had problems in focusing on what was meant by 'dramatic tension and conflict' and some looked more specifically at various aspects of 'conflict' which was a perfectly valid approach to take. However, despite there being much on which to comment in this extract, there were some who offered only broad commentary or a narrative approach, without looking closely at the stylistic/dramatic features which were in evidence. Many candidates commented on the striking of Desdemona, the use of questions and exclamations, and attempted to comment on the dramatic irony within the scene. Some, interestingly, looked at the use of Lodovico as a dramatic sounding board for the changed relationship between Othello and his wife.

Question 9: *Equus*

Few responses were seen on this text.

Re-sit questions

Question 10: *Enduring Love*

Overall candidates handled this question well. Many candidates commented on different kinds of speech evident within the extract; the veiled threat, the factual information about the gun, the use of questions. Tension was well understood in this extract, and candidates had clearly engaged with the mind-sets of all the characters involved. They liked the reporting clauses, the ellipses, the pauses and silences, the increasing tension, and in particular the behaviour and impact of Xan, eg: “Xan folded his mighty forearms”.

Question 11: *Waiting for Godot*

There were some well-focused responses seen showing a very good grasp of the characters and the use of stage directions and language within the scene, with clear engagement with the text and the see-saw relationship between Estragon and Vladimir. Some candidates, however, presented more descriptive/narrative responses, often despite some recognising a range of features.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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