# Examiners' Report

## June 2012

## GCE English Language & Literature 6EL01 01

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# Introduction

**Unit 1: Exploring Voices in Speech and Writing**

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) involve the exploration of 3 unseen extracts and candidates are required to identify features of spoken language and examine how writers and speakers shape and craft the extracts provided.

**SECTION B**

This section assesses candidates' 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 candidates are then to make links to the broader novel/novella/collection.

This report will provide exemplification of candidates' work, together with tips and/or comments, for a selection of questions. The exemplification will come mainly from questions which required more complex responses from candidates.

## Question 1 (a)

required candidates to explore three unseen extracts provided in the source booklet - a transcript of authentic conversation (used in conjunction with question 1(a), an extract from a blog posted on the Olympic 2012 website, and an extract from Mike Leigh's play script *Abigail's Party* used in conjunction with question (1b).

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

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

**1(a)(i)** was marked out of a maximum 6 marks at AO1 and, although the majority did well, it afforded a 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.

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**SECTION A: DIFFERENT VOICES**

1  Read Texts A, B and C on pages 2–5 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 ...... Ellision

Example ...... " How's "

Feature 2 ...... Voice filled pause

Example ...... " erm "

Feature 3 ...... Overlapping

Example ...... " No layers // If you sure "

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

            (AO1 = 4)

In text A we can find from the text voice filled pauses, "erm". the voice filled pause is put in place to allow the character thinking time. Also within text A there is overlapping. "No layers

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///// you sure", and this creates characters talking over one another within the piece.

**Examiner Comments**

Here the candidate identifies and exemplifies three features, achieving a mark of 6 for (a)(i). At (a)(ii) 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 extended to make this link, as in the following example, the mark awarded could have been doubled.

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

(AO1 = 4)

The filler, 'erm', performs the function of voicing the customer's hesitation as she considers what the hairdresser asked. She is trying to consider what she wants done to her hair - she is probably remembering what she has previously decided about it. It also gives her time to think while she expresses what she wants - 'just a trim' but without layers.

The overlapping shows the job of the hairdresser - she acts 'you sure' as she finds the customer's choice quite surprising since her hair is so thick. The fact that she interrupts shows that the situation is not that formal.

**Examiner Comments**

The candidate's comments link the incidence of spontaneous speech directly to the extract and demonstrate understanding of its function within the exchange itself.

## Question 1 (b)

**Question 1b,** the second component of Q1, links to two unseen extracts provided in the Source Booklet.

Text B was an extract from sports correspondent Alan Hubbard's blog, posted to the Olympic 2012 website; text C was an extract from the script for Mike Leigh's play, *Abigail's Party*. 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 the question. 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. This was particularly true at AO3.

Some 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 **Text B,** most demonstrated awareness of the conventions - linguistic and contextual - of a blog. A significant minority spent time discussing the features that they **expected** to see in a blog but which were not in evidence in the extract provided. Concentrating on omission at the expense of what **is** there can never really score highly.

The majority were able to discuss correctly (and the best cogently) the debate presented on the issue of women's boxing and most attempted to unpick Hubbard's stance on this issue. The more successful either placed Hubbard's view in opposition to those of Khan and Warren or explored the subtleties of political correctness presented in Hubbard's 'apologies'.

Features of spoken language were quite readily spotted. However, the quality of contextualized comment covered a wide range. Some sought (mostly unsuccessfully) to identify East London dialectal features, presumably because of the location of the Games.

The exploration of the play script, **Text C,** was slightly less successful on the whole, and, as such, proved to be a useful discriminator.

Many were able to make sensible comments on the conventions - graphological and generic – of a play script, although in mid to lower band responses these comments were undeveloped. Most tackled the dynamic of the participants well – picking out features of spoken language to illustrate, say, the dominance of Beverly, effectively. There were some interesting comments on the gender dynamic here although some seemed determined to work their interpretation to a feminist agenda.

The best related features to concepts of prosody and phonology and discussed, in an

informed manner, some of the ways in which written language can mimic effects of intonation and stress.

Perhaps the biggest problem was that many candidates seemed unsure of the real purpose of the text with some taking it far too literally, stating, for example, that the play had been written to inform parents about the misdemeanours of their teenage children; others deemed it to be targeted at a teen audience based on the content of the extract.

Only the best offered considered comment of Leigh and his authorial craft and intent, these successful responses managing to comment on how character, suspense and dramatic tension are created by specific language features.

At **AO2**, successful responses explored a range of language features in **both** texts. 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, with some candidates working to what seemed to be a pre-set list of features that they struggled to exemplify. There was a marked confusion at sentence level between simple/minor and ' short' sentences and complex/compound structures. At word level some struggled to differentiate between adjectives and adverbs and applied the term 'specialist lexis/jargon' imprecisely.
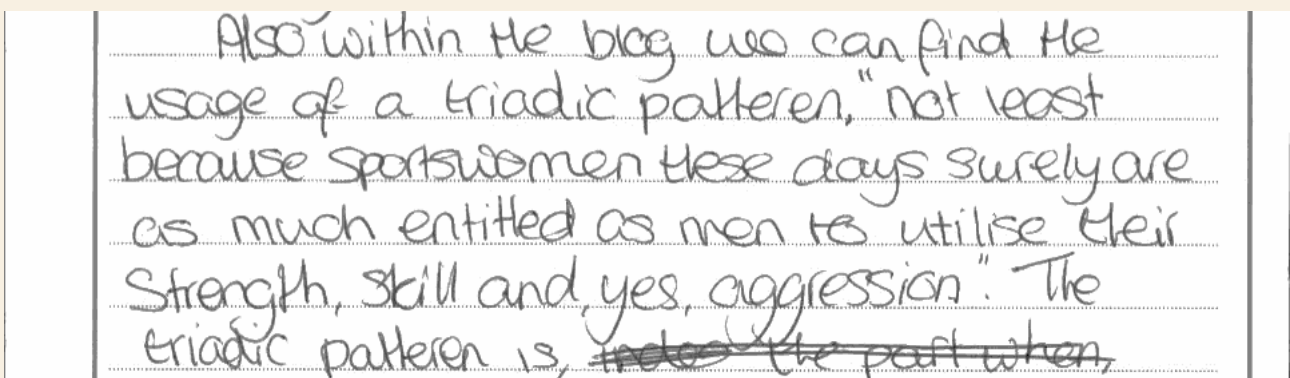
Levels of specific analysis and links between form and function were limited and/or undeveloped.

At **AO3** 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 blog considered the conventions associated with this form of communication and linked this to Hubbard's role as a sports correspondent and the multiple purposes of his post. Successful investigation of the play script considered its multiple audience and linked this to convention and the context of performance.

**It is clearly beneficial for candidates to spend some time considering the generic context of the extract BEFORE plunging into some form of analysis. Understanding this is key to being able to analyse effectively in this section of the paper.**

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

The response picks up on some general language features in both extracts, although exemplification is patchy, and links between form and function limited/undeveloped. As is characteristic of many responses in Band 2 there is greater security with Text B (the blog).

> Also within the blog we can find the usage of a triadic patteren, "not least because Sportswomen these days surely are as much entitled as men to utilise their strength, skill and, yes, aggression". The triadic patteren is, ~~index the part when~~

> "strength, skill and yes aggression". The Triadic pattern creates immediacy to the piece aswell as making more engaging for the reader.

There is a lack of confidence with both the audience and purpose and context of the playscript.

> to this piece. The context being there is a party happening at one Beverly and Lawrence's freinds house. Beverly is

> get check it out. The audience to which this piece could be aimed is to adults with teenage children or even possibly the teenagers themselves. To that the

> the teenagers themselves. To that the purpose is for parents to understand what it's like when they let their teenager have house party and what may worry them and occur. This could also have a purpose to the teenagers to allow them to understand how their parents maybe feeling whilst your having the house party.

The following excerpts are drawn from a response that sits at the mid-range of achievement which offers reasonably competent, if essentially straightforward, investigation.

> of equal length and sentence length. He uses a semantic field of boxing type jargon, for example "gumshield" and "fitness" and there are examples of dexis when he talks about the "ABA championship", this acronym also indicates to us he is knowledgable about the subject. The dexis is acceptable because of

> When Angela is questionning Laurence about
> what he saw he replies "no. no, I saw..."
> this backtracking implies that he is thinking
> back, however as we know Susan is in
> the room, there may be a hidden agenda
> in which involves not trying to worry her, this

The following excerpts are drawn from a response that sits at the mid-upper range of achievement and which offers a well-balanced, accurate and often discriminating investigation and analysis of both extracts.

> is written not only to entertain, but to persuade. The writer is clearly
> opinionated on the subject of women's boxing, he uses the word ~~surly~~
> "surely" to express his opinion confidently, making it difficult for the
> reader to question ~~them~~ his views. He keeps the tone casual so the

This specific application of terminology IS in evidence elsewhere in the response, however.

> couple who have other couples over for the evening. It as employs English comedy with the ~~Aristophan~~ classic male and female roles of couples portrayed - the women asking the men to do something and almost forcing it upon them by using tag questions like " you don't mind, do you ?". This gives comedic value to the text as the audience can

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**Examiner Comments**

There is clear understanding of genre and format here which scores well at AO3. The comments synthesize form and function effectively; and the links between them are evidenced through integrated evidence and analytical comment.

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**Examiner Tip**

Consideration of context is a good place to start with this question.

## Question 2

**SECTION B (Questions 2-8)**

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 the 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).

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.

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.

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 was 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.

**TIP: A detailed exploration of the extract provides a clear and focused platform from which to approach broader considerations. 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.

Many responses could illustrate voice rather than discuss how it was crafted. For example, a less successful response to Q3 (Doyle) could demonstrate the narrator's awareness of the breakdown in his parents' marriage but not show how this was achieved linguistically. 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.

At their best, responses at **AO1** 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.

Less successful responses at **AO1** were those littered with technical error with frequent mis-spelling of key terms. The most significant failing of many less successful responses was a lack of focus on the extract. These provided a few brief comments on the extract followed by what appeared to be a re-worked response on the rest of the text. Ignoring the precise wording of the question was also a frequent failing.

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** 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.

The following excerpts are drawn from a response to Q2, based on *The Bloody Chamber* (Carter). This response falls into the lower range of achievement.

The response as a whole is very thin and such comments as there are lack precision, focus and development.

> is a graceful movement. ~~the~~ Carter is also showing
> us the accent of the narrator by using italics 'attishoo'
> this shows the way that the narrator pronounces
> the word. Carter uses anthropomorphism to give her

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**Examiner Comments**

There is a general awareness of the 'voice' of the cat narrator, together with a sense of Carter's use of typographical structures to convey this. However, the candidate struggles to move beyond the basics of identification and is insecure with terminology.

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**Examiner Tip**

Make sure your understanding of terminology is secure.

In The Tigers Bride She describes the tiger to the reader to give us the image that he is ~~sort~~ rough ~~and towing~~ by using lexis like 'harsh' and 'ripped' which is ~~weak~~ unlike a traditional fairytale.

## Question 7

The following excerpts are drawn from a response to Question 7, based on *Cloudstreet* (Winton). This response falls into the mid-upper range of achievement.

This response is substantially more successful than the response to Carter. It does, however, represent a significant minority in that its fluency and critical understanding is not fully matched by the specific analysis of the evidence offered. This results in a depression of the mark awarded at AO1.

This extract, this conversation, is arguably a very pivotal moment in the book in which Quick and Oriel, who do not typically engage in deep, emotional conversations about family life, finally open up to each other and realise their familial experiences are very similar, as well as their overall experiences in life, foretold in Cloud-Street.

Firstly, Quick's evident ~~jeal~~ jealousy of Fish, his brother, as he is always the 'favourite' and centre of attention due to his disability as a consequence of surviving ~~drowh~~ potentially drowning. He does not, in contrast to Oriel, have a strong religious and God-fearing element to his personality. He mocks this; 'Honour thy Retarded Brother as your number one commandment' emotionally expressing ~~how~~ how fed up he is with having to be in Fish's shadow, and using 'commandment' ~~toreferto~~ to make reference to how important this aspect therefore must be to Oriel. Furthermore, his exclamation of 'Jesus Christ!' clearly a bid for attention or reaction from Oriel as a mother. When this offends her; 'Don't say that', he is briefly silenced and decides

instead to demonstrate how similar their familial experiences have been, to perhaps bond with her and deepen the tone of the conversation.

unstead to demonstrate how similar their familial experiences have been, to perhaps bond with her and deepen the tone of the conversation.

In addition, this extract shows how different these two characters, despite being related, are; and this is a prevalent theme in this book; the difference between parent and child and their experiences. Oriel and Lester are 'God-fearing people', and try to transmit this to their children. Their name as a family is very religious and biblical, ~~almost making reference~~ suggesting they are the 'Lambs' of God; they are traditional, and work hard, and thus their children believe in the same values, and, in contrast to the ~~park~~ Pickles, 'at least have each other' at the end of the day, and the stability of a loving family.

## Question 8

The following excerpts are drawn from a response to Question 8, based on *The Dubliners* (Joyce).

This response falls into the upper range of achievement.

> him. Joyce's use of colour imagery "grey gleaming river", and the reference to the dark "near him in the darkness" and and the use of pathetic fallacy "cold and gloomy" within the extract help create a sombre feel and reflect Duffy's feelings.

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**Examiner Comments**

There is a synthesised exploration of the extract itself with sustained focus on the question, and analysis that extends beyond the obvious to reflect the subtleties of Joyce's narrative and the connotations of his setting.

In The Sisters, the death of Father Flynn also changes the boy's perspective. The use of first person narrative perspective shows that the boy's older self realises that the priest's death 'freed' him whereas his younger self does not quite realise this. "as if I had been freed from something by his death" The boy feels like he should be sad, but because the priest trapped him, he does not feel this. The use of the religious language by the narrator shows how the priest indoctrinated him. "Euchanist" "ceremonies of the Mass" This is why the boy's perspective changes as his imagination has been freed by the death of the priest. The narrator also describes how the priest looked. "uncover his big discoloured teeth" " tongue lie upon his lower lip" This creates a repellent image of the priest, presenting him negatively. The boy admits it made him "feel uneasy in the beginning" suggesting he perhaps knew something was slightly strange about the priest all along.

Before Duffy reads the newspaper article which presents Mrs Sinico objectively, he eats some food. "morsel of corned beef and cabbage" "deposit a cold white grease" Thus Joyce uses food imagery to reflect Duffy's personality and meagre existence. It is also quite ironic as if he hadn't parted with Mrs Sinico then his life may have not have been contained to so meagre. Also it is ominous, as it presents him negatively just before he reads the article. It also links with Lenehan

# Paper Summary

The paper as a whole ran relatively smoothly in this series. There was clear evidence of excellent teaching and preparation. The engagement of candidates was clear to see and very pleasing.

The majority of candidates timed their handling of the paper well, dividing their time sensibly between components. There were relatively few rubric errors, continuing the pattern of year on year improvement in this respect.

In Section A candidates generally achieved the required balance in their investigation of extracts. Some should still consider issues of context more fully when exploring the unseen extracts that constitute question 1(b) and offer comment on how the factors of production and reception influence the language used in the texts. Terminology was generally applied in a reasonable range with a clear improvement in the application of terms to features evident in the texts. Common confusions include:

- ellipsis/elision

- simple/complex/compound

- adjective/adverb

- tense/perspective

In Section B the majority moved beyond the extract to offer considered comment on the wider novel/novella/collection. Most know their chosen texts very well and their enjoyment of these texts is obvious. There is excellent teaching in evidence across the range of texts in this section.

Some candidates failed to offer the detail expected in terms of the investigation of the extract, moving to what seemed like a re-working of a prepared response, which led in some cases to a lack of focus on the central issues of the task. This is a risky, largely unsuccessful approach and should be discouraged. Others offered sound literary/critical investigation of the text, but fell short of analytical comment on authorial intention and craft.

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