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**General Certificate of Education (A-level)
January 2011**

**English Language and Literature   ELLA2
A**

(Specification 2720)

**Unit 2: Analysing Speech and Its
Representation**

Report on the Examination

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 seemed to find both texts accessible and were able to offer a fair range of relevant comments on the task set. Most were able to identify several features and comment on them, but there were still some candidates who wrote very generalised responses to the question, and only broadly related their comments to specific details. There is still work to be done to stress the importance of identifying specific points, giving an example of each and then commenting on/analyzing/evaluating effects created. In order to achieve marks candidates must analyse language, not simply spot features. It is also important that they avoid combining several features, such as 'adjectives, adverbs and personal pronouns are used here' followed by a quotation that contains the features mentioned. Candidates need to demonstrate to examiners that they know terminology and can use it accurately rather than adopt a 'blanket' approach and hope the examiner can

deduce their meaning. Overall there was a broadly sound use of terminology for word classes, although some muddled adverbs and adjectives and, as ever, there was confusion over the use of ellipsis and elision, and over the correct application of 'low' or 'high' frequency lexis. Some candidates wasted opportunities to make relevant comments by referring to 'what is not there' in the respective texts, and there is still a tendency by a relatively small number of candidates to refer to Grice's Maxims or Labov without making meaningful links to the details within the text. It is also worth noting that some candidates become so involved in trying to identify the 'dominant' speaker or discussing the spontaneous speech as some kind of 'power struggle' that they fail to identify the key features of the interaction. Only rarely are these references successful or helpful in helping candidates establish points about 'attitudes' or 'context' within the speech interactions.

Many candidates also spend far too much time at the beginning of their answers writing in general terms about context, audience and purpose, or by simply describing what the texts are about, sometimes even repeating information given in the question. Time is precious in the exam and would be far better utilized by candidates starting their detailed comparative analysis as soon as possible. Broad and generalised comments attract few marks.

There were relatively few really 'integrated' analyses, combining thoughtful comments on features linked to attitude and context in a way which threw light on how speech/language works, and there was some imbalance in the coverage of the texts. Candidates sometimes wrote more fully on Text A but struggled to identify key features of Text B. However, some candidates did succeed in producing detailed, perceptive, comparative analyses dealing fully with both texts. There were also some mis-readings sometimes related to the gender of Gyles Brandreth, or to the relationship between Milly and her mother, with some seeing a decided lack of interest in the mother's response to Milly's enthusiasm.

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*

Very few texts were seen on this question.

Question 3: *Enduring Love*

The candidates who answered this question generally demonstrated fair knowledge of the overall text, and, where they applied themselves to the extract, were able to make sound points about the 'attitude of the police'. There was plenty of textual material to choose from in this extract to answer the question and so it was surprising that a number of candidates all but ignored the actual question of the police attitudes towards Joe's complaints, and wrote about Parry's behaviour towards Joe, or Joe's feelings as he spoke to the police. Less able students failed to pick out clear points about 'speech' or style.

Question 4: *Eden Close*

Few responses were seen on this text.

Question 5: *The Lovely Bones*

This text and question evoked a good range of positive responses. Candidates picked out nuances of tone in the extract, and offered some thoughtful analysis of how the language used added to the sense of tension. There was often a good grasp of how the relationships were captured by Sebold's narrative techniques and the way speech features highlighted changes in attitude.

Question 6: *Waiting for Godot*

Of the responses on this text a good number demonstrated a clear grasp of the relationships evident in the extract and across the wider text. Valid detail was highlighted from the extract and there were some thoughtful responses to stage directions, although some responses veered towards discussion of the philosophical elements of the play at the expense of stylistic detail.

Question 7: *The Caretaker*

There was a wide range of responses on this text with most understanding the nature of the scene and the relationships described. Many highlighted specific details from the stage directions and also were able to comment on the variety of dramatic effects which were on show in the scene. Specific references to the use of repetition or exclamation or taboo language were picked out, and also the variation in tone through the scene – especially as these elements added to the 'sense of menace'. However, some candidates lost focus on the 'menace' aspect of the question and drifted off into other areas of 'character' or issues to do with 'control'. Some failed to make use of the wide opportunities for comment in the scene and offered generalised reactions to character, or provided broad commentary on how the scene evolved.

Question 8: *Othello*

Most candidates had few problems with identifying the horror in this extract and stronger candidates highlighted the use of exclamations, the threatening vocabulary, stage directions and heaven related imagery to illustrate their points. However, the idea of 'mounting' horror was often ignored or was sometimes viewed as either audience response to what was happening on stage, or the realisation of certain characters to the situation (namely, Emilia, Iago or Othello). While both approaches could work well and lead to some perceptive analysis, sometimes candidates tended to narrate rather than analyse. Examination of Iago's mounting horror as he realises that he is about to be found out was generally well done. At the lower end, though, there was still too much broad commentary on what happens in the scene, commentary on character-related issues, recourse to favoured themes or efforts to describe 'dramatic irony'. Many had difficulty in analysing 'a sense of mounting horror' and how specific dramatic techniques contributed to this.

Question 9: *Equus*

Few responses were seen on this text.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the Results statistics page of the AQA Website.