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## Examiners' Report January 2011

### GCE English Language & Literature 6EL01 01

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January 2011

Publications Code US026298

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## Introduction

Unit 6EL01 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 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries.

SECTION A (questions 1a and 1b) involves the exploration of 3 unseen extracts and students are required to identify features of spoken language and examine how writers and speakers shape and craft the extracts provided.

SECTION B assesses 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 they are then to make links to the broader novel/novella/collection.

### Question 1(a)

Question 1 required candidates to explore three unseen extracts provided in the source booklet - a transcript of authentic conversation (used in conjunction with question 1a), an extract from an internet film forum linked to the teen horror series *Twilight*, and an extract from Mark Haddon's novel *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time* (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 teacher and her student) 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**. 1ai was marked out of a maximum 6 marks at AO1 and although the majority did well it did cover the full range in terms of marks allocated. 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.

1aii had a maximum score of 4 marks (again at AO1). Responses here also covered the full range with the most common failing being the generic definition of the given feature with no specific link to its function within the extract.

This response was awarded a mark of 6 for q1ai and 4 for q1aii.

#### SECTION A: DIFFERENT VOICES

1 Read Texts A, B and C on pages 2–4 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 Repetition

Example "sit down(.) sit down"

Feature 2 Stressed word

Example 'not'

Feature 3 Filler

Example 'erm'

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

(AO1 = 4)

T repeats "sit down" to urge S to <sup>do</sup> the action. T

is ~~clearly~~ making sure S understands the command and to follow it. ~~4~~

T stresses the word 'not' to emphasize that S's work is not on the usb stick. ~~4~~ T's patience ~~is~~ frustration is starting to show through his tone of voice.



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Examiner Comments

Features are accurately identified and exemplified. Comments relate the chosen features directly to their function in the extract.

This response was awarded a mark of 4 for q1ai.

### SECTION A: DIFFERENT VOICES

1 Read Texts A, B and C on pages 2–4 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 Timed pause

Example "Sit down (.) sit down"

Feature 2 Filler

Example "Erm"

Feature 3 Overlapping

Example "I'm sure I'll // matt <sup>it's</sup> ~~is~~ not there"



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Examiner Comments

There is a careless error in the labelling of the micropause.

### Question 1(b)

This second component of Q1 links to two unseen extracts provided in the Source Booklet. Text B was an extract from an **online film forum** and Text C was an extract from a **novel**. 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 fewer of the "rubric" type problems with this question this time round. 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. There were still some rather generalised assumptions about audience such as only middle class people read novels and that people above teen age can't understand emoticons!

Text B proved to be generally more accessible than Text C which provided a key discriminator for this question.

Higher band answers presented a balanced 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 **Extract B** most demonstrated awareness of the conventions- linguistic and contextual - of internet forums and of the two extracts it was generally the more accessible. The majority were able to correctly (the best, cogently) define the (primarily teen female) audience. The context and genre conventions of the forum were clearly closer to the experience of most candidates than those of the fiction extract. Mid-lower band responses tended to list/spot the features without actually considering their function. Better responses were able to identify the differences between the three messages and be more specific about the way in which they related to spoken language. The most impressive could go that little bit further and relate the features to concepts of prosody and phonology, and discuss in an informed manner some of the ways in which written language can mimic effects of intonation, stress and interactivity

Exploration of **Extract C**, taken from Haddon's novel, was less successful on the whole, and, as such, proved to be a useful discriminator. A significant minority clearly did not appreciate that the context was fictional and wrote about the narrator as if he was a real person, like the contributors to the forum, rather than a construct of the author. Those who saw that this was a literary work were much better at tackling this extract as they could see the way the author had crafted the narrative voice to represent aspects of Asperger's syndrome.

More than a few referred to Asperger's as a 'mental illness' or a 'disease' and judged the language rather than analysing it. More successful answers examined reported language of Siobhan and the indication this gave of the relationship between her and Christopher.

Some did not see the novel as an entertainment piece but rather an informative work only of interest to people who know someone with AS.

It is clearly beneficial for candidates to spend some time considering the generic contexts of the pieces they are asked to write about before plunging into some form of analysis. Understanding these is the key to being able to analyse effectively in this section of the paper.

The following excerpts are drawn from a reasonably successful response that achieved a mark of 16 for both AO2 and AO3.

The use of the deictics "this" and "it" suggest that readers of the online forum understand the subject in hand, that it does not need to be explained. References to the <sup>subject</sup> "New moon", "Bella", "Edward", all suggest a mutual understanding between the writers of text B and the audience.



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Examiner Comments

Comments on audience are well supported and linked to context.

In 'Post 2' a strong sense of excitement almost transcends out of the page on to the reader, through the excessive use of 'o's in ("I LOVED IT SOOOOOO MUCH !!!...") this informal/colloquial quantifiers written in capitals also ~~refer~~ shows her joy and naming this person as a 'true' fan.



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Examiner Comments

There is developed comment on typographical convention with links to how this is used to mimic intonation/stress. The final phrase touches upon the *elitism*/rivalry that pervades the text.

The use of the personal pronoun I re-instates that this piece is a personal account from "Christopher [a] 15 year old [who] has Asperger's syndrome." The extract opens with a short simple sentence "I find people confusing" which ultimately sums up his feeling on the extract as whole. The

adjective "confusing" makes the audience laugh as they probably feel the same way but also sympathetic as they remember who's account this extract is from, creating a sort of bathos.

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Examiner Comments

There is greater assurance in the handling of the fictional extract - a key discriminator for this question.

Despite the minor slip the candidate clearly appreciates that the narrative voice is a construct and demonstrates an awareness of authorial craft and generic convention.



Humorous anecdotes are integrated within the extract, where Christopher refers to "Siobhan" assuming we the audience know who she is, almost placing us at the scene. "It can mean <sup>1</sup>I want to do sex with you <sup>1</sup>" the use of the inverted commas implies speech almost spoken out loud but also depicts his character to be someone who holds on to Siobhan's every word, as he says "Siobhan also says" the quotation 'also' suggest Siobhan is his helper but also his character to listen.



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Examiner Comments

There is appreciation of the character of Siobhan as a device and some pertinent comment on Haddon's method in this respect. The focus on aspects of voice is also worthy.

The following excerpts are drawn from a response that sits at the mid range of achievement which offers reasonably competent, if essentially straightforward, investigation. As is typical of many responses in this range, there is greater confidence - and competence - with the handling of Text B.

Firstly having analysed the three posts, parallelism has been used. Each post begins with 'I loved'. This shows a repeated structure and indicates a positive beginning to the reviews. Within post 1 the use of superlative adjectives have been employed. The words 'most' and 'I've ever had!' suggests an experience to the highest degree. This reinforces to the readers an impact of how entertaining Twilight was to see.

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Examiner Comments

The response starts well - with some accurate comment on features and some linking of form to function and context.

Secondly, each post employs exclamatory sentence moods. Taking post 2 as an example 'I LOVED IT SOOOO MUCH!!!!'. The use of exclamation marks emphasise of the great feeling of strong emotion and feelings conveyed.

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Examiner Comments

There is awareness of the use of punctuation to mimic spoken delivery, but comments fall short of, for example, the use of capitalisation in combination with the use of exclamation marks.

Firstly the text begins with a simple sentence 'I find people confusing'. This suggests that the writer is saying their opinion while involving the reader and therefore this implies that the writer is sharing a piece of information with the reader, which may foreshadow events that may occur later on within the text.

Within the first ~~paragraph~~ of the novel we can already see that the writer has used structure well. 'The first main reason' and 'The second main reason'. This implies that the writer has focused reasons.

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Examiner Comments

Although there is a worthy attempt to offer comment on structure and sequence the candidate is struggling to separate writer from narrator here.

The following excerpts are drawn from a response that sits at the lower range of achievement. There is greater security with TEXT B as is characteristic of a response at this level and the candidate was able to offer more detail than in their exploration of TEXT C (the Haddon novel) where comments were undeveloped and tended to observe/describe.

It picks upon some general language features in both extracts, although exemplification is patchy and links between form and function limited/undeveloped.

Capitalisation: is used couple of times in  
the messages for example, ~~"I loved it so~~  
"I LOVED..." which shows the importance  
of the word and how it's stressed out.

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Examiner Comments

There is a **general** awareness how, in the forum, typography is used in written language to mimic the effects of intonation and stress.

The posts are aimed at people who would like to see the film as it gives an overview of how good or bad the film is. The people who is most likely to view this online film forum is people who has watched the film, to leave a comment or people who wants to read reviews of the film to see it.

The messages are informal and written in colloquial speech as the audience and the people who has written it are not at an old age as the film reviewed is aimed at younger audience.


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Examiner Comments

There is recognition of the audience and the general purpose of the postings (and the forum) but these comments lack precision and development.

The audience of the novel may be from teenagers to adults, or even maybe people who has Asperger's Syndrome. of the novel is to entertain and tell a story but it may also be informative as it gives some information about how people with Asperger's Syndrome think.


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Examiner Comments

There is general awareness of the potential audience for the novel and a sense of its dual purpose but this becomes confused as the response progresses.

The writer includes examples of metaphors in the novel to make it clear what metaphors are. The examples of metaphors are in bold and spaced out which makes it stand out. Words in Greek are used to describe where the word metaphor has come from.

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Examiner Comments

The candidate appears to be seeking evidence to support their assumptions about the informative nature of the novel here and the literal interpretation typifies the struggle many candidates had with this text in particular.

## Question 2

### SECTION B (Q 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 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).

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.

At their best, responses 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.

In higher band responses there was a degree of confidence in consideration of structure, form and language.

They commented closely on the critical detail of the extract and used this as a base from which to explore the text as a whole. 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.

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 were 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.

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. 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

Ignoring the precise wording of the question was also a frequent failing of mid-lower band responses. The requirement to consider the 'manipulation' of the narrative voice was, in mid-band responses, taken as an invitation to illustrate the voice rather than discuss how it is crafted. A case in point was the Carter question where the standard answer was able to demonstrate the narrator's awareness of the consequences of her marriage, but not show how this was achieved. Better answers were able to link changes in voice to specific literary and linguistic techniques. Candidates who understood the difference between description and analysis were able to score much higher marks. Some responses seemed to be rehearsing learned information without being able to relate it to the text. So, for example, most could comment on the black vernacular of Celie's voice in Q4 but only the better answers were able to discuss how it contributed to the creation of her voice. Some candidates simply saw it as an example of impoverished, or 'incorrect', language, without seeing its importance to

Celie's sense of self in the novel. Occasionally, candidates would attempt to bring in frameworks which were of marginal relevance to the text. The most frequent example of this was the invoking of Grice's maxims in contexts where they were clearly not helpful.

The best responses, as always, were able to see how the wider movements of the texts were reflected in the detail of the extracts, and more importantly, how this related to the concept of 'voice'. All candidates need to be reminded, of course, that the quality of any answer is improved by fluency, coherence and relevance. This is where Grice's maxims are important.



### Question 3

The following excerpts are drawn from a response that falls into the upper range of achievement. It is a response to Q3, based on *Paddy Clarke ha ha ha* (Doyle).

There is competence in exploration of the extract which shows critical awareness and a sustained focus on the question.

Paddy reacts to his parents' arguments innocently and with what appears to be a confused, troubled mind. Doyle's sentence "On the Stairs" to "in the kitchen" is useful as he has created the idea that Paddy can't switch off from his parents' arguments, <sup>and</sup> that it follows him everywhere, resulting in him rocking ~~is~~ on the Stairs, in bed and other places. Combining this with Paddy's word "hate", this opening to <sup>the</sup> extract goes about way to show how disturbed Paddy is.

Doyle also has Paddy focus on his parents. We see this by the repeated use of pronouns "He cleaned" and "He didn't" and "He knew". This use of pronouns signifies an intense monitoring of the situation. This theme that Paddy is <sup>an</sup> outsider, ~~is~~ <sup>in</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>on</sup> his parents' relationship "they're the same" shows how helpless Paddy feels.



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Examiner Comments

There is a clear sense of authorial intent and crafting. Exemplification is accurate, and links to the generation of the voice and perception of the boy as narrator are sound.

This goes a long way to emphasise the distress Paddy has at his parents arguing, because Paddy picks up on every little thing. We see this later in the book when he watches Da read the newspaper p208 "he wasn't reading". Paddy picks up on ~~the fact~~ that he notices there is something wrong because it isn't normal for people to pretend to read the newspaper. This sends signals an alert in Paddy and he knows there's something wrong.

Douglas enhances this <sup>notion</sup> further by Paddy revealing details. The details Paddy thinks are almost an after thought of original topic "At least an hour before now". The details show Paddy's child's mind is receptive and picking up on arbitrary things; this how children grow up and learn. The "Picking" in Extract 154 is evidence of the detrimental effect his parents arguments are having on Paddy. It isn't healthy for Paddy to be subjected to these disagreements.



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Examiner Comments

There is judicious selection of material from across the novel with clear links established, and analysed, with the extract and the question as a whole.

Paddy's perceptive Mind is often confused. This is due to his ~~lack~~ lack of development and awareness of the world. He doesn't understand the significance of certain actions. For example P216 Paddy's sees Ma leave the car but he is confused. Paddy asks "Has she gone for

99's?". This shows how Paddy is perceptive but his mind is restricted. This scene is very interesting as first it has a broken message Ma returns to the car due to her acknowledgement of Cathy's health and her responsibilities to the children; "It was too wet for Cathy". This contrasts with P289 when Da comes. Da doesn't have such deep ties to the children as Ma and so he has that option of leaving. This signifies Ma's trapped in the relationship as she puts the children's interests before hers.



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Examiner Comments

The response offers critical and focused comment which ranges broadly and is well integrated across the response. There is a confidence that enables points to be linked across the novel rather than a chronological/sequential analysis.

### Question 6

The following excerpts are drawn from a response that falls into the mid-upper range of achievement. It is significantly more successful than the exemplar response to Joyce. It sustains clear focus on the central issues of the task and affords systematic exploration of the extract, and moves with a degree of focus across the wider novella. It is representative of a significant number of responses that confined themselves to a 'compare and contrast' exercise between Martin as portrayed in the extract and the Martin of the 'Heil Hitler!' letter. While in themselves most of these answers were moderately successful, the higher banded responses distinguished themselves by commenting upon the development of characterisation and theme before and after these two exchanges.

Taylor clearly states Martin's perception of Grizelle through ~~his~~ own phrases. "She was made... for luxury and for devotion and the charming & beautiful life," Martin describes her using ~~words~~ <sup>lexis</sup> that connote independence & positivity. And the way Martin lists these descriptions are syndetic. You can feel that he is overflowing of admiration. More ~~short~~ short noun phrases follow 'Gentle, brave soul is in her dark eyes'. It is a metaphor of Grizelle being a strong and cunning woman, and that her eyes hold charisma and power. It can also reveal that Martin remembers ~~her~~ Grizelle's appearance and ~~that he is~~ his attraction to them.

Simile 'strong as iron' is followed by a conjunction 'and very daring too' portrays Martin's ~~more~~ immense observation to detail. He repeats that Grizelle is 'strong' and adds with an adverb 'very' that she is daring, ~~while~~ Strong and daring has similar meanings and both

Connote strength. He renews Griselle's personality and appearance in these declarative/~~simple~~ descriptive sentences. Taylor purposely bombarded the reader with these condensed sentences to ~~create a~~ <sup>present</sup> ~~wonderful~~ Griselle's character.



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Examiner Comments

The response identifies a range of linguistic and literary devices that construct Martin's remembered affection - and attraction - for Griselle. There is a clear sense of authorial craft here.

The perception of Martin of Griselle changes emotionally. ~~Through the~~ ~~lexis he~~ he uses a semantic field of lexis that connotes negativity 'foul', 'old', 'poor'. His view of Griselle as a 'strong' and fine woman is now reduced to someone worn out. The phrase 'old woman' depicts age not maturity, his view of Griselle physically <sup>was</sup> also changed, he's no longer attracted to her. In fact he is more interested on himself and constantly talks about Elsa's well being.



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Examiner Comments

The response offers clear points of contrast in Martin's attitude towards Griselle with accurate investigation of method and effect.

### Question 8

The following extract is drawn from a response that falls into the lower range of achievement. It is a response to Q8, based on *The Dubliners* (Joyce).

It is representative of a significant minority of responses that struggle to sustain focus on the specific requirements of the question. It seems to be an attempt to rework a 'rehearsed' response and is self-penalising as a result.

'The colour grey appears throughout *Dubliners* and it produces many negative connotations. The word 'paralysis' is very relevant as the priest has ~~the~~ said to have died of paralysis but the boy is also <sup>shown</sup> ~~seen~~ to be paralysed in the story <sup>as</sup> he trapped ~~with~~ as the priest filled his mind with all the religious terminology.



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Examiner Comments

The response (as a whole) persistently digresses into a discussion of the theme of paralysis.



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Examiner Tip

Students need to be reminded to answer the question and not just write about what they know/have revised.

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