

GENERAL COMMENTS

Student performances were generally very good. Outstanding students had obviously understood the assessment criteria and their performance showed evidence of thorough preparation.

The three parts of this examination are designed to assess students' knowledge and skills in using their language orally in linguistically and culturally appropriate ways. Part 1 is designed to bring out their informal conversation skills and in Part 2 students' ability to choose and present a topic suitable for a report and discussion is assessed. Students will benefit from teacher guidance in the choice and research of topics. Part 3 assesses students' ability to develop the content of the role-play and demonstrate their oral persuasive skills. Students need to practise their pronunciation carefully as mispronunciation of certain letters with sounds peculiar to the Tamil language can result in lack of clarity of meaning. Students also need to acquire a wide range of vocabulary and sentence structures to be able to articulate their thoughts and ideas. Students employed body language effectively, for example varying facial expression, nodding or shaking their head, using fingers to list arguments. They also produced a variety of utterances such as monosyllables for emphatic 'yes' or 'no' interjections to show joy or exasperation and succinct phrases.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Part 1 – General conversation

Most students were able to engage in a natural conversation and seemed to be relaxed. Students were able to talk about a range of topics and were well prepared on selected areas of the given topics. Students are assessed on their capacity to deal with the content of the conversation and attention is paid to the relevance of their utterances and quality of the conversation about three different areas listed in the study design. Students are expected to show their ability to develop aspects of at least one of these areas and thus demonstrate previous reflection. Generally, responses to matters concerning family appeared to be prepared responses. When topics like leisure and future aspirations were taken up, however, students were able to give considered responses and expand on one of the topics.

Part 2 – Report and discussion

Students chose a variety of topics ranging from hobbies to youth issues. Some successful topics were: damage caused to the environment by the use of plastic, Australia and the refugee problem, and the position of women in Tamil society as depicted in Tamil films. Most students showed good preparation and were aware of time constraints. The more able students were able to defend their point of view and demonstrated a thorough knowledge of their chosen topic. Opinions expressed on IVF and motherhood for unmarried women, for example, were effectively justified by appropriate arguments in the discussion that followed the report. A few students had not researched their topic thoroughly and were not in a position to engage in an enlightening discussion; they could only repeat what they had mentioned in their report. If the report is carefully structured to include important information and express student's opinion but withholding some examples and evidence, the student will be able to carry on a meaningful, sustained discussion. Some reports were delivered monotonously like memorised speeches and no attempt was even made at eye contact, until the discussion began. Improvement is needed in this area.

Part 3 – Situational role-play

Students used their preparation time well and were confident about the purpose of the role-play. They were able to convince/persuade their partners using culturally appropriate language, register and tone. The more able students showed good negotiation skills, as they would explain the situation to their partner, and suggest a course of action. Negative responses were successfully staved off using a variety of persuasive strategies ranging from pleading, appealing to emotion, reasoning out, and arriving at a compromise solution. The less successful students could only plead and repeat their request.

All parts of the task

Students showed good control of language and could speak fluently. A few students fumbled for words and there were one or two students who had good control of the language but were not very well prepared. They relied on their language ability to talk their way through, rather than give considered responses they could substantiate.

LOTE: Tamil GA 3: Written examination

GENERAL COMMENTS

Most students handled all parts of the examination well and achieved good results. Students showed familiarity with different discourse forms and generally conformed to prescribed word limits. It was evident that some students had been well prepared for this paper, while others were not.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Paper 1 – Processing spoken information

While most students were able to select relevant information, a few were not able to use this information to produce a sustained, comprehensive piece in their own words, to answer Part B which was a radio announcement.

Paper 2

Part A

Students had to select one task from a list of four tasks. Students who did well in this part, selected a task which was of interest to them and showed evidence of a good understanding of the demands of the task. They planned their writing with audience, purpose and the type of discourse form in mind and structured their piece of writing using appropriate form and organisation. Less successful students wrote at random, paying little attention to the requirements of the task.

Part B

Some students clearly lacked practice in this part of the examination. Some obviously fluent writers found it hard to integrate relevant ideas from the given texts and produce their own independently worded text in a given discourse form. Students who had sufficient practice were able to score well in this part and showed their ability to read texts with a certain purpose in mind, gather relevant points needed for the given task and link ideas from the three texts to produce their responses. There was a high standard among the more able students.

Paper 3 – Discussing a theme

(completed by interstate students)

Students' performance in this paper was of a high standard. Only one student answered this paper in English. The works chosen had been carefully selected and students showed a good understanding of the texts. Students chose tasks from both themes and their responses were backed by references to texts they had studied. One noticeable feature of responses was that all the students who selected Question 2, wrote in support of the view expressed in the task and approached the issue in a narrow manner. Students might be encouraged to have an open mind and to feel confident in expressing views which may not conform to the 'norm'. Generally, students enjoyed exploring the themes and using different resources to research their topics.