

LOTE: Turkish GA 2: Oral examination

GENERAL COMMENTS

Most students were clearly aware of the procedures for the oral examination. Students had been adequately prepared apart from a few who found it challenging due to inadequate preparation. Some students were very nervous and anxious and rushed through while others overcame this anxiety in the early stages of the general conversation. The best way to overcome the nervousness is to be well prepared, use cue cards and make eye contact with the assessors. In order to enhance their performance students should try to prepare themselves psychologically for the encounter with the assessors and develop strategies to overcome their fears and anxiety.

Part 1 – General conversation

Overall, students performed very well in this section. All five areas were easily covered although some responses sounded like recitations, rather than natural conversation. While it is essential to prepare for this part of the task, students need to be aware that their responses should sound spontaneous. They cannot rely on prepared statements. Some common problems included the use of English expressions instead of their Turkish equivalent, in particular the vocabulary relating to subjects studied. Most students were confident in responding to questions and comments on general topics.

Part 2 – Report and discussion

Most students prepared excellent reports which were well structured and successfully presented. However, care should be taken with some report topics which do not lend themselves to subsequent discussion. Some reports lacked adequate information while others showed no evidence of research. The use of visual materials was important in generating and conveying ideas. Some successful report titles included ‘change in family roles’ ‘hypnosis’ ‘marriage’ ‘euthanasia’ ‘capital punishment’ and ‘global warming’.

The most successful reports were based on well-selected topics that allowed students to demonstrate their oral skills. Such students did not recite their report nor did they rely heavily on their notes.

Part 3 – Situational role-play

For the purposes of the role-play most students satisfactorily assumed the roles they were assigned. Less successful students, however, made an awkward start, had frequent repetitions and were not able to advance the exchange with spontaneous responses.

All parts of the task

Students need to expand their vocabulary and sentence structures to be able to converse comfortably. In this way unnecessary repetition or pauses will be avoided. The use of simplistic vocabulary and grammar can, to a certain extent, be overcome with extensive use of the language prior to the examination.

The most common errors noted this year were inaccurate grammatical structures especially the referential and past tenses. Incorrect use of noun cases, phrasal and idiomatic expressions also featured as common problems. Direct translations from English weakened the students’ performance during the examination.

Despite the examination conditions, students on the whole, coped well and were able to successfully request clarification or information in Turkish, when necessary. Other students were either unable or reluctant to take the initiative in the role-play. Ample opportunities were provided for all students to take control of the scenario by asking questions, making suggestions, offering solutions and linking with the assessors.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Most students attempted all three papers and the quality of responses was reflected through the range of grades according to criteria and marking guidelines.

Paper 1 – Processing spoken information

Part A – Tasks on the two spoken passages

Few students were able to complete Section A of the paper correctly and receive the highest ratings. Most chose to respond in Turkish rather than English. Almost every student answered Question 4 Passage 2, correctly, although in the same question many misunderstood the term ‘colour faded’ and interpreted it as ‘heavy colour’.

Some students wrote the correct answers in the ‘Notes’ section on the lower half of the page but did not transfer them to the space provided for the answers and so could not be awarded marks. In Section B, students created generally interesting texts.

Part B – Task drawing on both passages

Most students did not provide their own title but used the title of the newspaper column ‘Fashion for Youth’. They also used irrelevant information from Section A in the writing of the article. A small percentage linked relevant information from Part A and B to create a good response. Some wrote a composition instead of an article as required. Overall, students wrote interesting articles using an appropriate heading, introduction, body and conclusion in well-organised paragraphs. Very few gained the highest marks for their responses. Results were spread from very high to low rather than in the good to excellent range.

Many students used effective expressions in their texts, with a very good range of interesting vocabulary. They expressed ideas using their own words.

Paper 2 – Reorganising information

Part A – Writing in Turkish

All students attempted this section but overall they did not answer the questions in depth. Question 4 was the most popular question, followed by Question 2, 1 and 3.

In some cases students’ responses were quite short even though they seemed able to express complex ideas and their Turkish was of high quality and were capable of writing more. The necessary creative skills were not evident in some student responses.

Discourse forms were appropriate – a newspaper article, a letter, a speech and a journal entry, with the most popular being the journal entry and the least the speech. Although most students coped appropriately with the conventions of the discourse form, they had some problems with linking and sequencing ideas.

Some students overlooked the dots and tails in some letters thus changing the meaning of words, e.g. c ç, s ş, u ü. Spelling mistakes were apparent. Punctuation was often used incorrectly or not used at all.

Some very good students used a wide range of vocabulary but most used only familiar and predictable vocabulary in simple sentences. Overall, students used mostly appropriate vocabulary and some used complex sentence structures, however, there were errors in grammatical structures, punctuation and linking sentences.

Generally the topics were expressed in good, clear language although at times students lost track of what they were writing, blurred the meaning and used anglicisms.

Part B – Reorganising written information

Most students did not understand the subtleties of the task set in Paper 2 Part B: ‘... write a magazine interview ... in which you discuss with Ms Aslim her thoughts on her music and how she views her role in and contribution to modern Turkish pop music’; thus they provided a lot of irrelevant information for the task set from the two resources or used information not drawn from texts.

There was plenty of information in the two texts to be able to accomplish the task efficiently. This task differentiated between the average to excellent students, with the best excelling in this area. Many students chose irrelevant information to the task but which was given in detail in Text 2: ‘Who is Aylin Aslim?’

Information on her childhood and family life did not score any marks, as it was not appropriate when discussing ‘her thoughts on her music and contribution to Turkish pop music’. More successful students used this information only in the introduction section of the interview. Others chose more (or only) information regarding her life from Text 2 instead of ideas/thoughts about her music, role and contributions to Turkish pop music. Most students failed to prove their capacity to select relevant information for the task.

Some students used quite informal language. Only a few had very well structured writing, where ideas were logically sequenced with information from both resource texts. Problems with linking of related ideas and the organisation of information were mostly caused by lack of appropriately selected information. Only a limited number of students consistently linked related ideas from both passages, with most just mentioning them without

linking them sufficiently. Few students did not write the appropriate length text but some wrote more than 150 words.

Most students preferred to copy sentences from the given text sources, Texts 1 and 2 directly, rather than express information and ideas in their own words. Others failed to show appropriate variation from the original text.

Expressing ideas in one's own words seemed to create problems in terms of grammatical patterns, syntax, suffixes and spelling. There were problems with forms of the nouns, syntax and richness of vocabulary. There were many examples of inappropriate forms of address for adults.

There was not enough attention given to instructions and/or reading and the requirements were forgotten after the students started the task. Generally, students found it easier to give factual information rather than express feelings and opinions. Exemplary responses used syntax, symbolism, cultural appropriateness and expressive language effectively.

Paper 3 – Discussing a theme

(completed by interstate students)

Not many students were able to make effective reference to the texts to indicate an understanding of theme/task but some were able to show such understanding and appreciation of the work. Generally, the appropriateness of references to the texts studied was poor. Some students demonstrated maturity in dealing with issues raised in the chosen theme while many just showed some ability to deal with the issues.

Many students scored well, but others were only able to provide a general summary of the chosen topic. The most popular theme chosen was 'Youth issues', and those who selected this theme (Questions 1 and 2) seemed pessimistic about it. In their responses they included youth crime, drug and alcohol issues rather than discussing the positives about youth entertainment and friendship.

Most students were able to select and deal effectively with the content required by the task. Some students were able to select appropriate content but showed weaknesses in dealing with it, whilst a few selected inappropriate content.

Most were able to meet the requirements for the word length but others did not know how to write a report or they misunderstood the discourse form required.

Some students used language accurately and effectively in both Turkish and English, but a few used linguistic structures inaccurately impairing meaning. Many students used relevant terms in the wording of their responses. This year many students responded in English, although their level of language was not very accurate.