



Oral component

GENERAL COMMENTS

In 2006, 236 students presented for the Turkish oral examination, which was the lowest number for the past five years, and for the first time in as many years no oral assessments were held in country Victoria.

Most students generally performed well in the oral examination. Those who appeared to have prepared themselves appropriately were able to communicate with confidence and advance the exchange in both the Conversation and Discussion sections effectively. Conversely, those who were less well prepared found the task more difficult and responded with simple utterances, often only after repeated prompting by the assessor. In preparing for this examination, it is important that students have a clear knowledge of the examination procedure and the assessment criteria. It should be noted that students are required to give extended, well thought-out answers rather than responses consisting of only one or two words. Students should also become familiar with the correct forms of speech to use when speaking to the assessors and when entering and departing the assessment venue.

It is imperative that students practise sufficiently to become familiar with the examination criteria used for assessment. Teachers should spend time reading the annual Assessment Report and structure their teaching program so that similar errors are not repeated year after year. Inadequate preparation was once again noticed in relation to the second part of the oral assessment.

This year student punctuality was a bit problematic, with many students from the same school arriving late. Group transport can provide good moral support for students and may help to remove anxieties, but the organisers must make sure that students arrive at the examination venue at least 30 minutes prior to their scheduled examination. It should also be noted that arriving too early may contribute to increased excitement and anxiety in some students.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Section 1 – Conversation

This section of the examination consists of a general conversation of approximately seven minutes about the student's personal world; for example, school and home life, family and friends, and interests and aspirations. It was pleasing to see that, in comparison to previous years, a smaller number of students had prepared to present the first part of the examination as a monologue rather than as a conversation with the assessors. Still, some students appeared to be unfamiliar with the polite forms of greeting and leave taking; for example, some said '*güle güle*' on departure, which is normally said by the person staying back as a response to the departing person's '*hoşca kal*', '*iyi günler*', '*Allaha ismarladık*', etc.

Most students prepared for this part of the examination quite adequately and were able to give appropriate responses to questions or comments made by the assessors. Students who were willing to take the initiative and elaborate on their responses by giving details, expanding on their ideas or giving evidence naturally received higher marks. Students who relied solely on memorised material found it difficult to continue the conversation when assessors interacted with them.

The majority of students recognised and attempted to use stress and intonation correctly. Most demonstrated some advanced communicative skills when discussing familiar content such as family background, future aspirations and special interests. These students were generally more confident of their ability to communicate in a familiar context and therefore were better able to concentrate on fluency.

Few students were unfamiliar with the kinship words, or the Turkish equivalent of subjects, occupations or hobbies. Occasionally, literal translations of idiomatic expressions were still used.

Some students lacked the skills to use a variety of sentence structures. These students mainly used short and simple forms.



Section 2 – Discussion

The focus of this part of the oral assessment is to explore aspects of language and culture, with reference to the texts researched for the Detailed Study. Students are expected to come to the examination prepared to discuss and explore ideas and opinions by using and referring to the texts studied and making links between the resources used.

The choice of topic for the Detailed Study is extremely important. Topics need to lend themselves to discussion, and students must be able to generate opinions and ideas. Although there has been a significant shift in the selection of the Detailed Study topics, it was still evident that some students prepared themselves for the task in a relatively short time. Some topics, such as ‘a historical building’ and ‘a tourist attraction’ were too narrow to talk about in depth. Topic selection should not be left to the student – teachers should provide adequate resources to enable the students to individually pursue aspects of the Detailed Study. In most cases, students’ preparation and presentation did not reflect the expectations of the study as prescribed in the *Turkish VCE Study Design*. Some topics chosen could not have justified 15 hours’ of study time.

Students who chose restrictive topics found it difficult to present new opinions or provide additional information following their initial one minute introduction.

The *Turkish VCE Study Design* recommends that students study a range of at least three different kinds of texts. These texts need to have substance and should differ substantially from each other. Choosing texts that provide different but relevant perspectives on their topic further assists students to engage in a more detailed discussion. Some students gathered their knowledge from resources written in English rather than Turkish. The texts chosen for the Detailed Study should be in Turkish and allow the student to explore and compare aspects of the language and culture of the Turkish-speaking community. These resources need to be understood and used in support of the student’s arguments, opinions and ideas.

Students who devoted adequate time to their preparation were able to effectively support and elaborate on their ideas, information and opinions while referring to the texts studied. Students who memorised slabs of information could not answer the questions asked and constantly attempted to return to their memorised material instead of discussing the topic in hand with the assessors. These were mainly students who derived their information and knowledge from inadequate resources or changed their topic for the sake of the examination. Teachers should ensure that the Detailed Study topic is covered during class time and at the appropriate time of the year.