



Oral component

GENERAL COMMENTS

The 2010 Turkish oral examination consisted of two sections: Section 1 – Conversation and Section 2 – Discussion. The format of the oral examination is explained in the *VCE Turkish Study Design*. Please see page 22 for a summary of the requirements of the Detailed Study. The Detailed Study is used as the basis for the Discussion.

In Section 1 – Conversation, although some students still relied on a few formulaic expressions, most students performed very well. Many students who were able to converse fluently in Turkish could improvise when talking about their hobbies, family, school life and future plans. These students were also able to expand on their ideas and views accurately with culturally appropriate language. Some students occasionally switched back to English and used words such as 'like' when giving examples and 'yeah' when confirming what the assessors had said. Some students were not able to name some of their subjects and occupations in Turkish, which is a very common error.

In Section 2 – Discussion, preparation and readiness for discussion were the differences between excellent and very good performances. Students who researched their Detailed Study discussion topic were well prepared, knew what to expect and did not rely too heavily on memorised information. These students were also able to introduce the relevant sub-topic of their Detailed Study fluently within the first minute.

Mock conversations and discussions followed by a mock oral examination that includes the two sections may assist students in their preparation. Some students had no knowledge of the structure of the examination and were not able to display the skills necessary for discussion. They were more tempted to do a presentation on the Detailed Study topic they had chosen.

Besides the knowledge of the examination structure and lack of discussion skills, some of the Detailed Study topics chosen did not lend themselves to broad discussion and this made it difficult for some students to expand on their views and express opinions fluently and with confidence.

Some students did not check the information on the advice slip and, as a result, arrived late or did not attend the correct assessment venue. It is the schools' and the teachers' responsibility to ensure that the information on the advice slip is read and understood by all students prior to the examination, and that students bring these slips with them on the day. As the assessment venues change from year to year, times and places have to be checked with great care.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Section 1 – Conversation

Communication

In Section 1, students engaged in conversation with the assessors in Turkish for seven minutes after initially reading their student number in English. Topics covered during this seven-minute conversation include the student's personal world, school and home life, family and friends, hobbies and interests and future aspirations. In this section of the examination, students were expected to demonstrate excellent understanding by responding readily, using effective repair strategies and carrying the conversation forward with spontaneity. Pronunciation and intonation were also assessed as part of the criteria.

Most students spoke with confidence, apart from a handful that seemed nervous at the start but, with the help of the assessors, became calmer as the conversation continued. The majority of students expressed their ideas and personal opinions with confidence and most were able to expand and build on the responses of the assessors using culturally appropriate and accurate expressions. Some students with less competence in using spoken Turkish were hesitant and responded with short phrases and often needed the assessors' encouragement to respond.

Some of the comments made by the assessors on communication included the outstanding level of pronunciation and intonation displayed by the students during the conversation. Students were able to open and close the conversation appropriately using Turkish cultural expressions, used pauses well and used the accurate register when referring to the assessors.



Some of the difficulties in this area were apparent when some students switched back to using English words to discuss the subjects they studied at school and to give examples using the word 'like' or 'you know'. While some of these students realised their mistakes and were able to correct themselves quickly, some continued to do so without realising. These weaker students also wanted to follow a memorised sequence when conversing with the assessors. Students who prepared formulaic responses were caught off-guard when these responses became irrelevant. Hence, the time spent on memorising some formulaic expressions would be better spent practising conversation and improvising on the broad topics in class and at home.

Content

For assessing content, the assessors looked for an excellent range of information, ideas and opinions produced clearly and logically during the seven-minute conversation. The relevance of responses and the ability to clarify and defend opinions and ideas were also very important indicators of the competence needed when conversing in Turkish.

As mentioned above, the majority of students performed well in this first section. Most aspects of the topics were covered well during the conversation. Most students were able to extend the conversation when talking about family and personal interests. Some students had difficulty using the correct names when talking about their subjects, apart from Turkish. Some students provided very limited information when talking about their interests or future aspirations. This also indicated lack of preparation, which is one of the key criteria for content.

Students need to practise talking about occupations and subject selection in class. They need to be given the opportunity to practise justifying their opinions with logical reasons; for example, in a mock interview. Teachers also need to remind students that they are not to mention the name of their school during the conversation.

Language

In order to achieve a high score from the language criteria of Section 1, students were expected to demonstrate an excellent range of vocabulary, structures and expressions with consistent use of appropriate and accurate style and register. Students who displayed excellent control of Turkish language were also able to self-correct their language errors effectively during the seven-minute conversation.

Assessors' comments were very positive in terms of the range of vocabulary and appropriate register applied by most students in the examination. Besides the usual odd errors related to language transfer and use of English words, overall, students used accurate grammatical structures.

As in previous years, some of the errors related to the influence of English vocabulary and pronunciation included *yükseldi* instead of *yükseldi*, *yüniversite* and *city'ye*. The reciprocal verb-making affix *-iş-* was again confused with the passive verb-making affix *-il-*, as in *yükseldi* instead of *yükseldi*. In addition, some of the other English words used were yeah, fence, gymnasium and shop.

Section 2 – Discussion

Section 2 is structured according to the requirements outlined in the *VCE Turkish Study Design*. This section lasts for 8 minutes. Students were expected to introduce their sub-topic in a one-minute introduction and then engage in a seven-minute discussion on the Detailed Study sub-topic, which had been studied for 15 hours in class. (See page 22 of the study design for details.)

In this section, the expected skills for assessment are almost the same as the first section, where students' performances are assessed using the same three areas of assessment criteria of communication, content and language used in Section 1 – Conversation. However, in Section 2 – Discussion, there is one extra point of assessment in the area of content, which is 'demonstration of thorough preparation of the topic'. This is a very significant point as it affects most other areas of oral performance in this section.

In other words, students who were not well prepared for their topic in class were also the ones who could not carry the discussion forward with confidence, clarify their ideas or present relevant responses. Hence, it is very important for teachers and schools to make sure that they provide students with adequate opportunities to spend the minimum **15 hours** on the Detailed Study. Additionally, students should not limit themselves to the resources and time spent in class, but should also do their own preparation until they are confident they could have a satisfactory discussion on their chosen topic.

Another general comment made by the assessors was about the selection of the Detailed Study sub-topic. Some sub-topics that generated plenty of discussion in 2010 LOTE Turkish examination included Turkish migration in Australia,



superstitions in Turkish culture (*Nazar*), harmful addictions and youth, and cultural identity. Some sub-topics did not generate much discussion and quite possibly stopped students demonstrating their Turkish language skills confidently. An example of a sub-topic that is often covered rather superficially is 'tourism'.

It is advised in the study design that students and teachers select a detailed study topic from the theme 'The language and culture of Turkish-speaking communities' and the above range of topics fulfil this requirement.

The last point about the Section 2 – Discussion relates to the support materials. In order to avoid further disappointment, students must familiarise themselves with the examination rules and regulations and should not have any form of support materials on their mobile phones or any other electronic devices as these are not allowed in the examination rooms. This rule also applies to bringing cue cards or materials containing large amounts of written information into the examination room. These materials will be retained by the supervisor until the end of the oral examination. The rules of the examination state that 'objects with minimal language such as photographs, diagrams and maps may be brought to support Section 2. Notes and cue cards are NOT PERMITTED' (VCE Exams Navigator 2011, page 15).

Communication

Many students communicated their ideas confidently and advanced the exchange with original ideas, views and information. Again, students who had prepared well introduced their topic and resources effectively in the one-minute introduction.

Few students required support from the assessors. Most displayed adequate communication with an excellent level of comprehension demonstrated in their responses. Some of these students were able to carry the discussion forward with original input without relying on any memorised information. Some, however, were slow to respond and hesitant during the discussion because of their limited preparation. Therefore, they relied heavily on the assessors' support to carry the discussion forward.

The slow responses were also because students did not seem to understand what constitutes a successful discussion. A few students had prepared a script and memorised what they were going to say during the discussion. These students were disappointed when they found out that the structure of discussion did not allow such pre-scripted talk or presentation style. In order to avoid students being disadvantaged in 2011, teachers must advise against any presentation-style preparation or memorisation of a prepared speech. Again, it should be emphasised that students cannot take cue cards into the Turkish oral examination.

Finally, teachers must also make a particular point of the initial one-minute introduction, as some students did not use it to present their sub-topic.

Content

To achieve excellent results for their content, students needed to present an excellent range of information, ideas and opinions logically and clearly in highly relevant responses. As stated earlier, students also needed to demonstrate thorough preparation of the topic during the discussion to receive maximum marks for content.

Unfortunately, some students believed they needed to cover all the resources and information they had studied and were disappointed when they did not get to discuss every aspect of their topic. A few students found this upsetting as they thought they were going to have the opportunity to show all the information they had prepared in class. Students need to be aware that it is not possible to cover all aspects of the Detailed Study topic in seven minutes. This was also why some students who brought in many support materials found that they did not have enough time to go over them all. As for any other examination, students need to practise using time effectively, perhaps with practice oral exams completed in class with their teacher. The Unit 4, Outcome 3 task of the school-assessed coursework allows students to do this.

Language

In terms of language use, most students used appropriate and accurate vocabulary and structures relevant to their Detailed Study topic. Students who demonstrated exposure to many resources on the topic were also successful in presenting a wide range of vocabulary appropriately and accurately.

A few students struggled when they attempted to use technical terms or too much jargon in their discussion, which was unnecessary. Again, this was often because they had prepared scripted or memorised vocabulary lists related to their topic. As this is not a natural way to prepare for the discussion in the examination, this again acted as a setback and interference for students when showing their competence with the language.

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Students need to be aware of linguistic strategies and devices as well as the appropriate style and register rather than focusing on technical jargon, which most students would find very difficult to discuss successfully. Students should remember that it is not simply their knowledge of the Turkish language that is assessed in the examination but the appropriate and accurate use of Turkish language in conversation and discussion.

Some of the language errors were related to the influence of English, similar to the Conversation. These included using terms such as 'like', 'city', 'maths', 'criminal justice', 'boss' and 'psychology' and literal translations such as '*Onların gözünü çekiyor*' instead of '*Onların ilgisini çeker*', '*...filmine baktık*' instead of '*...filmini izledik*'. Apart from English words, the influence of English word order and grammar were also evident in some weaker students discussions.