



A-LEVEL SPANISH

7692/3T&V: Teacher/Visiting examiner conducted speaking test
Report on the Examination

7692
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General Comments

This was the second examination of the new specification and it was pleasing that a significant number of centres had clearly responded to feedback from last year's examinations to ensure that their students prepared well for both aspects of the test, and there were some very well conducted tests by many teacher-examiners. Once again, this year the discussion of the sub-themes varied, but some of the most able students used their knowledge of current affairs and historical or political events relevant to the Hispanic world to give an astute critical evaluation of their chosen topic. There were some excellent linguistic performances from non-native speakers demonstrating a high level of fluency, highly accurate knowledge of basic tenses and the ability to make appropriate use of, and manipulate effectively, more complex structures.

The range of topics chosen for the Individual Research Project (IRP) was extensive, and it was good that, again, many students had moved away from the textbook topics and were keen to share and develop the knowledge gathered during their individual research. There were several topics that arose frequently, such as 'El Clásico', the life and works of Frida Kahlo, Pablo Escobar, bullfighting and the changing role of women in Spain. As with last year, it was very clear that those students who had chosen a topic that genuinely interested them, as opposed to it necessarily being 'easy' to research, were able to access the full range of marks available due to their thorough knowledge and evaluation of their chosen topic. Some students chose to use a question as their IRP title and others a statement; both approaches were equally successful.

Administration

In the majority of cases the administration of the tests was very good. However, it is important that teacher-examiners refer to and follow the explicit guidelines provided in the Instructions for the conduct of exams booklet, which is available on e-AQA.

A considerable number of schools and colleges did not provide the information set out on page 13 of the Instructions for the conduct of exams booklet when sending memory sticks and CDs. This meant there was frequently no indication of the stimulus card chosen by the student or of the teacher-examiner's name, which are both required for completing mark forms and Teacher Tester Performance Records.

Teachers who conduct their own tests are reminded of the importance of following all instructions regarding administration. These include:

- full announcement at the start of each individual test observing the prescribed wording on p 20 of the Instructions for the conduct of the exams booklet
- CD insert/USB label showing the order of tests, the stimulus card used with each student and the teacher-examiner's name
- correct labelling of tracks showing component, centre and student numbers
- recordings saved in .mp3 format
- checking volume levels for both student and teacher.

Visiting examiners reported that arrangements at schools and colleges were very good.

Recordings

Encryption caused some problems for both centres and examiners this series. It is important that centres follow the instructions provided by AQA regarding the encryption of recordings so that the students' personal data is protected. It is also crucial that centres use the password provided by AQA so that Examiners are able to access the recordings.

For the teacher-conducted tests, it was pleasing that the vast majority of recordings were generally of a good sound quality. In some cases, however, the background noise, rustling of paper close to the microphone, other students entering the room mid-test, or phones and bells ringing proved intrusive at times. Schools and colleges are reminded of the need to conduct the tests in spaces where noise and disturbances are kept to an absolute minimum so as to not distract the student taking the test and should be aware that students can be disadvantaged if what they say is partly or totally inaudible on the recording.

Schools and colleges are reminded that recordings should be saved in .mp3 format. File names for individual student recordings should comply with the format laid out on p13 of the Instructions for the conduct of the exams booklet.

Paperwork

Most centres provided the necessary paperwork for the IRP topic. In a few cases, Candidate Record Forms (CRF) sent to examiners of the T option had not been signed by the student, causing some delay in marking while the signed forms were obtained.

When completing the CRF it is important that:

- both student and teacher sign it
- the IRP title and all headings are in English
- sources, including websites, are clearly identified
- a minimum of two sources are listed (one of which must be an online source)
- both options studied for Paper 2 are named on the form
- handwritten forms are legible.

Please note that Additional Answer Sheets with students' notes for Part 1 should **not** be submitted with the media but should be retained securely by the centre until Results' Day, when they should be destroyed confidentially.

In the case of Visiting examiner tests, it is useful if spaces 3-8 on the CRF have headings rather than being left blank, so that the visiting examiner has an indication of the scope of the student's research.

If schools and colleges have been given approval of their titles by their NEA Adviser then they should send a copy of the initialled Title Approval Form to the Visiting Examiner (for the V option) or with the media (for the T option).

Conduct of the Test

Preparation Time

At A-level the students have a great deal to do within the allowed 5 minute preparation time (reading the two cards, choosing which to answer, preparing responses to the printed questions and preparing two questions to ask the examiner), and in some cases it was apparent that students had struggled to assimilate the printed information and prepare responses in the time available. Teachers are encouraged to ensure that students have plenty of opportunity throughout the course to practise preparing effectively under timed conditions.

Card Sequence

In most cases the card sequence was not an issue, but teacher-examiners are reminded of the importance of avoiding any possible overlap between the card and the student's IRP topic as material can only be credited once within the same test. If a teacher-examiner feels that there will be overlap they should move to the next suitable card combination in the sequence table.

Timings

Prescribed timings were adhered to by the vast majority of centres, but it is important that teacher-examiners are aware that the entire test should not exceed 18 minutes and, therefore, there needs to be a smooth transition between the various parts of the examination to ensure that students are not disadvantaged. Schools and colleges are reminded that timing begins when the first printed question is asked.

The discussion on the sub-theme lasts between 5 and 6 minutes. There is a requirement that the student asks the teacher-examiner two questions within this time. Questions asked after the 6 minute maximum will not be credited, and this will impact upon the student's ability to access the full range of marks for AO2. After the discussion of the sub-theme, the student's notes and card should be audibly collected in by the Teacher-examiner. The presentation of the IRP lasts for a maximum of 2 minutes and the subsequent discussion is between 9 and 10 minutes. Marking for an individual test stops at 18 minutes.

Student performance

Discussion of sub-theme

Assessment Objective 1

Understand and respond in speech to spoken language including face to face interaction

Scores for this AO were generally good, with most students scoring 3 or above. It is important, however, that teacher-examiners remember that there must be sufficient unpredictable elements to enable the students to access the full range of marks available for AO1. It is therefore in the student's best interests, and best practice, for teacher-examiners to ask responsive follow-up questions between the three printed questions so that students can effectively develop their ideas and opinions. Teacher-examiners should also ensure that they do not allow students to deliver lengthy pre-learnt responses as these will not attract marks for AO1. Similarly, teacher-examiners need to appropriately manage the time available to ensure that sufficient unpredictable questions can be asked.

Assessment Objective 2

Understand and respond in speech to written language drawn from a variety of sources

Again this year, the scores for this AO varied considerably, with many students only scoring 2 or 3. Those students who, as a result of their own preparation or in response to appropriate teacher-examiner questions, were able to demonstrate a full understanding of the range of information given in the printed material and ask appropriate questions were able to access the full range of marks available. Many students had generally been trained to respond to all or almost all of the printed material in their response to the first printed question and this proved to be a successful technique.

Many students, however, failed to exploit fully exploit the explicit material on the card and, in response to the first printed question, did not reference any of the specific detail from the card, choosing to give a generic response on the sub-theme as a whole. In cases such as these it is important that teacher-examiners ask suitable follow-up questions to ensure that the student has the opportunity to demonstrate a full understanding of the printed material and to go beyond their prepared responses to show a deeper understanding of the content of the card.

Some teacher-examiners simply read out the information on the card and asked the students to comment, but better practice would be to ask the student a question such as ‘¿Qué más nos dice la tarjeta sobre...?’ to allow the student to select the relevant information from the card and develop it. Teacher-examiners are also encouraged to sensitively challenge any misunderstanding or misinterpretation of the printed material on the part of the student.

Student’s questions (credited within the AO2 score)

It was pleasing to see this year that most students fulfilled the requirement to ask the examiner two questions in the 6 minutes allowed for the discussion of the sub-theme.

Teacher-examiners are reminded however that, if students forget to ask questions, the teacher-examiner should verbally prompt the students to do so at a suitable point before the 6 minute maximum time. Student questions should arise from the material on the card, include a conjugated verb, elicit information or an opinion, and should not be a rewording of a printed question or repetition of a question previously asked by the teacher-examiner. It is also worth noting that, if students use a question such as ‘¿Estás de acuerdo conmigo?’ or ‘¿Qué opinas?’ it needs to be clear to which statement they are referring.

Teacher-examiners should be aware that, if they feel that a student’s question has not met these criteria, they can ask the student for an additional question. It is good practice to ensure that students are fully aware of the criteria prior to the examination.

Teacher-examiners are reminded that their response to the student’s question should be brief so as not to use time available for the student to demonstrate their knowledge and linguistic skills.

If only one appropriate question is asked, the score for AO2 cannot exceed 4, and if no appropriate questions are asked the AO2 score cannot exceed 3.

Assessment Objective 3

Manipulate the language accurately, in spoken form, using a range of lexis and structure

Examiners reported that there were some outstanding performances this series, with some students demonstrating excellent linguistic skills and the ability to express some very complex ideas with a high degree of grammatical accuracy, thus enabling them to access the full range of marks available for this AO. Pronunciation was generally very good and rarely had a significant impact on comprehension. Some words, however, were commonly mispronounced (Estados Unidos; difícil; fácil; alquiler.)

In some cases, however, students struggled to manipulate basic structures whilst going to great lengths to shoehorn in unnecessarily complex phrases which had an adverse effect on their score for AO3.

It was noted once again by examiners that many students struggled with the verb ‘sorprender’, both in response to the printed question ‘¿Te sorprende(n)...?’ and as part of their response to the printed question ‘¿Cómo reaccionas ...?’

The most frequent grammatical errors were:

- incorrect numbers: students struggled with the percentages, figures and dates in the printed material
- incorrect verb endings (even in basic tenses)
- incorrect use of ‘ser’ and ‘estar’
- incorrect genders
- incorrect adjectival agreements
- incorrect use of ‘por’ and ‘para’
- confusion between ‘porcentaje’ and ‘por ciento’
- confusion of ‘soportar’ and ‘apoyar’
- inappropriate use of complex structures
- lack of subjunctive after certain impersonal expressions and value judgements.

Assessment Objective 4

Show knowledge and understanding of, and respond critically to, different aspects of the culture and society of countries/communities where the language is spoken

It was pleasing to see that, this year, many students were able to access the full range of marks available for this AO. They offered good critical and analytical responses, using relevant examples from the Hispanic world to justify their opinions and support their arguments. It was clear that successful students had a wealth of evidence from the Hispanic world at their finger tips, and so were able to make reference to this material throughout the 6 minute discussion and use their knowledge of the Hispanic world to evaluate the information provided in the printed material on the stimulus cards.

Many students, however, struggled to access the higher bands due to a lack of evaluative response and/or focus on target-language speaking countries/communities. Once again students should be made aware that using examples from non-target language speaking countries (such as the UK) will not attract marks for AO4. Teacher-examiners are reminded that any questions they ask should be worded in such a way as to elicit responses that include detailed reference to, and conclusions drawn in relation to, practices, trends or attitudes in Spanish-speaking communities.

Many teachers asked questions of a general or personal nature that, whilst putting the students at ease, did not attract marks for AO4.

Examiners commented that, once again this year, some students mentioned General Franco, but in entirely inappropriate contexts such as being responsible for high divorce rates in Mexico.

Stimulus Cards

Tarjeta A: Cada vez más divorcios en México

This was a very popular card and many students were able to demonstrate a clear understanding of the printed material. Less able students, however, failed to recognise the significance of the young age of couples mentioned or that the information centred on the situation in Mexico. Those students who did well were able to discuss the influence of religion in Mexico, the fact that historically in Mexico turning 15 meant reaching young adulthood and the social stigmas that may still exist in the Hispanic world regarding divorce. Most students responded well to the third printed question, mentioning among other things the changing demographics in Spain, the freedoms gained by women after the fall of the Franco regime, 'la Ley del divorcio exprés', the new laws surrounding gay marriage, the adoption of children by gay couples and the changing nature of Spanish society.

Tarjeta B: Las redes sociales traen nuevas formas lingüísticas

This was a relatively popular card, but the tendency was to talk about technology in general rather than focusing on the impact on language highlighted in the printed material. Once again, this year many of the additional questions posed by teacher-examiners on the sub-theme of 'el ciberespacio' encouraged general or personal responses, with a lack of focus on target language speaking countries or communities, thus impacting on the student's ability to access marks for AO4. Given the popularity of this sub-theme it was surprising that so many students had a limited knowledge of technology related issues in Hispanic communities. Successful students were able to discuss a range of relevant issues such as the use of technology in Spanish schools, the impact of social media on mental health in the Hispanic world and the limited access to technology and its impact in remote areas of some Latin American countries.

Tarjeta C: ¡No más inseguridad para la mujer!

This was a popular card, with successful students engaging in informed discussions on gender violence and gender roles in the modern Hispanic world and offering credible answers as to why men do not report attacks by their partners. Some students, however, failed to recognise details in the printed information, for example 'Taxis Rosas' employing female taxi drivers, acid attacks on men and men suffering in silence. Most students misinterpreted the tense of the last question ('se hace'), suggesting what *should* be done as opposed to current strategies to eliminate machismo, and this was not picked up on by teacher-examiners.

Tarjeta D: Las verdaderas modelos de Madrid

This card was quite popular, but many students struggled to fully exploit the printed material, with many failing to recognise the significance of Juan Duyos' choice of models and his reason for doing so. Successful students were able to discuss the impact of Angela Ponce's appearance on the catwalk and the changing image of models in Spain. Question three gave students an

opportunity to mention a wide variety of Hispanic role models, both good and bad, and thus access marks for AO4. Whilst Shakira, Salma Hayek and Ricky Martin remained popular as positive role models, it was good to hear some students reference other Hispanic figures such as Frida Kahlo and Rafa Nadal as having a positive influence.

Tarjeta E: Galicia y su gastronomía del mar y de la tierra

This was a less popular card, but those students who chose it were able to discuss the various dishes mentioned in the material, Galicia's proximity to the sea influencing its gastronomy and the importance given to the different regional dishes in Spain. Some students, however, failed to respond to the information regarding the significant number of festivals in the region or the fact that the produce is locally produced. In response to question 3, successful students were able to discuss, amongst other things, the Arabic influence on Spanish gastronomy and the influence gypsies have had on Spanish culture.

Tarjeta F: Un Tesoro arqueológico en Almería

This was not a popular card, but in general those who chose it were able to fully exploit the printed material and offer insight into the economic advantages for Hispanic regions with cultural heritage sites. In response to question 3, the most common examples mentioned were Machu Picchu, the Alhambra and Sagrada Familia. However, with Spain ranking third in the world on the UNESCO list and Mexico seventh, it was refreshing to hear students discussing other sites such as the Acueducto de Segovia, the Cueva de Altamira or Chichen Itzá amongst others.

Tarjeta G: Venezuela – un país en crisis

This was a relatively popular card, possibly due to the recent UK media coverage of the political and social situation in Venezuela. It was often chosen by students who had an interest in current affairs or who had studied the unfolding crisis in Venezuela in class and were very well informed about the situation with Maduro and Chavez; this led to some very interesting discussions. Less able students struggled to do more than paraphrase the information on the card and failed to notice the adjective 'pocos' in the first sentence, which meant that they were not able to discuss the dramatic difference in emigration figures in the 5-year period.

Tarjeta H: Los inmigrantes sufren discriminación

This was quite a popular card, but it was clear that students struggled with some of the vocabulary such as 'margenados', 'alquilar' or 'abstenerse' and many did not really understand the idea of not renting accommodation to someone because of their ethnicity or skin colour. Few students referred directly to the language used on the signs 'abstenerse extranjeros' and 'solo españoles'. Successful students spoke intelligently about stereotypes, particularly involving the 'gitanos' in Spain. They also included some good examples of racism, principally in Spain, although others did raise the issues faced by indigenous people in Latin American countries. Some students also pointed out that it was interesting that this situation was happening in Bilbao given that the Basque Country had lower levels of immigration than most other places in Spain.

Tarjeta I: Escuelas donde se hablan muchos idiomas

This was a relatively popular card, but there was a tendency to discuss the sub-theme in general, with some students failing to exploit the printed information and, in particular, the two projects

mentioned. Successful students attempted to explain the differences with regards to the experience and problems of children coming to Uruguay from non-Hispanic countries, the significant value of children learning about other cultures from an early age, and understanding the need of children who have emigrated to speak with others who have similar experiences.

Tarjeta J: España lidera en cuestión de paro juvenil

This card was less popular, but successful students were able to contextualise the plight suffered by young Spaniards, picking up on job insecurity, temporary work and over-qualification as well as the future risk of social exclusion. Less able students failed to grasp the ideas of young Spaniards being over-qualified or there being too many temporary contracts. In question 3, most students misinterpreted the tense of the last question ('se está haciendo'), suggesting what should be done as opposed to current strategies to help young Spaniards, and this was not picked up on by teacher-examiners.

Tarjeta K: Las fotos más íntimas de la Casa Real

This was not a very popular card and performances varied considerably. Those who chose this card often forgot to mention that all the events stated on the card took place because it was the king's 50th birthday. Successful students displayed a good level of understanding about the Spanish royal family, its role in the restoration of democracy, the recent scandals and the challenges it currently faces.

Tarjeta L: Miles de catalanes salen a las calles para defender sus derechos y libertades

This was a very popular card, with most students able to discuss the situation in Cataluña quite knowledgeably. Some students, however, failed to understand the idea that the protests were to do with police brutality as opposed to the referendum itself or to pick up the meaning of the Minister for the Interior's quotation. Successful students were able to explain the advantages and disadvantages of this type of protest and were able to talk about the brutishness of Franco's police and parallels cited during the Catalan disturbances. Question three gave students the opportunity to mention a wide variety of Hispanic movements, with 15 M, las Madres de la Plaza de Mayo and los Pingüinos in Chile frequently featuring.

Individual Research Project

Titles

Several topics were particularly popular such as Catalan independence, the Venezuelan crisis, 'el Clásico', the changing role of women in Hispanic society, la Tauromaquia and Pablo Escobar. However, there were some quite unique titles that produced very interesting discussions on topics ranging from the Panama Canal to the myth of the Spanish Inquisition and the contribution of Juan Palacios to modern physics.

Students are strongly advised to choose a topic that genuinely interests them as opposed to one that they feel will be easy to research as it is evident that the former leads to much more detailed and successful discussions.

If students select a film or novel as their IRP topic it is important that they remember that there is a need for them to critically analyse the work in order to access the full range of marks for AO4, simply ‘telling the story’ will not attract marks in the higher bands.

Some titles worryingly had only very tenuous links to the Hispanic World leading to general discussions that failed to attract high scores for AO4. Schools and colleges are reminded that there is an IRP Adviser for Spanish allocated to each centre who can be contacted at any time outside

the 5-week window when tests are conducted, with regard to queries relating to the IRP and the appropriateness of titles. Centres are advised to contact the IRP adviser to seek approval of their titles. For contact details of the IRP adviser, centres should contact mfl@aqg.org.uk

Presentation

Given that this is an aspect of the test that the student can prepare in advance, it is important that they do not over-prepare as this can lead to their delivery being unnecessarily complex, garbled and unintelligible. In the limited time available students should outline their key findings and develop them. Given that the presentation is marked solely for AO4 it is important that it contain an element of critical analysis rather than simply a list of factual information as the latter will have an adverse effect on the student’s score.

Teacher-examiners are reminded that they should not interrupt the students during their 2 minute presentation.

Discussion

Again, this year there were some very interesting and detailed discussions in which students were able to demonstrate a thorough knowledge and evaluation of their chosen topic, and it was clear that students had undertaken extensive research. Good critical evaluation and appropriate use of relevant factual information to justify their opinions were key to enabling students to access the higher bands for AO4.

Whilst it is important the teacher-examiners use the information provided on the CRF when asking their questions, it is vital that they do not simply work through the list of bullet points without asking additional follow-up questions in response to the answers given by the student. Teacher-examiners need to create a genuine conversation, get students to clarify their comments where needed and create opportunities for students to engage well in the discussion. In addition, teacher-examiners must not shy away from calling into question the validity of findings if appropriate. Opportunities need to be given for the students to develop their responses and demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the chosen topic. Questions that focus merely on factual information will not enable students to access the full range of marks for AO4 as it is the critical analysis and evaluation of the information that is being tested. Teacher-examiners should also be aware that over-reliance on pre-rehearsed responses and allowing students to deliver lengthy mini-monologues will have an adverse effect on the student’s scores for AO1 and AO3.

Some students underestimated the amount of material needed to discuss their chosen topic in depth for 9 to 10 minutes. It is important that in the preparatory stages of their research they are aware of the need to do sufficient research on their chosen topic.

Student performance

Presentation

Assessment Objective 4

Show knowledge and understanding of, and respond critically to, different aspects of the culture and society of countries/communities where the language is spoken

The majority of students scored 3 or above for the presentation of their project. However, some students concentrated on the process of their research rather than their findings and critical evaluation of the latter, thus limiting their score for this part of the assessment. Others had learnt overly complex passages, the delivery of which had poor pronunciation and intonation, meaning that the Examiner struggled to comprehend thus impacting on the student's score. Schools and colleges are strongly encouraged to ensure that students fully understand the requirements and possible pitfalls of this part of the examination.

Discussion

Assessment Objective 1

Understand and respond in speech to spoken language including face to face interaction

Scores for this AO varied considerably depending on the level of engagement in the discussion and the nature of the questions posed by the teacher-examiner. In tests where the teacher-examiner simply worked through the headings on the Candidate Record Form and allowed the students to deliver rehearsed monologue style responses with no follow-up questions there was an adverse effect on the score for AO1. Those tests which saw students being required to engage in a genuine discussion about their chosen topic and regularly having to justify their opinions with appropriate evidence were rewarded with scores in the higher bands.

Assessment Objective 3

Manipulate the language accurately, in spoken form, using a range of lexis and structure

Most students scored 6 or above for this AO. Students who demonstrated consistency in the manipulation of both basic and complex structures and used a wide range of appropriate vocabulary and idiom accessed top marks. Some students did try to use overly complex language rather than focusing on ensuring that basic tense and structures were accurate, which had an adverse effect on their score for AO3. Pronunciation and intonation were generally good, although students should ensure that they can correctly pronounce key words or names related to their topic.

Assessment Objective 4

Show knowledge and understanding of, and respond critically to, different aspects of the culture and society of countries/communities where the language is spoken

The vast majority of students scored in the top two bands for this AO. There were varying degrees of critical analysis demonstrated, with those students scoring in the top band readily able to evaluate their findings and use relevant information to justify the opinions they gave and the conclusions that they were drawing. Students who only presented factual information with little or no evaluation failed to access the higher bands for AO4.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.