



A-LEVEL SPANISH

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

7692
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General Comments

Given the disruption to learning for this cohort and the fact that, for many, the A-level Speaking test will have been their first ever public examination, it was pleasing to listen to some really impressive tests. There were some highly informed discussions on the various sub-themes and students were able to demonstrate a wide range of lexis and grammatical structures in their responses, thus affording them access to the full range of marks available. 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. Those students who had a good knowledge of current affairs, historical or political events relevant to the Hispanic world were able to use this information to great effect, selecting appropriate evidence to support their arguments and justify opinions or conclusions drawn.

The range of topics chosen for the Individual Research Project (IRP) was as extensive as in previous series but, as ever, there were several topics that arose frequently such as *El Clásico*; Pablo Escobar; Colombian drug cartels; bullfighting; the changing role of women in Spain; Flamenco; the influence/legacy of the Moors and the Mediterranean diet. As with previous series, those students who had selected a topic that clearly genuinely interested them were able to access the full range of marks available due to their thorough knowledge and evaluation of their chosen topic. Other students, who had chosen what they may have considered 'easily accessible' topics, often only had a superficial understanding of the topic area and the focus of their discussion was frequently more factual than analytical, thus impacting their ability to access the full range of marks available for this part of the examination.

Some students had selected titles that were inappropriate given that they were not focused on countries/communities where Spanish is an official language, for example titles regarding the Falklands, Gibraltar or the USA, were too broad or involved global aspects. Topics of this nature impacted on the student's ability to access the full range of marks available for this part of the test. In cases such as these, centres had not sought advice from their NEA Adviser and so Teacher-examiners are reminded that it is in the student's best interests to seek approval of proposed titles from the Adviser prior to students embarking upon their research. More information on how to seek approval and all other aspects of the IRP can be found in the *AQA MFL Teacher's NEA Guide*.

Administration

Attendance lists, Candidate Record Forms and additional information

With the change this series to online submission of the recordings, many centres unfortunately did not ensure that the Attendance Lists and Candidate Record Forms were sent to AQA Examiners as stipulated on page 13 of the *Instructions for the Conduct of the Exams* booklet. In addition, it is important that when sending the attendance register and CRFs, centres also include an additional sheet with the following information:

- The number and name of each student
- Component code (7692/3T)
- Centre number
- Name of Teacher-examiner(s) conducting the test(s) – written clearly
- Stimulus card chosen by each student

If centres 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 together with the Attendance List and CRFs (for the T option).

Please note that there is **no** requirement to send the Additional Answer Sheets with the student's notes for Part 1. These should be retained by the centre until Results' Day when they should be destroyed confidentially.

Completion of Candidate Record Forms

It is important that the CRFs are correctly completed and centres should remember that before CRFs are sent to AQA Examiners they need to check the following:

- the CRF has been signed by both student and teacher
- the IRP title and all headings are in English
- a minimum of 2 sources are listed, (one of which must be an online source)
- the sources listed in sections 1 and 2 are target-language sources
- sources, including websites, are clearly identified (in the case of online newspaper articles and similar, the full web address for the specific article should be given rather than simply the generic web page for the publication)
- both options studied for Paper 2 are named on the form
- handwritten forms are legible
- the total number of words in the headings does not exceed 80.

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

As with previous series, Visiting Examiners reported that arrangements at centres were very good.

Conduct of the Test

Preparation Time

It was pleasing to see this year that students in general were more adept at using the 5 minutes preparation time to assimilate the printed information, prepare responses to the printed questions and formulate two questions to ask the examiner. There is a great deal for students to do within this preparation time and so teachers are encouraged to ensure that students have plenty of opportunity throughout the course to practise preparing effectively under timed conditions.

Card sequence

In the vast majority of cases the card sequence was not an issue, but once again, 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, therefore any repetition of material would be credited in the card and not the IRP. 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 generally adhered to by centres but it is important that Teacher-examiners are aware that the entire test should not exceed 18 minutes and that timing starts when the first printed question is posed. Marking for an individual test stops at 18 minutes and so the timer should not be paused and restarted for the different sections of the test as this often leads to tests exceeding the 18 minute maximum. Teacher-examiners should therefore ensure that they manage the time carefully, remembering that Part 1 lasts between 5 and 6 minutes, the presentation no more than 2 minutes and the discussion of the IRP between 9 and 10 minutes. Therefore the minimum time for a test would be approximately 16 minutes and maximum 18 minutes.

Teacher-examiners should ensure that there are smooth transitions between the various sections and that they follow the guidelines in the *Instructions for the Conduct of the Exams* booklet to ensure each section is correctly introduced. Teacher-examiners are reminded that they should audibly collect in the student's notes and stimulus card at the end of Part 1 and should simply introduce Part 2 by saying, 'Thank you, now, your presentation.' There is **no** requirement to ask students to give the title of their presentation, (as this is given on the CRF), and indeed doing so wastes valuable time.

In Part 1, the discussion of the sub-theme, there is a requirement that the student ask the Teacher-examiner two questions within the 6 minute period. Questions asked after this time will not be credited and this will directly impact the student's ability to access the full range of marks for AO2. Therefore best practice is to encourage the student to ask their questions earlier in the discussion rather than later.

Student performance

Discussion of sub-theme

Assessment Objective 1 Understand and respond in speech to spoken language including face to face interaction

Scores for AO1 were generally good, most students scoring 3 or above, with many Teacher-examiners ensuring that they asked follow-up questions to enable students to develop their ideas and opinions. However, this year lots of Teacher-examiners allowed students to deliver lengthy responses to the three printed questions and did not ask sufficient unexpected questions, thus having an adverse effect on the score for AO1. In the worst cases, no questions beyond the three printed ones were asked, resulting in a score of 0 for AO1. Teacher-examiners are therefore reminded that in order for students to access the full range of marks available for AO1 there must be sufficient unpredictable elements. Best practice for teacher-examiners is to ask follow-up questions in between the printed questions. In addition, it is important that these questions are responsive to the student's answers as opposed to Teacher-examiners simply working through a list of pre-defined questions on the sub-theme in general. In some centres it was clearly the case that students were responding to very familiar questions and delivering pre-learnt responses; this had an adverse effect on their score for AO1. A genuine, spontaneous conversation is supposed to take place and so students should not be given prior knowledge of the Teacher-examiner's questions that will be asked in the test itself. It is also in the student's best interests that the Teacher-examiner's unpredictable questions encourage them to develop their ideas and opinions rather than just seeking factual information.

Assessment Objective 2 Understand and respond in speech to written language drawn from a variety of sources.

Once again, the scores for this AO varied considerably and, unfortunately, in many cases incorrect preparation of students and the poor conduct of the test had a direct impact on the student's score for AO2. It is important that Teacher-examiners are aware that, in order to access the full range of marks available for AO2, as well as responding to the three printed questions and asking two appropriate questions, students need to demonstrate that they have 'a very good understanding of the printed material', this means that students need to show that they have fully understood the **key messages** contained within the material on the card. In many centres, students have clearly been taught to respond to the first printed question with a generic summary of the sub-theme and therefore their responses do not reflect a 'very good' understanding of the explicit material on the card.

In their preparation of students, Teacher-examiners are therefore encouraged to ensure that students, in their answer to the first printed question, are fully aware of the need to respond and react appropriately to the various key messages given in the printed material. Students must be discouraged from simply reading out the information verbatim. If it is that the student has not fully exploited the material on the card then Teacher-examiners should ask suitable follow-up questions that allow the student to demonstrate a full understanding. Teacher-examiners should avoid simply reading out the printed information on the card and asking students to comment and instead should ask the student a question such as '*¿Qué más nos dice la tarjeta sobre...?*' and allow the student to select and develop the relevant information from the card.

Teacher-examiners are also encouraged to challenge sensitively any misunderstanding or misinterpretation of the printed material on the part of the student.

Student's questions (credited within the AO2 score)

Teacher-examiners are reminded that students need to pose two questions within the 6 minute time limit for the card. To meet the requirement to ask a question, the student must seek information or opinion relevant to the sub-theme of the card. Asking for clarification or repetition will not meet the requirement. The student's question must contain a conjugated verb. Rephrasing or repetition of the printed questions or of a teacher-examiner's unpredictable question will not meet the requirement.

In this series the majority of students asked their questions without being prompted and ensured that the questions were appropriate, which was very pleasing. There were, however, many examples of questions having been asked after the 6 minute maximum time for the card and so Teacher-examiners are reminded that they should verbally prompt students to ask their questions at a suitable time before the maximum time is reached. Best practice is to prompt the student earlier in the discussion so that there is time for the student to pose a third question if one of their questions does not meet the requirements outlined above. In cases where the student's question does not meet the requirements, Teacher-examiners should prompt the student to ask an alternative question. 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.

It is important that the Teacher-examiner's responses to the student's questions are as brief as possible, ideally just a few words, so as to not use valuable time for the students to demonstrate their knowledge and linguistic skills.

Assessment Objective 3 Manipulate the language accurately, in spoken form, using a range of lexis and structure.

It was pleasing to hear some performances this series in which students demonstrated excellent linguistic skills and were able to communicate complex ideas with a high degree of grammatical accuracy. On the whole, students scored 6 or more marks and pronunciation was good and rarely had a significant impact on comprehension. Some words, however, were commonly mispronounced (*cocina, desventajados, Pies descalzos, desigualdad* for *desigualdad, igualdad* for *igualdad*) or students simply added an infinitive ending to English verbs to create a Spanish verb (eg *restringir, afordar, evitar, prevenir, mejorar, involucrar, reportar, esperar, promover*).

In some cases, however, students struggled to manipulate basic structures whilst going to great lengths to shoehorn in unnecessarily complex pre-learnt phrases which had an adverse effect on their score for AO3. It is important that students concentrate on correctly conjugating basic past, present and future tenses in order to access the higher bands for AO3. In order to score 7 or more marks, the application of grammar needs to be ‘mostly accurate with some **minor** errors’ (ie errors which do not adversely affect communication).

It was noted once again by examiners that many students struggled with the verb ‘sorprender’ in response to both printed questions ‘¿Te sorprende...?’ and ‘¿Cómo reaccionas...?’. Many students used expressions such as ‘No me sorpresa...’ and so time spent ensuring that students can correctly conjugate *sorprender* would be beneficial.

The most frequent grammatical errors were:

- incorrect verb endings (even in basic tenses)
- incorrect gender for common vocabulary eg *la problema, la tema, el ley, el opinión*
- incorrect adjectival agreements
- confusion of *ser, estar, haber* and *tener*
- confusion between *soportar* and *apoyar*
- incorrect past participles in compound tenses
- lack of subjunctive after *no creo que* and certain impersonal expressions and value judgements
- confusion of *porcentaje* and *por ciento*
- incorrect use of infinitives
- confusion between first person and third person irregular preterites: *hice/hizo; fui/fue; tuve/tuvo*.

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

Scores for this AO varied considerably, with some students offering good critical and analytical responses and drawing on appropriate evidence to support their arguments and justify conclusions drawn. However, many students failed to access the full range of marks available due to a lack of critical analysis as well as lack of focus on target-language speaking countries or communities. In order to access the higher bands for this AO, students need to demonstrate a very good knowledge of the sub-theme *within the context of the Spanish-speaking world* and evaluate their evidence, offering a critical response and developing their arguments, justifying their points of view and drawing conclusions based on their understanding of the sub-theme within this context.

Teacher-examiners therefore need to ensure that their unpredictable questions target the right kind of information; questions of a personal or general nature should be avoided and instead all questions 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 countries/communities. Teachers should ensure that students are aware that using examples from non-Spanish speaking countries (for example referencing the charitable works of Cristiano Ronaldo, Marcus Rashford or Jennifer Lopez) will have a negative impact on the AO4 score.

Given the popularity once again of the sub-theme of *El ciberespacio*, it was disappointing that many students had a limited knowledge of technology related issues specific to Spanish-speaking countries/communities.

As with previous series, it is worth noting that many students cited General Franco and the *Guía de la buena esposa* as being responsible for all modern-day problems in Spain (and indeed in many Latin American countries), and indiscriminate reference to this period of Spanish history had an adverse effect on the score for AO4. It would be in the best interests of the students to have knowledge of some more relevant, current political figures, policies, campaigns or similar information to use as justification for their opinions.

Stimulus Cards

Tarjeta A: La importancia de la familia

This was a relatively popular card. Students were pleased to see that people in Mexico are happy with their family life and that values such as love, generosity, honesty respect, equality and tolerance are more important to them than material items. Specific details regarding the celebration itself and the poll were often overlooked. In response to the second printed question, students cited the importance of the family in Spain being due to the fact that children do not leave home on average until they are 29 years old and that during the Franco regime, women were rewarded for producing large families. In response to the third printed question, students spoke knowledgeably about changes in the composition of families across the Spanish-speaking world, the legalisation of gay marriage, changes in adoption laws and the importance of the extended family.

Tarjeta B: Mensaje con controversia en Twitter

This was a fairly popular choice. It was rare for students to react to all of the key messages with information such as the message being Vox's Christmas greeting and that it went viral in minutes being overlooked. Some students were clearly not familiar with the *Reyes Magos* and misinterpreted the information regarding how Vox had published an image of three white kings. Many of the examples that the students used in response to the second and third printed questions were generic in nature and lacked the focus on the Hispanic world needed to secure marks in the higher bands for AO4. Similarly, Teacher-examiner questions were often personal or generic in nature, which again limited the student's ability to access the full range of marks available for AO4. In many cases, the discussion moved beyond the sub-theme of *El ciberespacio* to *El racismo*; teacher-examiners are reminded that they need to ensure that they and the student do not stray from the card's specified sub-theme.

Tarjeta C: Igualdad en las cocinas del País Vasco

This was a very popular card. In general, students thought it was laudable that new apartments in the Basque Country were being built with space for a couple to work in the kitchen together, but some doubted that they would really cook together. Less successful students failed to recognise that the new rules related only to the kitchen and spoke about the overall size of the flats. In response to the second printed question, students discussed the changes in women's rights since the Franco regime, *La Guía de la buena esposa*, *la brecha salarial*, and *el techo de cristal*. In response to the third printed question, students were able to talk knowledgeably about, for example, changes in paternity laws in Spain, legalisation of gay marriage in various Spanish-speaking countries and the high proportion of women in governments in Spain, Cuba and Mexico. However, they also recognised that there is still a long way to go in some countries and that *la violencia doméstica*, *el femicidio* and *el machismo* are still significant issues in the Spanish-speaking world.

Tarjeta D: Eva Perón, el icono femenino más poderoso de Argentina

This was a popular card but performances varied considerably. Successful students were able to respond to most of the key messages and thought that Eva Perón was a positive role-model for having helped the poor and integrating women into the workplace at a time when this was not the norm in Spain or throughout the rest of the Spanish-speaking world. Less successful students misinterpreted the material and spoke about Eva Perón as if she were still alive and was the President of Argentina. Many students failed to notice the '¿qué..?' at the start of the second question and so spoke about whether or not they thought Hispanic idols were good role models as opposed to *what they should do to be* good role models. Often Teacher-examiners did not challenge this misinterpretation thus impacting the student's access to the full range of marks available for AO2. As ever, Shakira was the most popular Hispanic idol referenced by students, although many struggled to correctly pronounce the name of her foundation *Pies Descalzos*. Other Hispanic philanthropists mentioned were Salma Hayek, Penélope Cruz, Juanes and Ricky Martin.

Tarjeta E: El Día de las Islas Baleares

This was not a popular choice of card but those students who chose it were generally able to respond to all of the key messages, although '*celebran con alegría*' was often overlooked. In general students felt that it was important to celebrate regional identity to bring communities together and to attract tourists. In their responses to the third printed question, students were able to discuss the importance of regional gastronomy (*paella*, *tapas*, *gazpacho*), the role of regional languages and festivals such as *La Tomatina*, *Las Fallas* and *Los Sanfermines*. Teacher-examiners are reminded that the sub-theme *La identidad nacional en España* is the only sub-theme in which the discussion must remain within the realm of Spain as opposed to any Spanish-speaking country/community and so students must be discouraged from discussing material related to the latter (such as *El Día de los Muertos*, which was frequently cited in responses to this card).

Tarjeta F: Picasso pinta la guerra

This was a very popular card and most students appeared to be familiar with the painting *Guernica*. Successful students were able to talk about how the painting is an *emblema icónico* and how Picasso's thoughts on the atrocities that happened in the bombing are transmitted via the symbols in the painting. In response to the second printed question, they thought that art and literature are important in helping us to understand the history and culture of the Hispanic world

and texts such as *La Casa de Bernalda Alba* give us an insight into life in Spain at the time. In response to the third printed question, most students chose to focus on sites such as Machu Picchu, *La Sagrada Familia* and the Alhambra with students rarely selecting other aspects of cultural heritage such as art and music.

Tarjeta G: Puestos de trabajo para los inmigrantes

This was a less popular card and, whilst most students seemed to understand the overall gist of the printed information, many key messages were misunderstood or misinterpreted, for example the fact that the region has not been able to fill the vacant posts with Spaniards. In response to the second printed question, it was widely thought that immigrants do the jobs that Spaniards do not want to do and that they enrich the culture with their cuisine and help to create diversity within society. In response to the third printed question, the main reason given was for economic reasons or for better job prospects abroad for young Spaniards and, in the case of Latin America, fleeing from economically or politically unstable countries. Successful students were able to reference recent events in countries such as Venezuela to justify the conclusions they were drawing.

Tarjeta H: La actitud racista hacia un peinado

This card was not so popular but successful students discussed their appreciation of the need to celebrate the African heritage of a significant proportion of the Panamanian population with *el Día de la Trenza* and their unhappiness about the fact that, historically, schools had forbidden students to wear their hair in braids. The response to the second printed question was generally that minority groups should be allowed to show off their ethnicity in Hispanic countries as everyone is equal. Few students were able to discuss specific government plans or initiatives in their response to the third printed question. Some students struggled with some of the vocabulary on the card such as the words '*afrodescendiente*' and '*peinado*'.

Tarjeta I: El deporte une a la gente

This card was chosen quite often and performances varied. Less successful students misinterpreted the printed information, suggesting that Edgar Silva was a 12 year old Madrileño who played football at school along with 100 other boys. However, successful students were able to discuss the benefits of initiatives like *Orcasur sin fronteras* to use sport to bring together youngsters of different cultures and nationalities as it promoted a common interest and helped them to integrate and make friends. In response to the second printed question, most students suggested that language classes were the best way to help integration into Hispanic society. In response to the third printed question, racism, violence, verbal abuse and the language barrier were cited as significant barriers as well as finding a job.

Tarjeta J: Un proyecto cambia la vida de unos jóvenes españoles

This card was chosen infrequently, but students generally showed a good understanding of many of the key messages, particularly those in the first two paragraphs. Some students struggled with the expression '*Pese al...*' and didn't always successfully communicate the messages regarding the worries and inequalities in rural areas. In response to the second printed question, suggestions varied but included ideas such as doing work experience whilst at school and taking part in demonstrations. In response to the what governments in the Spanish-speaking world are already doing to help young people, the *Garantía Juvenil* and *el plan Primer Empleo* in Argentina were often given as evidence. Less successful students didn't fully understand what the *Gira*

Jóvenes project was about and chose not to mention it, focusing their responses on the statistics in the second paragraph.

Tarjeta K: Unas fotos que hablan del régimen de Pinochet

This was a popular card. Most students were able to discuss the content of the photographs and the number of deaths, people tortured and those forced into exile. However, information regarding Paz Errazuriz being one of the few female photographers at the time was often overlooked, as was the information regarding how the exhibition made people aware of the regime's violation of human rights. In response to the second printed question, students almost unanimously thought that it was important to know what happened during Hispanic dictatorships as many people suffered and the family want to know what happened to their loved ones. The Franco regime and in particular the treatment of women in Spain during this time was a popular response to the third printed question but pleasingly some students did reference less predictable dictatorships such as the positive and negative impacts of Castro's regime in Cuba and the impact of Maduro's 'authoritarian regime' in modern day Venezuela.

Tarjeta L: La campaña Sanfermín Sin Sangre

This card was a relatively popular card and most students were clearly very much aware of the *Sanfermines* and had a lot to say about their views on animal cruelty and the treatment of the bulls during the bull run, although some of the vocabulary proved difficult for less successful students, who struggled with words such as '*el encierro*', '*se disfrazaron*' and '*cuernos*'. In response to the second printed question, it was thought that protests can lead to changes in the law and that it is important to raise awareness and stand up for your rights. Common protests referenced in response to the third printed question were 15M, Catalan Independence protests, *las madres de la Plaza de Mayo* and the Chilean *revolución de los pingüinos*.

Individual Research Project

Titles

As previously mentioned, there were various topics that were frequently chosen by students in this part of the examination. However, there were some different titles that produced interesting discussions on topics ranging from sexism in *La Casa de los espíritus* to the impact of racism on the Afrodescendent community in Colombia and educational policies and their effects on the sociolinguistic situation of the Basque language.

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 that enable students to access the full range of marks available for this part of the examination.

Some titles were far too broad or lacked focus on the Hispanic world, and so centres are reminded that an IRP Adviser for Spanish is allocated to each centre and they can be contacted at any time outside the examining window with regard to queries relating to the IRP and appropriateness of titles. Centres are advised to contact the IRP Adviser to seek approval of titles prior to students embarking on their research. For contact details of the relevant IRP Adviser, centres should contact mfl@aqg.org.uk

Presentation

In order to access the higher bands for the Presentation, students need to demonstrate that they have fully understood and assimilated research-based knowledge through the development, in the time available, of some key findings.

Some students seem to have misunderstood the purpose of the presentation and so waste valuable time stating the title, explaining why they chose the topic, how they conducted their research and setting the agenda for the discussion, all of which will not allow them access to the higher bands for AO4, for example:

‘Voy a hablar del origen y la evolución del Flamenco. Para hacer la investigación usé fuentes como videos en YouTube y artículos del periódico El País. Escogí este tema porque me gusta mucho bailar. Voy a hablar de los orígenes gitanos y árabes del Flamenco, su popularidad con los turistas, la importancia de la música y también me gustaría hablar de la evolución del Flamenco en los años recientes...’

As the presentation is assessed for AO4 only, it is important that, in the limited time available, students include an element of critical analysis in their development of some key findings as opposed to delivering simply factual information; the latter will have an adverse effect on the student’s ability to access the full range of marks available.

Given that this is an aspect of the test that students 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, at times, unintelligible; this will impact their score for AO4. Students do not have to cover all of their key findings in the 2 minute presentation. The title is for the IRP as a whole and so some aspects may be covered in the presentation and others in the discussion, and so students need to strike the right balance to ensure there is sufficient content in the presentation but that the delivery is appropriate.

Teacher-examiners are reminded that the presentation should not last longer than 2 minutes and that they should sensitively interrupt the student once the 2 minutes maximum time has been reached.

Discussion

Examiners reported that there were some very interesting and detailed discussions that reflected extensive research on the part of the students. Successful students were able to demonstrate a thorough knowledge and evaluation of their chosen topic and they made good use of relevant factual information to justify their arguments and/or the conclusions that they were drawing.

Disappointingly this series, there were a few examples of tests where Teacher-examiners appeared to be working through a pre-defined list of questions and the intonation and general delivery of student responses strongly suggested that pupils were answering with pre-learnt responses. Teacher-examiners should 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. Teacher-examiners should also be aware that cases such as these run the risk of being flagged as malpractice.

Whilst it is important that 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, spontaneous conversation, get students to clarify their comments where needed and create opportunities for students to engage well in the discussion. The teacher-examiner does not have to cover all of the headings given on the CRF and they also do not need to be covered in the order in which they are written. The same is true for Visiting Examiners. In the mark scheme, reference to the student's engagement with the discussion includes how well, or otherwise, the student responds to unpredictable elements so if the Teacher-examiner simply works through the bullet point headings with no supplementary questions or with no reaction to what a student has said in response, the mark for AO1 will be adversely affected. In addition, Teacher-examiners must not shy away from calling into question the validity of findings if appropriate. Also, 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.

Again this series, some students underestimated the amount of material needed to discuss their chosen topic in depth for 9-10 minutes. In the worst cases, students had little more to add than the information that had been given in the 2 minute presentation. It is therefore important that in the preparatory stages of their project 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, as previously highlighted, those students who concentrated on the process and setting the agenda for discussion rather than their key findings and development of these saw their AO4 adversely affected. Similarly in cases where the delivery was garbled leading to difficulty on the Examiner's part to comprehend, the AO4 score was negatively impacted. Centres are strongly encouraged to ensure that the 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. Tests in which students were required to engage fully with a genuine, spontaneous discussion on their chosen topic were rewarded with scores in the higher bands. As previously mentioned, tests where it was clear that students were responding to familiar questions or relying on pre-learnt material saw the score for AO1 negatively impacted.

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 the top bands. Some students, rather than focusing on ensuring accuracy in basic tenses and structures, had clearly tried to pre-learn phrases using overly complex language that they then struggled to deliver accurately, which had an adverse effect on their score for AO3. On the whole, pronunciation and intonation were good, although students should ensure that they can correctly pronounce key words or names related to their chosen 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

This series, scores for this AO varied considerably. Those students who were readily able to evaluate their key findings and use relevant information to justify the opinions that they gave and the conclusions that they were drawing were able to access the higher bands. Students who 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.