



A-LEVEL SPANISH

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

7692/3T/3V
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General Comments

The tests this year produced some really interesting and animated discussions in which students were able to showcase a wide variety of linguistic skill as well as a thorough knowledge of relevant contemporary and historical issues throughout the Spanish-speaking world.

It was clear that many students had prepared very well and they were able to accurately use a wide range of vocabulary and complex grammatical structures to express their ideas and opinions enabling them to access the full range of marks available. Again, this year there were some excellent linguistic performances from non-native speakers demonstrating a very high level of fluency, highly accurate knowledge of both basic and complex structures and the ability to effectively manipulate these. 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 varied as in previous series but, as ever, there were several topics that arose frequently such as *El Clásico*; Pablo Escobar; Eva Perón; Bullfighting; Inditex/Zara; the changing role of women in Spain; the Arabic influence in Spain. 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, Phillipines, Gibraltar or the USA) or that they involved a comparison with a non-Spanish-speaking country or 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; teachers are reminded that it is in the students' 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*. Where there were issues with the titles selected by students or the way that the Candidate Record Form had been completed, examiners wrote an IRP Feedback form which will be sent to the centre to highlight these and help inform good practice for future series.

Tester Performance Records

In cases where the student's ability to access the full range of marks available has been directly impacted by the conduct of the test, a Tester Performance Record has been completed by the AQA examiner and sent to the relevant centre. This record includes pertinent information to help the teacher-examiner adapt their practice to ensure that tests are correctly conducted in future series so as not to disadvantage the students.

Administration

Centres are reminded of the importance of reading the relevant series' *Instructions for the conduct of the exams* booklet as full instructions regarding the administration of the tests are given and all changes or additions are clearly highlighted in yellow.

Attendance lists, Candidate Record Forms, Title Approval Form and Additional Information

With the change this series to online submission of both the recordings and relevant supporting documentation, many centres unfortunately did not ensure that the attendance lists, additional Information sheet and Candidate Record Forms were uploaded on the Media Submissions Portal as stipulated on page 13 of the *Instructions for the Conduct of the Exams* booklet. Centres are reminded that both sides of the Candidate Record Forms should be uploaded and that the following information should be included on the additional information sheet:

- the number and name of each student.
- the component code (7692/3T).
- the centre number.
- the name of teacher-examiner(s) conducting the test(s) – written clearly.
- the 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 upload it to the Media Submissions Portal together with the other supporting documentation.

Please note that there is no requirement to upload 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 uploaded to the Media Submissions Portal 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 headings are phrased as short, concise bullet points and not as questions.
- the total number of words in the headings does not exceed 80.

In the case of visiting examiner tests, it is in the best interests of the student if spaces 3 – 8 on the CRF have appropriate 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 again pleasing to see this year that students in general were adept at using the 5 minutes preparation time to assimilate the printed information, prepare responses to the printed questions and formulate 2 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

Once again this year, 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 to 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 on the Summary of Procedures sheet on page 20 of the *Instructions for the Conduct of the Exams* booklet to ensure each test 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.

It is important that teacher-examiners remember that in Part 1, discussion of the sub-theme, any student questions asked after the 6 minute maximum will not be credited and this will directly impact the student's ability to access the full range of marks for AO2. Teacher-examiners therefore need to ensure that they manage the time appropriately so as not to disadvantage the student.

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 suitable follow-up questions between the printed questions to enable students to develop their ideas and opinions. However, some 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 low score 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 unpredictable questions are in response 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, which 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. Similarly, it is important that the questions posed are not personal or generic in nature, but instead are relevant to the sub-topic in the context of the Spanish-speaking world.

Assessment Objective 2

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

This year it was pleasing to see that most students scored 3 or more for AO2 and were able to demonstrate that they had understood many of the key messages included in the printed material. However, there were some cases where the conduct of the test limited the student's ability to access the full range of marks available 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 most of the key messages contained within the material on the card. In some 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 key messages contained within 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 as this in itself does not demonstrate understanding. 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 sensitively challenge, where necessary, any misunderstanding or misinterpretation of the printed material on the part of the student.

Student’s questions (credited within the AO2 score)

In Part 1, the discussion of the sub-theme, there is a requirement that the student ask the teacher-examiner 2 questions within the 6 minute period. In many cases this year, students did not need to be prompted to pose their questions. However, there were cases where the teacher-examiner did not prompt the student and so no questions were posed, therefore impacting the student’s score for AO2. It is important that teacher-examiners remember that student questions asked after the 6 minute maximum will not be credited and this will directly impact the student’s ability to access the full range of marks for AO2. It is therefore best practice to encourage the student to ask their questions earlier in the discussion rather than later.

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.

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 it is that 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.

This series, most students scored between 5-8 marks for AO3 and almost a quarter of students achieved scores of 9–10. It was very pleasing to hear some performances in which non-native students demonstrated excellent linguistic skills and were able to communicate complex ideas with a high degree of grammatical accuracy. Pronunciation was good and rarely had a significant impact on comprehension. Some words, however, were commonly mispronounced (*desigualidad* for *desigualdad*, *igualidad* for *igualdad*) or students simply added an infinitive ending to English verbs to create a Spanish verb (eg *restringir*, *afordar*, *evitar*, *prevenir*, *mejorar*, *involvar*, *reportar*, *expectar*, *promotar*)

In some cases, however, students struggled to manipulate basic structures whilst going to great lengths to shoehorn in unnecessarily complex pre-learned 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 gente*, *el ley*, *el opinión*, *el situación*.
- incorrect adjectival agreements.
- confusion of *ser*, *estar*, *haber* and *tener*.
- confusion between *soportar* and *apoyar*.
- confusion of *mejor* and *mayor*, *creer* and *crear*.
- simply adding a Spanish infinitive ending to the end of an English verb to ‘invent’ an infinitive eg: *restringir*; *afordar*; *prevenir*; *improver*; *promotar* etc.
- incorrect past participles in compound tenses.
- lack of subjunctive after *no creo que* and certain impersonal expressions and value judgements.
- confusion between first person and third person irregular preterites: *hice/hizo*; *fui/fue*; *tuve/tuvo*.
- incorrect use of the passive.

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 good to see that most students scored 3 or more for AO4. Students who offered good critical and analytical responses and drew on appropriate evidence to support their arguments and justify conclusions drawn were able to access full marks. However, a lack of critical analysis as well as lack of focus on target-language speaking countries or communities meant that some students were unable to access the full range of marks available.

In order to access the higher bands for this AO, the 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 and so 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. In some centres for example, in an attempt to get students to use more complex grammatical structures, teacher-examiners often posed questions along the lines of *Si fueras tú...¿qué harías?* or *¿Como te hubieras sentido si vivieras en aquella época?* which generally elicited purely personal responses and did not usually attract marks for AO4.

Teachers should ensure that students are aware that using examples from non-Spanish speaking countries, (for example referencing data related to the UK/USA or highlighting the charitable works

of celebrities such as Cristiano Ronaldo or Jennifer Lopez who are not from Spanish-speaking countries) will have a negative impact on the AO4 score.

Again, this year, the sub-theme of *‘el ciberespacio’* proved to be popular but 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: Comer en familia

This was a relatively popular card and students generally demonstrated a secure understanding of most of the key messages. Some students, however, struggled to grasp the ideas that eating as a family strengthens family bonds and that busy lives mean there is not time to sit down together for a meal. In general, students showed surprise at what they felt were high figures related to the number of Columbians who are able to enjoy family meals each week and lunch together each day. Students were able to offer plenty of relevant information regarding the changes in family life in the Spanish-speaking world over recent decades, ranging from changes in divorce laws and legalisation of same sex marriages to the trends of grandparents playing a key childcare role for their grandchildren and the current role of women in the workforce in Spain.

Tarjeta B: Concha, la abuela cibernauta

This was a popular card and, whilst most students thought that it was a positive thing that Concha’s family had facilitated her use of technology, many claimed that this was to stop her feeling isolated as opposed to enabling her to pursue her interest in drawing. Similarly, some students misunderstood the information regarding Concha having been contracted by Disney. In their response to question 3 (*¿Qué están haciendo los gobiernos...?*), many students suggested what governments in the Spanish-speaking world *could* do as opposed to what they *are* doing and this misinterpretation of the tense in the question was often left unchallenged by teacher-examiners. As has been the case in previous series, students have at times struggled to demonstrate their knowledge of the sub-theme of *El ciberespacio* in the context of the Spanish-speaking world and 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 Spanish-speaking world needed to secure marks in the higher bands for AO4. Similarly, the teacher-examiner’s unpredictable 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.

Tarjeta C: Argentina, líder de la revolución trans en Latinoamérica

This was another card that proved to be popular with students and they unanimously felt that the doctor mentioned in paragraph one should not have been imprisoned. Most students were able to show understanding of the changes in the law highlighted in the second paragraph, but the information regarding medical treatment and the *Programa Médico Obligatorio* in the third paragraph was frequently overlooked. In response to question 3, most students were able to offer

relevant information regarding either barriers to *la igualdad de género* or developments throughout the Spanish-speaking world ranging from the work of people like Clara Campoamor in the advocacy of woman's suffrage in Spain to the high levels of domestic and gender-based violence in countries such as Mexico, Argentina, Peru, El Salvador and Bolivia.

Tarjeta D: En horas de crisis, las celebridades ayudan

This card was not so popular, but students who chose it generally answered well. In most cases the students needed prompting to show understanding of some of the messages and, in particular, the information included in the final paragraph. In response to question 2 some students were able to suggest celebrities who are not so responsible (such as footballers Luis Suárez and Maradona) but did not address the *¿Por qué..?* aspect of the question. In response to question 3, despite her recent fall from grace, Shakira remained the most popular example of a celebrity who helps others. Similarly, Messi, Salma Hayek, Penelope Cruz and Ricky Martin were regularly presented as positive role models within the Spanish-speaking world. As with previous series, some students chose to focus on examples from beyond the Spanish-speaking world, such as Cristiano Ronaldo and Selena Gomez, thus impacting their ability to access the full range of marks for AO4.

Tarjeta E: La Noche de San Juan

This card was not so popular, but successful students discussed the elements of fire and water involved in the celebrations, the pagan origins of the festival and its conversion to a Christian festival. In response to question 2, most felt that the religious origin of festivals is not of importance to the majority of Spaniards nowadays, and that the key aspect of the many festivals throughout Spain is the opportunity to have a good time with friends and family and also the economic benefits that festival tourism brings to the country. *La Tomatina* and the *Sanfermines* were the most popular festivals referenced in response to question 3, but it was good to hear some students discuss other celebrations such as *La Feria de Abril* and *Semana Santa*. Teacher-examiners are reminded that, for cards such as this, where the sub-theme is *La identidad regional en España*, the discussion must remain within the realm of Spain only as opposed to other Spanish-speaking countries.

Tarjeta F: Un paraíso peruano en peligro

This was a relatively popular card. Students struggled with pronunciation of the park's name, *Huascarán*, with many choosing to simply refer to it as '*el parque*'. Students generally volunteered information regarding the messages in the first paragraph, but many needed prompting to show their understanding of the messages in paragraphs 2 and 3. In response to question 2, the key advantage according to the students was the benefit to the local economy and disadvantages included damage to historic sites and increased pollution, with *Machu Picchu* frequently referenced as an example. Popular sites mentioned in response to question 3 were *La Sagrada Familia*, *La Alhambra*, *el Acueducto de Segovia* and *las Líneas Nazca*.

Tarjeta G: Un aumento de la inmigración en España

This was a very popular card with a full range of responses. The figures in the text did present some students with difficulties as they struggled to correctly express the numbers in Spanish. However, most students were able to discuss the key messages relating to the increase in the number of immigrants, the risks of travelling by boat and the number of Venezuelan emigrants who have arrived in Spain. In response to question 2, many students spoke of the advantages and disadvantages for the immigrants themselves as opposed to those of the country to which they have immigrated. This misunderstanding was often left unchallenged by teacher-examiners. However, others highlighted the role that immigrants play in the agricultural, hospitality, construction and healthcare workforces in Spain. In response to question 3, students were,

amongst other things, able to discuss how female Venezuelan emigrants face double discrimination in Colombia as they are women and immigrants as well as what they felt were worrying policies on the part of the Spanish political party Vox.

Tarjeta H: Iniciativa antirracista en los bares de Sevilla

This was a relatively popular card that produced a range of responses. Whilst most students seemed to understand the overall gist of the printed information, several key messages were misunderstood or misinterpreted, possibly due to unfamiliarity with vocabulary such as *manteles*, *servilletas* and *enlace*. In response to question 2, students felt that historical racist policies in the Spanish-speaking world were to blame for the continued existence of racism. There were limited examples of cases of racism referenced in response to question 3, the main one being the case of a banana being thrown at footballer Dani Alves. Some students did discuss the marginalisation and discrimination of indigenous people in countries throughout Latin America.

Tarjeta I: Los nuevos españoles

This card was quite popular and most students showed a good understanding of all of the key messages. Students were not generally surprised by the information and felt that Spanish society was very multicultural. In response to question 2, stereotypes relating to the *gitano* population were frequently referenced. When discussing question 3, as well as suggesting that the education system played a key role in improving peaceful coexistence, students often spoke about the historical multiculturalism of *Al Andalus* and how they felt that this was a positive model for the Spanish-speaking world.

Tarjeta J: España pierde a jóvenes cualificados

This card was chosen quite often and performances varied. Whilst most understood the gist of the card, less successful students misinterpreted much of the printed information and, for example, suggested that young Spaniards went to the UK to do a Masters degree or that they worked in cafés and restaurants in Spain. In their response to question 2, most felt that leaving Spain was a good decision and, when answering question 3, successful students were able to talk in detail about the youth unemployment levels in Spain, the issues of *sobre titulación*, the Spanish *fuga de cerebros*, the late age at which young Spaniards generally leave home as well as problems such as *el ciberacoso* presented by modern technology. Most students kept the discussion within the realms of Spain as opposed to the wider Spanish speaking world.

Tarjeta K: Los niños robados

This card proved to be very popular and, in general, students were able to demonstrate a good understanding of most of the key messages. Frequently overlooked were the facts that mothers were lied to and told that their baby had died and that those responsible were being taken to trial. In response to question 2, it was felt that putting advertisements in newspapers, doing DNA tests and publishing the results on a website where families could find each other, as well as giving emotional support and therapy to those affected, would be possible measures that could be put in place. Most students were able to discuss other atrocities in response to question 3, with the Pinochet and Videla regimes proving most popular and students discussing the demonstrations and success of *Las Madres de la Plaza de Mayo* association.

Tarjeta L: Justicia para unos estudiantes mexicanos

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, although students often

overlooked the opinion that Guillermo del Toro had tweeted. In response to question 2, most felt that young people had to take a stand and demonstrate against injustice and, in response to question 3, frequent references were made to movements such as *Solo sí es sí* and *15M* in Spain, as well as *La revolución de los Pingüinos* in Chile.

Individual Research Project

Titles

Whilst there were several titles that frequently arose and were discussed with varying degrees of success, there were other titles that made for very interesting and enlightening discussions and that highlighted less well known aspects of the Spanish speaking world. These ranged from discussions on how the Atacama Desert is rapidly becoming a dumping ground for fast fashion to whether internal as opposed to external factors led to the downfall of the Inca empire and an analysis as to whether oil was Venezuela's saving grace or a catalyst to its economic depression.

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 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 through the development, in the time available, of some key findings, that they have fully understood and assimilated research-based knowledge.

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, the students include an element of critical analysis in their development of some key findings as opposed to delivering simply factual information as 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, which 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. Students are allowed to have their copy of the Candidate Record Form whilst they deliver the presentation and so they can refer to the headings on this throughout and should be encouraged to do so, as often those who have learnt a script by heart find that exam pressure leads them to forget it and they struggle to deliver a meaningful 2-minute presentation. In cases such as these, having sight of their headings can help them to remember the points that they wanted to make.

In general, the timings for the presentation this series were very good, with few students delivering presentations that were too short and also very few going beyond the 2 minute maximum. Teacher-examiners, however, 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

Again, this series, examiners reported that there were some very interesting and well informed 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 still examples of tests where teacher-examiners appeared to be working through a pre-defined list of questions, often starting every discussion with the inappropriate question *¿Por qué escogiste este tema?*. In cases such as these, the intonation and general delivery of student responses strongly suggested that pupils were answering with pre-learnt responses. Teacher-examiners need to 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 must not treat the headings as a kind of script for the questions in the discussion and instead 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 the case 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. It is also important that headings on the Candidate Record Form are not written as questions: where headings are phrased as questions and then the discussion questions turn out to be a translation of these, this could well be flagged up as a case of malpractice because it effectively means the student has been aware of the discussion questions ahead of the test.

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 are 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.

It was pleasing to see that in general the standard of presentations this year had improved with the majority of students scoring 4 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 score 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 were good with the vast majority of students scoring 7. 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.

There were notable improvements in scores for this AO, with most students securing 7 marks. 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 and vocabulary 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, more than half of the cohort secured scores of 8 or more for this AO, reflecting a high level of effective research and ability to offer a very good evaluation of key findings. Successful students were able to use relevant information to justify the opinions that they gave and the conclusions that they were drawing. 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.