GCSE

POLISH

8688/SH Paper 3 Speaking Higher Tier
Report on the Examination

8688/SH
June 2023

Version: 1.0

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General Comments

Changes were made to the 2023 papers to reflect the removal of the regulatory requirement to test vocabulary outside of the published vocabulary list.

Overall the exam went well and the results are comparable to the previous years. As previously, there was broad range in the standard of work produced by students, ranging from students who who performed excellently to those who have earned much lower marks. Some students did not perform well in the Role Plays and Photo Cards.

There were a number of issues which adversely affected students' marks.

Poor timing sometimes resulted in a loss of marks.

For the Role Plays, teachers sometimes deviated from their script which meant that the answer given by a student for that task could not be credited.

In the Photo Cards, teachers are allowed to paraphrase the question, but sometimes the alternative version used was not a paraphrase. On occasions, teachers only asked three questions, instead of five.

It is important for teacher-examiners to read the advice sections at the end of this report and incorporate the advice into their own testing for future series.

The following comments aim to provide a comprehensive overview of the 2023 GCSE Polish Speaking Test, both in terms of teacher conduct and student performance.

Role Plays

Students regularly performed less well in the Role Play than in the General Conversation, suggesting that some that many students were unprepared for the exam requirements and were unaware of what was expected of them in this task.

In the Role Plays, most teachers followed the role prescribed in the Teacher's booklet. There were cases where teachers re-worded the script and any subsequent student responses were invalidated. Some examiners also asked questions which were not in the script or omitted some of them. In the case of two-part questions, often ones requiring opinions and reasons, it is good practice to elicit the two elements separately. This was not always done enough by teachers across the tiers. Also, many teachers prompted students to ask them the question, but unfortunately few examiners suggested the key words at the same time, meaning that the student could not be credited for the question task.

A significant number of students at both tiers did not pay sufficient attention to the context laid out in both English and Polish on their Role Play card and this may account for some inaccurate or irrelevant responses. Teachers are advised to ensure that they read the scenario introduction at the start of the Role Play, as well as reminding students about the importance of carefully reading the scenario in their preparation time. The biggest challenge for students in this section of the test was dealing with interrogatives. If their understanding of these was limited, students struggled to formulate a question when required to do so. Some of the students were able to effectively ask the question though from the prompt words provided on the **?** task. There were occasions when students asked a totally random question, quite often relating to the previous task, but not linked to the given prompt or simply read the prompt aloud, which could not be credited.

On many occasions, and at both tiers, students gave far more information than was necessary to accomplish the task, which should be discouraged. At both tiers, the majority of students were able to respond appropriately to the unpredictable task, which proved their ability to deal with language in a spontaneous way. All students need to familiarise themselves with the format and demands of Role Plays, and the meaning of **?** and **!** symbols in particular.

The published mark scheme has more details as to the kind of responses that were worthy of two, one or zero marks per task.

In Role Plays, the following tasks generally caused the most problems for students:

Role Play 7

Some students lost their marks for giving only one detail in the first task (*Sylwester – gdzie i z kim*).

The expression *bale przebierańców* was not at all well-known and so the fourth task proved challenging for some.

Many students also had difficulty producing a valid question (*Zmiany w nowym roku*).

Role Play 9

In the first task (*Wakacje – gdzie i dla ilu osób*) some students only addressed either the first or the second prompt. Failure to give two details in the first task led them to only being awarded one mark. There were also students, who did not understand this task or paid no attention to it, as they missed the *zagraniczne* and *w Krakowie* parts from the introduction text.

In the second task (*Gdzie chciałby Pan/ chciałaby Pani zatrzymać się podczas tych wakacji?*) many students named places, cities or countries (eg *w Hiszpanii*, *w Amsterdamie, nad morzem*) rather than different types of accomodation but the Mark Scheme was amended to reflect this tendency.

Some students had difficulty asking the question about travel; some asked questions to travel agents about whether they liked travelling or where they would like to travel, instead of about their journey itself.

Role Play 10

Most students had difficulty with Task 1 and often described the new park, not its opening ceremony.

Many students were unable to phrase question correctly in the question task *Miejsce wypoczynku*. Students tended to ask about the park instead as it was related to the previous tasks (eg *Czy podoba ci się park?)*.

Role Play 11

Some students missed *online* in the first question and instead described their favourite lesson without references specifically to the online aspect of it.

Some students were unable to respond to the fourth task. In some cases it was caused by problems with understanding the phrase *matura z polskiego* (*A co sądzisz o kontynuowaniu nauki języka polskiego na poziomie maturalnym?... Dlaczego?*). In this case, many students were giving an opinion on the importance of learning the Polish language in general, not on A-level.

Students also had problems with asking a question. Either they missed the *online* element of the question or were asking general questions about lessons online, not tests (eg *Co myślisz o lekcjach online?)*.

Role Play 12

Some students lost their marks for giving only one detail in the first task: *Mieszkanie – jakie (dwa szczegóły*); they failed to recognise the plural form within the prompt words.

Some students had also difficulty with the second task and sometimes answered *Będę płacił mało*, instead of giving answers in terms of amount of money.

Task 3 was not done well in many cases, too. It often seemed to be because the student did not understand the noun *akademik*.

Many students could not formulate a correct question about student life in Poland; they were asking questions about graduation or university in general, or about student life itself, but without the necessary references to Poland.

Photo Cards

There were some occasions when an entire question was paraphrased by teachers in a permissible way. However, there were many cases of attempts at paraphrasing which did not retain the exact original meaning of the question, and therefore invalidated any subsequent response by the student. Some teachers introduced their own questions or added supplementary ones. As a result, students did not gain credit and this also reduced the amount of time available for them to answer the prescribed questions as fully as possible. There were also instances in which teachers asked only three questions instead of five.

On the other hand, students generally seemed well-prepared for this part of the test and completed the Photo Card task comfortably within the time limit at both tiers. At Higher tier, where the time limit is three minutes, there were some cases in which all five questions were not asked within the time allowed. This was occasionally due to a very slow delivery by the student, but more often the result of too long and repetitive type of answers to the first three questions, especially the question eliciting a description of the photo. Although good development of response is to be welcomed, students need to make sure that what they say still addresses the question of what can be seen in the photo. It is worth mentioning the continuing English influence in commonly used collocation by students *w tej fotografii*.

In order to score in the top band, students had to answer all questions clearly and develop at least three responses by using several clauses. The lack of development of answers in some cases meant that some students were unable to score the top marks.

Generally, questions in the Photo Cards discriminated well, with a wide range in the quality of answers, but there were some that were done noticeably less well than others. These were the ones which students found most challenging:

Photo Card K

Some students missed the marks for not eliciting both details in the second question, despite the fact that it was a prepared one; quite often they talked only about the ways in which they and their friends are preparing for the tests, but without justification.

In general, many students did not seem to understand the meaning of the phrase *projekt szkolny* in the fourth task and as the result, they were unable to respond to this question.

Photo Card L

Some students had difficulty responding to the third question, because they have mistaken the concept of *nauczanie*. Quite often, they were talking how their own learning has changed recently in place of the teaching process.

Some students missed the marks for not eliciting both details in the fourth task and mentioning only advantages or disadvantages of working in a group during the lessons. Some students who had problems with understanding the *zalety* and *wady* in general.

General Conversation

For most students, the Conversation section of the test was where they performed best.

In some cases, teachers asked questions on only one theme in the conversation or mixed up two themes. There were also instances of duplicating the theme from the Photo Card in the General Conversation, which had an impact on awarded marks for Communication (the maximum mark available in this case is five for Communication). At both tiers, many General Conversations adhered to the minimum and maximum timings but there were some issues with timings for this part of the exam. As a result, one of the themes in the Conversation (or sometimes even both) and did not meet the minimum time requirement. This had an impact on the mark awarded for Communication, as explained in the published mark schemes. If time spent on one or both Themes is less than the minimum requirement, then the maximum mark for Communication is the equivalent mark in the band below. For example, if a mark of 8 (level 4) would be awarded, this is reduced to a mark of 6 (level 3).

The style of questioning for lower achieving students did not always allow them to perform to their full potential. Some examiners followed the example questions in the Teacher notes without consideration of the ability of the individual student. Some teachers also used closed questions that have very limited usefulness, as they are likely to hinder students from showing their skills and knowledge. There were also instances when teachers asked a question that students have already discussed earlier in their responses.

Most students either asked the question at a time of their choice, or it was elicited by the teacher at the very end of the test. Unfortunately, this led to some questions not being asked within the maximum time limit and a one-mark penalty being applied to the mark for Communication, as outlined in the mark scheme. Teachers should also remember that they are allowed to prompt the student to ask a question by saying eg *Masz jakieś pytanie?* or *Czy chciałbyś/ chciałabyś mnie o*

coś spytać? Some teachers did this effectively, even though the students declared *Nie* at the first instance, but others did not prompt the student effectively.

At Higher tier, most students were given the opportunity to use all three time frames, thereby gaining access to the 9-10 mark band for Range and Accuracy. There were isolated cases when students did not get/use opportunities to use different time frames, which limited them to the 1-2 mark band.

Many students used complex structures and vocabulary, which gave them access to the top marks for Language and Accuracy. Overall, students' vocabulary was mostly good, but some colloquial words were used, which were not always appropriate during the formal exam and may reflect the process of learning Polish language from hearing by students, eg *matma*, *spoko*, *gadać.* The verb *go* was overused in incorrect way: *jechać samolotem*, *szłem na wakacje*, *szedłem do Polski*, *iść do Ameryki*, *co rok idę do Polski na wakacje*, *poszłam do Norwegii.*

There were lots of English words conjugated in Polish, resulting in incorrect forms and sometimes with a complete change of meaning, like *polucja (zanieczyszczenie), juniform, juniversity, rewizja (revision), donacja (dotacja), adykcja (uzależnienie), karawan (przyczepa).* English influence was obvious in collocations like *spędzać* (in a meaning of *wydawać*) *pieniądze* or *dobra kondycja* (instead of *dobre warunki*). The most common influences though, were visible in the usage of the nouns *student* in place of *uczeń*, *klasa* in the meaning of *lesson*, and verb *studiować* instead of *uczyć się,* or some words (mainly connected with the school life and education) used in their English form; most commonly *Sixth Form*, *Science*, *Art*, *level*, *break*, *grade, subject*. It is pleasing to note that some students did elaborate and explain their meaning in detail in Polish.

There were also students who used more limited vocabulary and whose language was sometimes repetitive and conveyed only basic information. These students often mixed different time frames, noun cases and verb endings.

Some students demonstrated the ability to incorporate a greater range of structure, including modal verbs and common subordinating conjunctions.

The pronunciation and intonation were usually very good or excellent and many students received the highest marks for Pronunciation and Intonation. In a few cases there was little intonation, however.

Advice to teachers

General

- Do a short test recording before the first student's test to check recording levels and clarity.
- Position the microphone or digital recorder so that it picks up both voices clearly.
- Make sure that your own and the students' mobile phones are switched off (not just on silent) before the recording begins. Students must not have access to their mobile during the preparation time or during the exam, in accordance with examination regulations.
- The *Instructions for the Conduct of Examinations* document is available in the Assessment resources tab of the AQA website language pages as well as in the secure Centre Services area. It is *essential* that you follow the instructions in this document, which is updated each year.
- In the *Instructions* document, you are reminded how to introduce each student in English. This is what you should say at the start of the recording for every student: GCSE Polish examination, June (*year of exam*). Centre number ____, candidate number ____, candidate

name ____. Role Play number ____, Photo Card letter ____, General Conversation theme chosen by student Theme (1, 2 or 3).

- Use Polish throughout the exam once you have introduced the student and his/her Role Play and Photo Card combinations and the nominated theme for the General Conversation in English.
- Respond positively to what students say, even if it is not as good as you would like. It will encourage them for the rest of the test.

Role Play

- Keep to your script as laid out in the Teacher's Role. Not to do so will mean that the student's response will receive a mark of zero for Communication in that task.
- If you see that a student is starting to give the wrong answer to your question, stop him/her and repeat the question. Once the student completes an incorrect answer, a mark of zero for Communication is given for that task, even if you repeat the question and a correct answer is given subsequently.
- If a student asks for repetition of your question or if there is no answer, you may repeat the question.

Photo card

- You may paraphrase a question, provided that exactly the same meaning is maintained. However, be careful that that is the case or the student's reply will not be credited.
- Ask all five questions in the Teacher's Booklet, but do not ask any follow-up questions.
- Keep an eye on the timing. If a student's replies are very long and it looks as though you may not be able to ask the final question in the three minute maximum time, you may be better to interrupt an answer and move on to the next question.

General conversation

- Encourage students to vary their language structures and vocabulary as much as possible. Opinions are the most obvious area to focus on – not everything has to be described as *interesujące* or *nudne* and there are other ways to say *lubię to*. In order to introduce some variety of language, ensure that students have a bank of adjectives such as *zabawne, niesamowite, wspaniałe, świetne, nieprzyjazne*; and verbs such as *uwielbiam, interesuję się, znajduję to, nienawidzę tego, to mnie niepokoi.*
- Train students to give and justify opinions without necessarily being asked to do so. This can form the basis of different starter activities.
- Be sensitive to the ability of the students – someone who struggles to describe his/her town is not going to be successful discussing more challenging aspects of the topic, eg the impact of global warming.
- Try to ask students questions that reflect their interests. Don't ask all students identical questions.
- In order to achieve a greater sense of spontaneity in the conversation, follow up a student's response by asking about what they have just told you.
- Announce the change of theme in Polish: *Przejdźmy teraz do tematu rozmowy numer jeden,* etc.
- Keep a close eye on the time. If one of the themes lasts for less than 2'30", there is a marking penalty – see the published mark schemes.
- The maximum length of the General Conversation is seven minutes. Anything said after the

maximum time will not be marked.

- Remember to prompt the student to ask you a question if they don't do it without being asked. It is better to get them to ask you the question in their nominated theme so that you don't forget to do it later.
- If the first question the student asks you makes no sense, get them to ask you another one.

Advice to students

- Use the 12 minutes' preparation time wisely. You can write down exactly what you are going to say in the Role Play tasks and in response to the three questions on the Photo Card.
- For the Photo Card questions, try to prepare answers that consist of at least three sentences, using a verb in each one.
- Listen carefully to the questions that your teacher asks you for the unprepared questions in the Role Play and Photo Card and to all questions in the General Conversation.
- You can ask for repetition of a question in any part of the test, but make sure it is in Polish. For example, you can say *Proszę powtórzyć*.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the Results Statistics page of the AQA Website.