

Principal Moderator's Report January 2013

GCSE Spanish 5SP02 2A

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Introduction

Centres have a choice of three tasks:

- a presentation and follow-on discussion
- a picture-based discussion
- an open interaction.

Each candidate must undertake at least two of these three task-types but only one has to be recorded and submitted. Centres are asked to submit recordings of at least two different task-types in the moderation sample.

Fewer candidates entered for the January examination series than for the summer series and the majority of centres were meticulous in their administration of the tests, conducting the orals in a professional and encouraging manner.

In general, centres had prepared their candidates well. Most candidates were given the opportunity to perform to the best of their ability in tests that were conducted strictly according to the specification by teacher examiners who listened carefully to what the candidates were saying and, as a result, developed natural, spontaneous conversations.

Tasks

Some centres provided too many bullet points in the stimuli given to their candidates, allowing little opportunity for unpredictability. About five bullet points is the optimum number and within those it is important to provide the candidates with the opportunity to express their opinions, to range over a variety of verb forms and to widen the conversation beyond the immediate stimulus and yet remain within the same topic area.

Presentation and discussion

The most popular task-type submitted for this series was the presentation and discussion and, in particular, the topic of *School life*, which is a theme devised by centres. These were well prepared by the candidates but often there was a significant drop in standard between the initial pre-learned and frequently recited presentation and the subsequent interaction with the teacher examiner, when candidates became less confident and less forthcoming.

In some cases, it became apparent that the interaction had also been carefully prepared, with the teacher examiner asking exactly the same questions of all the candidates, and with candidates reciting their pre-learned answers. Teacher examiners who rely exclusively on a set of prepared questions and who do not listen to what the candidates are saying in order to develop a natural conversation effectively disadvantage their candidates.

Picture-based discussion

The picture-based discussions were also quite popular. The pictures chosen by the candidates ranged from photographs of their work experience to holidays and school sports. Centres are reminded that if the original picture stimuli are not submitted, a description of the pictures used by the candidates during the tests should be written clearly on the *Candidate Mark Sheets*, which now include a space below the heading *Picture-based discussion* for that purpose. It is important for the moderator to know some detail of the picture that provided a starting point for each oral test.

Open interaction

There were only a few examples of open interaction in this examination series.

In the open interaction there should be clearly defined roles for the candidate and the teacher examiner. One centre, for example, provided the scenario of the candidate working part-time in a restaurant and talking with a Spanish-speaking customer. Another set the open interaction in an estate agents where the candidate was employed on work experience and dealing with a Spanish family who were about to move into the area because the father's job had been re-located. Both of these are clearly correct and imaginative interpretations of open interactions.

However, a number of open interactions did not involve any evidence of transaction and were simply conversations between the candidate and, for instance, his or her Spanish friend.

The open interaction task-type is the only one in which candidates are required to ask questions and most centres fulfilled this requirement successfully.

Timings

Each oral task should last between 4 and 6 minutes and most centres were able to keep to these limits. Centres should be aware that moderators stop moderating after 6 minutes to ensure fairness to all candidates. In any case, prolonging the oral rarely, if ever, brings any advantage to the candidate – often the reverse is true.

At the other end of the time scale, centres are reminded that some weaker candidates may struggle to achieve the minimum time; there is, therefore, some leeway and performances over 3 minutes 30 seconds are accepted. Anything less than this will be considered short and centres should refer to the marking principles below for details on how to apply the assessment criteria in these cases.

Centres should note that in order to access the full mark range, the oral must last between 4 and 6 minutes. An oral that lasts only 3 minutes 30 seconds will not be able to access the full mark range.

Recordings

Just one recorded exemplar per candidate for moderation should be sent to moderators. Each candidate must undertake at least two of the three task-types but only one has to be recorded and submitted, although centres must submit in the moderation sample recordings of at least two different task-types for which they are submitting marks across the whole centre cohort.

It is certainly the case that orals recorded digitally and saved as mp3 files greatly facilitate for centres the selection process for the moderation sample. The quality and clarity of the recording are also better. While it is not necessary to conduct the controlled assessments one-on-one in a dedicated room, there is a need for minimal background noise.

Centres are kindly requested to label CDs or USBs carefully – centre number, candidate name and number, language and series details should be clearly given on both the CD and USB. It helps moderators tremendously if the task-type is indicated next to the candidate's name on the CD/USB listing sheet. It also avoids confusion if these details are announced clearly at the start of each oral.

Marking

Most centres applied the assessment grids satisfactorily and there was evidence of internal standardisation within the larger-entry centres where two or more teacher examiners were involved.

However, a few centres had clearly drilled their candidates into repeating similar or identical responses to similar or identical questions throughout the test which, far from being a natural conversation, became a question and answer session. This sacrifice of spontaneity effectively prevents candidates from accessing the higher marks for Content and Response, where *clear spontaneity* is one of the descriptors for the 16–18 mark band, and this practice is certainly not within the spirit of the assessment.

Those centres that conducted the oral tests poorly and gave undue credit to their candidates for reciting pre-learned material, often with poor pronunciation and intonation, had their Content and Response marks adjusted down from the top box in the assessment grid where evidence of spontaneity and the ability to deal with unpredictable elements is required.

However, most centres were using the full range of marks available appropriately and discriminated successfully between the less and the more able candidates.

Marking principles

The following marking principles should be followed by teacher examiners when marking candidates' controlled assessments:

Tests that are too short, ie less than 3'30" (NB 3'29" is too short):

- Automatic deduction of 2 marks on the Content and Response grid.
- There is no penalty applied for either Range of Language or Accuracy.

Tests that are too long, ie more than 6 minutes:

- Stop listening and assessing at the end of the first sentence after 6 minutes have elapsed.

Tests that are a monologue and include no interaction:

- No more than 7 for Content and Response.
- There is no penalty applied for either Range of Language or Accuracy.

Open interaction tasks only

There is an expectation in this option that the candidate will ask the teacher examiner two or more questions since it is a transactional task-type.

If candidate asks only one question:

- Deduct 1 mark from the Content and Response.

If candidate asks no questions:

- Deduct 2 marks from the Content and Response.

The other two assessment criteria will not be affected.

Presentation and discussion

- The presentation must last 1–3 minutes (maximum). If the presentation is shorter than 1 minute, deduct 2 marks for Content and Response.
- Where no presentation takes place, candidates can only score a maximum of 11 for Content and Response.

Although interaction is important in all three task-types, there is no requirement for candidates to ask questions in the Presentation and discussion or in the Picture-based discussion task options.

Administration

Centres are advised to refer to the updated version of the *Administrative Support Guide (Instructions for the Conduct of the Examination and Controlled Assessments)* available on the Edexcel GCSE 09 Spanish website. This details all procedures for submitting marks and which materials should be sent to the moderator. In addition, it contains the essential forms, eg the current CM2 and CA2 forms, as well as the marking principles outlined above.

Moderators felt that moderation went most smoothly where centres had carefully followed the guidance in the *Administrative Support Guide*.

The majority of centres are to be congratulated on their handling of the administration – labelling the CDs clearly, submitting the correct paperwork and ensuring that the recordings were clear and well timed. Some centres, however, failed to submit the CA2 forms and/or the task used by the candidates, did not include the highest and lowest scoring candidates in addition to the asterisked samples, or submitted only one task-type instead of a variety of task-types within the sample.

Candidate mark sheets

Centres are reminded that the Code of Practice requires that assessment evidence provided by candidates has been authenticated. The CM2 form (the *Candidate Mark Sheet*) has a double function: it is the form on which the tasks (including a short description of the picture) and centre-awarded marks are recorded, but it is also the authenticity form and must be signed by both candidate and teacher examiner. If either the candidate or the teacher examiner does not sign the form, then signatures will have to be requested. Since this delays the moderation process, centres should check that these forms have been signed by both parties before despatch of materials to the moderator.

In addition, the CM2 form has a box with Y/N, which allows teachers very easily to indicate whether the CA2 form has been used by the candidate.

CA2 forms

The CA2 form is the pro forma on which candidates may write up to 30 words as notes and make up to five small drawings. Centres should note that printed images (eg photos or pictures from magazines) are not allowed. Since candidates may take this form into the oral with them, it does constitute one of the controls. If candidates used this form during the oral, then moderators must see it to check exactly what support candidates had. If centres do not include the CA2 forms, or circle the N on the CM2 form, or include any statement to the effect that their candidates did not use CA2 forms, then moderators have to follow this up with the centre. Since this inevitably delays the moderation process, centres are kindly requested to ensure they have checked these details prior to despatch. If candidates decide not to use this form, this is fine, but moderators must have a signed document to this effect.

Task sheets

It is difficult for moderators to moderate a candidate's performance without access to the task used in the assessment. A copy of each task used in the moderation sample must be sent to the moderator.

Task sheets should not contain additional vocabulary. Candidates are allowed up to 30 words of notes (on the CA2 form) and any words in addition to the 30 permitted words infringe the controls. The task sheet should be just that: a task sheet with no

reminders to use a range of tenses, express opinions, etc. Such reminders should be achieved via the bullet points, eg *Mention an activity you did last week* (to encourage past tense), *Say why this was enjoyable* (to encourage opinions and reasons), etc.

Support

The following sources of support may be useful to centres:

- The GCSE 09 Spanish webpage on the Edexcel website offers a wealth of support to teachers on the Speaking Controlled Assessment.
- In addition to the GCSE Spanish webpage, there is a generic languages webpage where it is possible to subscribe to regular newsletters with updates and advice.

Teachers with a query about any aspect of the Controlled Assessment process should send an email to TeachingLanguages@pearson.com or telephone: 0844 576 0035 (from outside UK: +44 (0) 207 010 2187).

Teachers can also send an email to one of the Senior Examiners for Spanish at Ask the Expert gcsespanish@edexcelexperts.co.uk. A reply will be received within 48 hours.

Summary

The following points may be helpful to centres when preparing their candidates for the Speaking Controlled Assessment.

The best candidates:

- sustained fairly sophisticated conversations ranging over a wide variety of verb forms and tenses, using varied and often interesting vocabulary
- initiated conversations and developed their responses willingly, providing information without waiting to be asked
- had good pronunciation and intonation and could easily be understood by a native speaker
- fully developed their responses with longer sentences and often with examples of complexity not only in verb usage but also with, for example, the successful use of pronouns, adjectives, agreements and negatives
- conducted conversations that were often interesting to listen to as they provided a good deal of unsolicited information.

Less able candidates displayed:

- shorter sentences, mainly in the present tense
- an increase in inaccuracies with more ambitious structures and subordination
- ambiguity arising from the confusion between *fui* and *fue*
- confusion of times and tenses, with sentences such as *Ayer voy a ir al cine* or *Mañana fui al instituto*
- poor pronunciation, which would sometimes make it difficult to follow what the candidate was trying to say.

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