



A-level
Spanish

7692/3 Speaking

Report on the Examination

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General comments

Examiners commented that the speaking tests this series produced some really interesting and lively discussions in which many 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 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 manipulate these effectively. In Part 1, discussion of the sub-theme, those students who had a good knowledge of current affairs and 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 and, as ever, there were several topics that arose frequently such as Inditex/Zara; the changing role of women in Spain; the Arabic influence in Spain; Pablo Escobar and the rivalry between Real Madrid and FC Barcelona. Given its rise in prominence, and of course the media coverage of the ‘Caso Rubiales,’ women’s football in Spain proved to be a popular topic of discussion this series. In addition, recent political events saw a rise in students choosing topics related to the Presidencies of Javier Milei and Nayib Bukele.

As with previous series, those students who selected a topic where it was clear they had a genuine interest 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, Philippines, Gibraltar or the USA); that involved a comparison with a non-Spanish-speaking country; 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 examination. 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 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*.’ If you are unsure of who your IRP Adviser is, then you should contact mfl@aqa.org.uk who can provide you with their details. 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 speaking 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 speaking tests are given and all changes or additions are clearly highlighted in yellow.

Attendance lists, Candidate Record Form, Title Approval Form and teacher-examiner name

As this was the second year that recordings and relevant documentation were submitted online, it was pleasing to see that most centres uploaded the necessary material in a timely fashion.

Unfortunately, some centres did not ensure that the attendance list or name of the teacher-examiner who conducted the test(s) were also uploaded, as stated on page 14 of the “Instructions for the Conduct of the Exams” booklet. Centres are reminded that both sides of the Candidate Record Form (CRF) should be uploaded and that the form should be signed by both the teacher and the student.

If centres have been given approval of their titles by their NEA Adviser, then they should send a copy of the relevant 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 (CRFs)

It is important that the Candidate Record Forms (CRFs) are correctly completed and centres should remember to check the following before CRFs are uploaded to the Media Submissions Portal:

- the CRF has been **signed** by **both** student and teacher
- the Individual Research Project (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 & 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.

It is important that centres are aware that where all of the information on the Candidate Record Form (title and headings) has been given in Spanish, this is reported to the Malpractice team. Similarly, this is the case if headings are written as questions which the teacher-examiner then simply translates into Spanish and poses to the student.

As with previous series, visiting examiners reported that arrangements at centres were very good.

Conduct of the Test

Preparation time

This year it was pleasing to again see that students in general had been well-trained and 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 students have plenty of opportunity throughout the course to practise preparing effectively, under timed conditions.

Card sequence

This series, there were no significant issues with the card sequence and only in very rare cases was there any overlap between the card and the IRP topic. 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 prescribed timings were generally adhered to by centres, but it is important that teacher-examiners are aware 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 the timer should not be paused and restarted for the different sections of the test (as can be heard in many teacher-conducted tests); 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 also ensure there are smooth transitions between the various sections and that they follow the guidelines on the Summary of Procedures sheet in the ‘Instructions for the Conduct of the Exams’ booklet (page 22) 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 or for the teacher-examiner to read out the title, as this is given on the CRF and by 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 (AO1)

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

Scores for AO1 were generally good, with most students achieving between 3 and 4 marks. Best practice is for examiners to ask 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 some 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.

In addition, it is important the unpredictable questions are responsive to the student's answers and the information provided on the stimulus card, 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 essential that the questions posed are not simply personal or generic in nature but instead provide opportunities for students to demonstrate their understanding of the sub-theme in the context of the Spanish-speaking world.

Assessment objective 2 (AO2)

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

The vast majority of students scored 3 or more for AO2 and were able to demonstrate 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 explicit **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, making no reference at all to the information on the card itself. Therefore, their responses did 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 demonstrate understanding of the various key messages given in the printed material. Students must be discouraged from just reading out the information verbatim or simply prefixing the information with an opinion phrase such as ‘*Me sorprende que ...*’ and then reading the information out in full as it is written on the card, 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, as failure to do so could negatively impact the score for AO2.

Those students who successfully accessed the full range of marks for this AO had identified most of the key messages and were able to show clear understanding of them, often achieving this by using their own words to convey the gist of the messages. In addition, they had given appropriate responses to all three printed questions and posed two suitable questions of the examiner.

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. Pleasingly most 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 an 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 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 (AO3)

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

This series most students scored at least in the range of 6-8 marks for AO3 and almost a third 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. Again this series, some words 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. *avoider*, *improvar*, *involver*, *reportar*, *expectar*, *promotar*).

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).

Again it was noted 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 -ar to the end of an English verb to 'invent' an infinitive eg: *afordar*; *preventar*; *improvar*; *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*
- difficulty with correctly expressing numbers and confusion of 'miles' and 'millones'

Assessment objective 4 (AO4)

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

Again this series it was good to see that most students scored 3 or more for AO4. Students who offered good critical and analytical responses, drew on appropriate evidence from the Spanish-speaking world to support their arguments and justify their 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, students need to demonstrate a very good knowledge of the sub-theme **within the context of the Spanish-speaking world** and evaluate their evidence. They need to offer a critical response and develop their arguments, justify their points of view and draw 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. Instead, 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, 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 will have a negative impact on the AO4 score. Examples such as referencing data related to the UK/USA or highlighting the charitable works of celebrities such as Cristiano Ronaldo, Selena Gomez or Jennifer Lopez who are not from Spanish-speaking countries will not result in success in this AO.

The card on the sub-theme of ‘*el ciberespacio*’ again proved popular, but it was disappointing that many students had a limited knowledge of technology-related issues specific to Spanish-speaking countries/communities. In addition, many teacher-examiners’ follow up questions on this sub-theme were generic or personal in nature.

This series it was positive to see students were able to reference a wider range of political figures in Spain and the Spanish-speaking world. They were also more conversant with recent events, not only in Spain but other Spanish-speaking countries such as Argentina, Venezuela and Mexico - information which they used to great effect when justifying their opinions and arguments.

Stimulus Cards*Tarjeta A: La dura realidad del matrimonio infantil*

This card was relatively popular and, in general, students understood the overall gist of the key messages. However, some struggled with the various percentages and the details regarding the percentage of Mexican adolescents who are married, as well as fear and fleeing violence being cited as reasons for women in Latin America leaving home. In response to question 2, few students saw advantages to getting married young. Most students felt that there had been significant changes in the family model in Spain and that this was also the case in many other Spanish-speaking countries, but not

all. The decline in popularity of the Catholic Church as well as the passing of laws relating to divorce, same sex marriages and adoption by same sex couples were frequently referenced by students justifying their arguments in response to question 3.

Tarjeta B: Rappi – una aplicación para el móvil en Colombia

This was a very popular card and most students were able to demonstrate a very good understanding of most of the key messages, expressing sympathy for the “*rappitenderos*” whom they felt were justified in seeking better pay and conditions. As has already been mentioned, many students who chose this card struggled to demonstrate a good understanding of ‘*el ciberespacio*’ in the context of the Spanish-speaking world. In some cases this was due to the personal and generic nature of the follow-up questions posed by the teacher-examiner, and in others because students did not appear to have any examples of or specific material relevant to the use of technology in the Spanish-speaking world.

Tarjeta C: Una España que celebra a sus mujeres

This card was not chosen very often, but those students who did select it approved of the idea of changing the names of the train stations to celebrate the achievements of famous Spanish women. In response to question 2, students felt that it was important to respect equality due to the “*machismo*” that they feel still pervades many societies throughout the Spanish-speaking world. Most students felt that sexual equality has improved in Spain and, in response to question 3, said that whilst there is still room for improvement, the pay gap is narrowing and there is more significant female representation in executive and government posts, with over half of the ministers in Sanchez’s government being female. With regards the wider Spanish-speaking world, students felt that countries such as Nicaragua and Cuba are leading the way on narrowing the gender gap.

Tarjeta D: La muerte de una estrella del fútbol argentino

This was a popular card and many students were clearly familiar with Maradona and both his positive contributions to Argentine society, as well as his issues with addiction. Question 2 proved to be tricky for some students who struggled to explain how idols can bring pride and glory to their countries. However, successful students were able to discuss how the musical/sporting and charitable achievements of idols, such as Shakira and Lionel Messi, had brought great pride to their countries and a source of inspiration for young Colombians and Argentinians, helping them to believe that anything is possible with dedication and hard work. In response to question 3, students cited a range of idols whom they felt had become famous for both positive and negative reasons, ranging from Bad Bunny and Rosalia to Eva Peron and Rafa Nadal. It was also good to hear some students reference idols from the fields of science, industry and politics such as Severo Ochoa de Albornoz, Armancio Ortega, Rosalía Mera and Michelle Bachelet.

Tarjeta E: Concurso de cocina vasca

This was quite a popular card with successful students picking up on the details relating to the strong relationship that Basques have with their gastronomy. However, less successful students struggled to demonstrate a good understanding of the key messages related to the annual competition and how it was judged and celebrated. Students felt that it was good for regions to celebrate their gastronomy as it forms an important part of their identity and many were able to highlight the culinary excellence of the Basque region with its impressive 33 Michelin stars. Festivals were the primary examples given in response to question 3, with ‘La Tomatina’ and ‘Las Fallas’ proving to be the most popular. However, it was good to hear other students discussing aspects of regional identity such as languages, music and dance. As with previous series, some students and indeed teacher-examiners forgot that this sub-theme is specific to Spain and so the discussion should not include material from other Spanish-speaking countries such as ‘El día de los muertos’ in Mexico or Medellín’s ‘Feria de las flores.’

Tarjeta F: Arte por todas partes

This card was relatively popular and for most students the art of ‘*muralismo*’ was not familiar to them. Whilst the majority of students were able to demonstrate good understanding of the key messages contained in the second paragraph, quite a lot overlooked or struggled to show understanding of the information related to ‘*alcaldes*’ and ‘*piedras de colores diferentes*’ in the third paragraph. In response to question 2, Guernica was frequently referenced as a work of art that enables us to learn about Spanish culture and history, whilst the work of Frida Kahlo was emblematic of ‘*Mexicanidad*’. Students referenced a great variety of material in response to question 3, ranging from ‘*trajes tradicionales*’ to ‘*el acueducto de Segovia*’ and ‘*el tango*’. Students felt that Hispanic culture is diverse and exciting.

Tarjeta G: Un viaje peligroso en un tren llamado La Bestia

This card was not often selected but those students who chose it generally demonstrated a very good understanding of the key messages contained in the printed information. Many students appeared to already be familiar with ‘*La Bestia*’ and the dangers involved in the journey that so many immigrants make. In response to question 2, students felt that immigrants had no choice due to the terrible situation in their home country, with many citing Venezuelan immigrants who have had to flee due to the recent political and economic situation there. Students recognised the fact that many immigrants struggle when they arrive in countries such as Spain due to prejudices that exist and lack of employment opportunities in areas other than the hospitality, agriculture and service industries. However, they were also able to highlight the positives that immigrants bring to their new countries with regards cultural enrichment and increased birth rates.

Tarjeta H: Una buena decisión

This was a very popular card and most students were able to show understanding of the incident that had taken place. However some struggled with the immediate action taken by the waiter’s boss and the fact that, whilst they may have lost money, they had earned respect. Most students felt that more education was needed to eradicate racism and combat the prejudices and stereotypes that they felt existed, particularly in Spain, towards people from other countries. Those students who were able to access the full range of marks for AO4 made reference to recent changes in the law such as Hate Crime

legislation in Spain. Many students cited reasons such as Franco’s dictatorship and the Madrid train bombings as the causes of racism in Spain. Very few students chose to discuss racism in other Spanish-speaking countries.

Tarjeta I: Los gitanos en la educación

A relatively popular card where most students were able to show understanding of the statistics presented regarding education for ‘*los gitanos*’ in recent years and felt that this was very positive. Some students struggled with the percentages related to university attendance. In response to question 2, most students cited stereotypes and language barriers as the principal reasons for lack of integration. Many students struggled, in response to question 3, to provide examples of initiatives throughout the Spanish-speaking world to promote coexistence and integration, but some were able to reference initiatives such as ‘*Día internacional de los pueblos indígenas*’ and laws such as ‘*Ley de Extranjería*’

Tarjeta J: El voluntariado de los jóvenes

This was a very popular card and, with very few exceptions, students felt that it was a positive thing for young Spaniards to be doing and it was good that the project was extending to other cities throughout Spain. Some students however failed to pick up on the fact that these young people also raised awareness in others regarding the issues families living in poverty face. In response to question 2, students felt that nowadays accessing university education, finding a job, leaving the family home and buying a house were the priorities for young Spaniards. In response to question 3, the Chilean student protests were frequently cited as an example of a youth led initiative, but students also referenced other things such as the environmental campaign *UnaSolaGeneración*.

Tarjeta K: Un tema tabú en las clases de secundaria

Students expressed surprise that so little was known by young Spaniards about their recent history and that it was only included in 9% of the Spanish history curriculum. They also felt that it was worrying that teachers were afraid to cover the topic in their lessons. In response to question 2, students argued that learning about the recent history of Spain was essential to understand modern day Spain and that Spain needs educated youngsters who need to be critical and engage with democracy. Some students gave examples of teaching about Pinochet in Chile and Videla in Argentina. In response to question 3, students made references to many things ranging from the lack of freedom, censorship, lack of human rights, the disappeared and the use of fear and torture. Many students, however, mentioned investment in health and education in Cuba under the Castro regime. References were made to other autocratic regimes, such as Chavez, Maduro, Pinochet and Videla.

Tarjeta L: Protestas por un cantante polémico

This was a very popular card and opinion was divided as to whether Hasel's sentence was appropriate or not. Students disagreed with those who took part in the protests simply to be destructive but felt that freedom of speech was essential. In response to question 2, reference was made to protests such as 15M and 'Las madres de la Plaza de Mayo' with students feeling that whilst not all protests are successful in achieving all of their objectives, they should still take place. The fight for Catalan Independence, *Revolución pingüina* and *Ni Una Menos* protests were amongst those referenced in response to question 3.

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 as to whether or not Milei is what Argentina needs, the extent to which Malinche betrayed her own people, and whether the e-city Malaga project will help Malaga to become a sustainable city.

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. 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@aqa.org.uk

Centres are also reminded that the topic area chosen for the IRP must be linked to a country, region or community where Spanish is the native language or an official language. It must also be studied in the context of that country, region or community. So, for example, a scientist, fashion designer or film director has to be studied in the context of the Spanish-speaking country, region or community and cannot be studied in terms of a global context. The following countries that have links with the Hispanic world but where Spanish is not considered as an official language are not acceptable for the IRP: Falkland Islands, Gibraltar, USA, Philippines.

Presentation

In order to access the higher bands for the presentation, in the time available, students need to demonstrate that they have fully understood and assimilated research-based knowledge through the development 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 You Tube 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 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 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. 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, 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 again 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 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.

Unfortunately, this series there were again 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. 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 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 least successful responses, 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 (AO4)

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

In general, the standard of presentations this year was good with the majority of students scoring 3-4 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 (AO1)

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

Scores for AO1 were good with many students scoring 7 – 8. Tests in which students were required to engage fully with a genuine, spontaneous discussion on their chosen topic and took the initiative to develop their responses independently 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 (AO3)

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

Scores for this AO were generally good with almost three quarters of 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 know and can correctly pronounce key words or names related to their chosen topic.

Assessment objective 4 (AO4)

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

Again 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.