



A Level Spanish

7692/3T & 3V

Report on the examination

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General comments

This year examiners reported that there were some very interesting discussions that took place in the tests that they listened to with students demonstrating detailed knowledge of both the sub-theme and their chosen Independent Research Project (IRP) topic. In addition, the range and complexity of language produced by many non-native students was excellent.

It was evident that many students had prepared thoroughly and were able to discuss the sub-theme relevant to their chosen card in Part 1 fluently. In the time available, they also offered a good degree of critical analysis and evaluation as well as providing pertinent evidence from the Spanish speaking world to substantiate their opinions and the conclusions that they were drawing.

The topics chosen by the students for their IRP ranged considerably with subjects from the evolution of flamenco or the anti-tourism movements in Spain to an analysis of state corruption in Venezuela and its contribution to the country's ongoing socio-economic crisis. Once again, El Clásico, the influence of Al-Andalus, Frida Kahlo and the impact of Franco's dictatorship on Spanish women remained popular topics, with students discussing them with varying degrees of success. As with previous series, those students who had selected a topic that genuinely interested them were able to access the full range of marks available due to their thorough knowledge and critical 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 descriptive and factual than analytical. This impacted their ability to access the full range of marks available for this part of the examination.

Some students had selected titles that were inappropriate. For example, the titles were not focused on countries/communities where Spanish is an official language, (titles linked to the Falklands, Philippines, Gibraltar or the USA), they involved a comparison with a non-Spanish speaking country or they were too broad or involved global aspects. Topics of this nature impacted on the student's ability to access the full range of marks available for this part of the test. In cases such as these, centres had not sought advice from their NEA Adviser and so teacher-examiners are reminded that it is in the 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*'. IRP Adviser details for each centre are published on Centre Services but if for any reason you are unsure of who your IRP Adviser is, 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 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 for the current series are clearly highlighted in yellow.

Uploading of recordings to Digital Media Portal

Whilst it was pleasing to see that many centres uploaded the necessary material in a timely fashion, centres are reminded that all recordings must be uploaded to the Digital Media Portal **within one working day** of the last date of the assessment window. Centres are reminded that individual candidate recordings should be saved in an acceptable file format. The filename must contain the centre number, component code, and candidate number, e.g. 55217_7651-3T_0041.mp3

Attendance lists, Candidate Record Form, Title Approval Form and Teacher-Examiner name(s)

Some Centres did not ensure that the attendance list or name of the teacher-examiner(s) who conducted the test(s) was 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 Forms should be uploaded and that the form should be signed by both the teacher and the candidate.

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

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 & 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.

Contacting AQA during the speaking test window

It is important that centres are aware that no email queries relating to confidential assessment materials can be sent during the test window – this includes emails from teachers to their IRP Adviser. IRP Advisers cannot communicate with centres during the test window. The only way teachers can discuss any queries or comments on the exam content during the test window is by contacting the MFL Subject Support team on 01423 534 381.

Conduct of the Test

Please note that there is a new free eLearning module called “**A-level Spanish: Speaking test engagement**” available in the learning space on the AQA website. This course gives excellent advice on how to best prepare students for the speaking test as well as how to conduct the test to ensure that students can access the full range of marks available.

Preparation Time

This series it was clear that most students 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 that students have plenty of opportunity throughout the course to practise preparing effectively under timed conditions.

Card sequence

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

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 can be heard in many teacher-conducted tests), 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.

It is important that teacher-examiners remember that in Part 1, discussion of the sub-theme, any candidate 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.

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 22 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 in Spanish, '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 indeed doing so wastes valuable time.

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, with most students scoring 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 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.

In addition, it is important that these 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

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

Most students scored 3 to 4 marks 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 explicit **key messages** contained within the material on the card.

In some centres candidates 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, 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 show 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 candidate 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 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 at least in the range of 6-7 marks for AO3 and almost a third of students achieved scores of 9 -10 marks. Examiners reported hearing some high-quality tests 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. As with previous 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*, *involvar*, *reportar*, *expectar*, *promotar*).

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

It was noted by examiners that the verb 'sorprender' continues to prove problematic for some students when responding to the 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'; '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*; *improver*; *promotar* etc.
- use of 'resultado' instead of 'resultado' and 'locales' rather than 'habitantes'
- incorrect past participles in compound tenses
- lack of subjunctive after expressions such as 'no creo que', 'no pienso que', 'es importante que' and certain other 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

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

Most students this series scored 3 or more marks for AO4. Students who offered good critical and analytical responses and drew on appropriate evidence from the Spanish-speaking world 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.

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 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?*’ which normally elicited purely personal responses and the student’s response to this line of questioning rarely attracted 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, Selena Gomez or Jennifer Lopez who are not from Spanish-speaking countries), will have a negative impact on the AO4 score.

As with previous series, the card on the sub-theme of ‘el ciberespacio’ proved to be quite popular but responses varied considerably. Some student responses demonstrated a good understanding of the sub-theme in the context of the Spanish-speaking world however it was disappointing that many students who chose this card had a very 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 good to see that students were able to reference a wider range of political figures in Spain and the Spanish-speaking world and that they were more conversant with recent events in not only Spain but other Spanish-speaking countries such as Venezuela, El

Salvador, and Mexico - information which they used appropriately when justifying their opinions and arguments.

Stimulus Cards

Tarjeta A: La popularidad de la Iglesia protestante

This card had limited popularity but, in general, those students who chose it answered very well. In response to question 2 some predicted that the protestant church will continue to grow in popularity and become the major arm of Christianity in Spain due to what they felt were the outdated ideologies of the Catholic church. They felt that the protestant church leaders offer a message of hope and offer more participation in the life of the church. Also they felt that many religious influencers have become superstars in the Spanish-speaking world with 'telenovelas' now including evangelical characters and plots. In response to question 3 students were able to talk about the many changes seen over recent years citing changes such as divorce and same sex marriage laws to support their arguments.

Tarjeta B: La generación que odia hablar por teléfono

This proved to be a relatively popular card with responses varying quite significantly. Some students struggled to show their understanding of the excuse given of "*No noté que sonaba mi móvil*" and in response to question 2 chose to speak about communication now as opposed to in the future. Those students who answered successfully included interesting information related to significant differences in network coverage in various Spanish-speaking countries; disparities between rural and urban internet access in South America; use of technology in drug related crime in countries such as Colombia and Mexico; cyber bullying figures; links between screen time and poor mental health in Spanish-speaking countries.

Tarjeta C: Una nueva campaña en España

This card was not often chosen but those students who selected it were able to show understanding of the basic concepts of the campaign, although some were clearly not familiar with the word '*espejo*'. In response to the second printed question the students cited dictatorships, the catholic church and inherent 'machismo' as the root of discrimination throughout the Spanish-speaking world. Responses to question 3 varied in detail with most focusing on changes for women in Spain post the Franco regime. Other students discussed changes in legislation related to domestic violence in some Hispanic countries. They also recognised that there was still a long way to go and cited the need to eradicate child marriage in Latin America as well as the need for better literacy programmes for women in rural areas.

Tarjeta D: Mucho más que una actriz mexicana

This proved to be a very popular card although most students appeared to be unfamiliar with the actress Yalitza Aparicio and the film '*Roma*'. At times students stated that she had won an Oscar as opposed to having been nominated for one, but all students thought that it was good that Yalitza was such a positive role model. In response to printed questions 2 and 3 the students referenced a variety of Hispanic celebrities ranging from the more commonly mentioned Shakira, Lionel Messi, Salma Hayek, Rafa Nadal and Penélope Cruz to other personalities such as Ricky Martín (for his foundation's work protecting human rights) and Gloria Estefan (for her foundation's work helping to feed the homeless).

Tarjeta E: La gastronomía catalana

This card was not chosen very often and some students struggled with the correct pronunciation of '*calçotada*' whilst others misunderstood that the '*cebollas verdes*' was an explanation of the '*calçots*'. In the main, the response to question 2 was that the dishes are part of the regional heritage and so need to be preserved for this reason along with regional languages, festivals and music. In response to question 3, some students simply listed other festivals that they knew, (principally los San Fermíes, La Tomatina and Las Fallas), and were not able to give much detail about the celebrations themselves. More successful answers were able to link traditions and festivals with specific regions such as the Basque region's '*Aste Nagusia*', that celebrates Basque gastronomy and traditional Basque sports such as pelota, log chopping and stone lifting.

Tarjeta F: El Museo de las Momias

This card proved to be very popular, and most students were able to demonstrate an understanding of the main gist of the printed information. Some key messages were frequently overlooked, however, such as the fact that Guanajuato is known for its architecture and silver mines and the reference made to Mexicans' attitude to death. In response to printed question 2, students felt that respecting cultural heritage was vital, particularly in Latin American countries, to ensure that the wealth and majesty of pre-Columbian indigenous culture was remembered and preserved. In response to question 3, as well as the familiar examples of La Sagrada Familia, Machu Picchu and the Alhambra, it was pleasing to hear students reference less common examples such as '*la muralla de Avila*', '*el Teatro Romano de Mérida*', '*Ciudad vieja de la Habana*' and '*Parque nacional de Rapa Nui*'. In addition, many students discussed what they had learnt about cultural music and dance such as the tango and flamenco whilst others spoke of the importance of traditional clothing such as that worn by Bolivian '*cholas*' and what it teaches us about the country's culture, history and heritage.

Tarjeta G: Argentina, el sueño de muchos inmigrantes

This was a popular card, and most students were able to effectively demonstrate understanding of most, if not all, of the key messages contained within the printed material. Responses to question 2 were often quite generic in nature with few students able to reference specific initiatives or practices in Spanish-speaking countries although some did discuss the work of organisations such as *SOS Racismo*. In response to question 3, students spoke about the cultural, religious and linguistic diversity that immigrants bring as well as the benefits to the workforce of the '*país receptor*', particularly with regard to the fields of agriculture and hospitality in Spain. In addition, many students offered insight into the difficulties that immigrants can experience such as the racism shown towards Venezuelan immigrants or the problems faced by '*los gitanos*' in Spain.

Tarjeta H: Racismo en el norte de Chile

This card was quite popular, and students answered with varying degrees of success. Whilst most showed understanding of the information in the first sentence, many failed to demonstrate understanding of the burning of belongings mentioned in the second sentence or the information in the last sentence relating to those Chileans who reject immigrants and want a more culturally homogeneous country. In response to the second printed question many students suggested organisations like '*SOS Racismo*' which they felt could be effective in promoting tolerance and combatting racism, together with social media initiatives such as *#TodosSomosMacacos*. The Dani Alves case and other racist incidents in Spanish football stadiums were mentioned in the students' responses to question 3 and it was generally felt that indigenous people throughout the Spanish-speaking world were discriminated against as was the gypsy community in Spain.

Tarjeta I: La lucha por salvar las lenguas indígenas

This card was popular, and many students were able to show a good level of understanding of most of the key messages, although some students struggled with the information in the second paragraph related to the embarrassment that young people feel because they associate the indigenous languages with poverty. In response to question 2, most students felt that it was important to keep indigenous languages alive as they are an important part of a region's heritage but recognised that this was not an easy task. Comparisons were made with co-official languages in Spain. Responses to question 3 were principally generic in nature with students recommending better education in schools to facilitate coexistence but few students were able to reference specific government or community initiatives that were already in place.

Tarjeta J: Los jóvenes mexicanos y su actitud hacia la política

This card was relatively popular and in general students were able to show a good level of understanding of the key messages although the fact that they avoid talking about politics with friends and family was often overlooked. Opinion was divided as to whether or not young people should be involved in politics. Arguments ranged from the fact that they are the future and so need to be actively involved, to time being better invested in things that have more individual impact such as their studies and social life. In response to question 3, unemployment was the key concern raised with relevant statistics from around the Spanish-speaking world being provided to support their argument. In addition, students felt that the affordability of housing and the age of emancipation were issues in Spain in particular.

Tarjeta K: Los libros prohibidos

This was a popular card and was answered with varying degrees of success. Whilst most students were able to demonstrate understanding of the fact that books were censored and burnt during dictatorships, other key messages such as authors being persecuted, citizens hiding or burying books and books about moral values, religion and sexuality being prohibited were frequently overlooked. In response to question 2, students were able to talk knowledgeably about various dictatorships including those of Trujillo, Porfirio Diaz, Videla, Pinochet, and Franco and the fact that we can learn from the awful things that happened under these regimes to ensure that it does not happen again. The cases of '*los desaparecidos*' and '*niños robados*' in Argentina and Spain were frequently referenced in response to question 3. Also mentioned were the suppression of women, censorship and the persecution of minority groups in a range of dictatorships. One common error was that students referred to the '*reinado de Franco*' as opposed to '*dictadura*'.

Tarjeta L: El descontento social en España

This was another popular card and students performed well, demonstrating a good level of understanding of the various key messages. In response to question 2, students felt that the protesters were angry and frustrated due to what they feel are unjust price increases that are impacting so many sectors of society. There were many examples given in response to question 3 including '*15-M*', '*las Madres de la Plaza de Mayo*', '*Solo sí es sí*', '*Ni una menos*' and '*la revolución de los Pingüinos*'. Students also spoke about the protests for Catalan Independence and the more recent anti-tourist protests in cities like Barcelona.

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 other aspects of the Spanish-speaking world. These ranged from discussions as to whether tourism is solely negative for Spain or a critical evaluation of Neruda's poetry to an analysis of the impact of Bukele's leadership on the wellbeing of residents of El Salvador.

Students are strongly advised to choose a topic that genuinely interests them as opposed to one that they feel will be easy to research, as it is evident that the former leads to much more detailed and successful discussions that enable students to access the full range of marks available for this part of the examination.

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

Centres are 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, students need to demonstrate, in the time available, 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, 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 overprepare 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. The students therefore 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. They 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 are reminded, however, 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

This series, examiners reported once again 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 very good use of relevant factual information to justify their arguments and/or the conclusions that they were drawing.

Unfortunately, in 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 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 is being tested.

Student Performance

Presentation

Assessment Objective 4

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

The standard of presentations in this series was good with most students scoring 3 or 4 marks 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 many students scoring 7 – 8 marks. 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

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

Scores for this AO were generally good with a high proportion of students scoring at least 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 were able to access the top bands. Some students, rather than focusing on ensuring accuracy in basic tenses and structures, had clearly tried to pre-learn phrases. They used 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

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 this series more than half of the cohort secured scores of 8 or more marks for this AO, reflecting a high level of effective research and the 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 descriptive or 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.