

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2014

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE
in Spanish(4SP0/03)
Pearson Edexcel Certificate
in Spanish(KSP0/03)

Paper 3: Speaking in Spanish

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International GCSE Spanish Paper 3 Speaking Examiner Report

Summer 2014 was the first examination session where speaking was a compulsory component for the awarding of International GCSE Spanish. It was also the introduction of the Edexcel Certificate in Spanish, where speaking is also compulsory. Unfortunately, there were some centres who failed to follow the rubric of the specification and, as such, often limited the performance of the candidates and their subsequent marks. As such student's marks were limited when infringements of the specification occurred.

Teacher examiners should remember that the announcement of candidate, centre and topic areas do **not** count towards timings. Timings should start when the student starts the presentation in Section A, or responds to the first questions in both conversations for Section B. Examiners did not reward extraneous material beyond the allocated timings when a candidate finished their sentence nor if material presented in their presentation was repeated in the follow-up conversation.

The best teacher examiners knew the strengths and weaknesses of their candidates and asked questions accordingly. They were able to explore the linguistic boundaries of their candidates appropriately with unprepared comments and questions interspersed with a more standardised set of questions around familiar topics.

Home and Abroad was the most popular topic, particularly for the photograph. Centres should ensure the photograph is explored fully before moving on to more general questions. The best choices of photograph/image allowed teacher examiners to explore the photograph in detail. These were often photographs with lots of action and people so that candidates could be asked varied questions.

Conduct of the Speaking Examinations

The Presentation of the picture/photo

Most students had prepared well for their presentation and had obviously thought about how to include higher level structures into their speaking. The more interesting presentations and the most successful were based on something of actual interest to the candidates, for example some students talked with excellent technical knowledge about some extreme sports showcasing a very wide vocabulary base. It was also surprising at the lower ability range that some students just had not taken the opportunity to prepare adequately and think about the possible questions they might be asked about their stimulus.

In some cases the teacher examiner moved on to a general discussion about the topic area. Sometimes the candidate's responses could be credited as they linked loosely to the image but at times the conversation was judged

irrelevant. For example, if the photo was about an environmental issue follow up questions about media could not be credited. At times, this prevented candidates achieving the top band marks where they should be 'communicating a wide range of information related to the chosen visual stimulus'. Once again, photos with people and interaction allowed teacher examiners to ask a wide range of questions.

Teacher examiners must also remember that candidate's presentations should not be corrected and at times there was a distinct difference in the ability of the candidate across both parts of section A. There were some outstanding presentations that included a wide range of tenses, sophisticated vocabulary and higher level structures. At times this was juxtaposed starkly with the follow up conversation indicating a poorer level of ability. The same level of consistency across both parts is needed to access the higher marks.

The majority of teacher examiners were skilled at questioning which allowed students to succeed. Most conducted the tests in a very sympathetic and encouraging manner but teacher examiners should refrain from prompting or correcting the candidates Spanish as this language cannot be rewarded.

Most popular were holiday photos which led to interesting, well-prepared discussions. A discussion of holidays allows students to access three time frames easily and many students were able to distinguish well between the different tenses. Discussions of ideal house, ideal school, ideal holiday and future plans allowed for the use of the present and imperfect subjunctive, however, it was disappointing sometimes that teachers had obviously focussed on this type of question prior to the exam to the detriment of accuracy on basic structures and adjective agreements.

The modern world and the environment topic proved interesting, especially when talking about modern technology. However, teachers and candidates need to be aware of including different time frames as conversations can be easily restricted to the present with a little bit of conditional. This is very relevant to native speakers who need to be given the chance by the teachers' questions to achieve as they are patently able to.

The education and employment topic also however, showed up weaker candidates' lack of accuracy in use of adjective agreements, descriptions of subjects, use of me gusta/me gustan and es/son.

Some teachers did not seem that sympathetic to the ability of the candidate, often asking weaker pupils very complex questions which they did not understand. One or two teachers seemed more concerned with showing off their Spanish and some made lots of basic mistakes. Some native speakers did not score as highly as they might because they did not appear to have been taught to give fully developed answers and use a variety of time frames. Sometimes the examiner asked far too many closed questions and it was not easy for students to develop a full answer, for example 'What time do you get up?' or 'How do you get to school?' Whereas 'talk to me about your morning routine' would have given the candidates more scope.

The most productive examinations were in centres where the candidates had been very well trained to answer questions in a variety of tenses, including using a few subjunctives and more complex constructions. It also seemed to work best when their teacher examined them as there was more personal response and the teacher knew their strengths and weaknesses. There was significant evidence of some extensive preparation, hard work and commitment from a huge number of students and teachers.

Administration of the Examination

The administration of this examination was completed efficiently and professionally by most centres. Excellent administration was carried out by those centres where the correct pages of the specification had been photocopied allowing examiners to enter their marks appropriately, CDS/USBs had been labelled appropriately and wrapped carefully and the picture discussed was attached. Attaching a clearly visible identifying label to the memory stick is good practice as memory sticks have a natural ability to slide out of plastic wallets. The excellent quality of recording that can be reproduced by the use of digital recorders cannot be underestimated and teacher examiners would be advised that this is the best form of recording. The move away from cassettes towards CDs and memory sticks was much appreciated. Centres are reminded that audio cassette recordings are no longer admissible. Centres should ensure that each recording is audible and working before being despatched to the examiner.

Grade Boundaries

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