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Edexcel

Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2019

Pearson Edexcel GCSE
In Chinese (1CN0) Paper 2F:
Speaking

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Introduction

This was the first year of the new specification and there were many changes in the content and the demand of the examination. The new speaking examination for the Foundation tier consists of three parts: a role play with 5 prompts, a picture-based task with five prompts and a conversation about two different topic areas. There are 10 role play cards and 10 picture-based cards. There is also a sequencing grid that centres are asked to follow when organising which student receives which role play, which picture-based card and the theme for the second conversation. Following the sequencing grid is very important, as it ensures that the student is tested in four out of five themes of the specification and it avoids duplication. The students have 12 minutes' preparation time to read through the role play and the picture-based card.

Overview

Even though this was the first time the new specification was assessed and despite the many changes which were introduced, the examination team was pleased to report that there were some very good performances and that most students were well prepared at both tiers.

When conducting the role play (task 1) and picture-based task (task 2), the examiner should ask all the predetermined questions as written. Unfortunately this year some teachers did not follow this requirement and instead added their own questions or omitted some of the set questions. Teacher examiners need to bear in mind that the set questions and comments **must be asked as they are presented** and in the given sequence only. There must be no supplementary questions or rephrasing. Any rephrasing of the questions unfortunately resulted in students receiving no marks. The statements/questions may be repeated but no more than twice.

During the marking of scripts, we became aware that sticking to the script could cause issues for Cantonese; it could result in unnatural phrasing that could hinder students' understanding of the questions. Many Cantonese teachers automatically chose to use daily spoken form rather than written form, for example: 什么 - 乜嘢, 多少钱 - 几多钱, 多长时间 - 几耐时间, 明天 - 听日, 去年 - 旧年
HP5.5 你想上大学吗? Spoken Cantonese: 你想唔想入大学?
HP2.5 你喜欢在家看电影, 还是在电影院? Spoken Cantonese: 你喜欢喺屋企睇电影, 定係喺电影院?

As this was the first series of the exam, we allowed these kinds of variations in Cantonese, as long as they were a direct transfer of meaning of the question and did not go off script, as outlined above. The students were therefore not disadvantaged. However, this is an issue which requires greater scrutiny and clear rules will be put in place for the next summer series.

Some common issues

Task 1: Role play

Students are presented with instructions in English. During the assessment, teacher examiners read out the introduction as it is in English, as they are required to do. Some teacher examiners however translated the introduction into Mandarin or Cantonese. As this was the first series for this new qualification, students were not penalised if this was done but this will not be the case for future years.

There are 5 bullet points in total that students need to respond to. Students are advised to answer the questions directly and succinctly. This year, some students spoke too much about other things and ultimately failed to give the correct answer to the specific question. In the same way, when students have to ask a question, they should only ask the question as instructed on the card. They should not ask any other questions as no marks are awarded for doing this.

Teachers should remind their students to use the correct interrogative pronoun when asking questions, such as where, when, who, if or how. For example, HR5 Q4 'How to get to a book shop?' Instead of using HOW in the question, some students used WHERE.

Task 2: Picture Based discussion

The first question requires students to describe the picture. Some students, instead of describing what one could see, mentioned mainly what they thought and imagined. The remaining questions extend beyond the picture, inviting students to give their opinions and to justify them. Teacher examiners should provide sufficient time for the students to show their ability and fully develop their answers.

Some students did not express their opinion effectively or give any justification. This prevented the students getting into the top mark band.

Questions in task 2 require students to answer questions referring to past, present and future events. Quite a few students experienced difficulties in identifying the timeframes of various questions.

Task 3: Conversations

This task includes two different parts, each requiring the coverage of a different theme.

To give students the best chance of doing well in the conversation, the teacher examiner must ask sufficient questions which enable students to answer freely, develop the conversation and discussion, produce extended sequences of speech, present and justify their own thoughts and opinions and refer to past, present

and future events. In order to score high marks, students need to show that they can respond spontaneously to questions.

In the first part of the conversation, students are able to talk for up to one minute on the topic they have chosen. Many students were clearly motivated by being able to choose their own topic. Most performed very well on their one-minute introduction which served as a very good warm up for the following part of the conversation. However, some teacher examiners forgot to ask questions afterwards and moved straight onto the second theme. This disadvantaged students in terms of being able to access the full range of marks.

Teachers are advised to announce the theme for the second part of the conversation and ensure that an equal amount of time is allocated to both parts. Some teachers concentrated on only one theme and left very little time or even no time for the second one. This of course disadvantaged the students. Some teacher examiners asked too many closed questions or questions only for information, for example, 'How many people are in your family?' 'What is your father's name?' Questions like these do not provide opportunities for the students to expand on their answers and adversely affect the marks the students are able to achieve.

Some recordings were too short while some of them were too long. Both of these situations have an impact on the students in terms of being able to access the full range of marks and must be avoided.

Administration

Teacher examiners should not mark the students' speaking paper, this is done by Pearson.

Quite a few schools did not submit their CS2 form. Other schools did submit the CS2 form but without student or teacher examiner signatures.

Some students spoke very quietly or in other cases the recording itself did not pick up the student speech clearly. It is very difficult to mark speech which cannot be heard. Teachers must make sure that the position of the microphone favours the student rather than the teacher examiner.

There was sometimes interference on the USB because of loud background noise, for example bells, mobile phones, school announcements and so on. This sometimes made it difficult to hear the student clearly. Centres are advised to have a quiet recording environment for future exams.

Recordings of Cantonese and Mandarin students must now be saved on different USBs so that they can be sent to different language expert examiners.