



Pearson

Examiner's Report Principal Examiner Feedback

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Pearson Edexcel GCSE
In Speaking (1SP02) Paper 2H
Speaking in Spanish

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**Please note that this is a combined report
for papers 2F and 2H.**

GCSE Spanish
Unit 2: Speaking
Examiner report

With the introduction of the new Specification, there were significant changes both in the content and in the demands of the examination. Controlled assessment has now discontinued and all the examinations are marked by external Pearson Edexcel examiners. All 4 units of the examination now carry 25% of the total mark. The 2 tasks demanded of the old Specification were now replaced by 3 of which one, the Role Play, was new, although it bore some comparison with the former Open Interaction. The Picture-based Task was similar although this time the picture was from an unknown source not chosen by the candidate and the Conversation covered two topics, the first prepared by the candidate and the second an unprepared topic selected by Pearson Edexcel. Finally, the time allocation was increased, including the preparation time which has now extended to 12 minutes. All prompts on the paper were in the target language and the assessment grids used by the examiners to mark the exams were revised. Despite all of these changes and the challenges they presented, the students and the teacher examiners generally did well and prepared conscientiously for the exams.

Task 1: The Role Play

The role play is marked for Communication only, unlike the Picture based Task and the Conversation. Short, relevant answers were all that were necessary to access the full marks. A number of students clearly thought they would do better to give unnecessarily developed responses and at times the teacher/examiners encouraged this by treating the role play as an extended conversation. Such practice is a waste of time and effort as there are no extra marks for long, developed conversations. Answers should be brief and to the point. Students sometimes lost marks by careless use of verbs – using 'fue' instead of 'fui' creates ambiguity and therefore loses marks. Occasionally students ignored the question mark in front of the bullet point and made a statement rather than asking a question, thereby forfeiting the marks. Teacher/examiners generally conducted the examinations professionally, although some deprived their students of the marks by straying from the scripted questions, paraphrasing or adding extra information. A few teacher/examiners failed to read out the introduction as scripted or omitted one of the bullet point questions. Again, these omissions are often detrimental to the candidate's performance. At times students ignored the context of the Role Play and gave irrelevant responses. For example in FR4 where the candidate is being interviewed for a job at a camp site and is asked the question 'What kind of job do you want?' it was inappropriate to respond that s/he wanted to be a journalist or a lawyer. Had the teacher/examiner read the introductory context of the Role Play, the candidate may not have been misled. Finally, it is worth remembering the Marking Principles agreed across all modern languages:

- If a teacher/examiner changes a question or inserts a supplementary question, there can be no credit for a response made by the candidate.
- Where a candidate has offered an incorrect response to a question, the teacher/examiner may not repeat the question. If s/he does so and the candidate then gives a correct response, this is ignored.
- Teacher/examiners may repeat each question twice but may not re-phrase any of the questions.

Task 2: The Picture-Based Task

Most students did well and had prepared carefully and thoroughly for the Picture based Task questions during the 12 minute period allocated for preparation time. Unlike the Role Play, there were marks available for extended answers in Communication and Content as well as marks for the Knowledge and Accuracy of language. Students were expected not only to develop their responses but also to express opinions and justify them and to narrate and describe events. Two of the bullet points required the use of the past and future tenses or time frames and at Higher Level, students had to contend with an unexpected question that prompted an opinion from the candidate on an aspect of the topic. As with the Role Plays, teacher/examiners must keep to the script without changing or paraphrasing any of the questions and without adding any supplementary, unscripted questions. If they do, then again they will deprive their students of marks and any extraneous questions together with the responses are ignored. For the first question – Describe the picture – the students were well rehearsed into uttering useful expressions such as 'hay', 'en la foto puedo ver', 'a la derecha', 'a la izquierda', 'en el fondo' and 'veo' which helped them to develop and extend their responses. The more able students went methodically through the picture with descriptions of the people, their physical appearance, clothes, colours and paying attention to the background setting. A number of students often gave developed answers to the picture description in bullet point 1 but thereafter gave much shorter, undeveloped responses to subsequent questions. Less able students should be encouraged to describe the picture in more detail; often the description was very short and minimal. It is important to make use of the scripted follow-up questions - ¿Algo más? or ¿Por qué (no)? - To encourage students to extend their responses and aim for higher marks. Conversely, asking for ¿Algo más? When a candidate has already given a very full and detailed response is counter-productive. Inevitably there were problems with pronunciation, for instance with basic language such as 'hay' and there were over-used phrases such as 'me gusta porque es divertido / interesante' and 'en mi opinión' (frequently with an anglicised rendering of 'opinion'). Finally, it is worth remembering the Marking Principles agreed across all the modern languages:

- Students must make reference to the visual image in response to the first bullet point question.
- Where a teacher/examiner changes a question or inserts a supplementary question which is not scripted, there can be no credit for a response made by the candidate.

- Teacher/examiners may repeat each question twice but may not rephrase any of the questions.

Task 3: The Conversations

Students were required to participate in two conversations, the first on a topic selected and prepared by them and the second on an unprepared topic selected by Pearson Edexcel. An equal amount of time should have been allocated to each of the conversations and the total time was 3½ - 4½ minutes at Foundation and 5 – 6 minutes at Higher. It is essential to keep strictly to the timings and avoid any imbalance between the 2 conversations or any shortfall or excess in timings. Most teacher/examiners put their students at their ease, using a friendly tone of voice and spoke clearly and slowly so that the students had little or no problems in understanding the questions. Some teacher/examiners did not know whether theme 5 (environment and global issues) was available for Foundation students. It is only omitted from the Role Plays but this theme is best avoided for less able Foundation students. For the first Conversation, students should be encouraged to introduce the topic they have chosen for up to one minute prior to the interaction with the teacher/examiner. It is equally important to ensure that they are not allowed to go on beyond the 1 minute and teacher/examiners should interrupt with their first question if the candidate seems determined to continue with a monologue. Unsurprisingly, the first prepared conversation was often more successful than the second and it was noticeable how the less able students frequently found it difficult to complete their sentences as they struggled to find the right vocabulary, grammatical structures or verb tenses. Some teachers are still relying on a list of prepared questions and in one extreme case all the students had been directed to prepare the same topic for their Conversation 1, even to the extent of providing identical introductions for the first minute. Moreover, the teacher read out exactly the same questions to each of the students so that the examination became a question and answer session instead of a spontaneous conversation. Some teacher/examiners had clearly not been listening carefully to what the students were saying and confused them by asking questions the answers to which had already been covered in the initial presentation. These are examples of bad practice and against the spirit of the exam. The Conversations should be allowed to develop naturally and the teacher/examiners should listen carefully to what the candidate is saying and build the conversation accordingly. It is certainly worth preparing topic related questions in advance in case the conversation grinds to a halt but it is not a good idea to rely exclusively on prepared questions as this destroys spontaneity and the natural flow of conversation. In one extreme case, it was clear that the candidate had been allowed to prepare both conversations as the teacher/examiner asked the candidate at the end of Conversation 1 what s/he had prepared for Conversation 2. Fortunately, these infringements of the Specification rules were few and far between. Some students were disadvantaged because the teacher examiner failed to ask any questions that required the use of a tense other than the present.

Again, it is worth remembering the Marking Principles that have been agreed across all modern languages:

- Foundation Conversations should last for between 3½ and 4½ minutes while Higher Conversations should last between 5 and 6 minutes.
- Timings begin with the candidate's first utterance.
- Conversations that are too short are likely to be self-penalising.
- Conversations that are too long: once the 4½ (F) or 6 (H) minutes have passed, examiners stop listening and assessing at the end of the candidate's response to the current question.
- An equal amount of time must be allocated to each Conversation.
- Where the first Conversation is a monologue and has no interaction, students will be limited to a maximum score of 6 marks for Interaction and Spontaneity. The marks for Communication and Content and Linguistic Knowledge and Accuracy, however, are unaffected.

The most popular choices of Topics for the first Conversation were the Environment, Who Am I? Holidays, School life and Educational visits

Administration

There was far less administration with the new Specification and therefore fewer problems. It is important, however, that Centres check carefully to ensure that the recordings are clear and audible. A few Centres submitted recordings that were very difficult to hear and consequently a lot of time was spent listening over and over again to make sure that the examiner knew exactly what the candidate was saying. It is important too to avoid extraneous background noise. Some centres failed to submit the CS2 forms, or submitted unsigned ones and others omitted to include the track list. It is very useful if teacher/examiners can announce the Role Play card number and the Picture Card number at the start of the tasks, as well as the Theme for each of the Conversations at the beginning of each one. Most centres applied the sequence correctly although some made mistakes and included a note of apology or an explanation. At times following the grid caused some confusion and several centres failed to do so correctly resulting in themes being repeated. Even when the sequence was not applied strictly, however, most of the centres did make sure that the students covered four themes (Role Play + Picture Task + Conversation 1 + Conversation 2). Some tasks were used less frequently than others, maybe due to sequence and the choice of the topic for the first conversation. FR9 was used a significantly fewer number of times, HR5 and HR8 were almost never used and HR10 was seldom in evidence. Picture Tasks FR5 and HR5 were used less often than the rest. It was also evident that some students had been entered at the inappropriate level; excellent students, at times native speakers, had been entered incongruously for Foundation level and conversely very weak students struggled with the demands of higher level when Foundation would have been a better choice. It is important to enter students sensibly at the correct level that best suits their abilities.

