SPANISH

Paper 1344/01

Speaking

General comments

The Examiners were very pleased with the general level of spoken Spanish exhibited by the candidates. The majority could communicate in language that was sufficiently fluent and accurate to sustain the conversation, in spite of some common errors, listed in the next section.

Most candidates had prepared their topics very thoroughly. Examiners found evidence of detailed research using different sources, and rewarded candidates highly for the quality of their research. When detailed and extensive factual knowledge was combined with clear analysis and well-founded opinion, candidates achieved much higher marks.

The discussions mostly flowed naturally without the candidates giving the impression of simply reciting pre-learnt material. They tended to respond readily to the Examiners' questions with appropriate replies. Not only that, but most did not appear taken aback by unexpected questions and tackled them confidently and honestly. Candidates were rewarded for their ability to engage in a natural and spontaneous conversation.

Candidates also displayed an excellent ability to keep calm and collected or, at least, not to allow nerves to interfere significantly with their performance.

Specific comments

There were 12 candidates for the Spanish Short Course. Among the topics chosen, 7 related to political, historical or social issues in Hispanic countries, with some presentations combining two of these areas. There were also 2 on cinema, 2 on art and one on literature.

Most candidates chose familiar topics, such as a famous artist or politician, but it was pleasing to note that a few explored more widely and produced well-researched presentations on more unusual subjects. Such topics usually indicated a high degree of personal interest and enthusiasm.

All topics were interesting, but some lent themselves better to the 8-10 minute discussion required. The most successful topics were neither too broad nor too narrow. For example, if the candidate was talking about a famous artist or historical figure, the presentation worked best when it clearly concentrated on particular works or aspects of that figure's career, while perhaps touching more lightly on other points.

Presentations also produced the best conversations when an element of controversy or debate was brought into it. The contentious element could be implicit in the title, or it might be introduced under one of the sub-headings. Candidates who went beyond the purely descriptive and had a personal view or an unusual angle on the topic were highly rewarded, as long as they supported their opinions appropriately.

Pronunciation was good overall and did not impede comprehensibility on the whole. The most common errors were:

- Faulty stress causing confusion in the person and tense of the verb and in words ending in *–ía*
- Unclear vowels
- Interference from English pronunciation in words like *religión, Europa, sociedad, idea*

Grammatically, the most common errors were:

- gender choice: *la problema, el madre*
- inaccurate gender/number agreement between noun and adjective: *las obras más reciente, la opinión politico*

© UCLES 2010
www.theallpapers.com

- conjugation errors, specially in radical changing verbs. Wrong person ending (*su padre dije)* was as common a mistake as wrong tense choice (*cuando fue pequeño).*
- use of infinitive for finite verbs :*el pueblo dar su apoyo a...*
- failure to place the negative in the correct place: *es no bueno, tengo no tiempo*
- inability to distinguish between *ser, estar* and *haber*
- confusion of adjectives and adverbs: *es muy calor, es muy violencia, mucho famosa*
- inability to use *gustar: la gente no gusta la nueva situacion*
- failure to recognise the need for the subjunctive mood: *no pienso que es un problema*

Advice and guidance to candidates

Candidates should:

- fill in the oral form correctly.
- present their introduction "naturally", even if pre-learnt.
- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the topic.
- provide evidence of research.
- show interest in and personal engagement with the topic.
- support opinions with evidence.
- avoid sweeping statements.

Candidates should also expect to:

- be interrupted.
- be asked to support statements.
- be asked unexpected questions.
- give examples.
- be stretched linguistically to their ceiling.

© UCLES 2010
www.theallpapers.com

SPANISH

Paper 1344/02

Reading, Listening and Writing

General comments

This is the second year of the Cambridge Pre-U Spanish Short Course examination. The entry for this session was small, but it is hoped that the numbers will grow in the future. This report will, therefore, look at the performance in this year, but will also concentrate on giving advice and guidance for future examinations.

This is a mixed-skills paper which allows candidates to show their Spanish-language skills in Listening, Reading and Writing.

Part I – Listening (45 minutes)

In this section there are three recordings with listening comprehension questions in Spanish and in English. Language accuracy is not taken into account as long as it does not impede communication. Candidates hear the recordings three times and there are pauses both between and within the sections.

In **Listening Text 1** candidates heard an item about animals in the Doñana National Park. They were given a printed summary of the extract with five gaps left blank. Below the summary, they were offered a choice of three words to complete the sentences and had to underline the most appropriate option. The material was understood well by candidates and generally the correct options were chosen, although some candidates did not know *evitar* in **Question 6**. During the preparation for this type of question, it is essential that candidates should become confident in finding and using Spanish synonyms.

The extract for **Listening Text 2** was an interview with the owner of a new vegetarian restaurant in the Spanish town of Jerez. The exercise, involving straightforward Spanish questions to be answered in Spanish, was generally done well. The test is marked positively and the objective is to communicate the correct response, but not to reproduce the original text word for word. All the relevant information must be given but candidates are not required to answer in full sentences. The Examiners only mark what is correct. All irrelevant and superfluous information is disregarded, unless it adversely affects the correct target information. Nevertheless, there was some evidence of candidates attempting to transcribe the material without really understanding it. Most of the questions were understood and candidates wrote appropriate replies. Nevertheless, there was some confusion about José's attitude to meat in **Question 9**. The answer was that he enjoyed eating meat but did not eat it every day. There was some confusion between *comida* and *cocina* for **Question 10** and also some candidates misunderstood the Spanish word *local* here. This is not the adjective meaning "local" but the noun meaning "place" and, therefore here, "restaurant". In spite of these errors, most candidates scored well in this task.

In **Listening Text 3** candidates heard an interview with a psychologist discussing going back to work after the summer holidays. The material certainly seemed accessible and candidates made a good attempt at answering the English questions set on it. Sometimes, however, rather than weak comprehension of the Spanish material, a candidate might have lost marks because of awkward English expression that did not convey the information correctly. Most of the questions required two pieces of information and candidates are urged to ensure that have given all the information needed to gain the two marks. There did not appear to be any serious cases of misunderstanding the Spanish material, although the word *sueño* caused some confusion, as it can mean "sleep" and "dream" and the correct choice needed to be made.

Part II – Reading (45 minutes)

There were three passages with reading comprehension questions in Spanish and in English. Language accuracy is not taken into account as long as it does not impede communication.

Reading Text 1 involved a short article about a medical advance at a Spanish hospital where a baby has been conceived with the genetic possibility of saving his elder brother's life. The material was understood

© UCLES 2010
www.theallpapers.com

well by the candidates. The exercise, involving Spanish questions to be answered in Spanish, was generally well done. Some candidates were confused in **Question 23**, believing that both the baby and his father were born on a Sunday, whereas the answer was that they were both called Javier and there was some confusion over the words *gratuito* and *libre* for **Question 26**. Most candidates succeeded in using their own words in the answers. It is important to stress that, when answering these questions, candidates should aim to communicate a correct response, but should not reproduce the original text word for word.

The passage used for **Reading Text 2** was a longer article about an incident off the African coast where the authorities in Mauritania were holding a Spanish fishing boat and its crew. The text had Spanish-language questions and answers set on it. Generally, the material was understood well, although some candidates had difficulty with *golpe de estado, multa,* and *negar*. **Question 33** needed two full points of information: *dice que el capitán tiene razón* and *quiere que los tripulantes sean liberados.* Similarly, **Question 34** needed two items: *el dinero que pierde el barco* and *cada día que está retenido*. Some candidates only provided one point of information for these answers and so were not able to gain the full marks. Candidates must ensure that they provide the full information required. As for the previous Reading task, it is essential that candidates should use their own words rather that attempt to reproduce the original text word for word.

Reading Text 3 involved an article about immigrants and people trafficking in Spain.. The material was generally well understood by the candidates, who succeeded in answering the English questions set on the passage in a fluent, comprehensible way. Nevertheless, some candidates were unsure as to whether the immigrants' family members were already in Spain or waiting to come (**Question 36**) and when exactly the money was paid (**Question 37** – "in advance"). Others had difficulty with **Question 39**, believing that the lawyer had been "condemned" and failing to understand *inhabilitada* in this context. The verb *elaborar* was often misunderstood in **Question 40** and some candidates were not able to express the meaning of *desarticular* for **Question 41**. Overall, however, most candidates succeeded in understanding the material whereas some lost marks because of their awkward or incorrect English versions.

Part III – Guided Writing (45 minutes)

Candidates were given a choice of two texts and had to write a response of 200-250 words in Spanish, based on a series of five bullet points. The material contained in the two extracts was clearly accessible to candidates and candidates succeeded in writing appropriate responses in a good level of fluent Spanish.

The first article discussed the findings of a European study of how the use of high-volume MP3 players can cause premature loss of hearing in young people. Candidates had to write a letter to the newspaper in response to the article, firstly giving their reaction to the article and discussing the importance of music for young people today; then moving on to give their opinions of the advantages and disadvantages of modern technology and ways in which some of the negative effects may be avoided; and finally they had to offer a conclusion as to which is more important – entertainment or health. This was clearly the more popular of the two articles and candidates wrote convincing letters. Some seemed to be genuinely appalled by the findings of the report and discussed their friends' use of MP3s.

The second article described the rising popularity of golf courses in Spain and their excessive use of water, especially in areas suffering a drought, such as Andalucía. Candidates had to write a letter to the newspaper in response to the article, firstly giving their reaction to the article and discussing the advantages and disadvantages of golf courses; then moving on to describing the role of sports in their own country and discussing the general main threats to the environment that exist nowadays; and finally they had to offer a conclusion as to which is more important – economic development or protecting the environment. The few candidates who chose this option wrote convincing arguments in a good level of Spanish language.

The response is marked according to the published marking grids. Firstly, the essay is marked for Content according to the task set and the bullet points, bearing in mind originality and development of ideas. Then the Quality of Language is assessed, taking into account both accuracy and variety of lexis and structure and to what extent error impedes comprehension. Candidates are expected to use an acceptable formal letter format and to write within the word limits.

© UCLES 2010
www.theallpapers.com

Advice and Guidance to candidates

Listening and Reading Comprehension

Answering Spanish questions set on the texts

- remember that full sentences are not required. However, the full information asked for must be given;
- highlight the question words (¿quién?, ¿cómo?, ¿cuándo?, etc.), so that it is clear what information is needed;
- note how many marks are awarded for each question, so that no essential information is omitted;
- try to use your own words and do not reproduce the language of the texts word for word;
- practise building a wide Spanish vocabulary, so that you are at ease using synonyms for words in the texts;
- remember that your Spanish answers must make sense. If they do not, then there is something wrong.

Answering English questions set on the texts

- write your answers in good English and check your spelling;
- beware *false friends* (words that look alike in Spanish and English but have different meanings);
- realise that some Spanish words can often have two meanings. Choose the correct one (e.g.: does *local* mean "local" or "place" in the context?);
- find the appropriate English word, not necessarily one that looks similar to the Spanish word (e.g.: *velocidad* is usually "speed" in English, not "velocity");
- make sure your whole answer sounds like real English and makes sense to someone reading it;
- make sure that you give the full information required; do not omit any essential information.

Guided Writing

Covering the content

- read the two stimulus passages and decide quickly which one you wish to tackle;
- pick the topic that most appeals to you and is most in accordance with your strengths;
- ensure that you have enough knowledge to tackle the question and enough vocabulary associated with the topic;
- read the chosen stimulus text again: analyse it to grasp the aim, content and context of the passage and to note key words and concepts;
- study the bullet points carefully and consider the full implications and scope of the requirements;
- pay attention to the form the response should take: (a letter? a report?);
- adopt the correct linguistic register: (formal? informal?);
- plan carefully and stick to your plan, avoiding digressions, getting carried away, recapitulation, putting in afterthoughts, etc.
- each bullet point must be covered and developed, but not necessarily given equal weight;
- make sure that ideas follow a logical sequence, both overall and within each paragraph;
- avoid generalisations; make sure that ideas are illustrated and substantiated;
- take care to ensure full coverage of the content within the limits of the word count;
- develop the skill of communicating succinctly but effectively;
- leave enough time at the end to check your writing for accuracy.

The Spanish-language requirements for comprehension questions and the Guided Writing tasks

- remember that essential basic grammar knowledge is required. You should aim for responding in accurate language;
- be confident in your use of all Spanish tenses, in particular the present, preterite, imperfect and conditional, both regular and irregular;
- be able to use tenses with all persons, not just the first person;
- be able to switch between the first and third persons with confidence, as this is often required in comprehension passages;
- use pronouns with confidence, in particular *le* and *se*, and be able to switch from first person to third person pronouns and adjectives with ease (e.g.. *mi* to *su* and *mío* to *suyo*, etc.);
- use *gustar* and similar verbs properly in all tenses;

© UCLES 2010
www.theallpapers.com

- be strict when applying the correct articles and adjectival endings (e.g. *un problema*, *cinco rosas rojas*, etc.);
- know when accents are important (e.g. *trabajo* or *trabajó*? *esta, esta or ésta?*)*;*
- be familiar with the subjunctive mood: know when and how to use it successfully;
- develop a bank of suitable phrases for your essay writing: how to begin (para empezar), making general statements (hablando en forma general), giving opinions (me parece que), explaining (es decir), disagreeing (no estoy de acuerdo con), giving justification (no cabe duda de que), expanding ideas (no sólo ... sino también), contradicting (a pesar de que), suggesting (es posible que) and concluding (en resumen), etc. (NB. These are only suggestions and candidates should build up their own banks of phrases).

© UCLES 2010
www.theallpapers.com