2020 VCE Korean First Language oral examination report

General comments

The Korean oral examination assesses students’ knowledge and skills in using spoken language. The examination has two sections – a Conversation of approximately 7 minutes, during which students converse with the assessors about their personal world, and a Discussion of approximately 8 minutes.

Following the Conversation, the student will indicate to the assessor(s) the subtopic chosen for detailed study and, in no more than one minute, briefly introduce the main focus of their subtopic, alerting assessors to any objects brought to support the discussion. Suitable objects include photographs, maps or diagrams and should include no text or very little text. The support material must have minimal writing, which includes only a heading, name or title.

The one-minute introduction should give assessors an indication of the area of discussion. The purpose is for students to briefly introduce their chosen subtopic; it is not an opportunity for students to list all their information or texts.

The focus of the Discussion is to explore aspects of the language and culture of communities in which Korean is spoken, with the student being expected to make reference to the texts studied.

The choice of subtopic for the Detailed Study is very important. It should be an engaging subtopic that motivates students to become familiar with the content and vocabulary needed, and thus be more skilled to support and elaborate on information, ideas and opinions. It is important that students and teachers select materials for the Detailed Study carefully so that students are exposed to a variety of views. The type of texts used by students should vary in complexity and be in Korean so that students can become aware of key vocabulary related to their subtopic. Students are reminded that they must be prepared to use language spontaneously in unrehearsed situations. Students should be able to draw on the texts they have studied and make links between the texts to support, expand on and explore opinions and ideas on the subtopic and different aspects of the texts. Students should be able to relate this to the Korean-speaking community.

Students are not expected to be ‘experts’; they are expected to have learnt strategies in order to respond to unexpected questions. It would be valuable for students to learn phrases such as, ‘I have not studied this aspect of the subtopic, but I think …’, ‘I don’t know, but I feel …’ and ‘I am not sure about this question but I know …’

It should be noted that during the oral examination:

* students may be asked a variety of questions with varying levels of difficulty. Questions may also be asked in a different order from the one students anticipate
* assessors may interrupt students to ask questions during either section of the examination; this should be regarded as a normal process in a discussion
* assessors may also repeat or rephrase questions
* normal variation in assessor body language is acceptable.

Three criteria are used in assessing both the Conversation and the Discussion: communication, content and language. Details of the assessment criteria and descriptors are published on the VCAA website. It is important that all teachers and students be familiar with the criteria and descriptors and that students use them as part of their examination preparation. This will help students to engage in a lively and interesting exchange with assessors. Although there are similarities between the assessment criteria for the Conversation and Discussion sections of the examination, the criteria assess two very different aspects of performance. Students who are well prepared are generally able to demonstrate their abilities and proficiency in the language.

Overall, students demonstrated a very good understanding of the requirements of the Korean First Language oral examination. Students who were aware of the criteria and understood the requirements of the tasks presented their knowledge and ideas in an authentic manner. The content displayed by those students was properly prepared and logically presented using an advanced and impressive range of vocabulary. For the Discussion section, however, some students needed to engage more readily with the assessors, and to convey a comprehensive understanding of the selected issue in a more confident and effective manner.

Specific information

Section 1 – Presentation

Communication

Students who need to use cue cards should aim to do so in an unobtrusive way. Cue cards should be used as brief prompts to aid memory rather than as text to be read verbatim.

Students who did not score well in this section were unable to deliver their presentation in one piece and depended heavily on their cue cards, often attempting to read from notes.

Students who scored highly demonstrated excellent control of style and register. They stated accurately their selected issue using an extensive range of adequate expressions with excellent tempo and effective time management strategies.

Content

Students who scored highly demonstrated a deep knowledge of the issue selected, due to the use of excellent resources. Their knowledge allowed them to deliver relevant information in an eloquent and logical manner, analyse the implications and deduce well-developed opinions and conclusions.

In contrast, students who did not score well were unable to demonstrate a clear understanding of the topic nor strong arguments about the chosen issue. The quality of their ideas and opinions was shallow, and they were unable to elaborate on or make effective use of the texts.

Section 2 – Discussion

Communication

Students who scored highly responded to questions logically with a range of highly relevant information and demonstrated an ability to defend their own stance with evidence by analysing resources and elaborating on the issue chosen.

In contrast, students who had not adequately prepared found it difficult to explain their point of view and could not expand on or discuss expressively the answers to the questions they were asked. They were unable to use their resources successfully and communicated in a basic and ineffective manner.

Content

Being familiar with and able to use key vocabulary is essential for this section of the examination.

Students who scored highly could manage terms and expressions related to their chosen topics appropriately. They had built an extensive vocabulary bank from which they could draw their answers. They were in control of the discussion, delivering their responses in a clear manner, demonstrating an ability to handle challenging questions ranging beyond the chosen issue, and incorporating and conveying original ideas and opinions effectively.

Although many students presented well on their issue, some students found it difficult to clarify or elaborate on opinions and ideas. They were not well-placed to respond to unexpected questions on areas of their chosen topic. Without understanding the questions, they simply retold the information delivered during their presentation.