



Oral component

GENERAL COMMENTS

Eight students presented for oral assessment in 2006. The standard of spoken language was generally satisfactory to excellent.

All students demonstrated a high level of language proficiency; however, some topics chosen by students based around the religious festivals of Easter, Christmas and christenings had too little substance and left these students with an inability to present opinions or engage in a discussion of any substance.

Although the Internet can be a useful research tool in providing information on notable historical towns, it left some students without any independent historical information related to their chosen places. Teachers should help students to fill in these gaps by undertaking further reading and research.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Section 1 – Conversation

Criteria 1 and 5

Most students were comfortable with this section. Overall, there was evidence of much individual preparation. Information flowed freely and students showed a good level of variety in their responses to the assessors. Some students were more hesitant, yet managed to use repair strategies quite satisfactorily.

A perennial problem is a near missing of the 'R' and rather weak 'T's. Stress was not always on the first syllable of the word, which is the cardinal rule of spoken Hungarian. There was also a tendency in some cases to an upward intonation of the voice at the end of an indicative sentence; however, in Hungarian there is a descending mode, both in words and in indicative sentences.

Criterion 2

The range of information was well developed, except in some students who tended to repeat certain points. As most students had plenty of information about family, school, recreation and the future, there was, in most cases, enough opportunities for students to elaborate on their ideas.

Criteria 3 and 4

There is a correlation between the range of vocabulary and linguistic competence. Excellent students demonstrated rich vocabulary, but even students with a slightly more restricted vocabulary could engage in a meaningful conversation.

The following list indicates some of the common problems that occurred in students' vocabulary.

- *Kicsi* and *kis* were usually confused. *Kis* is used as an adjective (for example, *kis család*, *kis baba*, etc.), whereas *kicsi* is usually used as an adverb (for example, *Kicsit futottam*). However, it can be used as an adjective if it is not immediately preceding the noun (for example, *Kicsi az udvaruk*), or more in terms of tiny (for example, *Kicsi volt a kis kutya amikor születésnapomra kaptam*).
- *Nem együtt* sounds odd – *Külön* is the word that students should use.
- *Pár* governs the singular (for example, *pár haverral*), not *haverokkal*.
- *Féltette* means being anxious, not being afraid, which was the sense of the students' sentences.
- Correct expressions were sometimes elaborated on when it was not needed. For example, *egyórás időként* should be *óránként* – the 'egy' is implied.



- *Mind* was often confused with *minden*, which is ‘everything’ or ‘anything’. It governs the singular (for example, *minden diák átment a vizsgán, minden üzlet be volt zárva*). *Mind* governs the plural (for example, *a diákok mind jól vizsgáztak*). *Az üzletek – kivétel nélkül – mind be voltak csukva*.
- Comparisons caused some problems, but they are simple when using the *olyan mint*. *A helyzet olyan rossz mint egy harmadik világban*.

Section 2 – Discussion

Criteria 6 and 7

A pleasing range of topics was presented. In the top range of performances, clarifications were handled well and the information presented was highly relevant. However, the discussion was not as wide ranging with the weaker students.

Most students had taken care to prepare well for the Discussion section and were able to carry on an effective discussion. Topics included historical persons, historical events, traditional celebrations (*Keresztelő, Karácsony, Farsang stb*), customs according to calendar years (*naptári év*) and folk customs and traditions.

Some students repeated a great deal of information and treated their background references superficially. In some cases, assessors needed to provide extra support in order to bring ‘life’ into the discussion.

Discussions on the highly topical Hungarian Revolution were very well prepared and clearly presented during this the 50th anniversary of the 1956 revolution.

Topics such as the famous cities of Szeged, Esztergom and Budapest were sometimes not well handled because of the overwhelming barrage of statistics presented. This approach impedes a good dialogue between the student and assessors because the student concentrates too much on remembering the data and does not consider implications of the statistics – the ‘why’ and ‘how’ of the topic. The tendency is to rote learn the data. Opinions should be offered about various aspects of the students’ personal tastes, perhaps comparisons with Australian cities or some perceived deficiencies of the city discussed (no city is perfect). There are many possibilities to advance a discussion.

‘Bartók Béla’ and ‘Kodály Zoltán’ were presented with a great many rote learned passages, and rather less elaboration and individual responses to the composers’ lives and importance or the qualities that appeal to the individual student and broader discussion of those qualities.

‘Lake Balaton’ was another geographical topic and as such had a range of discussion points, which were often well thought out. Some students just presented facts and figures, therefore it was difficult for the assessors to engage in a meaningful discussion.

Criteria 8 and 9

Unfortunately, the same grammatical errors continue to occur. Students must realise that following numerical adjectives, definite or indefinite, the noun is always in the singular; for example, *egy könyv, két könyv, több könyv, egy cipő, négy cipő, sok cipő*.

Word order is flexible in Hungarian, but too many subject/predicate beginnings to sentences tend to give a monotonous flow. The vocabulary used was often limited, but top students displayed a good range of appropriate vocabulary.

One advantage in preparing the chosen topic well is the subsequent growth of vocabulary. Students who did not prepare adequately often used incorrect word forms, which were sometimes quite amusing; for example, *vendégfogadó* instead of *vendéglátó* industry. The language concerning the immediacy of tradition provided well chosen expressions, but ‘*csinálni*’ often prevailed. Students should use words such as *készíteni* and *előkészülni*. *Ünnepek, ünnepnap* and *ünnepelni* are useful when talking about workday life. *Kazettát nézni* could be *szalagot tanulmányozni*. *Lehetőség* was a pleasing, well-used expression; however, *tojásoknál* was incorrect in the context – it should have been *tojásokat*.

There were concerns about repeatedly occurring grammatical shortcomings, such as the absence of the ‘T’ of the objective case, numerals that did not have plurals (*két nap*, not *két napok*) and verb errors (for example, which suffix governs which

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verb: *beszélék valakivel várok a barátomra* or *várom a barátomat*. The classical hybrid occurred this year: *Nem nagyon arról foglalkoztunk* should have been *azzal nem nagyon foglalkoztunk*, or simply *arról nem beszélünk*.

Simple structures must be stressed and practised with examples, and idiomatic usage should be pointed out.