

Oral component

Students acquitted themselves quite creditably. For the native speakers of the language and as such it was familiar ground. In addition it appeared they had many hours of preparation and practise before their assessment. Students were enthusiastic and ready to deal with any of the broad areas related to their personal world as required in the study design. Student and assessor interaction produced spontaneous responses both in the conversation and discussion sections.

In exploring aspects of the language most students selected the section on special ceremonies and arts and entertainment to the total exclusion of sub topics such as lifestyles, visiting Sri Lanka and stories from the past.

- all students used culturally appropriate ways of entry into and exit from the examination room
- students who were nervous at the beginning quickly settled into the activity
- all students used similar expressions to introduce their sub topic of the detailed study
- students were aware of the procedures to be followed during the text
- some students did not manage the available time to their best advantage
- most students were very well prepared for the test.

Most students performed well in the conversation except for the few who were nervous and therefore had excessively long pauses. Others were able to maintain the conversation by picking up cues and positively contributing with further ideas.

Section 1 – Conversation

Most students conveyed relevant information and ideas very well with supporting evidence and examples. They successfully described events in their daily life, showing the close knit nature of their family relationships.

There was a high degree of accuracy in the vocabulary and grammar the students used. They were extremely fluent in the Sinhala spoken language. Even in their detailed study discussion, students used the language in the same fluent manner. They could handle the conversation very well because they had a substantial vocabulary and a good knowledge of grammar and were able to use complex sentence structures correctly.

The students' clarity of expression was very impressive. They displayed good pronunciation and a well maintained tempo.

Section 2 – Discussion

Almost all students showed a high degree of interaction with the assessor. They had a good capacity to maintain and advance the exchange of ideas. Moreover, they used the repair strategies quite effectively.

Many students provided relevant information with a good mix of facts and opinions, linking to the text they studied and they were thorough in their detailed studies. Some used visual aids to support the discussion.

Almost every student had the ability to handle the unfamiliar situations or unexpected questions very well.

Written component

Section 1 – Listening and responding

Parts A and B

In the written part of the examination many students had problems in answering questions in English. This was especially in the listening and responding segment. Students did not convey information clearly enough.

Almost all students answered Question 2 quite well, although this was not the case with Question 3. Responses to Question 4 and 5 in Part B were correctly answered by most students.

Section 2 – Reading and responding

Part A

A large number of students performed quite well in this part of the examination in contrast to the segment on listening and responding, and practically everyone understood the texts. The students who did not perform well had some difficulty responding to the questions in English. Nevertheless, most students handled Questions 6 and 7 quite well.

Part B

Overall, this was answered well and it was evident that everyone knew the appropriate format for the letter and responded correctly to comments and requests made by the mother. Layout, register and style all conformed to the conventions of the text type of an informal letter.

Section 3 – Writing in Sinhala

Students had a choice of four kinds of writing. Most popular were the short story (imaginative) and the leaflet (persuasive). Some pieces were high-quality writing, with the information and ideas contained in them being authentic and relevant. Sentence structure and expression were eloquent. Many students scored top marks in this section.