Principal Moderator's Report
January 2013

GCSE German 5GN02 2A

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January 2013

Publications Code UG034564

Introduction

Centres have a choice of three tasks:

● a presentation and follow-on discussion

● a picture-based discussion

● an open interaction.

Each candidate must undertake at least two of these three task-types but only one has to be recorded and submitted. Centres are asked to submit recordings of at least two different task-types in the moderation sample.

In this session, the majority of centres opted for the presentation and discussion and picture-based discussion, although some centres did undertake an open interaction task.

Centres create their own task sheets for the presentation and discussion and the picture-based discussion – there are no Edexcel set tasks for these two options. Some centres did not give their candidates a task sheet: candidates had just a title, eg *My holiday last year*. Centres should be aware that all tasks have to be refreshed every two years. The best tasks will therefore be a title with 5–6 bullet points to guide and support candidates: the task can then be refreshed at the end of two years by changing at least one of these bullet points. If the task is just a title, this title may not be used after two years. The assessment criteria require candidates to demonstrate spontaneity and an ability to interact and to deal with unpredictable elements. Centres should be aware that task sheets with a defined list of questions to prepare will not allow candidates to access the higher mark bands.

Where a candidate engages in a picture-based discussion, centres should note that the specification states on page 16 that the picture is intended to be used as a 'prompt to discussion'. The ensuing discussion must therefore start from the candidate's picture. The spirit of this task-type is that candidates will each bring in their own picture, rather than all being given the same one.

Most centres undertaking the open interaction – the unscripted role-play task – created their own stimuli and tasks. Teachers are reminded that the stimulus in the open interaction task should not exceed 70 words. (The specification states on page 33 that the stimulus may contain visual prompts in addition to the 70 words of either English or German.) There is no word limit for the task but you are advised to set concise tasks.

Conduct

In general, the orals were conducted well and allowed candidates to achieve their best. Skilful and appropriate questioning from the teacher examiner afforded candidates the opportunities to fulfil their potential in line with the criteria.

Unfortunately, there were centres where teacher examiners stuck rigidly to a bank of questions and so all candidates were asked the same questions. These questions rarely followed on logically from one another. Teacher examiners should be mindful that more able candidates are disadvantaged by such an approach, since there is a need for candidates to speak spontaneously, to interact and to deal with unpredictable elements in order to access the higher mark bands. Tailoring the questions to candidates' responses is the best way to ensure spontaneity and genuine interaction. Thus candidates did best when teacher examiners' questions followed on from what the candidate had just said and the unpredictable questions were frequently those that elicited more information or clarification.

In addition, teacher examiners should ask questions appropriate to the level of the candidate being examined. In this way, they can offer more able candidates opportunities to express a range of ideas and points of view and to demonstrate a range of more complex structures and vocabulary. Similarly, weaker candidates have the opportunity to respond to more modest questions using language that they are able to manipulate.

Some candidates were asked too many closed questions. This was particularly disappointing when the candidate was very capable and clearly able to produce extended answers. However, when faced with closed questions in the stressful environment of the oral, they frequently resorted to yes/no answers. In general, closed questions should be avoided in favour of more open-ended questions as they lead to a better candidate performance.

Tasks

Some centres did not differentiate their tasks to cater for the different levels of candidates, preferring instead to give all candidates the same task, differentiated by outcome. This was not always a positive experience for candidates. Candidates in the same teaching group do not all have to do the same task. Teachers may start with a generic task but then modify it to correspond to the ability level of different candidates within the group.

Themes

Centres and candidates are free to choose their own themes for the orals: four popular themes have been identified by Edexcel (see page 9 of the specification) but these are not prescriptive. Candidates may undertake both tasks on the same theme if they wish, although there should be no direct overlap of content. Popular themes remain Holidays, Work experience, School, Family, Media (typically pop stars), Healthy living, Leisure and sports, and My town.

Presentation and discussion

In the presentation and discussion task-type, candidates must give an uninterrupted presentation that lasts between 1 minute minimum and 3 minutes maximum (the clock starts ticking when the candidate starts speaking). Presentations that fall short of the 1-minute minimum time allocation will incur a 2-mark deduction from the Content and Response grid (please refer to the marking principles towards the end of this document). Short presentations continue to pose a problem: some teacher examiners did not allow their candidates to speak for at least 1 minute before interrupting them to ask a question – even when it was clear that the candidate had more to say; consequently, these presentations were too short. Some weaker candidates ran out of material after about 30 seconds and teachers should consider whether the other two task-types might not be more appropriate for candidates unable to give a presentation lasting a minimum of 1 minute. Centres should be reassured that just over 1 minute really is long enough for the presentation part of the task – long presentations could mean less time for the more interactive, spontaneous part of the task. It is therefore not necessary for any candidate to go to the full 3 minutes' mark.

Some candidates performed well here. Other candidates had prepared their presentation thoroughly and were able to perform well but then had little left for the all-important interaction. The presentation section allows candidates to fulfil certain assessment criteria but the discussion section allows them to fulfil others. Both sections should therefore be well represented and accomplished. Sometimes the follow-up questions covered exactly the same ground as the presentation, which led to candidates using the same language and repeating information already given, rather than taking the conversation forward, expanding on detail and opinion, or moving the conversation in a new direction. Often when the teacher examiner asked a question about something the candidate had already stated in the presentation, this caused hesitation and confusion.

A presentation followed by a sequence of questions that lead into shorter 'mini-presentations' will not allow candidates to access the higher assessment bands. There should be spontaneity, interaction and an ability to deal with unpredictable questions. There was some evidence that questions and answers had been over-rehearsed. While this drilling may allow weaker candidates to access their potential grade, the lack of spontaneity and unpredictability will limit the marks of the more able candidates.

Picture-based discussion

Candidates may give a presentation (maximum of 1 minute) but they do not have to. Some candidates find giving a presentation boosts their confidence for the rest of the oral; others feel more comfortable going straight into the discussion. Either approach is acceptable but it bears repeating that the picture is a 'prompt to discussion' so the oral must start from the candidate's picture. Some candidates did not refer to the picture at all. Since the assessment criteria for Content and Response refer specifically to *information related to the chosen visual*, this will have had an impact on the marks available to such candidates. However, for the most part, a short presentation or brief discussion on the photo or picture led on to wider conversation.

Open interaction

Many teachers have realised the full potential of this unscripted role-play task. It was, however, the least popular option.

Where the task was exploited correctly, candidates of **all** levels were able to engage in a genuinely spontaneous role-play-type dialogue. There were some excellent performances, eg in a tourist office, with a tourist asking for information on the candidate's local area, or in a leisure centre. Well-structured open interaction tasks encouraged high scores on the Content and Response grid due to the level of genuine interaction. This task gives a real flavour of how language can be used in a way that is personal and unique to each individual candidate and some candidates were enabled to demonstrate their language ability. Indeed, moderators felt that the open interaction task often allowed weaker candidates to achieve better marks, as it could offer more support in the stimulus.

Unfortunately, some teachers conducted this task as a question and answer session – more of a general conversation than an unscripted role-play scenario in response to a stimulus. Some tasks set did not give rise to an unscripted role-play. For example, *You are talking with your German exchange partner about your work experience* did not work well at all as there was no obvious role to play and it turned into a general discussion. Centres are advised that there is no 'general conversation' task-type in this specification.

There is an expectation in the open interaction that candidates will ask the teacher examiner questions and many tasks reminded candidates of the need to do so. Sadly, some candidates forgot to ask questions and were not prompted by the teacher examiner to do so. It is acceptable for teachers to prompt candidates in this respect, eg *Hast du/Haben Sie Fragen für mich?* Centres should refer to the guidance in the *Marking* section of this report for details on how to apply the marking criteria in such instances.

Timings

Each oral task must last between 4 and 6 minutes – this range affords flexibility to suit different candidates. Centres should be aware that moderators stop moderating after 6 minutes and any material beyond that will not be considered for assessment in order to ensure an even playing field for all candidates. On the other hand, 4 minutes may represent too long a time for weaker candidates and so orals that last 3 minutes 30 seconds will be accepted. However, anything less than this will be considered short and in the case of a short oral 2 marks should be deducted from the candidate's score in the Content and Response grid. The marking principles detail this. Not all centres had deducted these 2 marks in those cases where the oral was too short. Centres should note, however, that in order to access the full mark range, the oral must last between 4 and 6 minutes. An oral that lasts only 3 minutes 30 seconds will not be able to access the full mark range.

As mentioned above, in the presentation and discussion task-type, candidates give a presentation, which must last between 1 minute minimum and 3 minutes maximum. Presentations falling short of the 1-minute minimum time allocation will incur a 2-mark deduction from the Content and Response grid. Not all centres had deducted these 2 marks in such cases.

Centres should also note that in the picture-based discussion task-type, candidates may give a presentation but they do not have to. If they do choose to start off with a presentation, this may last a maximum of 1 minute, anything up to the 1-minute point being acceptable.

Recordings

Just one recorded exemplar per candidate in the moderation sample should be sent to moderators. In this session, centres submitted their recordings on CDs and USB sticks (with orals recorded as both mp3 files and music/audio files).

Moderators would respectfully request that centres check their recordings before sending off the samples. There were some poor-quality recordings that were barely audible. In addition, while it is not necessary to conduct the orals one-on-one in a dedicated room, there is a need for minimal background noise so that the candidate being examined can be heard. Some candidates recorded were very difficult to hear due to high levels of background noise.

Centres are kindly requested to include a track list with the CDs or USBs, detailing centre number, candidate name and number, language and series details. It helps moderators tremendously if the task-type is indicated next to the candidate's name. It also avoids confusion if details of both candidate name and number are announced clearly at the start of each oral – some orals are started without identifying the candidate at all, which makes it very difficult for moderators to know which candidate they are listening to. Where orals have been recorded as music/audio files, it would be helpful to moderators if centres could write the relevant track number on the CM2 form.

Marking

Many teacher examiners showed a good understanding of the assessment criteria and were able to differentiate their candidates' performances. It was clear that the majority of centres had standardised their marking internally when there was more than one teacher examiner involved in the assessments. Unfortunately, there were some centres whose marks needed adjustment.

Content and Response

Centres tended to overvalue their candidates' performance here. It should be remembered that the assessment criteria are applied globally on a best-fit basis and that an ability to interact well with the teacher examiner and respond spontaneously to unpredictable questions is necessary to attain marks in the higher bands. Pre-learned mini-monologues or 'conversations' that consist of a question and answer session but lack interaction, or do not evidence an ability to expand or take the initiative, cannot be rewarded with top marks. Thus, marks were incorrectly awarded in the 16–18 band in cases where the candidate gave extended, informative answers that had clearly been pre-learned, but where they did not show any spontaneity or ability to respond to unpredictable questions. Marks were awarded too generously in the 12–15 band for candidates who answered a lot of questions but tended to give a one-sentence answer, ie did not take the initiative and develop elaborate answers.

On the other hand, the weakest candidates were often under-marked in this section. Candidates who had given a good amount of information, albeit in short simple sentences, and were able to maintain the conversation for 4 minutes, were still put in the 1–3 band when the 4–7 band was more appropriate.

Range of Language and Accuracy

Marks here are largely dependent on the amount of German conveyed by the candidate and it is unusual for a candidate who scores in the lower mark bands for Content and Response to score highly in these grids since there is not the breadth of language required. Tenses other than the present must be used in order to have the opportunity to access the 5-mark band for Range of Language. Many candidates had been well trained by teachers to include different tenses. Sometimes, however, use of tenses was given priority over the use of a variety of structures and vocabulary: candidates were able to speak in three tenses, but use only short sentences and simple vocabulary. Teachers should be aware that the demonstration of a good grasp of the tenses alone does not mean candidates will automatically score a mark of 5 – they do need to demonstrate a wide range of structures and vocabulary as well.

When awarding the mark for Accuracy it is important to note that the mere lack of error does not mean the candidate will score highly. The candidate must attempt to use more complex structures to reach 5 and there must be generally good pronunciation and intonation.

Some teacher examiners based their marks for both Content and Response and Language on information given and level of language used by a candidate in the presentation, without acknowledging that this was not sustained in the discussion. Marks awarded for all three grids are awarded globally across the whole performance.

Marking principles

The following marking principles should be followed by teacher examiners when marking candidates' controlled assessments:

Tests that are too short, ie less than 3'30" (NB 3'29" is too short):

- Automatic deduction of 2 marks on the Content and Response grid.
- There is no penalty applied for either Range of Language or Accuracy.

Tests that are too long, ie more than 6 minutes:

- Stop listening and assessing at the end of the first sentence after 6 minutes have elapsed.

Tests that are a monologue and include no interaction:

- No more than 7 for Content and Response.
- There is no penalty applied for either Range of Language or Accuracy.

Open interaction tasks only

There is an expectation in this option that the candidate will ask the teacher examiner two or more questions since it is a transactional task-type.

If candidate asks only one question:

- Deduct 1 mark from the Content and Response.

If candidate asks no questions:

- Deduct 2 marks from the Content and Response.

The other two assessment criteria will not be affected.

Presentation and discussion

- The presentation must last 1–3 minutes (maximum). If the presentation is shorter than 1 minute, deduct 2 marks for Content and Response.
- Where no presentation takes place, candidates can score a maximum of only 11 for Content and Response.

Although interaction is important in all three task-types, there is no requirement for candidates to ask questions in the presentation and discussion or in the picture-based discussion task options.

Administration

Many centres completed the administration admirably. Others had omitted to include all the materials required but responded quickly to moderators' requests for material. Centres are requested not to send candidate materials in plastic wallets. The best way to submit work is to collate each candidate's materials and then use a treasury tag.

Centres are advised to refer to the updated version of the *Administrative Support Guide (Instructions for the Conduct of the Examination and Controlled Assessments)* available on the Edexcel GCSE 09 German website. This details all procedures for submitting marks and which materials should be sent to the moderator. In addition, it contains the essential forms, eg the current CM2 and CA2 forms, as well as the marking principles as outlined above.

Moderators felt that moderation went most smoothly where centres had carefully followed the guidance in the *Administrative Support Guide*.

Centres should not send more than one oral per candidate, ie only those recordings requested by Edexcel for moderation. The candidates required for moderation are identified with an asterisk by Edexcel, but centres should ensure that they send their highest-performing and their lowest-performing candidates on the 2A task in addition to the requested sample. In this case, the term *highest and lowest scoring candidates* refers to the 2A task only (that is to say, the task to be moderated): it does not refer to the overall scores, ie not the total score for the 2A and 2B tasks.

There was some misunderstanding of what constitutes the 2A task. The 2A task is **not** necessarily the task that centres conduct first, and the 2B task is not necessarily the task that centres conduct second. The 2A task is the task that has been recorded and for which a recording will be available to send to the Edexcel moderator if requested. The 2A task should **not** be the same for all candidates in the centre: centres will need to send at least two different task-types in the sample for moderation. It is not a requirement to record the 2B task, although many centres do record everything. Thus, if a centre records all candidates undertaking all task types, it will be necessary for the centre to designate which task is task 2A for each candidate and which task is task 2B for each candidate, bearing in mind that not all candidates should have the same task 2A. If centres record only task 2A, then they should note that they will have to record some candidates doing one task-type and other candidates undertaking a different task-type.

Moderators will moderate the 2A task only. They do not moderate the 2B task. Consequently, centres should not send any recordings or paperwork relating to the 2B task to moderators.

Candidate mark sheets

Centres are reminded that the Code of Practice requires that assessment evidence provided by candidates has been authenticated. The CM2 form (the *Candidate Mark Sheet*) has a double function: it is the form on which the tasks (including a short description of the picture where applicable) and centre-awarded marks are recorded, but it is also the authenticity form and must be signed by both candidate and teacher examiner. If either the candidate or the teacher examiner does not sign the form, then signatures will have to be requested. Since this delays the moderation process, centres should check that these forms have been signed by both parties before despatch of materials to the moderator.

In addition, the CM2 form has a box with Y/N, which allows teachers very easily to indicate whether the CA2 form has been used by the candidate.

CA2 forms

The CA2 form is the pro forma on which candidates may write up to 30 words as notes and make up to five small drawings. Centres should note that printed images (eg photos or pictures from magazines) are not allowed. Since candidates may take this form into the oral with them, it does constitute one of the controls. If candidates used this form during the oral, then moderators must see it to check exactly what support candidates had. If centres do not include the CA2 forms, or circle the N on the CM2 form, or include any statement to the effect that their candidates did not use CA2 forms, then moderators have to follow this up with the centre. Since this inevitably delays the moderation process, centres are kindly requested to ensure they have checked these details prior to despatch. If candidates decide not to use this form, this is fine, but moderators must have a signed document to this effect.

Candidates did not always use the CA2 form to their best advantage. Complex vocabulary items were listed, but it was apparent that candidates did not know how to pronounce them, and consequently communication was impaired. A list of 30 discrete lexical items does not generally represent the most helpful use of this form. We strongly recommend that candidates do not write full sentences – this uses up the 30 words very easily. Centres should spend some time discussing with their candidates how the allowed 30 words can best support them during the speaking tasks.

Task sheets

It is difficult for moderators to moderate a candidate's performance without access to the task used in the assessment. A copy of each task used in the moderation sample must be sent to the moderator.

Task sheets should not contain additional vocabulary. Candidates are allowed up to 30 words of notes (on the CA2 form) and any words in addition to the 30 permitted words infringe the controls. The task sheet should be just that: a task sheet with no reminders to use a range of tenses, express opinions, etc. Such reminders should be achieved via the bullet points, eg *Mention an activity you did last week* (to encourage past tense), *Say why this was enjoyable* (to encourage opinions and reasons), etc.

Support

The following support may be useful to centres.

● The GCSE 09 German webpage on the Edexcel website offers a wealth of support to teachers on the Speaking Controlled Assessment.

● In addition to the GCSE German webpage, there is a generic languages webpage where it is possible to subscribe to regular newsletters with updates and advice.

Teachers with a query about any aspect of the Controlled Assessment process should send an email to TeachingLanguages@pearson.com or telephone: 0844 576 0035 (from outside UK: +44 (0) 207 010 2187).

Teachers can also send an email to one of the Senior Examiners for German at Ask the Expert gcsegerman@edexcelexperts.co.uk. A reply will be received within 48 hours.

Summary

Entries were modest this session. Nevertheless, moderators listened to some imaginative and genuinely interesting orals and were impressed by the level of performance of many of the candidates entered.

The best orals were characterised by:

- a definite sense of natural conversation
- evidence of interaction and spontaneity
- a wide range of vocabulary and grammar.

Teachers are to be congratulated on managing the process effectively and putting candidates at ease during the Speaking assessments.

Grade boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx