2020 VCE Korean First Language written examination report

General comments

Most students seemed well prepared for the 2020 VCE Korean First Language written examination. They used their time effectively and attempted all questions, although Section 1 proved to be a challenge for many students. Students who scored highly demonstrated excellent skills in language application and the ability to elicit both explicit and implicit information from the reading texts provided. They understood the requirements of the tasks and gave comprehensive answers that addressed all elements of the task. They demonstrated successful integration of ideas in a sophisticated way, and highly effective structuring and sequencing of information and ideas appropriate to the audience and purpose specified.

Students are reminded that it is important to:

* make appropriate use of the dictionary
* take detailed notes during the playing of the listening text
* be aware of the audience, purpose and text type required
* pay particular attention to the task verb in the question: for example, ‘explain’, ‘describe’, ‘compare’, ‘analyse’, ‘discuss’ etc.
* be aware that the answer space provided gives an idea of how much to write.

Specific information

Section 1 – Listening and responding

Most students answered all questions in Section 1, although only a few students answered all questions correctly or demonstrated strong language skills. Some students simply rewrote what they had heard in the text instead of providing a relevant response to the question, thus failing to convey information accurately and appropriately.

Text 1

Question 1a.

본문에서 노연우 박사는 아리랑이 ‘여럿이면서도 하나이고, 옛 것이면서도 새 것’이라는 역설적인 표현으로 그 정신을 요약하고 있다. 아리랑의 형식은 다양하지만 일관된 주제인 우리 민족의 ‘한의 정서’를 담고 있기 때문에 여럿이면서 하나인 것이다. 그리고 즉흥적 편곡과 모방이 가능해 요즘 여러 예체능 매체의 주제로 활용되고 있다는 점이 바로 옛 것이면서도 새 것임을 나타낸다. 이는 최근 평창 동계올림픽에서 남북한 단일팀 노래로 채택된 것을 보면 잘 알 수 있다. (In the passage, Dr Yeonwoo Noh summarised the spirit of Arirang using the paradoxical expression of ‘many but one, old but new’. The ‘many but one’ reflects that there are many forms of Arirang, but they all share one theme: the Korean sentiment of Han. It is ‘old but new’ because Arirang continues to be used in many variations and versions in today’s entertainment media. One example was the use of Arirang as the team anthem for North and South Korea at the Pyeongchang winter Olympics.)

Overall, students did not perform well in this question, which required a detailed and exact explanation of the spirit of Arirang. Some students found it difficult to accurately explain the comprehensive nature of the spirit of Arirang in relation to the paradoxical expression of ‘many but one, old but new’.

Question 1b.

SNS 는 개인과 개인, 그리고 개인과 사회를 이어주는 소통의 매개체 기능을 하고 있다. 그 옛날 민초(대중)들은 아리랑을 통해 자신의 생각과 감정을 분출을 했다. (혹은 아리랑이 필요했던 이유는 사회 비판과 저항, 대동단결, 그리고 개인의 희로애락 감정의 공감이다.) 따라서 과거의 아리랑과 현재의 SNS가 그 역할적 기능과 필요에 있어서 서로 같다고 볼 수 있다. (Arirang played the same role as social media, which allows communication between individuals and between individuals and society. In the past, people used Arirang as an outlet for their thoughts and feelings, to feel connected in their resistance and criticism of society, and for solidarity. Therefore, Arirang in the past and today’s social media play similar roles in fulfilling people’s need to connect.)

Most students answered this question reasonably well. However, some students provided inaccurate or ambiguous responses and missed out on marks. They could not clearly explain how social media and Arirang played a similar role nor could they provide details or supportive information.

Question 1c.

아리랑의 대중화요인은 곡의 내적 및 외적 특성 두 측면으로 나누어 설명할 수 있다. 내적 요인으로는 간명성과 다의성이 있는데, 간명성은 후렴을 되풀이하게 만드는 관성력을 뜻한다. 다의성의 의미는 가사 구절 해석이 개인을 넘어서 국가로 확대할 수 있다는 것이다. 외적 요인으로는 우선 외국으로 떠난 우리 동포들이 전통계승의 목적으로 즐겨 부른 것이 한 요인이 될 수 있다. 또한 유엔병사들이 한국전쟁 이후 전리품처럼 간직하고 귀국하여 자기 나라에 퍼뜨렸을 가능성도 한 요인으로 볼 수 있다. (The first way is related to the inherent factor of Arirang’s simplicity that makes the tunes easy to follow and remember, and the diverse ways in which it can be interpreted to apply both to the individual as well as the sentiment of the nation. The second way relates to external factors, such as the expatriates who had left Korea for safety and continued to sing Arirang in their longing for home and to hand down the tradition. The UN forces who fought in the Korean War continued to sing the song when they returned home, taking it to their home countries as a souvenir.)

In general, students did not perform well on this question, which required them to correctly identify both the internal and external factors. To be awarded high marks students needed to explain the two factors in detail and link their deeper meaning in an integrated and explicatory way to make a summary of the text. Students who scored highly demonstrated appropriate vocabulary and accurate grammar, with some evidence of control of more complex structures.

Question 1d.

진도 아리랑은 전라도 지역에, 밀양 아리랑은 경상도 지역에 퍼져 있다. 진도 아리랑의 음악적 요소는 세마치장단에 시나위 형식, 다시 말해 즉흥연주 스타일이고 밀양 아리랑의 음악적 요소는 빠른 세마치 장단과 반복되는 구절이다. 이런 이유로 진도 아리랑은 노래가 구성지면서도 다소 격렬한 특징이 있다. 반면에 밀양 아리랑은 경쾌하고 씩씩한 느낌이 들고, 호소의 메세지가 강한 매력이 있다. (Jindo Arirang is popular in Jeolla and Milyang Arirang is prominent in Gyeongsang. Jindo Arirang takes the musical form of Semachi beat and Shinawi or improvised form; Milyang Arirang’s musical features are rapid Semachi beat and repeated refrain. Therefore, Jindo Arirang is more structured and intense, while Milyang Arirang is cheerful and upbeat with a strong and charming message of appeal.)

Generally, students performed well in this question. However, many responses were much shorter than the space provided and therefore failed to explore the question in appropriate detail. Students needed to compare and contrast the two styles by listing the similarities and differences and combining them into a meaningful answer.

Question 1e.

(무형문화재는 연극, 음악, 무용, 의식 등의 일정한 형태가 없는 문화재를 뜻한다.) 아리랑이 지정된 배경은 우선 시,공간을 초월해 가장 널리 불리는 민족의 노래이기 때문이다. 그리고 우리나라의 역사와 문화를 이해하는데 중요한 문화적 구심점 역할을 한다는 점이 높이 평가되어 지정되었다고 한다. (Intangible Cultural Heritage refers to cultural heritage that does not have a constant form. The background of Arirang being selected was because it is the most widely sung song of the people that has existed over time and space. It has also been selected for an appreciation of its pivotal cultural role in understanding Korean history and culture.)

Students need to respond in a descriptive way, presenting well-sequenced information in order to justify the value of Intangible Cultural Heritage, Arirang.

Section 2 – Reading and responding

Texts 2 and 3

Question 2

Students were required to demonstrate their comprehension of the two texts provided and respond to the task using their capacity to identify and synthesise relevant information and ideas from the text. They needed to use the form and structure appropriate for the writing, context, purpose and audience of the task.

* Context: Opinion about recommendations on the health of our youth
* Audience: Message board of the World Health Organization (WHO)
* Text type: Article
* Kind of writing: Persuasive

Students who scored highly combined and integrated the relevant information and main ideas from the two texts effectively and logically to successfully create a new, single persuasive text. They sequenced information suitably and had a good flow of ideas conveying messages clearly, with extremely well-organised paragraphs and a wide range of appropriate vocabulary and expressions. They demonstrated excellent control of language.

The following are possible areas that could have been discussed in the article.

* Text 2:
* 설탕세 도입과 먹방 방송 규제는 국가주의적 발상의 극치이며 국민의 행복 추구권을 박탈하는 정책이다. (Introduction of a sugar tax and regulation on Mukbang is a violation of the people’s right to seek happiness and an extreme form of nationalism.)
* 설탕세는 사실 국민의 건강 증진보다는 세수를 위한 것이다. (The motive for the sugar tax policy is to increase tax revenue rather than improve public health.)
* 덴마크에서는 비만세가 효과가 없음으로 1년만에 폐지 했으며 영국의 설탕세는 죄악세라는 폐지 여론이 들끓고 있다. (Denmark abolished the fat tax after one year due to lack of efficacy, and the UK is also being pressured to scrap the policy, calling it the ‘sin tax’.)
* 후식보다는 밥이나 과일 등에서 당분을 섭취하는 한국인들의 경우 설탕세는 결국 대부분의 식재료에 세금을 부과하는 형국이 될 것이다. (For Koreans who consume most of their sugars through rice or fruit, a sugar tax would be a levy on their main food items.)
* 설탕세나 비만세는 저소득층의 가처분 소득을 낮춰 소득 불평등을 악화시키며 이보다는 비가격 정책을 펼쳐야 할 것이다. (Sugar or fat tax would only worsen the income disparity by reducing the disposable income of low-income earners, so non-price policies should be introduced instead.)
* Text 3:
* 정부는 세계보건기구의 설탕세 도입 권고 이후 비만 방지를 위해 작년 말 먹방 프로그램 가이드 라인을 발표 했다. (The government announced the Mukbang Program guidelines late last year in line with WHO recommendation for sugar tax to prevent obesity.)
* 청소년 비만의 원인 중 단맛 음료 섭취가 크게 증가 했으며 소아 비만은 성인 비만으로 이어진다. (Consumption of sweet drinks, a main cause of obesity in youth, has increased; and childhood obesity was found to lead to adult obesity.)
* 설탕세는 설탕과 설탕이 첨가된 식품에 세금을 부과하여 비만을 예방하려는 노력이다. (Sugar tax is a tax that levies tax on sugar and food products containing sugar to reduce obesity.)
* 현재 30 개국에서 설탕세를 시행하고 있다. (Thirty countries have introduced the sugar tax.)
* 태국은 아시아 국가 최초로 자국민의 건강과 비만을 예방하기 위해 설탕세를 도입했다. (Sugar tax is an inevitable wellbeing trend, with Thailand becoming the first Asian country to introduce sugar tax to prevent obesity.)

Section 3 – Writing in Korean

All five questions were attempted by students. The highest scoring responses demonstrated integration of ideas in a very logical, relevant and comprehensive descriptions with a reasonably wide vocabulary and refined language skills. Students should take careful note of the kind of writing and text type required for the chosen question and include appropriate language in the finished piece.

Question 3

Students were required to respond to the following task.

Below are some works of Korean illustrator Woo Nayoung who is known for various collaborative work that depicts famous Western characters wearing Korean Hanbok. Write an evaluative review about the positive and negative effects of its role in the globalisation of Korean culture, to be published on a Korean Hanbok website.

* Context: Globalisation of Korean culture
* Audience: General
* Text type: Website review
* Kind of writing: Evaluative

Responses could have included at least two positive and negative effects of the collaborative work of Woo Nayoung, discussed rationally and objectively, using evidence to support the contrasting sides or alternatives.

Question 4

Students were required to respond to the following task.

Walls covered in graffiti art are becoming increasingly common to revitalise Korean cities. These walls can be found in villages such as Ihwa, Gamcheon and Dongpirang. Write an article for a local newspaper evaluating the positive and negative aspects of these wall paintings.

* Context: Mural (wall painting) Villages
* Audience: Local community
* Text type: Article for local newspaper
* Kind of writing: Evaluative

Responses needed to demonstrate the structure of an article and could have included the title, date, place, content and author (fictional name), along with the correct register, style and layout. Responses could have included at least two advantages and disadvantages of Mural Villages, discussed rationally and objectively and using evidence to support the contrasting sides or alternatives. Conveying an impression of balance and impartiality was essential.

Question 5

Students were required to respond to the following task.

Delivery services where orders are taken before midnight and are delivered by 7 a.m. the next morning have been having an impact on the distribution market and consumers recently. Write a review about this type of early morning delivery service, addressing the advantages and disadvantages in a letter to the courier company.

* Context: Early morning delivery services
* Audience: A courier company
* Text type: Letter
* Kind of writing: Evaluative

Students were asked to write an evaluative letter (review) to the courier company about early morning delivery services, addressing the advantages and disadvantages. The response needed to be in the form of a formal letter and could have included: address, date, reference number or equivalent, salutation, greeting, body (content), farewell, sign-off (fictional name), register, style, layout. Responses could have presented two or more important aspects of the issue of early morning delivery services and discussed these rationally and objectively, using evidence to support the contrasting sides or alternatives.

Question 6

Students were required to respond to the following task.

A publisher has invited you to write a short story in a young adult book titled ‘My future profession’. Use as stimulus the image of a piece of missing puzzle, which is the cover of the book.

* Context: Image of a piece of missing puzzle
* Audience: Young adults
* Text type: Short story
* Kind of writing: Imaginative

The structure needed to be clear, including the setting, the plot development, and how the situation was resolved or concluded.

Question 7

Students were asked to write an imaginative diary entry inspired by the Seoul subway announcement of Hapjung Station.

T*his stop is Hapjeong, Hapjeong Station. You may exit on your right.  
You can transfer to line number 6 for Eungam, and Bonghwasan Station.*

* Context: Seoul subway announcement
* Audience: Self
* Text type: Journal entry
* Kind of writing: Imaginative

The journal text type required a date and could have also included the place, time and weather. Imaginative writing may break normal sequencing for added impact, such as in a flashback or in a final disclosure which puts a different interpretation on preceding passages.