

2018 VCE Indigenous Languages of Victoria: Revival and Reclamation written examination report

General comments

Overall, the majority of students gave excellent answers to all questions. Answers to Questions 1–4, as well as to the essay (Question 6), were particularly high scoring. Students with the highest-scoring responses answered these very well, both in terms of quantity of words and content. No students answered Question 5.

Students are reminded to read the questions carefully and make sure they answer them all. Some students missed out on marks because question instructions were not carefully followed. In responding to Questions 5 and 6, students are advised to present answers that are as detailed as possible by using examples that clearly illustrate their points and writing to answer the question fully.

Specific information

This report provides sample answers or an indication of what answers may have included. Unless otherwise stated, these are not intended to be exemplary or complete responses.

Question 1a.

The Pintupi words that correspond to each of the English expressions are:

- the woman: *minyma, minymalu*
- the man: *wati, watilu*
- the girl: *kungka, kungkalu*
- the dog: *papa, papalu*
- the goanna: *kurrkartti, kurrkartilu*
- (the) food: *mayi*
- the plane: *yirrupulayilu, yirrupulayikutu, yirrupulayi*
- saw: *nyangu*
- stood: *ngarangu*
- brought: *katingu*
- went: *yanu*

Students needed to have all forms in each line correct for full marks.

Most students received full marks for this question. Some students missed out on marks for incorrect spelling.

Question 1b.

The contexts in which the two different Pintupi forms for 'dog' are used are:

- *Papa* is used in absolute contexts, when the dog is either the subject of an intransitive sentence or the direct object of a transitive sentence.
- The form *papalu* is used in ergative contexts, when the dog is the subject of a transitive sentence.

Most answers to this question were sufficient, although some students could have expressed themselves more clearly. When asked for examples, students should give those examples both in language and in the English translation/explanation.

Question 1c.

The students were expected to point out that the word for 'camp' only occurs in combination where *ngurra*: means 'camp' and *kutu*: 'to' or 'towards' or 'allative' or 'dative.' The word for 'plane' also occurs in the allative in sentence 11, but is a direct object unmarked by case marker in sentence 7.

Many students used the term 'locative', which relates to location, where in fact 'allative' (motion towards) is correct. While it is true that locative and allative are related concepts expressed with similar forms in some Indigenous languages, it is not true in general.

Question 1d.

kurrkarti ngarangu (in any order)

Question 1e.

kungkalu nyangu papa (in any order)

Question 1f.

watikutu minymalu kurrkarti katingu (in any order)

Question 1g.

Some students pointed out that word order can vary in Pintupi, without changing the meaning. They were expected to give examples, such as that the verb *nyangu* 'see' is in first position, as in 6, in the middle as in 7 or last as in 3. Thus word order is not used to distinguish subject and object. The subject, object and verb can occur in any order.

This question was generally answered well.

Question 2

The Arabana pronouns that correspond to the underlined noun phrases are:

1. Peter and his three cousins were lying in the grass: *kari*
2. I was lying in the grass: *antha*
3. You and Elizabeth were lying in the grass: *urupula*
4. My three sisters were lying in the grass: *kari*
5. My three sisters and I were lying in the grass: *arni*
6. Myrtle was lying in the grass: *uka*
7. Myrtle and I were lying in the grass: *aruna*
8. Myrtle, Elizabeth, you and I were lying in the grass: *arniri*
9. Myrtle and Elizabeth were lying in the grass: *pula*
10. Peter was lying in the grass: *uka*

This question was generally answered well. Some students, however, did not clearly understand the concepts of the different pronouns. In many Indigenous languages there is a very different pronoun system from English, with four words that can mean 'we', three words that can mean 'you' and two words that can mean 'they'. On the other hand, English distinguishes 'he' and 'she' from 'it', which some Indigenous languages do not.

Question 3a.

ngalungun: ours, belonging to two people, yours and mine

ngullan: ours, belonging to two people, mine and someone else's, not yours

nguandan: ours, belonging to more than two people, including yours

ngannan: ours, belonging to more than two people, but not the listener's

A number of students gave confusing answers to this question, mistaking the concept of inclusive and exclusive as relating to the speaker, whereas it is the addressee ('you') that is either included or excluded. The introduction to Table 2 that was presented as part of the examination made this clear, and also it is expected that the grammatical feature of inclusive (speaker including listener) and exclusive (speaker excluding listener) as it is found in first-person dual and plural pronouns will have been part of the coursework for this subject.

Question 3b.

ngalungun

Question 3c.

ngannan

Most students answered Questions 3b. and 3c. correctly.

Question 3d.

karnha: am sitting, sitting

moonin: hit

wunya: boomerang

Most students answered this question correctly.

Question 3e.

The answer should have explained that *nga* is the subject of an intransitive verb, a verb without a subject, as *nga karnha* (I am sitting), and *ngutta* is the subject of a transitive verb, a verb with a subject, an ergative pronoun, as *Ngutta yoong'an wunya* (I threw a boomerang).

A number of students answered that *nga* was used with progressive/present tense and *ngutta* with the past tense. This is a possible answer based on the data, but given the structure of Indigenous languages that students have studied, it is not correct. Some credit was given to students who gave this answer because it was a possible answer.

Question 3f.

I took a stone: *ngutta mummün eorga*

we (you and I) are sitting: *ngalgin karnha*

we (someone else and I) threw a stick: *ngullak yoong'an yoolwa*

The words could have been in any order.

Most students answered this question correctly.

Question 4a.

The name of the linguistic process for creating new words shown in Table 6 was 'borrowing'.

Question 4b.

The following are the three consonant sounds that were not present in Table 7 but that were used at the beginning of the Murrinhpatha words listed in Table 6:

- f as in *flat* (flood)
- s as in *seip* (save)
- sh as in *she* (share)

A number of students incorrectly thought that the question was only about doubled letters and answered *fl* or *fr* as a single sound. Students should realise that *sh* is a single sound written in English with two letters (it is not the sound *s* followed by the sound *h*).

Question 4c.

The process described in part b. was a sound/phoneme being borrowed.

Many students handled this question well. However, some students were not clear in their responses.

Question 4d.

The initial /h/ in English is not being borrowed (unlike /s/ and /f/ and <sh> /ʃ/ in Table 6, Question 4), and in words like *anting* (hunting), and *oras* (horrors), the initial /h/ is not present.

While the initial *s*, *f* and *sh* were borrowed, the initial *h* was not. Some students' answers were not expressed clearly.

Question 4e.

Students needed to explain that at the end of each of the English words there are additional sounds not spoken in Murrinhpatha. In other words only a single consonant is permitted in Murrinhpatha where several, or a cluster, are allowed in English. Only the first sound of the cluster can be borrowed, as in *res* (rest) where the /s/ is present but the /t/ is dropped, or *fren* (friend) where the /n/ is present but the /d/ is dropped.

One mark each was awarded for correctly identifying the issue, for the examples and a well expressed answer.

Many students identified the dropping of one or more final letters where English has clusters (multiple consonants) at the end of the word. In Murrinhpatha only the first sound of that cluster is retained.

Question 4f.

b and *p*

Most students answered this question correctly, though some had difficulty expressing the answer clearly.

Question 4g.

b between vowels/medial position as in *seben* (seven), *lebul* (level).

b in initial position, as in *bidiyo* (video), *bailent* (violence). (If a student answered *b* in front of a vowel, this was accepted with full marks even if there was only one example given.)

p in final position, as in *seip* (save)

dropped if the last is a cluster *-lv* as in *inbol* (involve).

Most students explained that *b* was used in two places (initial and medial, between vowels) and that *p* was used in final position. No students received the last mark for this question, pointing out that the final *lv* sound in English *involve* is reduced to a *l* in Murrinhpatha, and the final *v* is dropped.

Question 5a.

In Question 5a., students were asked to discuss the protocols and processes of community involvement in the production of the resources and the benefits that community knowledge would bring to the process. They should have also discussed the need to carefully examine the original sources of the language, and how features of neighbouring languages or other Indigenous languages might need to be brought in to cover some of the gaps in the record of the Watha wurrung language.

Question 5b.

This question required students to list the kinds of interactions that would be needed: greetings, questions and answers, exclamations and warnings, and requests for information about where things are. For example, perhaps the Watha wurrung people would have attempted to teach Buckley how to catch fish, so an answer would describe how they would do this in language. Another example would be explaining to him how to make a spear. Alternatively, perhaps there would be a section where Buckley explains about horses (which he is known to have done). Students needed to mention that the creation of new vocabulary would be required here.

Question 5c.

In Question 5c., the traditions, culture and land of the community are likely to have been spoken about to Buckley. Students were required to explain that any comprehensive movie about his contact with Watha wurrung people would surely mention these things, as they teach him their knowledge, and that current knowledge would be an obvious source for the basis of any dialogue about these subjects.

Question 6a.

Students were expected to discuss each of the three or more points they chose to illustrate, and also to include concrete examples. So, for example, if discussing sounds and pronunciation, they may have pointed out that the target language has sounds not found in English, such as initial *ng*-. When talking about spelling they may have explained that initial consonants like *b* and *p* might be alternative ways of spelling the same sound. For example, a word such as *batja* might be spelled as *patja* or *badja*. If exemplifying the construction of new words, they would need to give examples.

Question 6b.

In Question 6b., students were required to discuss the role of the relevant Aboriginal community: the role of elders, issues of protocols for the language revival process and consultation. Once again, concrete examples of their experience were to be included.

Question 6c.

In Question 6c., reasons for language reclamation could have included things like identity. Most students answered this question very well and included a good deal of data.