

2020 VCE Chin Hakha oral examination report

General comments

The Chin Hakha oral examination assesses students' knowledge and skills in using spoken language. The examination has two sections – a Conversation of approximately 7 minutes, during which students converse with the assessors about their personal world, and a Discussion of approximately 8 minutes.

Following the Conversation, the student will indicate to the assessor(s) the subtopic chosen for detailed study and, in no more than one minute, briefly introduce the main focus of their subtopic, alerting assessors to any objects brought to support the discussion. Suitable objects include photographs, maps or diagrams and should include no text or very little text. The support material must have minimal writing, which includes only a heading, name or title.

The one-minute introduction should give assessors an indication of the area of discussion. The purpose is for students to briefly introduce their chosen subtopic; it is not an opportunity for students to list all their information or texts.

The focus of the Discussion is to explore aspects of the language and culture of communities in which Chin Hakha is spoken and the student will be expected to make reference to texts studied.

The choice of subtopic for the Detailed Study is very important. It should be an engaging topic that motivates them to become familiar with the content and vocabulary needed, and thus be more skilled to support and elaborate on information, ideas and opinions. It is important that students and teachers select materials for the Detailed Study carefully so that students are exposed to a variety of views. The type of texts used by students should vary in complexity and be in Chin Hakha so that students can become aware of key vocabulary related to their subtopic. Students are reminded that they must be prepared to use language spontaneously in unrehearsed situations. Students should be able to draw on the texts they have studied and make links between the texts to support, expand on and explore opinions and ideas on the subtopic and different aspects of the texts. Students should be able to relate this to the Chin Hakha-speaking community.

Students are not expected to be 'experts'; they are expected to have learnt strategies in order to respond to unexpected questions. It would be valuable for students to learn phrases such as, 'I have not studied this aspect of the topic, but I think ...', 'I don't know, but I feel ...' and 'I am not sure about this question but I know ...'.

It should be noted that during the oral examination:

- students may be asked a variety of questions of varying levels of difficulty. Questions may also be asked in a different order from the one students anticipate
- assessors may interrupt students to ask questions during either section of the examination; this should be regarded as a normal process in a discussion
- assessors may also repeat or rephrase questions
- normal variation in assessor body language is acceptable.

Three criteria are used in assessing both the Conversation and the Discussion: communication, content and language. Details of the assessment criteria and descriptors are published on the VCAA website. It is important that all teachers and students are familiar with the criteria and descriptors and that students use them as part of their examination preparation. This will help students to engage in a lively and interesting

exchange with assessors. Although there are similarities between the assessment criteria for the Conversation and Discussion sections of the examination, the criteria assess two very different aspects of performance. Students who are well prepared are generally able to demonstrate their abilities and proficiency in the language.

Students performed well in the 2020 VCE Chin Hakha oral examination. It was evident that most students had prepared thoroughly and were familiar with both the language and the specific requirements of the two sections of the examination.

Students who scored highly listened to questions and responded appropriately with spontaneity and did not use English and Burmese words. They used sophisticated vocabularies and expressions such as *khuacimuihnak* (catastrophe), *purhdah* (postulation), *suimilam* (a watch), *a caan phak hlan ah thih* (untimely death), *horkuang* (pothole), *hnuhmai hoih khurkhua tuaktannak* (critical thinking), *sianghleirun* (tertiary education), *khuaruahnak* (thought), *tuaktannak* (ponder) and *hmailei caah ruahchan in* (to prepare for the future). More importantly, they did not always use the present tense to avoid mistakes but also used the past and future tenses: for example, *A hlan ah cun siibawi si ka rak duh nain, atu ah cun cachimtu rian hi hmailei keimah caah a tha deuh te men lai tiah ka ruah cang.*

Some students relied heavily on prepared answers and struggled to cope with unexpected questions, which limited the flow and progress of the examination. These students had not mastered the common vocabulary and grammatical structures needed.

Grammatical errors occurred in a number of contexts, including lack of agreement between article and noun, and incorrect usage of singular/plural with verbs. For example:

- *ka* and *kan*:
 - *a rak ra khomi cu pali ka si* (four people came including us) instead of *a rak ra khomi cu pali kan si* (four people came including me)
 - *tuah kan huammi pawl cu* (our hobby is) instead of *tuah ka huammi pawl cu* (my hobby is)
 - *kan huammi* (our interests) instead of *ka huammi* (my interests)
- *a* and *an*:
 - *a ka ti* (he/she did to me) instead of *an ka ti* (they did to me)
 - *an kan ti* (they did to me) instead of *a kan ti* (he/she did to us)
- *a si* (it is) and *an si* (they are):
 - *ka huammi cu ... cu pawl cu a si* (my interests is as follows) instead of *ka huammi cu ... cu pawl cu an si* (my interests are as follows)
- *a si* and *si*:
 - *si ko* (it) instead of *a si ko* (it is), *si* instead of *a si*.

Students who do not understand a question should ask assessors for clarification. They should not resort to rote-learned material when in difficulty and should attempt to interact with the assessors at all times.

Most students demonstrated correct pronunciation, intonation and stress.

Specific information

Section 1 – Conversation

The majority of students had prepared well and practised effectively for questions about their personal world. They provided responses with some breadth and depth. They elaborated on their statements by giving reasons, examples and evidence, presenting an excellent range of information, opinions and ideas.

Students who did not score as well presented a limited range of information and had difficulty clarifying or elaborating on opinions and ideas. Students should prepare adequately for the conversation and ensure that they are ready to express opinions, clarify, elaborate on, and defend opinions and ideas.

All students need to be aware that they need to carry the conversation forward with spontaneity and should endeavour to elaborate upon responses rather than give one-sentence answers.

Section 2 – Discussion

The majority of students spoke confidently during the Discussion, expressing and elaborating on ideas and opinions, and supporting them with appropriate evidence from the specific texts studied. Many engaged in original thinking, making valid comparisons between texts and proposing alternative viewpoints. Many students used a wide variety of accurate language and vocabulary that enhanced their performance. These students demonstrated excellent pronunciation, intonation, stress and tempo. They were able to anticipate questions and at times were able to advance the discussion with interesting comments.

Only a few students displayed a limited ability to advance the discussion due to a lack of preparation. These students found it difficult to interact with assessors and provide the required reasons, opinions and examples in support of their subtopic. They lacked basic repair strategies and presented a limited range of information.

The choice of subtopics and texts is very important and should cater to the students' language ability as well as interests. In addition, subtopics need to provide students with the opportunity to elaborate on information, ideas and opinions with reasons, examples and evidence. Some students attempted to present subtopics that were beyond their linguistic abilities and this had a negative effect on their performance.

Students may bring visual material to the examination to support the discussion of their chosen subtopic. The visual material may include photographs, diagrams or maps and should include minimal writing. This can be a useful prompt, supporting a stimulating discussion and expression of worthwhile ideas and opinions.