



## Oral component

### GENERAL COMMENTS

Most students performed very well in the examination; however, more attention should be given to some linguistic elements. In general, the areas of concern have been very similar from year to year and often relate to nervousness, lack of confidence or over-confidence, as well as preparation issues.

Many students experienced nervousness, which might have resulted in the students using words that were incorrect or not appropriate. Students can reduce their nervousness and gain more confidence by practising talking in Khmer at a deeper level with adults. Nervousness can also be reduced if students ensure they are well prepared for the examination. On the other hand, being over-confident with less preparation might also result in being unable to secure high marks for the examination.

Generally speaking, pronunciation was very good as most students were of a Khmer-speaking background. The issue of inappropriate or wrong concepts and words should be raised again. Students need to ensure they have a strong familiarity with these areas, so that incorrect words can be avoided. Practice in using Khmer concepts and vocabulary is highly recommended. Students should also be familiar with different sentence structures and different ways of asking questions. Some students required excessive prompting from assessors to be able to continue.

Culturally speaking, students may not have wanted to advance the conversation too readily, as it might be seen as being impolite towards the assessors. This can be avoided by understanding that it is acceptable to move forward in a polite manner by using expressions such as 'If you don't mind, I'd like...', 'May I please suggest...' and 'Can I please show that...'

Good performances in the oral examination included:

- ready interaction with the assessors
- responding to questions by elaborating on information
- making polite requests to clarify meanings and words that were not familiar
- applying successful repair strategies.

### SPECIFIC INFORMATION

#### Section 1 – Conversation

As the Conversation is based on less formal language and more personal information, in general students were quite confident and were able to elaborate on and expand their responses more readily. They also presented good repair strategies. However, a few students needed to be prompted or provided with links and supports to further the conversation.

Regarding the accuracy, range and appropriateness of vocabulary, more attention should be given to the honorific system of the Khmer language in order to refer to people of different status and age by the appropriate terms. Students also should try to avoid the less appropriate reply '*neung hae*' for 'yes'.

Students should prepare for this task so that they can become confidently and fully engaged in the conversation. Preparing ideas in advance gives the advantage of moving the conversation forward more easily, and elaborating on a topic more readily. Students and teachers could organise ideas and concepts for the Conversation and prepare supporting statements or arguments.

#### Section 2 – Discussion

The topics undertaken for the Discussion section in 2006 were less diverse than in previous years. There were some topics that provided good discussions, such as 'Educational inequality in Cambodia' and 'Girls in Khmer society'.



However, the assessors felt that students should get more opportunity to study a wider range of topics for the Discussion.

Most students presented a well-researched topic and had drawn information from various sources such as films, textbooks, magazines and websites, although there was a feeling they could have presented more examples to support their arguments.

Students generally used appropriate language structures, good repair strategies and clear elaborations to defend their opinions and ideas confidently. The Discussion task uses a more formal level of language; therefore, the accuracy, range and appropriateness of vocabulary should be emphasised more in the preparation for this section. Although the language used during the Discussion was generally appropriate and relevant to the topic introduced, some incorrect vocabulary items were noticed. For example, *savipheap*, *samipheap* for *samapheap* (equality), *rothathibal* for *rothaphibal* (government), *anthot* for *ronthot* (frightful), *Angvek* for *Longvek* and there was a confusion between *aknurak* (supervisor) and *akphirak* (conservation). Some inappropriate expressions were also heard, such as *sethakech laeong thlay* (improved economy) and *reach rothbal* for *reach rothaphibal* (royal government).

In order to maintain the discussion, students should try to relate to the assessors. Well-prepared students are generally more able to do this as they can exchange opinions or ideas more comfortably with the assessors.

Good performances in the Discussion usually related back to how well the sub-topic had been researched and prepared. In the Discussion, phrases such as 'According to the research I did, I found that...' and 'The paper I looked at...' are very useful to indicate that students have done proper research on their sub-topic.

In the Discussion students should also ensure that they use the honorific forms appropriately.