



Oral component

GENERAL COMMENTS

More students than usual sat the Khmer oral examination in 2009 and, in general, the students performed well.

Generally, inappropriate use of language was not as much of an issue as in previous years. However, the use of some inaccurate forms of phrases needs to be addressed. Students should practise using Khmer vocabulary and checking words with a dictionary.

Many students appeared to be nervous, which may have been caused by a natural reaction to an oral examination or a cultural occurrence where the assessors are regarded as superior. Students should understand that the assessors try to minimise any nervousness and put the students at ease as much as possible.

Students should greet the assessors in the Khmer manner. A few students took leave in Khmer style, but did not use a greeting at the start of the examination.

Strong performances generally included the following features:

- interaction with the assessors, for example, 'As I mentioned to you just now ...'
- responding to questions by elaborating on information
- making polite requests to clarify meanings and words that were not familiar, for example, 'Can you please clarify what you have just said?', 'Would you please repeat the question?', 'Please explain what you mean by that.'
- the application of successful repair strategies, for example, 'Excuse me. What I meant to say is ...', 'I did not mean to say ...', 'What I mean is ...' and 'I'd like to clarify what I said ...'

It is recommended that students try to ensure more variety in the topics for the Discussion. Most topics for discussion have been the same for the last few years and may need to be changed to incorporate more up-to-date situations in Cambodia.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Section 1 – Conversation

As in previous years, most students performed well in the Conversation section, although a few students needed to elaborate more on each subject of the conversation.

Students should try to avoid the less appropriate reply *neung haey* for 'yes'. They should use *bart* or *jah*, respectively for male and for female responses. Although a conversation is usually conducted in informal language, the examination should be considered more formal than the colloquial form *neung haey* suggests. This issue occurs each year. With the Khmer honorific system in mind, it is important that students learn the appropriate terms with which to address older people (the honorific system in the Khmer language incorporates different terminology used for politeness, for the Buddhist monks and royalty).

Students should prepare for this task more thoroughly so that they can be confidently and fully engaged in the conversation. Preparing ideas in advance gives the advantage of the ability to move the conversation forward more easily, and elaborating on a topic more readily. This does not mean students should learn sentences by heart, but they can become familiar with words to be used in different areas of the conversation. Role playing and practising in an examination situation can help familiarise students with the process.

Section 2 – Discussion

Overall, students performed very well in the Discussion section. Generally, the language used was appropriate and relevant to the topic introduced. Students related well to the assessors during the discussion and well-prepared students were generally able to exchange opinions or ideas comfortably.

2009 Assessment Report



Students should be encouraged to study a wider range of topics, including some new topics. The topics also need to be more diverse. The topic relating to 'Poverty in Cambodia' seemed to provide a good framework for discussions.

Topics about the war that ended in Cambodia in 1998 may be less relevant to students today, although the war may be studied from a different angle as the cause of current situations in Cambodia. More appropriate topics may include the development of Cambodian society in the present day from perspectives such as 'The performing arts', 'Accidents on roads', 'Women in Cambodia', 'Outside influences on Cambodian culture', 'Health issues', 'Social evils' and 'The issues of cultural artefacts'.

Different formats for introducing students' ideas would make it more interesting for the assessors, rather than all students using the same phrase 'Please assessor, take mental note of the three points ...'. Students should observe the time limit set for the Discussion when preparing for the examination. Some students' introductions were too long. Students should introduce their Detailed Study sub-topic in no more than one minute.

Some students appeared to have learnt phrases or chunks of information for the Discussion by heart, which was obvious to assessors when students got stuck on a word and had to repeat the sentence once, twice or even three times before they could catch on to the next idea, phrase or word that had been forgotten.

Linguistic elements were not as much of a concern as previous years, although the following issues should be addressed.

- accuracy: some students used *doch sneh* for *doch chneh*, *sbab* for *chbab* and *leukdamkaen* for *leukdamkaeng*
- inappropriateness: some students used the phrase *srey pesya jar* instead of *srey pesya*