

2. Discussion Title: Clare sa Spéir and Yu Ming is Ainm Dom.

Examiner's Comments

Overall:

The candidate attempts to link the film Clare sa Spéir to his own life. The language is fluent, spoken with confidence, and perhaps more importantly, conveys the fact that he has given some thought to the films and drawn his own conclusions. Some mistakes are present in pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar, but these are minor and in no way impede comprehension, “séat rather than seat = a (film) shot”, “páipéar nuachtán rather than páipéar nuachta or nuachtán” and “lámh ina bhás féin” and “a fhear céile” used when referring to Clare. This candidate is able to explain not only his own opinions, but those of classmates. He also is willing to speculate about the opinions of a female audience with regard to one of the films. Terms such as “ról na mban”, “uaigneas” and “aineolach” indicate that the candidate has complemented his meditation on the films with the careful preparation of appropriate vocabulary and phrases. The candidate identifies common ground between his two chosen films, not always a necessary exercise, but interesting in this case. Yu Ming is Ainm Dom is analysed thoughtfully in terms of visual and sound content. The “bigger picture” regarding the lack of spoken Irish in this country is not lost on this speaker and as a consequence the discussion of the film naturally moves into the general conversation portion of the examination. In terms of AO2 the speaker is undoubtedly in band 5 of the mark scheme, for he “takes the initiative to develop arguments, ideas and insights”, and then some.

Much of what has been said about the discussion of the films can be said about the general conversation.

The candidate effortlessly discusses the literature text and his response to it without rehearsing a previously prepared statement on Marcas de Grás. He speaks honestly and naturally about topics. The result of that is that at times he has to pause to assemble his thoughts and think through what he wishes to say. This is not a problem. This happens all the time in a conversation in any language. Some candidates mistakenly feel that if there is ever a break in the machine-gun delivery of a bullet-pointed conversation they will lose marks.

Candidates are allowed to take a breath. The mark scheme asks in band 5 that “the candidate has a very good degree of comprehension and responds readily and fluently to the examiner’s questions and takes the initiative to develop answers”. It is evident that this candidate fits comfortably into that description.

It should be noted that this candidate is a neo-native speaker of the language and others should be assured that they do not need to reach the same level of fluency in order to be awarded marks from the top band.