Examiners' Report

June 2010

GCE Italian 6IN02

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Introduction

Italian 6IN02: Listening, Reading and Writing

Section A: Listening

Candidates are required to listen to authentic recorded target-language material and to retrieve and convey information by responding to a range of target-language questions.

Assessment principles

Up to 20 marks are awarded positively for correct information retrieved and conveyed. The quality of language is not relevant unless it impedes communication.

Section B: Reading

Candidates are required to read authentic texts in Italian and to retrieve and convey information given in the texts by responding to a range of question types.

Assessment principles

Up to 20 marks are awarded positively for correct information retrieved and conveyed in response to target-language and English-language questions. The quality of language is not relevant unless it impedes communication. Answers taken verbatim from the text are not credited.

Candidates showed understanding of the requirements of this unit and generally performed well.

Section C: Writing

In the third part of this paper candidates are required to write 200-220 words in Italian based on a short printed stimulus and a list of four bullet points in the target language. This year candidates were required to write a letter in Italian in response to an extract from a newspaper article about shopping online.

Assessment principles

The written task, Question 8, is marked for Content (15 marks) and for Quality of Language (15 marks).

Candidates should adhere to the word limit. Short answers are self penalising. Material after the word limit is disregarded, therefore the mark for content is affected accordingly and lengthy answers to the first bullet points will not make up for ommission within the word limit. The appropriate letter format (if required by the task or used anyway) is not counted in the maximum word limit.

Question 2

Question 1 (Multiple choice) was intended to be accessible to the majority of the candidates, so that even the less able candidates could pick up some points. There was a small percentage of wrong answers which did not follow any clear pattern except for 1(a) which was answered correctly by most.

Question 2 (Table) also proved to be accessible to the vast majority of the cohort.

Among the options which attracted the few wrong answers were (b), proving that numbers are a hurdle for less able candidates, and (e) where the targeted element was not the discount for the cinema but when this discount is available.

Question 3 (a)

Question 3 (Gap filling) was as accessible as it was intended, but began to operate some discrimination at the lower end of the candidature. Question 3a in particular became a clear indicator of candidates' levels. It was only answered correctly by 22% of E grade candidates, but even amongst average candidates there was often a wrong choice between "scendere" and "accendere".

Question 3 (b)

Poor performers lost marks also in this question showing lack of attention to grammatical details as well as lack of comprehension. "Partenza" was in fact the only word which could follow "della".

Question 3 (c)

Even more marks were lost here than in the previous question, and, again, very often for lack of attention to grammatical details. Very few of the candidates who answered this question wrongly used the decoy word "disturbati". Candidates who failed to understand and resorted to guessing did so wildly, without bringing grammar into their guess work.

Question 3 (d)

Almost all candidates were able to associate "grave" with "rischio".

Question 4

Question 4 (Target language questions and answers). The passage was an interview with Carla Bruni. This set of questions was designed to

cater well for all ranges of abilities. Some factual questions were

successfully tackled by all candidates, some required more interpretation as they were intended to separate the more able candidates. Less able candidates were often contented with lifting large amounts from the text without any attempt to make their answer consequential to the questions. In 4(b), for instance, there were often lengthy lifted answers, which did not answer the question. Redundant answers were also all too frequent in 4 (f), where the answer 'modella' was to be found among chunks of lifted, irrelevant information.

Many candidates in 4(a), for example, grasped the idea of dual nationality but not all of them were able to provide a convincing explanation and resorted to lifting irrelevant information (e.g. "cambia il passaporto ma non l'identità"). In 4(c), a number of candidates did not recognise the phrase "dare in beneficenza". In 4(d) the key element was being able to understand that not only doesn't Ms Bruni need to work now, but she never did. Question 4(e) required a degree of manipulation that not all candidates were able to do. Q4(g) was, on the whole, answered successfully

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(b) A che cosa paragona la sua vita pubblica?

(1)

Carla ama avventura, servare Lavoro di suo marito e anche ame ha servare la reactione che le situazione possono privocare le media.

(c) Che cosa farà con i guadagni del suo ultimo disco?

(1)

tutti i soldi in beneficenebe

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Examiner Comments

(b)The candidate has obviously identified the relevant information but was not able to handle it appropriately to answer the questions.

(c) Apart from the poor spelling of "beneficenza" the candidate failed to produce a verb answering the question "Che cosa farà...?"

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Examiner Tip

Read the question properly and answer it appropriately. Identifying targeted material is not enough to gain credit.

Question 6

Question 5 (grid) was intended to be a gentle introduction to the reading section and most candidates managed to score at least 3 or 4 points out of 5. (c) was often left blank, and not necessarily by less able candidates. There may have been a misunderstanding on the format of the task and some candidates may have assumed that one statement had to be ticked for each person. The number of marks allocated, though, should have made it clear that 5 ticks were needed, and not 4.

Question 6

This question was answered successfully by many candidates. They were able to identify reasons for British experts visiting Italian schools and their aims. Some candidates wrote the same information in 6(a) and 6 (b). A few marks were lost over the confusion between politics and policies. Questions 6c,d,e proved more challenging – specific items of vocabulary "tovaglie di carta bianche" and "cestini di mele fresche" were not known to a proportion of candidates. In question 6 (d) the key element "instead of chips" was often omitted and candidates lost the mark. Sometimes "chips" were included in the list of the food served. Candidates were often unable to translate "biologici" as "organic", but most of then scored for managing to understand "stagionali"

> (c) Apart from the nice smell what impressed them about the school canteens they
> visited?
> (1)
>
> *everything was clean & fresh.*

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It is perfectly true that "everything was clean and fresh" but candidates cannot expect to be credited for generalisations without detail. If a candidate has understood a relevant detail, this should be included in the answer. Only this can guarantee that the candidate has understood the text. Crediting answers like this would be unfair to candidates who lost marks for translating "mele" as "melon" and "tovaglie" as "serviettes"

(d) What surprised them about the food on offer in Italian schools?

(1)

classic healthy fresh food

gli ingredienti e fresca

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Examiner Comments

The notion of "healthy fresh food" may be correct, but at least some detail from the text is required. However, this answer would not have been credited even with more detail, because the key element was "instead of chips".

(d) What surprised them about the food on offer in Italian schools?

(1)

Instead of finding the chips, they is tomato pasta, meatballs and fresh salad.

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Examiner Comments

This is a good answer to questin (d)

Question 7

Similarly to Question 4,this set of questions was designed to

cater well for all ranges of abilities. Some factual questions were successfully tackled by all candidates, some required more interpretation as they were intended to separate the more able candidates.

The text was about lanaguges in the "blogosfera". It was dealt very well with the more able candidates, but proved a challenge for the less able ones. A number ignored the idea of "tendenza" in their answer to 7a, which needed to include the concept of an increase in volume. Many candidates found it difficult to identify two details for 7b, and surprisingly few were able to extract the idea of linking blogs together. Question 7f also presented a challenge to many candidates who found it hard to pick out nocturnal blogging as linking the Chinese and Japanese. Generally, all apart from the very weakest, were able to answer the remaining questions satisfactorily, with 7h being answered well by the majority of candidates.

(b) Che cosa è possibile fare nella blogosfera? Menziona **due** dettagli.
(2)

~~Possono leggono~~ leggono i diari altrui, possono publicare messaggi.

(g) Quando si collegano i bloggers di lingua inglese e perché?
(2)

Nella mattina grazie allan loro diffusione planetaria

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Examiner Comments

The answer "leggono i diari altrui" (q b)cannot be credited as it is lifted verbatim. "E` possibile leggere i diari altrui" would have been credited (only just).

In question (g), this candidate lost the first mark ("nella mattina") but his manipulation of the text - having changed " a causa di..." to "grazie a..." and the possessive "loro", referring it to the bloggers instead of the "sua" in the text - was just enough to be credited.

Question 8

The writing section is normally the one which produces greatest discrimination among candidates. The standard of answers varied enormously: the very best answers (and there were a good number of impressive efforts) displayed a relevant, detailed and organised response to the task, in sophisticated and accurate Italian. The less able candidates, however, failed to respond effectively to some or any of the bullet points, did not plan their response effectively and made some very elementary grammatical errors (present tense verbs, plural nouns, articles, adjectival agreements).

The majority of candidates were of the opinion that modern life was stressful and some were able to justify such an opinion very effectively, commenting on the double-edged sword of technology or making perceptive comparisons with the past. Whether this stress affected adults or young people more seemed to depend on the age of candidate, but again, the best responses were those that contained evidence to back up their opinions. Most candidates would like to participate in such an initiative, suggesting some innovative ways of doing so and of involving family and friends. A tiny minority were sceptical and made an effective response to the task more difficult by adopting such a stance. The final bullet point was tackled well by many candidates who put forward an array of ideas ranging from more holiday time to shorter working hours. A number, however, did not move beyond suggesting what they personally would do.

It was pleasing to read many answers that responded fully to the bullet points in order and were constructed in a logical manner, in separate paragraphs and giving a range of opinions and justifications.

Many candidates had understood the task fully and appreciated the tone and register they needed to adopt. A large proportion set it out as a formal letter, although a number seemed unsure as to exactly how to do this. Similarly, there were attempts to use a formal register, but too often there was a mixture of "Lei" and "tu" forms of the verb and of informal and formal language.

On the whole, the word limit was respected but there were a number of cases where candidates were unable to do themselves justice because of writing too little or too much. There were a number of candidates who, whilst being near native speaker standard linguistically, wrote up to twice as much as the word limit allows. Candidates should be warned against this as excessive material in the early bullet points does not compensate for not dealing with the last ones within the word limit.

In terms of language, there were some excellent pieces of writing. It is to a number of candidates' extreme credit that non-native, in many cases teenage learners, are able to produce Italian of such a high standard. There was an impressive range of vocabulary and structures used, with many candidates showing themselves to be very competent at using even the most complex elements of the language. At the other end of the scale, there were a small number of candidates who were unable to conjugate any verbs correctly, who were unable to agree adjectives consistently or who could not apply the correct form of the definite or indefinite article.

Advice and Guidance

For the Listening section candidates are reminded of the importance of reading the questions carefully before they start and of listening to the whole extract once before trying to answer the questions, so as to have a general understanding of the recording. For Listening and Reading questions alike, it is very important to use the targeted information in answer to the actual question. This is clearly shown by the clips attached to question 4. There is more than comprehension needed for successful answers to these questions. Candidates should be trained to work out meanings from the context, to read rubrics and questions carefully, to have practice in different exercise types. In particular, for the gap-filling exercise, candidates should be made to understand that attention to grammatical details itself rules out a number of possible wrong answers. All candidates require a good deal of classroom practice in re-phrasing and manipulating the language of the original text as material lifted verbatim from the text cannot be credited in the reading question. Training in time-management and reading techniques such as skimming and scanning should also form an integral part of exam preparation.

As to the Writing section (question 8), it is always worth reminding candidates of the need to answer the final written task within the word limit as failure to do so can result in a loss of marks for Content. They would be well advised to devote an appropriate amount of their time to this activity and ensure that it is well planned so that all the bullet points are dealt with appropriately and preferably in the same order as in the stimulus. All candidates need regular practice in the art of getting the essential parts of the message across in a concise way.

Finally candidates are reminded that tidy presentation is even more essential now that answers are marked on line.

Grade Boundaries

Grade	Max. Mark	A	B	C	D	E	N
Raw boundary mark	70	55	49	43	38	33	28
Uniform boundary mark	140	120	98	84	70	56	42

The modern foreign languages specifications share a common design, but the assessments in different languages are not identical. Grade boundaries at unit level reflect these differences in assessments, ensuring that candidate outcomes across these specifications are comparable at specification level.

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