Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2023

Pearson Edexcel GCE
In Italian (9IN0)
Paper 3: Speaking

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Introduction

2023 marked a return to the A-level Italian oral set under the revised specification. Many candidates showed they had a level of language proficiency of a good standard and the general understanding of themes and sub-themes was of a commendable level. Where there was a choice, candidates opted for sub-themes associated with cards 2.3.4.6.9.10

As this is the second Principal Examiner's report for the new specification after Covid 19, it is perhaps important to review and clarify different aspects of this qualification.

The specification

In the A Level speaking examination, students should be able to demonstrate:

● knowledge and understanding of the cultural context by giving ideas, examples and information on one of the themes and on a chosen subject of interest they have researched linked to the social and cultural context of the language studied
● the ability to analyse aspects of the cultural context by presenting and justifying valid arguments, viewpoints and conclusions
● the ability to interact and hold a natural and fluent discourse
● skill in manipulating language accurately
● the ability to respond to written language in speech.

These aspects are assessed via two distinct tasks conducted entirely in Italian, which are carried out in consecutive order in one session.

Task 1 (discussion on a theme)

Content for this task will be based on any one of the twelve sub-themes from one of the four overall themes listed on *pages 8–9* of the specification.

Students have approximately **6 to 7** minutes discussion time for this task.

There are **TWO** parts to the discussion.
Part 1: The teacher-examiner asks the two compulsory questions on the card. The teacher-examiner then helps to develop the discussion by asking appropriate follow-up questions relating to the statement on the stimulus card.
Part 2: The teacher-examiner then broadens the discussion to cover **other aspects of the overall theme**. Teacher-examiner must ask questions to enable the student to meet the requirements of the assessment criteria, i.e., to elicit examples and information to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the cultural and social context and to analyse aspects of the theme by developing and justifying arguments and forming conclusions.

Task 2 (presentation and discussion on student's independent research project)
This task is in two parts. Content for this task will be based on the subject of interest that students have chosen for their independent research project. This may be based on any of the four themes of study listed on *pages 8–9* of the specification or on a subject of interest of the student's choosing. However, it **must** relate to the Italian- speaking cultural and social context.

Students have approximately **10** to **11** minutes for this task.

Part 1: The discussion must open with a **2 minutes** presentation from the student in which they provide a summary **of at least two of the written sources** they have used as part of their research, outlining the authors' main points/ideas and giving a personal response to what they have read. In this part of the task, students are assessed on their ability to respond in speech to written sources.

The presentation must not exceed two minutes.

Part 2: The discussion that follows must explore more widely the student's presentation and their research. The teacher-examiner must use the key findings and list of sources on Form RP3 to help them formulate their own questions to enable the student to meet the requirements of the assessment criteria, i.e., to elicit examples and information to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the cultural and social context and to analyse aspects of their research by developing and justifying arguments and forming conclusions.

In both tasks, students are expected to ask questions that elicit opinions **as part of the natural discourse** and to confirm that their own points of view have been understood. Students are also expected to take the lead in the discussions.

The **key features** of this examination are:

- it is firmly rooted in Italian society and culture
- there are prescribed topic areas for Task 1 and two compulsory questions relating to the statement that the candidate has chosen. The teacher-examiner **must ask** the compulsory questions **in the order** they are presented, **without asking extra** questions
- in Task1 – part 2 the teacher-examiner **must** cover other aspects of the overall Theme
- there is a need for candidates to elicit points of view and check examiners' understanding, naturally and appropriately, at different points during the discussion
- the presentation of the independent research for Task 2 must clearly reference specific **named sources**, **written in Italian**.
- The new examination is between 5 and 7 minutes longer than the previous Legacy syllabus assessment.

Assessment Principles

Three mark grids are applied to Task 1 and Task 2:

● knowledge and understanding of society and culture (AO4)
● accuracy and range of language (AO3)
● interaction (AO1).

One mark grid is applied to Part 1 of Task 2: responding to written language in speech (AO2).

A01 – Interaction – Task 1 and 2

This mark grid assesses students' ability to interact with the examiner by giving relevant responses based on what they have heard, by initiating communication and eliciting points of view.

The interaction is awarded **up to 6 marks**.

Teacher-examiners and candidates must remember that asking a question does not automatically place the performance in any of the three mark bands. Interaction provides a picture of how much the candidate participated in the discussion.

A03 – Accuracy and range of language – Task 1 and 2

This mark grid assesses students' ability to use a range of grammatical structures and vocabulary to produce articulate communication with a range of expression. It also assesses students' accuracy of pronunciation, grammar and syntax.

Candidates are judged on their competence in making themselves understood, showing how able they are at conveying a message without its meaning being compromised by errors that hinder clarity.

Accuracy and Range of Language is awarded **up to 12 marks**.

A04 – Knowledge and Understanding of Italian-speaking society and culture – Task 1 and 2

This grid assesses students' ability to communicate information and demonstrate appreciation for different aspects of Italian-speaking culture and society.

They are also assessed on their ability to respond critically and analytically to different aspects of Italian-speaking culture and society by selecting relevant material, presenting and justifying points of view, developing arguments and supporting their ideas with examples.

Knowledge and Understanding of Italian-speaking society and culture is awarded **12 marks**.

A02 - Responding to written language in speech – Task 2 (Part 1)

This grid is used to assess the student's **two-minute** presentation **only**. It is not applied to the discussion that follows the presentation. This mark grid assesses students' ability to understand and respond in speech to written language drawn from a variety of sources and to summarise information from written sources in speech. The written sources will be those that students read as part of their independent research and they **must refer** to at least **two** named written sources during their presentation.

Responding to written language in speech is awarded **12 marks**.

Responses that refer to just one single written source can be awarded a maximum of 3 marks only.

Candidate performance

Task 1

Candidates who opted for the topic of education, were able to discuss about different kinds of problems of the Italian school system and were aware of the issues young people face with unemployment. They were able to discuss the cultural aspects of Italian family life including festivities.

Candidates also had great understanding of the issues surrounding immigration in Italy. This is a topic that all candidates felt close to their personal experience since many have lived for periods of time in Italy as immigrants. They understood how 'language' is a great issue which hinders immigrants' integration. Many commented on how there is a risk that immigrants are perceived as taking away local employment. However, students also recognised that immigrants were those who did manual jobs that local people did not want to carry out. Many successfully evaluated the differences between North and South and the issues related to both parts of Italy, including its stereotypes.

Questions 2, 3 and 4. These questions were better answered in the sense that they offered greater scope for conversation on topics which, in any case, fall within the experience of a student aged eighteen.
When discussing education and work, many examiners asked candidates to make comparisons with the UK, thus shifting the focus away from the Italian context.

Questions 6. This question was less well answered in so far as it required specific and more in-depth - study of cultural aspects of Italian society. This led in part to all too frequent comparison with British traditions. This tendency occurred both with examiner questions and the candidate responses.

Many candidates who had selected Card 6A were clearly confused as to the meaning of '*feste nazionali*' and replied mentioning celebrations in general, such as Christmas, Carnival and Easter.

Where there was a choice, relatively few candidates opted for stimulus cards 10 to 12 associated with fascism, some who did so, demonstrated a detailed knowledge of the required period of history and were able to argue effectively and in detail but a minority did not have any knowledge of the topic. However, some teachers were not aware of the need to shift to a different subtopic of the same Theme in Task1-Part2.

The following is an example of a good performance. (**Task1 – Stimulus IN9 B**). TE and candidate seem to have a natural conversation, which flows moving gradually and naturally from North/South Divide to positive impact of immigration and/or his challenges. Language is mostly accurate and rarely errors hinder clarity.

Q1
TE*: Secondo te, quali differenze socio-culturali esistono tra il Nord e il Sud?*
C: *La questione meridionale per quanto riguarda il divario tra il Nord e il Sud è una domanda molto interessante. Ci sono certamente differenze social culturale tra il Nord e il Sud. Questi differenze sono spesso esagerati, degli stereotipi, in particolare delle persone del Sud...ma negli stereotipi ci sono veramente qualche verità. Un esempio di questo è che le persone del Sud sono più tradizionali e la famiglia nucleare ha un'importanza più grande nel Sud che al Nord. Ci sono meno coppie diversi e meno tipi delle famiglie nel Sud che nel Nord e il tasso di divorzio è molto di meno ....(*continua con le unioni civili, in particolare di coppie omosessuali. Esplora la religiosità tra le due parti del Paese e l'emigrazione dal Sud*).

Q2

TE: Esistono somiglianze tra Nord e Sud che uniscono tutto il Paese?

C: *Certamente ci sono somiglianze tra il Nord e il Sud... dopo la Seconda Guerra mondiale c'era l'introduzione della Costituzione italiano da cui l'economia e la cultura italiana è fondata, una democrazia fondata sul lavoro e secondo me questa è una verità per tutto il Paese. Inoltre è interessante per me che c'è un fenomeno della fuga di cervelli sia nel Nord che nel Sud ....*

TE: E secondo te, le condizioni oggi degli immigrati sono le stesse che c'erano con gli immigrati che venivano al Nord? Come sono le condizioni di vita degli immigrati ?

C: *Sfortunamente le condizioni di vita degli immigrati non sono bravi. Gli immigrati devono affrontare tanta difficoltà e vivono con tante paure nella società italiana. Infatti ci sono tanti paure, uno di questa è l'inabilità di integrarsi nella cultura e società italiana. Trovano difficoltà con la lingua italiana e ricevono pochi sostegni ... (*la discussione continua con il permesso di soggiorno e la cittadinanza italiana). *È d'accordo con quello che ho detto?*

TE: Sì, sono d'accordo, hai ragione. E secondo te, gli immigrati sono realmente integrati in Italia?

C: *Direi che in generale gli immigrati non sono integrati nella società. Ci sono alcuni esempi dei immigrati che sono integrati per esempio....(la conversazione continua spiegando le paure e le condizioni di vita sia economiche che sociali degli immigrati).*

Task 2-Part 1: Candidates in the opening statement of their presentation should:

- indicate topic and names of the two written sources to be summarised in the presentation
- give a summary of the first written source
- give a summary of the second written source
- provide a personal reaction to the findings of the two written sources.

Many of the candidates assessed did not mention their sources during their presentation and some only referred to them 'in passing' ("In an article I read…"); this made it difficult to establish what sources the candidates had based their research on, especially when the RP3 form was not uploaded on the Learner Work Assessment platform.

Some candidates chose very interesting topics for their presentation, these included:

• The significance of Ungaretti in Italian literature
• D'annunzio: fascist or narcissist genius?
• The abolishment of Palio di Siena
• The importance of nature in Dante's Inferno
• Has Montessori revolutionized the educational system?
• Neorealism and growth in Italian Cinema
• The development of Commedia dell'Arte
• Is Buffon a good role model for young people?
• Has Ferrari created the most iconic car brand?
• The importance of Liliana Segre in our society
• Is Slow-food really revolutionary?
• Morte assistita: gli italiani ne hanno diritto?
• Era Totti solo un calciatore?
• E' la moda italiana etica?

Teachers should warn candidates against choosing topics that do not allow them to critically analyse aspects of the Italian culture and society.

The following is an example of a good presentation of the research.

Title: L'impatto del calcio sulla società italiana

C: *Il calcio è lo sport più amato dagli italiani, infatti conta circa 32milioni di tifosi, quindi ho voluto fare una ricerca che mettesse in luce sia gli aspetti positivi che quelli negativi che ruotano intorno a questo mondo. Ho selezionato due articoli che si intitolano rispettivamente ... di ... pubblicati su... Il primo articolo parla di... quindi il giornalista invita a ... Il secondo articolo parla di... il giornalista dichiara che ... Sono d'accordo con ... perché ... Condivido l'opinione di ... che ...* (2 minutes)

TE: E che ruolo ha il calcio nella società italiana?

Task 2- Part 2

Generally, the second part of the oral test proved to be more difficult, both in terms of what was required in the first two minutes of this second part of the test and in what followed. Some candidates and teacher-examiners were unaware that the students had to refer in the presentation to the sources used during their research.

Teachers-examiners should make sure that the follow up questions they ask are relevant to the candidate's research project or other related issues avoiding questions on the candidate's family, their experience living in Italy or their school life as such. Some rather worrying questions about the candidates'

experience as immigrants were also heard, or questions that generally belong to GCSE level or below ("what TV programs did you watch in Italy?", "what do your friends in Italy say about…?") as these types of questions do not allow candidates to move on from simple descriptions.

A fair number of candidates and teachers-examiners allowed their discussion to be exceptionally general with no particular focus. In too many cases it was evident that teachers-examiners had not read the RP3 form or were not aware of the candidate's research project in advance of the exam (this was particularly evident for visiting examiners). This resulted in awkward pauses and in questions generally lacking breadth in Task 2.

Interaction

It was not unusual for a candidate to reach a score of at least 4, and very often 5 or 6. Nor was interaction a problem in part two of the test, particularly where candidates had devoted enough time to their research question or statement. The mark for interaction encourages spontaneity in oral response and there were few examples of over rehearsal in what candidates generally had to say.

Responding to written language in speech

For many candidates, this section of the oral test which carried **12 marks** and referred only to the presentation, was the most difficult and daunting part of the whole oral examination. Marks were lost in part for not quoting sources or quoting only one source and/or by giving a summary of sources used, without expressing a considered opinion. Owing to this a fair number of candidates lost all awardable marks, a problem which might need to be addressed before the next examination.

Accuracy and range of language

Accuracy was not generally a problem for those candidates with a native or near-native command of the language. These candidates usually scored marks between 10 and 12. The number of native English speakers was particularly low this year, but most candidates demonstrated good or excellent skills. Despite language errors, most students were comfortably within the band 7-9.

Some weak points observed were:
- *meno piu' persone si sposano* (sempre piu'...)
- *il marcio Gucci* (il marchio Gucci)
- *ha affettato* (influenzare in modo negativo)
- *venire insieme* (riunirsi)
- parenti (genitori)
- *da una mano* (da una parte)
- *le donne non sono date le stesse possibilità* (alle donne non sono date…)
- *pronto* (presto)
- *Alemagna* (Germania)
- *Fattoria (*fabbrica)

- *porta la gente insieme* (riunisce)
- *educazione* (istruzione)
- *la famiglia non possono*
- *la scuola devono*
- *il smart working; i studenti; i smartphone; la media; i zii; il suo padre/ zio*
- *scritto per* (da = by); *parlare su* (di) *la musica che sono cresciuti con*
- *se la scuola sarebbe* (fosse)
- *in quello momento* (quel)
- *perché di* (a causa di)
- *sei d'accordo con me, Signora?*
- *tu puoi trovare lavoro* (si può ...)
- *ci sono tanti* (ce ne ...)

Knowledge and understanding of Italian-speaking society and culture

Apart from candidates who chose very generic topics for their research question or statement, most students achieved a commendable mark in this section of the oral test, many being awarded a score of at least 9. Candidates embraced the wealth of cultural background information with obvious enthusiasm and they are to be congratulated, in many instances, on the richness of detail in which they were able to present their views in both part one and part two of the test. There was a feeling, however, that in some instances the research question or statement lacked cultural and intellectual depth and rigour.

Conduct and administration

Overall, the exams were well conducted.

Most candidates spoke spontaneously, showing a good knowledge of Italian society and culture and their research projects were examples of outstanding work.

The following suggestions may help to improve the conduct of the exam.

Task 1

- **Task 1 Part 1**: Students should give succinct answers to Q1 and Q2; there should be **at least one** follow-on question relating to the sub-theme of the stimulus card for Task 1 part 1.
- **Task 1 part 2**: must **move away** from the sub-theme of the stimulus card and cover at least one other sub theme within the same **overall** theme.
- Keep **focus** on Italian world in Task 1.
- Teacher-examiners' responses should be kept to a **minimum.**
- If the examiner asks if there is anything the candidate wishes to ask him/her, this is **not** credited in interaction.
- **Comparison** with other societies should be strictly limited to avoid drifting into irrelevance in terms of the Italian context.
- The **timing** of Task 1 is recommended to be 6-7 minutes.

Task 2

- **Two** minutes is the time limit for the presentation in Task 2 Part 1.
- **Task 2 (Part 1)** in the presentation the students must provide a **summary** of at least **two** of the **Italian** written sources they have used as part of their research, outlining the **authors' main points/ideas** and giving a **personal response** to what they have read.
- The teacher-examiner should use the **key findings** and list of sources on the Independent Research Form (RP3) to help them formulate their own questions.
- When conducting the examination teachers-examiners should only **move** to another key finding when the student appears to have no more to say.
- It is possible that the conversation could develop naturally and digress from the bullet points which is acceptable
- **The timing** of Task 2 is recommended to be 10-11 minutes (2 minutes presentation- 8-9 minutes discussion)
Students will not receive any marks for any conversation that takes place beyond 18 minutes (total assessment time for Task 1 and 2).

Administration

Timing
Task 1: 6 to 7 minutes (recommended)
Task 2: 10 to 11 minutes (recommended)
Total assessment time: 21 to 23 minutes, (16 to 18 minutes of speaking plus 5 minutes' preparation time for Task 1).
The timing of the assessment begins with the student's first utterance in relation to Task 1.
Once the maximum stipulated assessment time has passed (18 minutes) examiners will turn off the recording device at that point.
Students will not receive any marks for any conversation that takes place beyond the maximum time allowed.

Forms and documentation
The following items should be upload to **LWT**:
- MP3 recording.
- A Level Italian RP3 form – to provide information for Task 2.
- CS4 – candidate speaking authentication sheet – declaration and authorisation form signed.

Recording

- Place the microphone **closer to the candidate** and not the teacher.
- Conduct the exam in a **quiet room**.
- Use the **best quality** recording equipment that is available.
- Record the candidate exam as an MP3.

Final comments

Congratulations to teachers and candidates!

Overall, a good number of the exams assessed for this series were conducted correctly. Many candidates responded well to the questions asked by the Teacher/Examiner and were able to demonstrate good knowledge of the topics studied; some candidates also showed the ability to successfully summarise the findings of their research in the two minutes allowed, as well as refer to the sources used. Some candidates managed to also critically analyse the sources read and provide insightful opinions on them.

NB: Unfortunately, there were centres in which the teacher-examiner was not aware of how to conduct the exam and did not understand the timing for each part of the exam. These cases unfortunately impacted on the grades of their students.

Although it is anticipated that most students would prefer orals to be conducted by a teacher in their Centre, Pearson offer a **London Centre Orals** service (online) for not taught students. Please refer to the administrative support guides on the relevant language qualification pages for more information. These appear under the 'Forms and Administration' section.