Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2023

Pearson Edexcel GCE
In Persian (9PN0)
Paper 1: Translation into English, Reading comprehension and writing (research question) in Persian

General comments

This report relates to paper **9PN0-01**, which tests candidates' ability to translate from Persian into English, to read and respond to written Persian and to demonstrate their ability undertake independent research in Persian.
The evidence from marking in this session indicates that the paper was effective in differentiating between candidates of different abilities and that all the questions worked as anticipated.

The published mark scheme provides extensive guidance with regard to the overarching approach to marking, as well as the range of correct, acceptable and rejected responses as they relate to Section A and Section B, as well as indicative content for Section C. Teachers should note, however, that the mark scheme is not designed in such a way that every possible answer is included. Examiners look at each answer on merit to allocate marks. The approach to marking is positive, so examiners always seek to reward what candidates produce.

It is helpful for teachers to distinguish clearly between the assessment objectives stated in the specification. These are: A01- listening and responding in Persian; A02 – reading and responding in Persian; A03 – grammar and vocabulary of Persian; A04 Knowledge and understanding of the countries and communities where Persian is spoken. In this paper A02 is assessed in Sections A, B and C; A03 and A04 are assessed only in Section C.

There was varied evidence of how well candidates were prepared for this assessment, but there was little evidence of rubric infringement; this is where candidates either failed to follow the instructions, for example ticked more than the required number of boxes in the objective tasks.

Comments on each question

Section A

This section tests candidates' ability to translate into English. Teachers should note that in the mark scheme there may, on occasion, appear to be misalignment between the Persian column and the English column: this is a reflection of the idiomatic nature of translation and the way word order and clause structure varies between Persian and English. Reading the correct answer column vertically from the top will provide a complete translation in good English of the passage.

Question 1

This year Question 1 related to the theme of the subtheme: Changes in family structures and the content was focused on Changing attitudes toward marriage and relationships.

One mark is awarded for each correctly translated segment up to a maximum of 20 marks and as previously mentioned, not every acceptable or rejected answer is included in the mark scheme. Examiners will award a mark to a segment where the message is conveyed clearly, correctly, and unambiguously in such a

way that a native speaker of Persian with no knowledge of English would understand exactly the same message as would a native English speaker with no knowledge of Persian.

As part of the design of the passage for the assessment of translation into English, each segment is targeted at a particular grade and so it is normal and expected that candidates with different levels of Persian should find some parts more challenging than others. In this way the passage is differentiated to assess across the full range of grades.

Most candidates were successful in translating:

با تغییر شرایط سیاسی ایران در ده ی پنجاه، زندگی خانوادگی ایرانیان هم بسیار دگرگون شد.
Or
آنان با رفتن به دانشگاه و بالا بردن سطح دانش خود توانستند در کنار مردان کار کنند.

The parts of the passage that challenged many but the highest scoring candidates were:

نقشی برابر در درآمدزایی و تربیت فرزندان داشته باشند.

There was evidence that some candidates needed to pay closer attention to the naturalness of the English phrasing that they used, to avoid ambiguity of message. (for example آن ها را گرفته اند در سال های اخیر، بچه ها جای.) A close reading of the reject column in the mark scheme will provide teachers with some useful areas to work on in terms of linguistic structures.

Section B

Question 2

This question related to the theme of Media and culture, the subtheme: Music and the content was focused on the aspect of Influence of other cultures.
This is a multiple-choice task with four parts and four options for each part. Teachers can usefully note that incorrect options may include an element of distraction in the form of a word or idea from the text. Candidates, therefore, need to be careful to read fully and carefully, rather than rely on spotting isolated words. This question targets grades C to E, and is intended as a gentle lead in for this paper.

Most successfully answered was: N/A
Least successfully answered was: N/A

Question 3

This question related to the theme of Aspects of Persian-speaking society the subtheme: Engagement with environmental issues and the content was focused on embracing of different types of energy.

This is a multiple-completion task where candidates choose four correct answers from nine statements. Teachers can usefully note that incorrect options may include an element of distraction in the form of a word or idea from the text.

Candidates, therefore, need to be careful to read fully and carefully, rather than rely on spotting isolated words. This question targets grades A to E, and so differentiates at a higher level than Question 2.

Most successfully answered was: A - I
Least successfully answered was: C - F

Question 4

This question related to the theme of Aspects of Persian-speaking society, the subtheme: Engagement with environmental issues and the content was focused on embracing of different types of energy.

This is a free response task, where candidates are required to answer in Persian. In general candidates answered this section well, however there was some evidence that some candidates did not always read the questions carefully or produced answers which, although correctly locating the information in the text, were not precise answers to the question that was asked or relied on indiscriminate or untargeted lifting from the text. For example, many candidates did not respond question C correctly.

Teachers are reminded that, in free-response questions, examiners apply a strict order of elements and mark only the first viable answer that a candidate produces. For example, where the required answer is 'dog' a candidate who writes 'dog and cat' will receive a mark, but a candidate who writes 'cat and dog' will not, because only the candidate's first viable answer to the question is considered for a mark. This question targets grades A to E.

Most successfully answered were: A – B - E and D
Least successfully answered was: C

Question 5

This question related to the theme of Political and artistic influences on society past and present, the subtheme: Arts and crafts and the content was focused on the influence of Islamic Art.

Like question 4 this is a free response task, where candidates are required to answer in Persian. In general candidates answered this section very well, however there was some evidence that some candidates did not always read the questions carefully or produced answers which, although correctly locating the information in the text, were not precise answers to the question that was asked or relied on indiscriminate or untargeted lifting from the text. Teachers are reminded to train candidates to give one detail per mark, as they answer free response questions. Some questions do carry two marks, and, in some cases, there may be more than two possible things a candidate could write. This is a normal part of the way the questions work, and so there is no need for candidates to offer more information than required by the rubric. It is useful to note that questions are also designed so that the answers could reasonably be expected to fit on the writing line provided. Candidates should aim for concision in their responses.

This question targets grades A to E.

Most successfully answered were: A - B – D
Least successfully answered was: C

Section C

This section tests candidates' ability to conduct independent research in Persian, and to respond critically to a text that relates to the research topic they have chosen. Candidates need to be mindful that they need to relate the text that they have read to the research that they have done about the topic they have chosen. The A02 information from the text needs to be contextualized and added to from the research, A04. It is not enough simply to give a critical view about the content of the text or to use the research statement simply as a kind of essay title and overlook the text.

The highest scoring candidates had effectively combined the information from the text provided with what they had researched to respond critically to the research statement. The inclusion of perceptive ideas was an indicator of high levels of performance in this task. A perceptive idea is defined in the specification and mark scheme, but broadly can be considered any knowledge or understanding that goes beyond what the average speaker of Persian would know about the topic in question. This could include facts, data, trends, social or historical context or the connection of ideas in such a way as to demonstrate real understanding of the issue. These candidates had also used appropriate and wide-ranging vocabulary specific to the task and had shown their ability to write the language in a natural, authentic and sophisticated way including a range of structures and features. These candidates often also showed evidence that they had proofread their own work, as was indicated by corrections made to what they had written.

The lower scoring candidates often missed a crucial element of the task; they either focused exclusively on the passage, without adding from their own research or they used the research statement as a stimulus for a generalized set of comments that were straightforward in nature and did not go beyond what any speaker of Persian might be expected to know. Sometimes the language used was less academic in register, less wide-ranging and contained errors that impeded clarity or generated ambiguity. Here there was evidence of a lack of proof-reading.

Teachers are reminded that the mark scheme contains indicative content, but this is not intended to be definitive answer to the statement. Examiners use a levels-based mark scheme and reward all relevant response produced by the candidate, accepting that each candidate may approach the task in a different way.

Research from Theme 1

In response to this research topic, candidates produced a range of thoughtful and well-structured responses and there was evidence that many had prepared well. However, there were evidences that candidates limited their response to A02 and discussed general ideas which were not specific to Iran. Teachers

should look carefully at the indicative content in the mark scheme for information about the level of response expected.

Research from Theme 2

In response to this research topic, candidates produced a range of thoughtful and well-structured responses and there was evidence that many had prepared well. For example, some candidates did not agree with the statement and discussed barriers which could prevent people doing online business in Iran and Afghanistan. Candidates' arguments showed they researched and prepared themselves, however there was evidence that many candidates did not focus on research topic, also expressed mostly generalised and occasionally relevant ideas about culture and society.

Research from Theme 3

- In response to this research topic, candidates produced a range of thoughtful and well-structured responses and there was evidence that many had prepared well. For example, candidates wrote about women rights in the past and present – their achievements, different types of discrimination against women in the society, well known female poets, writers and artists and the ways they used to show all the issues that women face in their stories. Candidates also mentioned how women showed the feminine identity in their artistic works especially fictional works and developed their artistic skills and created characters and fictional atmosphere in their works where men were unable to do so.

Research from Theme 4

Like previous years this research topic was least popular among candidates this year and a few candidates chose to write about it. In response to this research topic, candidates produced a range of thoughtful and well-structured responses and there was evidence that many had prepared well. Critical analysis of culture and society demonstrated by consistently developed and justified arguments and viewpoints, were evident in many responses.

Guidance for teachers for future sessions

1. Ensure that all candidates are familiar with the format of the paper and what they need to do in each section and question.
2. In section A, make students aware that a correct translation will not necessarily be a literal word-by-word translation. There will be difference in word order, clause structure or other linguistic features between the two languages. The resulting English passage should be natural, correct and unambiguous English.
3. In section A, work with students using the mark scheme, to exemplify different approaches to translation. It can be useful in teaching students to translate into English to ask them to produce a 'mark scheme', rather

than a translated passage; this can help to develop the ability to think laterally. It may also be helpful in steering them away from online translators if they are encouraged to think carefully about alternatives and how to avoid errors.

4. In section B it can be a useful exercise to focus candidates not only on finding the correct answers, but also looking at why the incorrect options are wrong. This encourages a careful reading of the questions and develops metacognition in terms of how the questions work.

5. In section B teach students about the 'order of elements' rule and apply it during teaching, so that students learn to produce clear and concise answers.

6. In section B teach students to be guided by the number of marks and the space allowed for writing. This can help them give enough detail and avoid indiscriminate lifts.

7. Teachers should remind students that their responses in section C should be written only in Persian.

8. In section C, ensure that candidates understand the task and give them practice in linking a passage with research. This can make a useful speaking task and provide teachers with insightful assessment for learning information about the student's understanding.

9. In section C, ensure students are equipped with a good range of topic specific, academic vocabulary to be able to ensure that the written response is correct in terms of register and not overly colloquial in tone.

10. In section C, give students practice in proof-reading their own work and that of others, looking to correct common errors and develop the habit of writing accurately.