

Moderators' Report/
Principal Moderator Feedback

Summer 2015

Pearson Edexcel GCSE
in Italian (5IN02/2A)
Paper 2A: Speaking in Italian

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Publications Code UG041882*

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GCSE Italian
Unit 2 Speaking in Italian
Moderator Report

The overall standard was very high this session. It is always a pleasure to listen to students holding excellent conversations in Italian with their Teacher-Examiners.

A majority of students managed to communicate a lot of information relevant to their chosen topic. Guided by questions well geared to their level, they could display their knowledge and understanding of the language, using a range of tenses, appropriate vocabulary and varied structures. Invariably, conversations with spontaneous interaction and genuine unpredictable questions led to higher scores than pre-learnt dialogues.

The area causing much concern was the application of administrative procedures, in spite of a small improvement from last year. Not only did errors and omissions take hours to sort out, but more worryingly they frequently impacted negatively on candidates' performances. Teacher-Examiners are urged to refer to the instructions on the Edexcel website and to their online E9 report, to ensure that they conduct future tests correctly.

Choice of tasks

The topics of *Media & culture*, *Sport & leisure* and *Travel & tourism* were once more the most popular, whereas *Business, work & employment* was rarely chosen. Centres who devised their own option often opted for *School*.

The preferred task types continued to be *Presentations and Discussions* and *Picture-based Discussions*, although *Open Interactions* were used by more centres than in previous sessions.

Disappointingly, Moderators noted that a number of centres failed to meet the specification requirement that they must include a mix of task types in their samples.

Presentation and Discussion

In most cases, the presentation section was timed correctly (one to three minutes), thus leaving enough time for sufficient spontaneous conversation to follow.

Genuine dialogue including unpredictable questions is essential to give candidates access to the highest scores. However, Moderators found many instances of over-rehearsed tests – a more likely occurrence in centres where all the students did a presentation on the same topic.

Picture-based Discussion

Many *Picture-based Discussions* allowed students to speak spontaneously on a topic they found interesting and to demonstrate their ability to answer unpredictable questions. When Teacher-Examiners used a pre-prepared bank of questions, this did little to encourage natural conversations and had a detrimental effect on their candidates' Content & Response marks. In some cases, it was difficult to tell whether a test was actually a *Picture-based Discussion*, since it was treated more as a *Presentation and Discussion*.

Open Interaction

Open Interactions based on a realistic transaction-type situation were an ideal way of encouraging meaningful dialogue. Unfortunately, there were many centres where candidates omitted to ask questions; it is important that Teacher-Examiners remind them to do so with an instruction in the stimulus, to avoid a loss of Content & Response marks. A number of tasks offered as Open Interactions were in fact Presentations in disguise; some were little more than pre-prepared Q & A sessions. Centres intending to conduct *Open Interactions* should consult the Edexcel-suggested scenarios, which can either be adapted, or used as a source of inspiration.

The three task types enable students to display different skills and should therefore be well differentiated.

Conduct of the tests

In a majority of centres, Teacher-Examiners ensured that chosen topics were suitable and respected timings. They are to be congratulated on the efficient and sympathetic way in which they led the conversations, adapting their questions to the candidates' ability and responses, including unpredictable elements, encouraging spontaneous elaborate responses and the use of a variety of tenses.

However, when tests were not conducted with these points in mind, the candidates' performances were adversely affected:

- the top Content & Response mark bands were out of reach in the absence of genuine dialogue.
- the highest Range of Language marks could only be obtained if good structures, development and use of tenses were evident.
- the Content & Response mark suffered when some of the discussion points were not covered in the first 6 minutes of a too-long test.
- marks had to be deducted when a whole test was too short, when a presentation was too short, or in an *Open Interaction* when the student failed to ask questions.

Application of mark grids and marking principles

It was pleasing to note that, on the whole, Teacher-Examiners had correctly interpreted the Assessment criteria, awarding marks in line with the standards set by the examination board. When deciding on marks, it is helpful to start by looking at the description of the middle band under each heading, then move up or down the bands according to the candidate's performance.

The marking principles that affect the Content & Response mark must also be applied when the test is a near monologue rather than a conversation, when genuine interaction is lacking, when candidates ask no questions in *Open Interactions*, or when whole tests or presentations are too short. Moderators felt that a number of centres were unaware of this.

Administration

OPTEMs

Whilst most centres sent the correct copy of the 2A OPTEMs with their samples, Moderators found instances where none were sent, or more than one set was included. Teacher-Examiners need to enter their marks both on the OPTEMs and online. This was not done by all.

Sample

The candidates whose tests are part of the sample are indicated with a * on the 2A OPTEMs. To these must be added those who obtained the highest mark and the lowest mark in their 2A test.

For each candidate in the sample, the 2A recording and all accompanying paperwork must be sent for moderation.

Whilst most Teacher-Examiners were aware of this, there was a surprisingly large number of cases where

Moderators had to contact centres and request omitted items.

CM2 forms

Almost all centres used the correct CM2 mark sheets and a majority completed them accurately.

Nevertheless, Moderators found that some had not been duly filled in and signed by both candidate and Teacher-Examiner, leading to delays whilst the missing information or signatures were obtained.

CA2 forms

These are used for student notes, which should be (but were not always) words rather than full sentences.

In many centres, candidates opted not to use CA2 forms and this was shown, as required, in the appropriate box on the CM2s. When this box was not ticked, Moderators expected to find CA2 forms bearing the candidates' notes.

Stimuli

For *Open Interactions*, the required stimulus needs to explain the transaction and remind the candidate to ask questions. A task outline should be provided for *Presentations and Discussions* and *Picture-based Discussions*. When none was enclosed in the sample, Moderators had to

guess what the students had been asked to do. The doubt as to whether the candidates had communicated all the 'relevant information related to the chosen visual/topic/stimulus' and had answered any 'unpredictable questions' resulted in a reduction of the Content & Response marks.

Recordings

Only rare instances of poor sound quality or blank recordings were reported. Moderators had to contact a few centres whose parcels contained no recordings. Whilst most Teacher-Examiners had labelled their recordings very clearly, also indicating the relevant track numbers on the CM2 sheets, Moderators sometimes struggled to locate the tests they needed to listen to. In some cases, both 2A and 2B tasks had been recorded together, which made it difficult to find individual 2A tasks.

A huge majority of Teacher-Examiners remembered to start each test with recommended introduction.

Conclusion

Overall, the students' performances this year were pleasing and fully reflected their ability. This is to the credit of their Teacher-Examiners. Although there were certainly a fair number of native speakers amongst the candidates, the vast majority were young people from the UK who enjoyed the tasks which they were asked to execute. Most of them also enjoyed a good rapport with the teacher examiner and talked with a fair degree of confidence on their prepared topic.

Grade Boundaries

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