

Moderators' Report/ Principal Moderator Feedback

June 2011

GCSE Urdu (5UR02) Paper 2A

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Speaking

General

This is the first full year in which candidates have been examined for this unit based upon the new GCSE specification. There were approximately 2000 entries.

As this is a new examination format, there was some concern about the ease, with which the Teacher/Examiners would be able to put the new examination into practice. As it turned out, very few centres where there were problems, and they were not really concerned with the actual conduct of the examination, rather the main headache for all concerned was the plethora of paperwork, which resulted in much confusion all round.

In such cases, the Moderators have had to deal with them and to concentrate on the job of trying assess the mark to the candidates' performances, with the proviso that candidates can only be judged upon the recorded evidence presented.

Format

Each candidate is required to perform two tasks, both of which are marked by the Teacher-Examiner, one of which is submitted to Edexcel for moderation.

There were a number of stimuli available for use by centres on the Edexcel website but centres were free to adapt these to suit their purposes or to create their own. If in doubt, they could submit these tasks to Edexcel for approval. Each task should last for about 4 or 5 minutes.

The candidates will have previously chosen one of these tasks earlier in their course and will, at least in theory, have studied and practiced it in some way before recording it.

Tasks

It is presumed that the Teacher/Examiner has normally spent time with their students discussing and working on their chosen tasks. They should know their level of linguistic competence and ask appropriate questions. In the majority of cases, the language used by Teacher/Examiners was pitched at the right level.

PICTURE-BASED TASK

The most commonly attempted task was the picture-based discussion. Here, the candidate was free to bring in any picture of their choice and talk about it with the teacher examiner. Although the specification requires candidates to ask questions in order to get the highest marks, this particular task does not lend itself quite so easily to a candidate asking questions.

PRESENTATION

The next most common task was a presentation. This was frequently on 20-20 Cricket, which was on at the time, or a Bollywood actor or film. These were, as might be expected, variable in quality. It was a little disturbing to find a large number of candidates from a centre performing almost identical presentations. This is not in the spirit of the controlled assessment.

INTERACTION

This was less frequently attempted, and I think most suited to the more able candidates.

They tended to follow, more or less exactly, the samples given, such as "Tourist Information". Most were able to convey the visitor's questions and some were able to ask their own questions of the Teacher/Examiner. This is a key point as it is worth 2 marks if they ask a couple of questions to the Teacher/Examiner.

Marking Principles

The following general marking principles are offered as guidance on the application of the mark scheme. They were used by Moderators this summer and show how the mark scheme should be applied to different scenarios that arise during the conduct of the oral.

Tests should last between 4 and 6 minutes.

Tests which are too short: < less than 3'30" - so 3'29 " is too short

- Automatic deduction of 2 marks on the Content and Response grid.
- There is no adjustment applied to either Range or Accuracy.

Test which are too long: > more than 6 minutes

- Once the 6 minutes have passed, stop listening and assessing at the end of the next sentence.

Test which are a monologue and have no interaction

- Candidates cannot score more than 7 marks for Content and Response.
- This does not affect the marks for either Range or Accuracy.

Open interaction tasks only

- If a candidate asks only one question in a task that requires 2 or more – deduct 1 mark from the Content and Response.
- Candidate asks no questions during the task – deduct 2 marks from the Content and Response.

The other two assessment criteria will not be affected. There is an expectation in this task type that the candidate will ask the TE questions since it is a transactional task type. Although interaction is important in all three task types, **there is no requirement for candidates to ask questions in the Presentation and discussion or in the Picture-based discussion task options.**

Marks for content and language are awarded discretely – i.e. if a candidate scores 8-11 for content, there is no imposed ceiling on either of the other assessment boxes for range or accuracy

Presentation and Discussion

- The presentation must last between 1 – 3 mins (max). If the presentation is shorter than 1 min deduct 2 marks for Content and Response.

Problems

Problems arose when Teacher/Examiners seemed not to have fully grasped the concept of the new specification. They do have a responsibility to prepare themselves as well as their students. That means to familiarise themselves with the requirements of the controlled assessment and to fully understand their role before and during the test.

It is clear that many centres have not yet come to terms with the new specification's requirements, especially regarding Topic Areas, which are markedly different from the old GCSE Specification. While this year examiners were instructed to be broad-minded about this, teachers are recommended to study the new Topic Areas before the next examination preparations commence.

Experience informs us that when the tests are well conducted, the candidates score well, within their individual expertise; if the tests are not properly conducted the ability of the candidates concerned to maximise their potential is compromised.

In oral examinations, at both GCSE and GCE level, there has been a long-term issue. While it is to be expected that candidates will practice talking about their chosen topics, this component of the examination is a discussion. It is **not a monologue** or a speech and should not be prepared or delivered as such. Such candidates were not able to score highly in the Response grid. **They are also expected to ask questions.**

Teacher/Examiners have a hard job but they must prepare themselves as well as their students if their candidates are to achieve their full potential. By reading the specification, using the Edexcel website to find out more information, and preparing suitable questions for their candidates, they will be better able to conduct a successful Oral Examination.

Material in Centres

The main job of the moderator is to assess and mark the candidates' performance and that is a job requiring intense concentration. When material arrives from centres with tapes that are un- or partially labelled, and it is extremely time-consuming and wearisome to sort out unlabelled cassettes. When recording candidates, clearly state the candidate's name and number before starting each examination. While it is clearly unrealistic to expect only one candidate on each side of a tape, it is possible to use c60 cassettes that can comfortably fit two candidates on each side. The increasing use of CDs and USBs to record material is to be strongly encouraged.

Conclusion

Despite some of the issues mentioned above, which, it must be stressed, affected only a small minority of centres, that the majority of the tests were very well conducted by well prepared Teacher/Examiners with well prepared students.

Grade Boundaries

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.

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link: <http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>

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