

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2013

GCSE Urdu (5UR02)
Paper 2A Speaking in Urdu

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Publications Code UG037051

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GCSE Urdu Paper 2 Speaking in Urdu Examiner Report

General Comments

This examination is conducted and marked by centres themselves, and then samples are moderated by the team of Edexcel appointed moderators.

As time has gone on most centres have gained some expertise in preparing their students for, and then conducting the Controlled Assessment Tasks. Fortunately, very few centres had problems, and they were not concerned with the actual conduct of the examination.

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

One point is that many of our teachers working on a peripatetic and part-time basis have little or no regular contact with the school examinations officer who is very busy at this time of year. The other point is that many teacher examiners seem unaware that some of the forms are simply downloadable from the Edexcel website.

The Format

Each student is required to perform two controlled assessment tasks, both of which are marked by the Teacher-Examiner, one of which is submitted to an Edexcel moderator 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. Each task should last between 4 - 6 minutes.

Tasks

It is presumed that the teacher examiner has normally spent time with their students discussing and working on topic areas before the tasks are given to the students and the preparation period begins. Teachers setting the tasks should know their students' level of linguistic competence and ask appropriate questions during the assessment. In the majority of cases the language used by teacher examiners was pitched at the right level, but some students are still disadvantaged by the basic nature of the questions asked. .

Picture Based Discussion

The most commonly attempted task was the picture-based discussion. Here the student was free to bring in any picture of their choice and talk about it with the teacher examiner. This particular task does not lend itself quite so easily to a student asking questions. The problem here is the teacher examiner conducting the assessment not asking questions which cover past, present and future tenses, thus limiting the marks available.

Presentation and Discussion

The next most commonly attempted task was a Presentation when a student prepared and answered questions. This was frequently on sport or a Bollywood actor or film. These were, as might be expected, variable in quality. The use of a cricket match or indeed any single event in the past can be quite limiting, as the teacher examiner has to prepare carefully in order to allow the student to demonstrate a full range of vocabulary and tenses, including past present and future to get the best marks.

It is still too common to find a large number of students from a centre performing almost identical presentations, although this is not forbidden as such, it is certainly not to be encouraged.

Open Interaction

This task type was less frequently attempted, and most suited to the more able students. Some centres devised their own Open Interactions while others clearly based theirs on the samples given by Edexcel.

Most were able to convey the visitor's questions and some were able to ask their own questions of the teacher examiner.

It is necessary for students to ask questions in this type of task in order to get the best available mark, but we have heard many otherwise excellent students fail to get top marks because, presumably they had not been taught or prompted to ask questions.

Problems

The problems arose when teacher examiners seemed not have fully grasped the concept of the new specification. They do have a responsibility to prepare themselves as well as their students. That means doing their homework and finding out what they are required to do before and during the assessment.

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

In oral examinations, at both GCSE and GCE level there has been a long-term issue which merits some comment. While it is to be expected that

students 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. Students who did so were not able to score highly in the Response grid on the mark scheme. They are also expected to ask questions, especially in the Open Interaction Task.

Teacher examiners must prepare themselves as well as their students if they 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 students, they will be better able to conduct a successful Oral Examination.

Organisation of Material in Centres

Paperwork

Often moderators had to contact centres because the correct forms had not been sent or, more frequently, not signed by the student and the teacher. It is important that the mark sheet contains the authentication signatures of both.

Recordings

When material arrives from centres with tapes that are un- or partially labelled, it is extremely time consuming to sort out unlabelled cassettes. When recording students, clearly state the student's name and number before starting each examination. While it is clearly unrealistic to expect only one student on each side of a tape, it is possible to use c60 cassettes that can comfortably fit two students on each side. The increasing use of CDs and USBs to send material is to be encouraged.

Internal Moderation

Centres with more than one teacher examiner must check and internally standardise their marking. Since most of the centres are small, there are few instances where this has been necessary but there was no evidence that this took place. Larger centres must ensure that they follow the appropriate procedures.

Marking

Moderators report that nearly all of the centres' marking was sufficiently accurate. However, there were exceptions. In order to mark accurately, teacher examiners must not only familiarise themselves with the marking criteria but also conduct the examinations in such a way as to maximize their students' performance potential.

Conclusion

Despite the problems mentioned above, which, it must be stressed, affected only a small minority of centres, the majority of the tests were very well conducted by well prepared teacher examiners with well prepared students.

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

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