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Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2017

Pearson Edexcel GCSE

In Urdu (5UR02)

Paper 2A: Speaking in Urdu.

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GCSE Urdu
Unit 2: Speaking in Urdu
Examiners Report

GCSE Urdu Unit 2: Speaking

Principal Moderator Report 2017

Foreword

GCSE Urdu Unit 2 Speaking is a well-established oral assessment component of GCSE specification. The assessment of speaking component requires the learner to demonstrate that s/he can communicate and interact effectively in speech in Urdu.

Most centres, as always, have undertaken the task of preparing, examining, assessing and recording their students' oral performance very professionally.

This certainly has made the moderation team's job easier. However, only a few centres have had problems this year and where the teacher examiners were not well prepared and up to date. They didn't follow the specification requirements, hence caused deduction of marks for even very able students. In other cases, problems were not related to the actual procedure and conduct of the examination. Instead, they were mainly due to the following:

- incomplete paperwork
- not keeping the test above the minimum required time of 3.30 minutes
- not ensuring that the presentation time is at least one minute
- not instructing the candidates to ask two questions from the teacher examiner during test to fulfil the specific requirement of open interaction task or allowing the candidate to turn the test into a monologue by not involving them into discussion and interaction.

Also, a few centres keep using the old forms for assessment instead of CM2, which causes great difficulty for moderators as those are not appropriate for moderation process. Centres are strongly reminded that they must download the up-to-date CM2 form and other paperwork for GCSE Urdu Speaking before starting the examination process.

Although teacher examiners like to see students achieve maximum marks, if the students are not prepared properly prior to the oral test and the teacher examiner has not refreshed his/her knowledge about the requirements of the test and specification, the students are not helped to do better but end up being disadvantaged.

In such cases, Moderators have to concentrate on the job of trying to assess the correct mark for the candidate, with the possibility that they judge the candidates' performance only from the recorded evidence presented to them.

The format

Each candidate is required to perform two tasks: 2A and 2B. The teacher examiner marks both in line with three-mark grids in the mark scheme. The centres submit Task 2A to the Exam Board for moderation.

There are a number of stimuli available for use by centres on the Pearson Edexcel website. The centres are free to adapt these to suit their purposes or to create their own as long as they fall within the topic areas in the specification. If in doubt, they could submit these tasks to the exam board for approval. This year only a very small number of centres presented tasks to the exam board for advice and the Board was happy to do so.

Usually the candidates will have previously chosen a topic and one of these tasks earlier in their course and will, at least in theory, have studied and practiced it in some way before oral test recording.

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 questions appropriate to the topic and the ability level of the students during the test. In most cases, the language used by teacher examiners was pitched at the right level.

i) 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. In this particular task, candidates do not have to ask any questions from the teacher examiner.

It must be stressed that selecting a suitable picture is important. It must be one that gives the candidate the best chance to display his or her spoken language skills. This task is narrative in nature hence can be limiting in the use of past, present and future tenses during discussion. Here teacher examiner needs to ask appropriate questions to ensure that the student is able to demonstrate its ability to use of all three types of tenses for achieving best marks.

One problem was that relatively large number of candidates' work submitted did not contain a copy of the picture, or the least, a brief description of the picture. This helps the moderators immensely when listening to the material.

ii) Presentation Discussion Task

The next most commonly attempted task was a Presentation Discussion when a student prepared and answered questions. This was often on a topic of student's own choice, or sport's personality, a Bollywood actor or film. These were variable in quality.

The use of a 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 candidate

to demonstrate a full range of vocabulary and tenses, including past present and future to get the best marks.

It was a little disturbing to find some occasions when a large number of candidates from one centre performed almost identical presentations. This didn't occur frequently except when candidates were describing a film they had seen. Although it is not forbidden, moderators do feel that if a whole centre is doing the same task then it may not always be in the best interests of all the individuals concerned.

Another unusual practice has come in to light where students are mainly spending most of their time in presentation (which apparently sounds like being read from a paper including answers to a few questions) being asked by the teacher examiner during discussion. It is certainly a bad practice and must be avoided.

iii) Open Interaction Task

This was less frequently attempted, and it is generally considered most suited to the more able candidates.

A fair number 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 to the Teacher/Examiner. In this particular component, it is necessary for the candidate to ask at least two questions as a requirement in order to access the highest marks.

Problems

The problems arose when teacher examiners seemed to not have fully grasped the concept of the specification. They do have a responsibility to prepare themselves as well as their students. That means finding out what they are required to do before and during the test to ensure, their students are not disadvantaged due to lack of their own preparation.

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

In oral examinations, at GCSE level there has been a long-term issue, which merits some comment. 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 must not be prepared or delivered as such. Candidates who did so were not able to score highly in the response grid on the mark scheme they rather end up losing up to half marks out of content and response.

Teacher examiners have a hard job but they must prepare themselves as well as their students if they are to achieve their full potential. By reading the Specification, using the Pearson Edexcel Website to find out more information,

and preparing suitable questions for their candidates, they will be better equipped to conduct a successful Oral Examination.

Organisation of 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. If material arrives without the correct paperwork or incorrectly filled in, or if the audio recording is not clear and easily audible it does make the Moderator's job more difficult and very time-consuming.

Another difficulty arose when the teacher examiner and the candidate did not sign on the Assessment form CM2 in the spaces provided. It became necessary to contact centres and ask them to redo the form and make sure both the candidate and the teacher examiner have signed it.

Moreover, if more than one teacher examiner are involved in conducting the oral tests then internal standardisation must be done prior to conducting the oral tests of students.

Conclusion

The problems mentioned above, it must be stressed, only affected a small number of centres. On the other hand, well-prepared teacher examiners conducted the majority of the tests very well with well-prepared students.

