



Examiners' Report Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2023

Pearson Edexcel GCSE
In Urdu (1UR0)
Paper 2H: Speaking

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General Comments

The GCSE Urdu 2023 / 1UR0_2H & 2F (1-9) series was successful, with a lot of well-conducted tests from the centres. Generally, a high standard of work was produced by students. Examiners reported that they heard many very good performances and listened to some imaginative and interesting orals. There was evidence of the full range of abilities entered at each tier and performances reflected this throughout all three elements of the speaking examination.

Most students performed very well keeping up with the demands of the specification, especially with the number of tasks and length of exam. Most of the centres have well prepared their pupils; they have covered a wide range of topics for all parts of the test. Most pupils have given opinions fluently without hesitation with fully developed justification to Communication Content, Linguistic Knowledge & Accuracy.

Teachers have targeted good range of relevant questions and in response to that most of the pupils have consistency in grammatical structures, successful references to tenses (past, present and future), no hindering in their clarity and they responded back so wisely. Almost all centres have attached their attendance registers. Good administration was in practice by most centres except few those have not included CS2 forms or attendance registers on LWA. Overall, mostly centres have submitted their pupil's work before deadline and work was well presented.

It is vital that centres are given robust feedback about the conducting the exams and student performances. This will enable some centres to provide training for some staff, so that in future exams are conducted smoothly and will not hinder in the performance of students. The general performances in the higher tier were good however the standard of students' work varied enormously in foundation tier. In some cases, the student performance was affected because teacher was not able to meet the criteria of the exam especially in the roleplays.

The Recordings standard was generally good and examiners were able to understand the conversations clearly however occasionally they were some background noises for example school bell etc., which is difficult to avoid. Some teachers should be provided with the advice on positioning of the recording equipment because teachers were a lot louder than the students. The recording device needs to be closer to student rather than teacher to hear the student clearly.

Role-plays

Student responses within the role-play do not need to be elaborate and best practice is to keep answers to what is required within the bullet points. Unfortunately, where students gave overlong responses these sometimes contained material which caused communication to be less clear and therefore not able to score full marks since there was some ambiguity.

It is important that students read the scenario carefully in order to understand where the role-play is situated in order to aid understanding before completing the task and providing answers that are in context.

Teacher-examiners are reminded that they should adhere to the wording of the role-play including where a student is required to ask a question. Teachers should also keep to the register that is within the scenario and not change it to what they normally use during their teaching.

The unpredictable question was well done by more successful students; however, less successful students often offered no response or one which had no relevance to the situation of the role-play.

There were many instances of poor intonation and occasionally statements as an answer to the question rather than a question asked.

Picture- based task

While this task requires responses to the bullet points to have extended responses, these should not be a series of long monologues. Best practice is to keep answers to what is required within the bullet points. Unfortunately, where students gave overlong responses these sometimes contained material which caused communication to be ambiguous, leading to the clarity of communication being impaired and, therefore, not able to score full marks.

There is, however, the need to develop responses, adapting language to describe, narrate and inform in response to the stimulus questions. Students must also give opinions and for these to be fully justified to reach the higher mark bands. However, some students gave elaborate responses after a suitable answer had been given and the extra information did not add anything to what had already been said.

Examiners are looking for the quality of the response rather than the length. There is no need to go through the supplementary prompts when a perfectly good response has been given. Indeed, the ensuing silence as the student is unable to give further information does not help the student. Some of the tasks were thus overlong, there is nothing to be gained by this and some student's performances

deteriorated towards the end of the task and appeared to also have an impact on the performance within the conversation as they tired.

At Higher tier, there was a wide range of marks awarded and this was because there was an uneven level of response across the task. Some students were able to give very good descriptions of the photograph and offered very good opinions with some justification but were less forthcoming in the response when dealing with events in the past and the future. The most successful students were able to relate past events effectively and give reasons for why they took part and their opinions of the events were fully justified. In addition, they were able to give developed reasons for any future events with minimal prompting and there was little hesitancy within the responses. The most able students were able to use different time frames appropriately throughout the whole of their response. Less confident students could often use the appropriate time frame within the first part of any response but when following up with opinions and justification there were often errors in the formation of tenses and this led to some ambiguity.

Within both tiers there was a wide variation in the pronunciation and intonation of students. Successful students had it seemed made notes for their responses to the set questions rather than reading out sentences that they had written during the preparation period.

Centres are reminded that the questions within the Picture-based discussion are set and they should not be altered in any way. Unfortunately, there were instances where teacher-examiners reworded or reframed questions which did not allow students to be credited for responses to these questions. There were also occasions where supplementary questions were added in the middle of the task. No credit could be given for these responses and the practice caused confusion for these students who had prepared responses to the five bullet points.

Conversation

In general, the conversations were well conducted and the skilful and appropriate questioning from the teacher-examiner afforded students the opportunities to fulfil their potential in line with the criteria enabling students to achieve their best.

Centres are reminded that in the conversation task, there are two themes tested, the first chosen by the student and the second by Pearson according to the sequencing grid. Students may give a presentation of up to one minute on their chosen theme and each theme should be of roughly equal length. Examiners reported that there was a far greater proportion of time spent on the first chosen theme and insufficient time spent on the Pearson chosen theme in some centres. This may affect marks awarded as the conversation is marked globally and examiners take into consideration performances across both themes.

The presentation allows students to be confident with presenting some information and the follow-up discussion then allows them to explore this with the teacher-examiner in more detail before moving to a second theme. It is therefore crucial to

ensure that both themes are well represented and accomplished. In more than a few centres a carefully learnt topic within a theme was used for the presentation, but when it came to delivering answers in the rest of the conversation, some answers were not always understandable due to the errors made or questions were not understood, particularly with less successful students. Where this was successful, centres used the presentation as a starting point, and the remaining time to follow-up on ideas given by the student, to probe further about the subject, and allow the student to take part in a spontaneous exchange.

The task was often less successful where the presentation was followed by a sequence of well-rehearsed questions and answers. This did not allow students to access the higher mark bands as there is a need for spontaneity, interaction and an ability to deal with unpredictable questions within both themes. In these cases, teacher-examiners did not take the opportunities offered by the student to explore in more detail what the student had said. In some cases, teacher-examiners had ignored what the student had said in the presentation and asked a question that had already been referred to and consequently led to confusion. Best practice is to respond to the answers of the students rather than having a pre-set list of questions which do not allow students the chance to take part in a truly spontaneous interaction, thus preventing them accessing the higher mark bands for Interaction and Spontaneity, particularly at the Higher tier.

There were occasions where teacher-examiners asked too many closed questions. Where a student was capable and clearly able to produce extended answers, this was extremely disappointing as the student, in a stressful situation, sometimes opted for a non response rather than produce responses that would allow them to reach their full potential. Similarly, on occasions students were not given enough thinking time before teacher-examiners rephrased questions or moved on to another question.

Within the mark schemes there is a need for students to be able to produce developed responses and extended sequences of speech to reach the higher mark bands for Communication and Content. There should be evidence of using the language creatively to express thoughts, ideas and opinions and these appropriately justified with a range of vocabulary.

Areas for Improvement with some examples

There are few centres in which teachers who conducted the exams did not go through how to conduct speaking exam training, which misled as well as disadvantaged pupils' performance. Given below are examples to follow in next year's exam.

- Conduct the exam as expected, give introductions and instructions.

be aware of how to conduct exam and what the targeted questions will be, specially picture based questioning techniques to be in line with assessment criteria. It should not be a speech but a conversation.

- Avoid using English vocabulary.
- Allowing candidate to take initiatives.
- Avoid additional questions in picture based section, very long unnecessary detailed responses from candidates in role play and picture based section.
- Give introduction for each card and task in all recordings.
- Avoid having the teacher very close to microphone and candidates far from it, which causes difficulty in listening to their recordings.
- Avoid noisy backgrounds, making it hard to understand.
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Suggestions and Advice

Make sure pupils are fully aware of assessment criteria when they are preparing for tasks.

Roleplay

Keep to your script as laid out in the Teacher's Role. Not to do so will mean that the student's response will receive a mark of 0 for Communication in that task.

Once the student completes an incorrect answer, a mark of 0 for Communication is given for that task, even if you repeat the question and a correct answer is given subsequently.

Students are required to ask questions at the end of role play. The teacher examiner must ask students e.g. Do you have any questions?

Photo card

Ask all five questions in the Teacher's Booklet, but do not ask any follow-up questions.

Keep an eye on the timing. If a student's replies are very long and it looks as though you may not be able to ask the final question in the three-minute maximum time, you may be better to interrupt an answer and ask the next one.

General conversation

Encourage students to vary their language structures and vocabulary as much as possible. Opinions are the most obvious area to focus on, so at higher tier encourage students to express them using a range of more sophisticated structures and a wider variety of adjectives than at Foundation tier.

Train students to give and justify opinions without necessarily being asked to do so. This can form the basis of different starter activities.

Try to ask students questions that reflect their interests. Don't ask all students identical questions.

In order to achieve a greater sense of spontaneity in the conversation, follow up a student's response by asking about what they have just told you.

