

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2013

International GCSE Urdu (4UR0)

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International GCSE Urdu 4U0

Introduction:

The overall level of difficulty, content and linguistic demand of the paper was similar to previous years. The topics were relevant, interesting, informative and easily accessible by the majority of the candidates. The overall performance of the candidates was slightly better than previous year. The general trend of Urdu to English translations is getting better, while English to Urdu translations are not showing enough improvement when compared to previous years.

In Question 4 most candidates demonstrated good essay and letter writing skills in Urdu. They demonstrated their subject knowledge and tackled the topics fairly maturely with the use of appropriate vocabulary. They also gave good reasons to justify their arguments for or against in a convincing manner. However, some candidates did not grasp precisely what was being asked in the essay and letter writing questions and ended up writing content information not relevant to the topic.

Question 1:

In this question, candidates were required to translate five sentences 1(a), 1(b), 1(c), 1(d) and 1(e) from English to Urdu.

The majority of the candidates found sentence 1(a) slightly challenging and lost one or two mark. Others found 1(b) a little bit tricky. In this question, accurate and precise translation into Urdu was required. Those candidates who had good knowledge of grammar and vocabulary performed very well and achieved full marks.

These sentences were rather interesting and are frequently used in everyday life. The overall performance of most candidates was not bad and scored reasonable marks. In case of 1(a), 'This year, I will aim to achieve the best I can.' (اس سال، میرا ارادہ بہترین کامیابی حاصل کرنے کا ہے۔), many candidates did not read and grasp the message correctly before translating it, hence, made mistakes when translating. The majority of the candidates did not translate the phrase 'aim to achieve the best' appropriately. In 1(b), really (واقعی) and carefully (احتیاط), were badly translated. In 1(c), believe (یقین) and discovered (دریافت کیا) were not translated accurately by many candidates. While others translated 'discovered' (دریافت کیا) as 'invented' (ایجاد کیا), which was not appropriate within the context of the message. In 1(d), showing off (شیخی مارنا/دکھاوا کرنا) again translated in different ways. Surprisingly, the majority of the candidates translated 1(e) correctly and received full marks.

Question 2(a):

This question consisted of an English text for translation into Urdu and held 15 marks. The title of this passage was 'Holy relics in Istanbul'. Here students needed to follow rules of grammar, composition and vocabulary specifically used in Urdu language. Majority of the candidates with good knowledge of grammar and vocabulary tackled this passage very well. They demonstrated their bilingual ability and scored very good marks. Few candidates with poor bilingual skills and vocabulary found some keywords and phrases challenging e.g. 'amazing to see how old meets new' (قدیم کا جدید سے ملناحیرت انگیز/حیران کن لگتا تھا.); masterpiece of Turkish Architecture (ترکی کے فن تعمیر کا شاہکار/نمونہ) and also decorated with diamonds and

precious jewels (بیروں اور قیمتی لعل و جواہرات سے آراستہ کیا گیا ہے/ سجایا گیا ہے۔)

Question 2(b):

This question consisted of an English text for translation into Urdu and held 10 marks. The title of this passage was 'Social networking'. Some candidates translated this passage with poor spellings, grammatically incorrect sentences. The main difficulties were e.g. 'chat about their future career plans' (اپنے مستقبل کے بارے میں گفتگو کرتے ہیں); 'web/net' as (جال/جالی) as literal meaning which was out of context; among other things (دوسری چیزوں کے علاوہ); 'The Student Room' is great for discussion (دی اسٹوڈنٹ روم بہترین/شاندار ہے، گفتگو/بحث و مباحثہ کے لئے).

Question 3(a):

Question 3(a) consisted of an Urdu text for translation into English and held 15 marks. The title of this passage was 'Ink-credible pen'. This question was a test of candidates' bilingual skills for transferring meaning from Urdu into English. Most candidates who had good vocabulary and grammar of both languages performed really well and scored high marks in content and quality of language. Candidates with average knowledge of Urdu vocabulary and grammar had difficulty in understanding some keywords and phrases from the passage e.g. Sirf (صرف), 76 Heerey jurey hu'ey they (76 بیرے جڑے ہوئے تھے۔), chabbis salah Angrez nojawan (چھبیس سالہ انگریز نوجوان).

Question 3(b):

Question 3(b) consisted of an Urdu text for translation into English and held 10 marks. The title of this passage was 'Birthday'. Many candidates found the following keywords and phrases really challenging to translate into English correctly e.g. lambi reshmi dori (لمبی ریشمی ڈوری) (long silk thread/string); chaandi ka challa (چاندی کا چھلا) (silver ring). The phrase girah-detey (گرہ دیتے) 'putting a knot' was literally translated by some candidates as 'made to fall or fall' (گرا دیتے) which was out of context and hence lost a few mark.

Questions 4(a), (b), (c) and (d):

This was about writing a composition in the form of an essay or an informal letter of about 200-250 words in Urdu on any one of the three given topics. Majority of candidates who had good vocabulary and knowledge of language performed very well. They had demonstrated their knowledge of subject and tackled the topic very maturely. They gave good reasons to justify their argument for or against in a very convincing manner and were able to score good marks. A small number of candidates with poor vocabulary did not perform well and scored low mark. 4(d) was to test informal letter-writing skills. Majority of the candidates also performed very well and they demonstrated good letter writing skills and achieved good marks in both content and quality of language.

Question 4a:

Question 4a's topic for essay writing was on 'Do we really learn from our mistakes?' (کیا ہم واقعی اپنی غلطیوں سے سیکھتے ہیں؟) to be written in 200 to 250 words in Urdu. This topic brought some good pieces of Urdu composition for examiners to read. The majority of the candidates who attempted this topic did very well in conveying their thoughts and arguments in a balanced way.

Question 4b:

The topic 4b for writing an essay was on 'What can you do to stop falling in bad company?' (آپ بُرے لوگوں کی صحبت سے کیسے بچ سکتے ہیں؟) to be written in 200 to 250 words in Urdu. Some candidates attempted it very well. Their coverage mainly included personal experiences of youngsters these days. However, some candidates restricted themselves to more of a bookish knowledge.

Question 4c:

The topic 4c for writing an essay was on 'Every country needs good and sincere leaders' (ہر مَلک کو اچھے اور مخلص رہنماؤں کی ضرورت ہے۔) to be written in 200 to 250 words in Urdu. Most candidates attempted this topic very well, while others failed to realise the focus of the topic and continued writing tangential and unnecessary details, which consumed up the 250 words limit without doing any justice to the topic.

Question 4d:

The topic 4d for writing an informal letter was on 'Your cousin has invited you to visit him in England, but you cannot go. Write a letter of apology saying why you cannot go' (آپ کے کزن نے آپ کو انگلینڈ آنے کی دعوت دی ہے۔ لیکن آپ نہیں جاسکتے۔ اپنے کزن کے نام ایک خط میں اپنے نہ) to be written in 200 to 250 words in Urdu. Many candidates attempted it very well keeping the specific focus in mind e.g. their own 'financial difficulties', 'illness in the family', 'on-going exams' etc. Only a few candidates actually read and understood the focus of the stimulus and tackled it accordingly gaining very high marks or almost full marks.

Paper Summary:

The overall performance of the candidates was good. However, there are few areas for improvement. In English to Urdu translations weakness in writing good quality Urdu was evident. There were issues in writing names of cities, dates and times, use of appropriate tenses and plurals, and a general lack of good quality vocabulary. There were too many spelling errors in commonly known words and phrases.

Teachers should look at these things when preparing their students for this examination. Many candidates continued to write numbers in Urdu and got them wrong. Candidates should understand that numbers written in English digits are perfectly acceptable.

The quality of performance in Urdu to English translations was better. However, some candidates skipped certain words and phrases or transliterated them during translation. They must avoid this at this level of examination. Teachers from all centres must ensure that their students understand the importance of responding to the rubric. They must focus their response on what is being asked to do specifically in the question for gaining high marks, rather than writing their own version.

Grade Boundaries

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