

TELT March2012

Examiners' Report

1. Introduction

151 candidates sat for the TELT March 2012 examination session. The distribution of Final results and percentage details are listed below:

Unclassified	1
Fail	47
Narrow Fail	44
Pass	52
Merit	7
Distinction	0

In conclusion, **61 candidates** were awarded Pass grades or higher. This is the equivalent of **40.4%** of the candidates who sat the examination, a drop of 17% from the November 2011 session.

2. General Remarks

The TELT March 2012 session was the third sitting using the newly revised syllabus. The paper followed rigorously the format, recommendations and sample sections of the new syllabus. The team of examiners commented that the use throughout the paper of the exact rubric suggested in the new syllabus document seems to have benefitted the majority of the candidates in that it eliminated doubts as to what was exactly required of them in any given part of the paper.

A number of candidates were on the whole well-prepared for this exam although examiners are noticing a phenomenon that is slowly but clearly emerging: candidates generally perform particularly well only in the sections for which they are able to study. Most candidates in fact found a certain amount of difficulty in those exercises which required skill at the manipulation of lexis, vocabulary formation and language transformations within the given parameters as well as in the writing skills section.

Candidates also had an opportunity to demonstrate a range of writing skills in Part 2 Section E and where they scored broadly similarly in both essays.

3. Section Analysis

Part 1 Language Description, Sensitivity and Awareness

Section A - Language Terminology

Once again, examiners are pleased to note and confirm that successful candidates prepared well for this section. Some performed very well indeed, and demonstrated an increased and clear understanding of language terminology, and an improved familiarity with English grammar.

Sections B, C and D (Phonology and Sound Patterns)

The examiners noted an overall general improvement over the performance in the Phonology section in the previous examination. However, this is an area which continues to be problematic for many candidates. Candidates generally scored well in the sections on Word Stress (Part 1 Section B) and recognition of words transcribed phonemically (Part 1 Section C), but the phonemic transcription exercise (Part 1 Section D), once again, proved to be a major stumbling block for a good number of candidates. Moreover, it continues to be disturbing to note that a sizeable number of candidates opted to ignore this exercise and did not tackle it at all.

It is also regrettable that in Section C, many candidates lost precious marks because of careless spelling mistakes, e.g., 'interruptions', 'negotsiation', 'negociations' and 'negosiations' and other rather improbable spelling versions.

All examiners feel that they need to reiterate that candidates and TELT preparation courses should focus much more sharply on this section, and that candidates who aspire to teach EFL in the near future should (be helped to) value and recognize the role of Phonology as a useful and effective classroom tool.

Section E—Odd one out

Candidates were generally well prepared for this section and approached the task methodically. In particular a number of candidates showed quite a good understanding of tenses and their functions, and seemed better equipped to notice language pattern differences in grammar, but were less prepared to identify other differences, e.g. in the meaning of vocabulary items, an area for which they are unable to study.

Moreover, prospective candidates would do well to focus on the recognition of the Odd One Out that goes beyond superficial differences like, for example, 'one is a question and three are statements'. Unfortunately, apart from a certain imagination demonstrated by many candidates' answers in this section, a large proportion of answers, albeit correct, lacked the 'in-depth' analysis that one would expect from prospective teachers of English

Part 2 Language Proficiency

Section A Identifying and Correcting Errors

The majority of candidates demonstrated a good range of lexis and a general knowledge of English and managed this task relatively well. Some struggled to correctly identify grammatical and spelling errors and in many cases attributed the error wrongly and/or corrected correct sentences.

Section B - Word Formation

Although a number of candidates demonstrated a sufficiently wide vocabulary knowledge as evidenced by a certain dexterity in the word formation tasks (Part 2 Section B), this exercise was a clear indicator of strength or weakness in vocabulary and understanding of morphological patterning in English words. While a few candidates provided almost all answers correctly, the vast majority performed miserably and produced almost all answers incorrectly. In particular, candidates often made full use of their imagination and coined a number of non-existent words for the occasion.

One would certainly expect a wider range of vocabulary from prospective EFL teachers.

Section C – Cloze Test – Selective Deletion

In this section the candidates were asked to think of a word which would fit into a gap within a text. This exercise tested a range of linguistic areas including grammar, collocation and also general reading skills and prediction abilities. Though grammatical errors led to the loss of some marks, it was felt that incorrect collocation generally remains a major problem area. Candidates simply collocate lexical items incorrectly as a result of, we suspect, a lack of or insufficient familiarity with and exposure to current spoken and written English.

This exercise proved to be very challenging leading to the vast majority of candidates faring badly and even failing this section.

Section D – Sentence Transformations

Generally, a much better performance was expected here. Many candidates lost precious marks and even failed this section because of a basic inability to manipulate sentence structures within the given parameters. This may be another illustration of a general trend among candidates indicating a lack of reading and exposure to modern written and colloquial English.

Overall the main problem with the candidates' performance in Sections C, B and D above seems to be caused by an intrinsic lack of language awareness and/or lexical sensitivity that both individual candidates and TELT preparation centres would do well to address.

Section E— Writing

In the free writing section, many candidates often proved to be more fluent than accurate. In particular, misuse of appropriate lexis and style, as well as grammatical errors especially in the areas of the use of tenses, prepositions and concord were common. All examiners also noted an inappropriate use of linkers and discourse markers.

What is also worth mentioning is the incidence of widespread spelling errors even for frequently used words. For candidates who aspire to become EFL teachers, this is indeed worrying and denotes carelessness and lack of attention to detail.

Once again, it was clear that candidates performed better in one essay genre than another. This was felt by all examiners who recommend the need for prospective candidates and TELT preparation course providers to focus on a wide range of essay genres as well as seek out opportunities to increase exposure to English in various registers. During such preparation courses it would also be beneficial to remind candidates to always keep in mind the ‘readership’ of their essay, and to address their writing accordingly.

A sharper focus on the layout and signposting linked with a number of genres during TELT Preparation courses also seems necessary.

On a more positive note, it was noted that most candidates made an appropriate choice of register this time round. Moreover, there were a few competent L1 speakers who, as a result of a natural familiarity with their mother tongue, performed very well in the writing section. (Naturally, this same familiarity with the L1, together with a certain over-reliance on it, did not necessarily prepare them adequately for the other sections of the examination.)

4. Recommendations

It is clear that candidates and TELT preparation course providers are to be commended for their efforts to prepare thoroughly for this exam.

It is also evident that while candidates are preparing/being prepared for grammar tasks quite thoroughly, less effort and attention seem to be given to extending and broadening their lexis, and their familiarity with collocations, appropriacy, style and (to a lesser extent) register.

Examiners felt that many candidates are not adequately prepared for the essay writing part of the exam. TELT preparation courses seem to require a more in-depth development of expression in the written register.

Specific training for the Speaking test is also recommended as it was noted that a small number of candidates struggled to cope with the speaking task largely due to a poor range of vocabulary and a certain lack of fluency. Given that these candidates are prospective teachers of EFL it was felt that this need should be highlighted and properly addressed.