

# TELT November 2011

## Examiners' Report

### 1. Introduction

121 candidates sat for the TELT November 2011 examination session. The distribution of results and percentage details are listed below:

#### Paper 1 - Written

Unclassified	2
Fail	19
Narrow Fail	27
Pass	58
Merit	15
Distinction	0

#### Paper 2 - Oral

Absent	1
Fail	2
Narrow Fail	1
Pass	27
Merit	23
Distinction	19

**69 candidates** were awarded Pass grades or higher. This is the equivalent of **57%** of the candidates who sat the examination.

## **2. General Remarks**

The TELT November 2011 session was the second sitting using the newly revised syllabus. The paper followed rigorously the format, recommendations and sample sections of the new syllabus. The four 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 give part of the paper.

Candidates were on the whole well-prepared for this exam and generally performed particularly well in the sections for which they were able to study. Most candidates however found a certain amount of difficulty in those exercises which required skill at 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**

It is evident that candidates prepared well for this section. They performed well, some very well, and showed an increased understanding of language terminology, and an improved familiarity with English grammar.

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

In spite of the fact that the examiners noted a slight overall general improvement over the performance in the Phonology section in previous examination, this is an area which continues to be problematic for many candidates. Although there was a marked improvement in candidate performance in the Word Stress (Part 1 Section B) and recognition of words transcribed phonemically (Part 1 Section C), the phonemic transcription exercise (Part 1 Section D) once again proved to be a major stumbling block for about 75% of the candidates. Moreover, it is disturbing to note that once again a 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., 'marrige', 'anulment', 'seperation'

All four examiners feel 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) 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 less prepared to identify differences in vocabulary and pronunciation.

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 lacked the ‘in-depth’ analysis that one would expect of 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 managed this task relatively well. Some struggled to correctly identify grammatical and spelling errors and in many cases attributed the error wrongly.

### **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 some candidates provided almost all answers correctly, some performed miserably and produced almost all answers incorrectly.

In particular, questions causing most difficulty were 'medicinal' and 'infringement'.

### **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 and prediction ability. 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 current spoken and written English.

## **Section D – Sentence Transformations**

Generally, a better performance was expected here. Many candidates lost precious marks and even failed in 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 spoken?) English.

## **Section E— Writing**

In the free writing section, many candidates often proved to be more fluent than accurate. In particular, misuse of appropriate lexis, style and register, as well as grammatical errors especially in the areas of the use of tenses, prepositions and concord were common. All four 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.

It is to be noted that the greatest majority of the candidates who attempted Option 4 fared badly in that their essays were out of subject. Most of them demonstrated that they did not understand the meaning and connotations of ‘a nostalgic journey’ and interpreted it to mean ‘exciting’, ‘exotic’ or ‘emotional’, thus producing a descriptive/narrative essay of a ‘memorable’ holiday or trip.

Once again, it was clear that candidates performed better in one essay genre than another. This was felt by all four examiners who recommend the need for prospective candidates and TELT preparation courses to focus on a wide range of essay genres, particularly reports (Option 5) and formal letter writing (Option 1) 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.

The choice of register also proved to be problematic, with many candidates opting for a too informal register and style in Option 1 and a too formal one in the blog entry (Option 2).

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

Moreover, the examiners felt that candidates would probably have been more successful in this task if they read the context of their chosen title more carefully.

#### **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 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 register, as well as the phonemic script.

Examiners felt that many candidates are not adequately prepared for the essay writing part of the exam. TELT preparation courses of study 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.