

TELT March 2015

Examiners' Report

1. Introduction

79 candidates sat for the TELT March 2015 examination session. **57 candidates** were awarded Pass grades or higher. This is the equivalent of a **72%** pass rate compared to 79.6% of the candidates who sat the examination in November 2014.

The grades for the written paper are listed below:

1 Unclassified

8 Fail

14 Narrow Fail

47 Pass

9 Pass with merit

There were no requests for a revision of paper.

62 Oral Test sessions (including 5 Resits) were held with the following results:

2 Absent

1 Unclassified

2 Narrow Fail

20 Pass

20 Pass with merit

17 Distinction

2. General Remarks

The TELT March 2015 session was the ninth sitting using the revised syllabus and followed the format, recommendations and sample sections therein rigorously. Once again, 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.

The examiners note the good overall results which demonstrate that a healthy percentage of the candidates, i.e. 72%, were well-prepared for and/or performed satisfactorily in this TELT examination session.

3. Section Analysis

Part 1 Language Description, Sensitivity and Awareness

Part 1 Section A – Language Terminology

As in previous examination sessions, the March 2015 candidates performed well in this section – a section for which candidates are able to study and prepare themselves adequately. The average mark was just above 32/40 indicating a good 81% in this important area.

Generally, candidates demonstrated that they can cope adequately with this section though a few lost marks as they clearly demonstrated problems with *basic* terminology like, for example, *names of tenses*, *auxiliary verbs* and *definite and indefinite articles*. This strange phenomenon is recurrent in all recent TELT examination sessions.

Part 1 Section B – Primary Stress Identification

Part 1 Section C– Transcription of Phonemic Script into Normal Spelling

Part 1 Section D – Transcription into Phonemic Script

The very good performance in the phonology sections registered in the November 2014 session (72%) was unfortunately not repeated this time round as in this exam session the overall percentage of the combined Phonology sections is just 61%. Candidates performed well in Section C (72%) and in Section B with a 76% rate (although many marks were again lost due to inaccurate spelling). As usual, **Section D – Transcription into Phonemic Script** comes out as the most challenging examination task for TELT candidates with a very disappointing 34%. Once again, examiners noticed that candidates shy away from this very useful classroom tool with as many as 17% of the candidates failing to score any marks in this section.

The examiners feel that, once again, they have to reiterate their conviction with exam preparation centres regarding the importance of teaching pronunciation and using the phonemic script as an important teaching aid in the classroom, an aid which encourages learner autonomy.

Part 1 Section E – Odd One Out

The average mark was just above 20/30, indicating a pass rate at 66% for this task.

Examiners once again noted those candidates who used the same answer as provided in the rubric had more chances of scoring highly as they covered all areas. A few candidates indicated which sentences they thought were the odd ones out without giving any explanations; in instances where they correctly identified the odd sentence, they were awarded one mark.

Candidates are once again reminded to focus on the words or phrases in bold and not the rest of the sentence when identifying conformity and contrast.

Part 2 Language Proficiency

Part 2 Section A – Identifying and Correcting Errors

The average mark was 13/20, indicating a satisfactory pass mark at just under 65% for this task.

Overall, candidate performance was just adequate in this area. As in previous examinations, it was noted that marks were lost when a number of candidates did not stick to the rubric and underline the error in the printed sentence. The spelling of easily confused words continues to be a serious obstacle – a worrying factor since we are talking about future teachers of English.

Candidates are advised to stick to the rubric and write down only the correct word, phrase or punctuation in the space provided. Examiners have once again noticed that candidates who wrote the whole sentence, apart from wasting precious examination time, often made spelling errors in other sections of the sentence, and although marks were not deducted for this, it indicated carelessness and overall poor performance.

Part 2 Section B – Word Formation

The average mark was marginally over 6/10, indicating a rather low 65% pass mark for this particular task – one which, examiners feel, should not present a serious obstacle to would-be English language teachers. The team of examiners noted once again that in this section they were repeatedly constrained to deduct marks for careless spelling mistakes, notable with the words *absorption*, *repentance*, *insertion* and *disbelief*.

Part 2 Section C – Cloze Test – Selective Deletion

The average mark was just 5/10 indicating a bleak 50% average for this important task, one which sheds light on the candidates' familiarity, or in many cases, lack of it, with common English collocations and fixed expressions. The Cloze Test continues to be the Achilles'

heel for TELT examination candidates. The examiners reiterate that the only solution to this problem is that candidates should read more regularly, as well as expose themselves to and exploit more English language opportunities in their everyday activities.

Part 2 Section D – Sentence Transformation

The average mark was just below 12/20 this time round, indicating a disappointing 59% mark for this task. However, a number of candidates sometimes came out with incorrect, and at times, 'creative' and very awkward sentence transformations especially in numbers 4, 7 and 10. Once again, a considerable number of marks were deducted as a result of careless spelling errors.

Part 2 Section E – Writing Section

The average percentage pass mark in this section, 71%, was almost identical to that recorded in the November 2014 session which stood at 72%.

Overall, there seems to have been an improvement in the writing section. Candidates should however pay much more attention to format with some text types such as reports and letters. Moreover, TELT Examination course providers should remind candidates that they should *not* sign letters with their real names or include their real addresses. Sentence structure caused problems and subsequent loss of marks: examiners often came across incomplete sentences or ones which were too long and elaborate. Some candidates were penalised due to the fact that they wrote essays which were 'out of subject'. number of such candidates seemed to have realised this problem and attempted to rectify it by 'stretching' the last sentence, as it were, in an attempt to make their essay 'fit' the topic. There were two cases where candidates only wrote one essay, leaving out the second essay entirely, obviously resulting in a considerable loss of marks.

Candidates who did well were coherent, with acceptable examples of collocation and clear flow of expression.

Candidates are encouraged to allow time for revision. Moreover, a considerable number of papers were submitted with handwriting that was barely legible. It needs to be reiterated that TELT Examination course providers would do well to emphasise that candidates should avoid presenting shoddy work and crossed out paragraphs, which is often clear evidence of bad planning and a certain degree of carelessness.

Candidates are therefore once again reminded that examiners have to read and understand the written tasks – clear handwriting is imperative.

4. The Speaking Test

A cursory look at the Speaking Test results on page 1 reveals that while the Pass rate is relatively high, with no less than 17 candidates having been awarded a Distinction, 5 candidates actually failed the oral test.

The candidates who failed the Oral test demonstrated difficulties in expounding ideas coherently, naturally and effortlessly, poverty in the range of lexis used, as well as an inability to process replies to interlocutors' prompts and questions in real time.

Examiners, however, had overall positive comments, and reported that the March 2015 'crop' of candidates were generally very well prepared for the Speaking Test.

5. Recommendations

Candidates and TELT preparation course providers are to be commended for their continued efforts to prepare well for this exam.

It is evident that more focus and attention still need to be given to phonology, in particular the phonemic script, spelling, and especially to increasing candidate familiarity with collocations in English, areas which continue to present real problems to most candidates.