

## **TELT March 2016**

## **Examiners' Report**

### **1. Introduction**

**65 candidates** sat for the TELT March 2016 examination session. **36 candidates** were awarded Pass grades or higher. This is the equivalent of a 55.4% pass rate compared to 69.8% of the candidates who sat the examination in November 2015.

The grades for the written paper are listed below:

**0 Unclassified**

**11 Fail**

**18 Narrow Fail**

**32 Pass**

**4 Pass with merit**

**0 Distinction**

**37 Oral Test sessions (including 1 who sat for Part 2 only)** were held with the following results:

**0 Absent**

**0 Unclassified**

**0 Fail**

**1 Narrow Fail**

**18 Pass**

**12 Pass with merit**

**6 Distinction**

The Pass rate in the Speaking test reached **97%**.

## **2. General Remarks**

The TELT March 2016 session reconfirmed that the use throughout the paper of the exact rubric suggested in the new syllabus document certainly 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 rather disappointing overall results which demonstrate a low percentage of the candidates, i.e. 55.4%, 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 2016 candidates performed fairly well in this section – a section for which candidates are able to study and prepare themselves adequately. The average mark was just above 28/40 indicating an acceptable 71% Pass percentage which, however, fell clearly below the 80% registered in the previous examination session.

Generally, candidates demonstrated that they can cope adequately with this section though many again lost marks as they clearly demonstrated problems with *basic* terminology. This strange phenomenon has been 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 satisfactory performance in the phonology sections registered in the November 2016 session (69.94%) fell by almost nine percentage points, registering a poor 60.6%, this time round. Candidates performed well in Section C (just below 86%), (although the Examiners once more feel the need to reiterate that many marks were again lost due to inaccurate spelling), and fairly well in Section B with a 65% rate. As usual, **Section D – Transcription into Phonemic Script** comes out as the most challenging examination task for TELT candidates with a very disappointing 31%. The examiners noticed with concern that the tendency of candidates who deliberately shy away from this very useful classroom tool is now becoming very common with as many as 29% of the candidates either ignoring the Phonemic transcription task completely or failing to score any marks in this section.

The examiners augur that this tendency does not become the norm and 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 15/30, indicating a pass rate at just under 50% for this task.

Generally, candidate knowledge was generally very weak in identifying grammar elements in all areas covered in this section. The poor performance in this task was further made worse by the fact that candidates often failed, (and consequently lost marks), to submit answers as per the rubric in the example provided.

Observations for candidates who struggled with this task are indicated below:

As indicated above, many candidates lost a mark for not following the rubric and saying what all the items in bold had in common. In spite of this, candidates were awarded a mark when they managed to select the appropriate answer. In many cases, candidates did not even attempt to include a reason whatsoever for their choice of answer. Candidates are once again reminded to provide answers according to the rubric provided, to focus on the words in bold and not the rest of the sentence when identifying conformity and contrast, and to include a rationale for each of their answers.

## **Part 2 Language Proficiency**

### **Part 2 Section A – Identifying and Correcting Errors**

The average mark was 12/20, indicating an overall rather weak performance at just under 61% for this task. Candidate performance was nothing more than just adequate in this area. A few candidates did not stick to the rubric and underline the error in the printed sentence; others underlined the error but did not provide a correct version. Some candidates thought there was an error in numbers 7 and 8 and attempted to correct both sentences. Many candidates thought sentences 1 and 2 were correct, possibly because they did not pick up the spelling mistake in *heard* and *alot*. Surprisingly a few candidates did not realise that *Ginger* in number 11 is a proper none, and marked the sentence as correct.

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, sometimes made spelling errors in other sections of the sentence, and although marks were not deducted for this, it indicated carelessness and an overall poor attention to detail.

## **Part 2 Section B – Word Formation**

The average mark was marginally over 7/10, indicating a good 70% pass mark for this particular task. The team of examiners, however, noted once again that in this section they were repeatedly constrained to deduct marks for careless spelling mistakes, notably with the words *continuity*, *infectious* and *suspension*.

## **Part 2 Section C – Cloze Test – Selective Deletion**

The average mark was just under 5/10 indicating a very weak 49% average for this very 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 feel that they need to continue to 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 over 15/20 this time round, indicating a satisfactory 74% mark for this task. However, a number of candidates sometimes came out with incorrect, and often, 'imaginative' and very awkward sentence transformations especially in numbers 1, 4, 6 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, fell marginally from 74% in November 2015 to 71% this time round.

Overall, the Examiners would like to encourage candidates to 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 sometimes came across incomplete sentences or ones which were too long, unwieldy and elaborate. There was one case where a candidate only wrote one essay, leaving out the second essay entirely, obviously resulting in a considerable loss of marks.

A number of candidates performed well in this task: they were coherent, used accurate grammar and acceptable examples of collocation and demonstrated a clear flow of expression. However, the Examiners' overall impression is that the level of essay writing this time round was rather low and simplistic with candidates also demonstrating a dearth of ideas. It is therefore being suggested that TELT Examination course providers should perhaps dedicate some time to sessions which would include and encourage a brainstorming of ideas, linked with an exposure to a wider range of relevant, topic-related vocabulary.

Candidates are also encouraged to allow time for revision. As has been remarked in previous examination sessions, a considerable number of papers were submitted with handwriting that was barely legible. Examiners have to read and understand the written tasks – consequently, clear handwriting is imperative.

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. This is often clear evidence of bad planning and a certain degree of carelessness.

## **4. The Speaking Test**

A cursory look at the Speaking Test results on page 1 reveals that the Pass rate this time round is very high, in fact very close to the 100% mark. There was only 1 Narrow Fail candidate.

The Speaking Examiners had very positive comments, and this clearly demonstrates that the March 2016 'crop' of candidates was 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 recognition of language patterns and familiarity with collocations in English, areas which continue to present real problems to most candidates, especially in the 'Odd Man Out' and Cloze tasks.