

TELT March 2017

Examiners' Report

1. Introduction

35 candidates sat for the TELT March 2017 examination session. 22 candidates were awarded Pass grades or higher. This is the equivalent of a 62.9% pass mark compared to 72.9% pass mark of the candidates who sat the examination in November 2017. This equates to a 10% drop in the Pass rate.

The grades for the written paper are listed below:

0 Distinction
4 Pass with merit
18 Pass
5 Narrow Fail
8 Fail
0 Unclassified

23 Oral Test sessions were held. (1 candidate sat only for Part 2.) The results were as follows:

2 Distinction
11 Pass with merit
8 Pass
2 Narrow Fail
0 Fail
0 Unclassified

2. General Remarks

The March 2017 TELT session has seen a significant drop in candidate performance when compared to the previous session held in November 2016. Candidates performed adequately overall, with Section D in Part One, Transcription into Phonemic Script, still being the section that candidates struggle with most. The Cloze task (Part 2 Section C) is also, once again, a problem 'area' for candidates. The Writing Section still poses a challenge for many candidates who struggled with the format conventions of the text they selected; any weakness when it comes to lexis and structure was more noticeable in this section. Candidate performance during the Speaking Test was of a consistently high standard.

3. Section Analysis

Part 1 Language Description, Sensitivity and Awareness

Part 1 Section A – Language Terminology

In Section A Part 1, the average pass mark was 70%, but it was noted that, as for previous sittings, some candidates could not tell the difference between basic language awareness terms. It is advisable for all candidates to adequately prepare themselves for the exam in terms of learning the grammar, as well as the labels and terminology that go with it. Candidates who did well were likely to have studied the grammar terms or followed a TELT course.

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 March session registers an average 63% pass mark in these sections. This is, in fact, a rather disappointing 19% drop in performance levels when compared to the 82% registered in the November 2016 session.

Candidate performance was quite satisfactory in Section B (63%). Candidates performed exceedingly well in Section C (94%), indicating that candidates are able to recognise/decipher words transcribed phonemically. Surprisingly, once again there was quite a number of candidates who misspelt some of the five words, especially ‘frightened’ and ‘anxious,’ for which they lost marks. Section D remains the most challenging examination task for TELT candidates with the lowest result (34%). As many as 12 candidates were not awarded any marks for this section, and, as has been noted in most of previous examination sessions, some candidates did not even attempt this task.

Once again the examiners would like to impress upon centres and trainers preparing candidates for this exam the importance of teaching pronunciation and using the phonemic script as a teaching aid in the classroom, especially to reinforce learner autonomy.

Part 1 Section E – Odd One Out

Overall, performance in this section fell short when compared to the previous sitting with an average pass mark of 67% in comparison with the 72% pass mark of November 2016. Some candidates continued to struggle with terminology.

There was an improvement in candidates following the rubric; however, candidate performance was not consistent in this section. Candidates who partly responded to the questions had a chance to gain marks if their parts were correct. A few candidates did not volunteer any answers in some instances. Sentences No. 4 and 8 seemed to have presented the biggest problems to examinees. Candidates who did not select the correct odd one out but delivered a justifiable description of what they identified as being in common and odd had a chance to gain marks.

Part 2 Language Proficiency

Part 2 Section A – Identifying and Correcting Errors

The average pass mark for this section was 60%, which is again a considerable drop from the 72% in November 2016. Candidates did well to follow the rubric and, in most cases, wrote down only the correct word, phrase or punctuation in the space provided. However, overall performance in this section was generally weak. Errors include candidates attempting to correct sentences which were already correct (e.g. No. 7), while the most common errors were registered in Sentences 2 & 18.

Part 2 Section B – Word Formation

With an average pass mark of 70%, candidates performed well in this section, yet slightly underperformed in comparison to the previous session which had registered an average 73% pass mark. Once again, apart from some words which were not reformulated correctly, valuable marks were lost with the majority of the candidates due to poor spelling, particularly with the following words: *repellent*, *perception* and *responsibilities*.

Part 2 Section C – Cloze Test – Selective Deletion

The majority of candidates performed very poorly in this section with a very low average mark of 43% compared to the 68% pass mark in the previous session. It is to be reiterated that only candidates who read regularly and broaden their range of collocation and commonly used phrases would fare well in this section.

Part 2 Section D – Sentence Transformation

The candidates performance in this section was a rather low 63% average pass mark: a marked drop for the 80% pass mark in the November 2016 session. There were, however, unanticipated problems with numbers 2, 6, and 8. Errors with collocation in the reformulated answers were the main reasons for such a poor performance.

Part 2 Section E – Writing Section

Overall, the majority of essays were adequate with the task being addressed and all points being covered. In many instances, essays were coherent with good control of language and cohesive devices. Task completion in the form of answering what was specifically requested of them in the rubric was good. However, examiners noticed a lack of knowledge regarding the layout of many of the written texts.

Many candidates had problems with format, displaying a disregard to paragraphing and the elements of a paragraph. Specific formatting and the use of specific conventions in the cases of the report were, once again, usually absent. For example, there was no attempt at using headings in many of the reports, nor was there control of appropriate sections.

Apart from errors with format, candidates who struggled in this section had a weak range of lexis. It was noted that there was very little display of imagination or creativity cause by a

certain dearth of ideas. Moreover, a number of essays were not always logically organised. Some attempts at using idioms were inaccurate: idioms were sometimes mixed or there were errors with collocation. Phrasal verbs suffered too, with the wrong preposition being collocated with the verb.

Examiners are surprised yet again at the high incidence of spelling errors and a disregard for punctuation. Moreover, in many cases, presentation was far from what is expected with writing that was hardly legible, words and paragraphs that were crossed out, and a combination of pen and pencil within the same text.

Some candidates disregarded the word count.

Examiners suggest that candidates dedicate more time to reading, with reading being a model for writing as well as a means by which candidates broaden their range of lexis and structures. Reading would also serve to help students develop their creativity and come up with ideas for their writing. Examiners encourage trainers to provide candidates with opportunities to read and develop their writing using a variety of texts.

4. The Speaking Test

Overall, candidates performed very well in the oral component with the pass rate being 92% this time round. There were only 2 Narrow Fail instances with a high incidence of Passes with Merit and Distinctions (13 in all). The Distinction candidates were in full command of the language. Candidates who achieved high marks and were awarded Passes with Merit also displayed a very good usage of all relevant discourse strategies. These linguistic features were particularly useful in the second part of the examination and contributed well to the overall cohesion and coherence of extended speech. In some cases, applicants were able to communicate well in English; however, a limited display of lexical range, as well as a certain poverty of ideas, hindered their performance.

5. Recommendations

As with previous reports, more focus and attention to phonology is encouraged, in particular the phonemic script. The necessity to spell correctly needs to be impressed upon candidates as well as correct combinations of collocated words. Trainers are encouraged to provide candidates with opportunities to improve their writing skills in the various text types and their respective writing conventions. Candidates should also be trained to proofread their written work before submitting for marking in an examination like the TELT. Lastly, candidates should be encouraged to dedicate time for regular reading practice as this may serve as a valuable model for their own writing.