

# Language Proficiency Assessment for Teachers (English Language) 2011

## Assessment Report

### Introduction

1. The purpose of this report is to consolidate the Chief Examiners' observations on the performance of candidates who sat the Language Proficiency Assessment for Teachers (English Language) in 2011.

### General Observations

2. Candidates achieved different proficiency attainment<sup>1</sup> rates in different papers. The approximate attainment rates for individual papers were: Reading 89%; Writing 37%; Listening 83%; Speaking 50%; Classroom Language Assessment 95.5%.

### Paper 1: Reading

3. The paper comprised three reading passages and contained a number of multiple choice items. The multiple choice items tested understanding of lexical items in the context of the passages and of the meaning portrayed in the texts.

4. Candidates' performance

- 4.1 Paper completion

Most candidates completed the questions for all three reading passages. Unanswered questions were most evident in the third passage, suggesting that candidates had run out of time to complete the paper.

- 4.2 Identification of expressions/literary devices

Candidates generally understood what was wanted when a question asked for identification of a metaphor or other literary device.

- 4.2.1 For example, many candidates correctly identified 'a prison of blue ice' as the response to Passage C Question 43 and 'a work of giants' as the response to Passage C Question 46.

- 4.2.2 However, in the latter question, some candidates wrote 'a work of giants and all to no purpose'. The phrase 'and all to no purpose' does not suggest the challenge of the work and including it in the response meant that the answer was not awarded the mark.

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<sup>1</sup> Scoring Level 3 or above in the Reading and Listening papers, and Level 2.5 or above on any one scale and Level 3 or above on all other scales in the Writing, Speaking and Classroom Language Assessment (CLA) papers.

### 4.3 Understanding what questions were testing

- 4.3.1 In Passage A, Question 7 asked ‘*What* gave rise to Eli Whitney’s invention’, the correct response being *the need* to replace laborious hand cleaning, not the replacement of that hand cleaning.
- 4.3.2 In Passage B, Question 24 asked ‘...“to protect”. From what?’, therefore asking the candidates to respond with the *threat* to the paperback business model. A correct response referred to invasion by e-readers or competition from Apple, Amazon and Sony.
- 4.3.3 In Passage B, Question 29 asked ‘*Why* are publishers *considering* supplying books electronically?’ Careful reading provides the reason: their revenues are dwindling and the paperback market has shrunk significantly. Some candidates responded along the lines of ‘as long as they could be sure that they would profit from it’; this would be the answer to a different question, such as ‘Under what condition might publishers agree to supply books electronically?’.
- 4.3.4 In Passage B, Question 23 asked ‘What *factors*...?’ Most candidates responding to the question recognised that there would be more than one factor involved. Similarly, in Passage C Question 39, the question ‘Who *are* talking?’ signalled the fact that there was more than one person to be identified in the answer.

### 4.4 Identification of referents

Overall, candidates performed quite well on questions requiring identification of specific information in the passages; for example, in Passage A Questions 1 and 6.

However, in responding to Passage B Question 26, some candidates mistook the response as being ‘changes to the business model’ rather than the correct answer ‘the business model’. In Passage B Question 31, most candidates recognised that the reasons electronic comic books are profitable in Japan are that they are easy to read on cell phones and that *comics* are ubiquitous in Japan. Some candidates, however, wrote ‘they are ubiquitous in Japan’, which is incorrect since, in the context, ‘they’ refers (incorrectly) to electronic comic books.

### 4.5 Grammatical accuracy and clarity of answers

Candidates generally wrote comprehensible responses. However, markers noted that unclear phrasing and grammatical errors sometimes made answers difficult to understand, resulting in a loss of marks.

An example of this was demonstrated in some responses to Passage C Question 50. Correct responses to this question clearly identified the part of the science teacher's argument with which the writer did not agree. Uncertain structuring of some responses led to markers' confusion about whose views – the writer's or the teacher's – were being expressed. The question asks candidates to identify the part of the teacher's argument, not the writer's views.

- 4.6 Grasp of global meaning: reading beyond the sentence level  
Candidates who performed strongly in questions such as Passage A Question 22 and Passage B Question 36 demonstrated their ability to derive overall meaning from a passage.
- 4.7 Appropriateness of responses  
Strong candidates identified the material that was relevant to the question being asked, either by quoting parts of the passage or in their own words.

Overall there was relatively little evidence of indiscriminate copying, although where this did take place the response was often inappropriate and attracted no marks. It is important for candidates to recognise that each question is looking for specific information which must be clearly identified in the response. Copying large chunks of material from a passage may not indicate to a marker that a question has been understood.

## 5. Advice to candidates

- 5.1 Plan, monitor and use your time carefully so that you can respond to all questions in the paper. Note that the length of passages and the number of questions for each will vary. Remember that you may tackle the passages in any order; start where you feel most confident and aim to work reasonably quickly so that you have time to review questions in which you are least certain of your responses.
- 5.2 To focus effectively on each passage and its questions, read the passage quickly first, noting the title and getting a sense of the writer's point of view. Then skim through the entire set of questions before beginning to respond.
- 5.3 Read each question carefully to ensure that you understand what is being asked.
- 5.4 When responding to a question about the *meaning* of something in the passage, make sure that you take into account the *context* of the passage.
- 5.5 When you read, aim to understand the construction of the ideas in the passage. Sometimes you may need to read backwards and

forwards in the passage to ensure that you have captured information which is relevant and appropriate to a question.

- 5.6 Check to see how many marks are awarded to the question. If two marks are awarded, you will probably need to provide two parts or points in your answer.
- 5.7 Be aware that your first answer to the question is the one which will be marked; there is little point in copying out a list of items or answers in the hope that one of these will attract a mark.
- 5.8 When a question asks for the identification of an expression, specific word or metaphor/simile, aim to write only that information as the response, thus making it clear that you have understood what is asked for. Marks cannot be awarded when a long piece of text has been copied which may include the expression asked for but does not specifically identify it.
- 5.9 Pay attention to the grammatical structure of your responses. While errors in grammatical structure are not taken into account in the mark scheme, you should recognise that markers cannot give credit to responses that are not intelligible or to misspellings which create a different word from that you wish to use.
- 5.10 If the best response to a question is contained in words from the passage, use those words. If you choose to use your own words, check that you have expressed your meaning clearly.

## **Paper 2 (Writing)**

6. This paper consists of two parts, Part 1: Task 1, Composition, and Part 2: Tasks 2A and 2B, Correcting and Explaining Errors/Problems in a Student's Composition.

### ***Part 1: Composition***

7. In Part 1 of the paper, candidates are required to write a short text, which can be of almost any type. The 2011 task was to write a proposal to the Commission for Youth for the upcoming *International Celebration of World Youth Week* which had the theme of 'Growing Up in a Challenging World'. Candidates were asked to explain the relevance of this theme and then outline at least one specific issue to be explored at the World Youth Week. Markers commented that the topic was relevant and interesting, sufficient background information had been provided and the task allowed candidates to demonstrate their ability to use the English language.
8. Candidates' performance is graded on three scales for Part 1: (1) Organisation and Coherence, (2) Grammatical and Lexical Accuracy and Range and (3) Task Completion. Markers felt that in general the quality of candidates' writing was high. However, in some areas it was noted that

candidates still have room for improvement, especially in scales (2) and (3).

9. In terms of scale (2) Grammatical and Lexical Accuracy and Range, markers found it common for scripts to contain grammatical problems, some of which were intrusive and impeded understanding. Below are some examples of common problem areas:
  - Subject-verb disagreement, e.g. “Hong Kong peoples have their uniqueness”; “Young people is our future”; “No one were in doubt”; “teenagers faces many problems”.
  - Inappropriate expressions / L1-influenced constructions, e.g. “children grown in Hong Kong”; “Hong Kong children phenomenon”.
  - An overuse of clichés was noted by some examiners. Examples include: “Young people are the pillars of our society” and “Young people are our future”.
10. Markers felt that the task rubrics were clearly worded, and that most candidates were able to write a relevant text which completed the task well. The following writing problems were identified by markers, however:
  - Overly simplistic statements or ideas without any elaboration, e.g. some candidates wrote that workshops could be held to boost young people’s self-esteem without stating how these workshops would foster development in this area. While candidates’ ideas may be relevant, they still require elaboration and, where appropriate, exemplification.
  - Too much background on the challenges facing young people and not enough detail on the specific issue. Candidates should provide a balanced response in their composition.

### ***Part 2: Correcting and explaining errors/problems***

11. Part 2 of the Writing Paper is divided into two parts: Task A, correcting errors/problems and Task B, explaining errors/problems. Candidates were given a composition that contained errors/problems and were asked to correct those that appeared in the first part of the composition for Part 2A, and to fill in incomplete explanations of some of the errors/problems in the remainder of the composition in Task 2B.
12. Markers felt that instructions for Part 2 were clearly stated and that the composition contained a balanced and comprehensive range of testing items.
13. Most candidates did satisfactorily in Task 2A and Task 2B. Markers noted the following problems in responses to Task 2A however:
  - Inappropriate choice of prepositions in the structure “busy...my hobby” (Item 2)
  - Failure to read the whole sentence for contextual clues and not just the parts which were underlined

- Confusion about the form of the uncountable noun “sweat” (Item 8)
  - Confusion about conditional structures (e.g. “would have been his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday if he was/were/had still been alive”) (Item 10)
14. In Task 2B, candidates generally performed well. In this task, candidates were given incomplete explanations of errors/problems. In order to make the explanations complete, candidates were asked to fill in the blanks with one or more words. Some items required longer answers (e.g. Item 14b and Item 15b) but in some cases candidates gave unnecessarily long answers which were confusing, contradictory or overly vague. Candidates are reminded of the importance of clarity and brevity, and that terminology used must be precise enough to explain the error in the context of the student text.
15. Here are some examples of the problems observed in Part 2B answers:
- Difficulty explaining why the present perfect tense needs to be used (Item 14b)
  - Confusion over different types of conjunctions (Item 18)
  - Confusion between phrasal verbs/prepositional verbs and verb phrases (Item 20b)
  - Incorrect spelling of the following words: “prefix” (17a); “inversion” (19a); “modal” (19c); “uncertainty” (19d); “participle” (20a).
16. Candidates are advised to insert into the blanks correctly-spelt words, phrases or clauses to make the whole sentence logical and grammatically appropriate. For clarity, the full forms of grammatical terms should be used rather than abbreviations or short forms (e.g. prep., adj., vb) in answering 2B.

### **Paper 3 (Listening)**

17. This year’s paper consisted of three sets of items on three different listening texts. The first text was a dialogue on the topic of the pressures faced by young boys resulting from marketing strategies aimed at young children; the second was a talk-show discussion on the problem of light pollution in Hong Kong; and the third was an interview with a speech writer about what it takes to write a good speech.
18. As usual, the paper went through a rigorous moderation and pre-testing process. The Moderation Committee considered the content of the three texts to be appropriate, allowing for interesting listening and containing meaningful questions of varied types.
19. A variety of task types were included in this paper, which allowed for a range of micro-listening skills to be tested. The paper included blank-filling, table-completion, multiple-choice and open-ended questions. There was no evidence that any one of these formats was generally more difficult or easier than others for candidates.

20. There were male and female speakers in the test, with a variety of accents, speaking at normal speed for the type of interaction. The questions on each text demonstrated a range of difficulty.
21. It was pleasing to note the generally high scores achieved by this year's cohort, with approximately 50% of candidates at level 4 or above.
22. The easiest items
  - 22.1 Eight items were answered correctly by more than 90% of candidates, but all of these items were shown to have discriminated effectively between weaker and stronger candidates.
  - 22.2 The first three items (Question 1) in the first text were answered correctly by almost all candidates. This was probably due to the fact that they were questions that served to set the scene for the text and required fairly undemanding retrieval skills.
  - 22.3 Question 3(a)(i) proved to be very easy, which is understandable given that the answer was a very high frequency single word ('internet').
  - 22.4 In the second text, Question 12(iv) was answered correctly by 90% of candidates. This was probably due to it requiring fairly simple global listening skills and relating to a topic that candidates would be familiar with since light pollution had recently been written about in the local press.
23. The hardest items
  - 23.1 The hardest item in the first text was Question 2. The answer required candidates to identify three aspects of what made the book referred 'noteworthy'. Many identified only two.
  - 23.2 Question 4(b) proved difficult for candidates, almost certainly due to the nature of the question, which required candidates to infer from the whole section the attitude of the speaker.
  - 23.3 In the second text, Question 15(ii) proved challenging, most probably for the same reason as noted above – it required the listener to provide a suitable answer by inferring the speaker's opinion/attitude.
  - 23.4 Five of the most difficult questions occurred in text 3.
    - Qu. 18(ii): the answer ('(political) satire') proved difficult because of 'satire' being a low frequency word, but also perhaps due to the concept being not so familiar to the candidates.

- Qu. 19(b): the notion of ‘water restrictions’ is perhaps not common in Hong Kong and so candidates needed to understand the term in the context of the speaker’s reference to his composing speeches in the shower.
- Qu. 20: this was the most difficult item in the test, most probably because it required the listener to deal with cataphoric reference.
- Qu. 22(ii): reference to ‘the person’ (rather than identifying the speech writer) in the text was a possible reason for this proving to be a difficult item.
- Qu. 27(iii): this proved to be a difficult item, perhaps because of the possibly unexpected juxtaposition of ‘disbelief’ and ‘Obama’.

24. Extracting answers

24.1 As in previous years, questions which required the candidates to listen to stretches of text but then extract answers only from specific chunks proved challenging.

24.2 As noted above, Question 2 proved challenging due to the nature of the question. However, the answer was also preceded by a fairly long aside, which made the task more challenging.

25. Set phrase

When answering Question 9, a number of candidates wrote down what they thought they had heard while clearly not understanding the correct answer (‘cradle to grave’).

26. Discourse structure

A number of items required candidates complete a sentence on the answer sheet which required recognition and understanding of various types of referencing, and the way that the speaker had chosen to structure the information. This proved challenging for many candidates.

27. As in previous years, some candidates did not write anything in answer to some of the questions, which meant that there was no chance of getting a mark. Candidates are reminded that there is nothing to be lost by writing down what they think they have heard as this may turn out to be correct: the mark will be awarded as long as the candidate’s answer is considered to be a misspelling of the required answer rather than a completely different word.

28. Advice to candidates

As in previous years, candidates are reminded to:

- Check the number of marks allotted to a particular question as this will give an indication of the number of points you are expected to make.



For example, two marks means that two pieces of information are required.

- Make sure responses are comprehensible and that spelling is accurate.
- Pay attention to discourse markers as these will give a clue about the way the speaker is structuring their talk.
- Listen to a wide variety of source materials in English in order to increase their capacity to cope with long stretches of speech.

#### **Paper 4 (Speaking)**

29. Paper 4 consists of two parts. In Part 1 there are two tasks; Task 1A: Reading Aloud a Prose Passage and Task 1B: Recounting an Experience/Presenting Arguments. There is only one task in Part 2; Group Interaction.
30. Candidates are tested on six scales of performance. Task 1A assesses candidates on two scales: (1) Pronunciation, Stress and Intonation and (2) Reading Aloud with Meaning. Task 1B assesses candidates on two different scales: (3) Grammatical and Lexical Accuracy and Range and (4) Organisation and Cohesion. Finally, Task 2 assesses candidates on two different scales: (5) Interacting with Peers and (6) Discussing Educational Matters with Peers.
31. Five minutes are given for both Tasks 1A and 1B, with Task 1B beginning immediately after Task 1A finishes. After Task 1B is over, candidates are asked to go back to the preparation room where they wait for a short while before returning to the assessment room for Part 2 – Group Interaction, in which they discuss a topic of relevance to the educational context of Hong Kong. The Group Discussion lasts for either 10 minutes (if there are three candidates in a group) or for 13 minutes (if there are four candidates in a group).

#### ***Part 1: Task 1A Reading Aloud a Prose Passage***

32. The passages that the candidates were required to read for Task 1A were extracted from a wide variety of sources, reflecting the types of reading candidates would likely encounter in their job. The passages were carefully selected so as to allow candidates the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to convey meaning to the target audience. Care was taken to ensure that each passage contained a range of written elements, including narration, dialogue/conversation and description.
33. Additionally, passages were examined for words and phrases that could discriminate between candidates in terms of pronunciation, articulation, stress and intonation. The passages were long enough for accurate assessment to take place, but short enough to ensure that candidates had adequate time to complete the tasks.

34. Some candidates read the passages very slowly, however, and so ran out of time for Task 1B. This was the case for candidates who, for example, paused excessively, perhaps thinking that this would add to the dramatic effect. Candidates are advised to make sure that they read the passages meaningfully, but without recourse to overly dramatic narration. Candidates should pay attention to the timer so that they leave themselves adequate time for Task 1B.
35. Overall, candidates performed well in the Reading Aloud task and the majority were able to pronounce the words and sentences correctly and convey some sense of the passage. Pronunciation of individual sounds was generally accurate, but there were some problems which prevented candidates from being clearly understood. Consonant clusters, particularly those at the end of words, remain problematic for many candidates. There was some vowel substitution, when candidates said the wrong vowel in a word. Words that end in ~ed often caused difficulty for candidates, as did the placement of appropriate stress in complex sentences. Some candidates did not link words effectively, leading to the impression of a 'word-by-word' style of delivery.
36. Very few candidates succeeded in effectively capturing the tone of the passage they were reading, and opportunities to convey shifts in mood and in the emotions of the putative speakers, for example by utilising changes in voice pitch and pacing, were not taken up by the majority of candidates. Dialogue proved particularly challenging in this respect and there was often very little sense of overall meaning.

***Part 1: Task 1B Recounting an Experience/Presenting Arguments***

37. The topic areas chosen are intended to be relevant to candidates' personal experience, which allows them to articulate their thoughts more easily. Most of the topics were opinion questions about issues in Hong Kong and candidates were required to demonstrate their competence in producing an accurate, cohesive, natural and meaningful discourse. Almost all candidates were able to talk on the given topic for the time required.
38. The intention of the task is to elicit a short monologue which has a recognisable structure and is varied, grammatically accurate and easy to follow. It is possible to score very well when speaking in a very informal, conversational or chatty style, in which the audience is more like a group of friends, as well as in a more formal 'oral presentation' style, explicitly structured using 'first', 'second' and so on. The important thing is that the speaker's language is consistent with the style they have chosen and that this style is convincing, given the topic being addressed.
39. Some candidates did not use complex structures, or a range of structures, and tended to stick to one tense or way of linking ideas, for example. As a result, the examiner did not know if the candidate simply preferred to use simple structures or was a relatively weak candidate for whom this was their only resource. Where there was complexity, this was quite often more appropriate for written discourse than for spoken, giving the impression of undue

formality. This tendency may have been exacerbated because of the reliance on a script. After the scripted portion of the talk, candidates sometimes went on to talk about other issues with little or relationship to what had been said before.

40. It is suggested that rather than writing out complete sentences or paragraphs, candidates make brief notes, preferably bullet points, during the preparation time and refer to these when talking. In this way, they are likely to have enough material to allow them to speak for the allotted time, but, more importantly, the talk is more likely to have a clearer structure and remain relevant to the topic throughout.
41. General coherence is also an area that could be improved. The importance of sequencing cannot be overemphasised; the order in which information is conveyed could be chronological or developmental, for example, so as to express ideas more clearly. There is no requirement that this be a formal presentation, so it is not necessary to organise points using numbers or similar. In some cases this is an appropriate way of organising the talk, in other cases (because of the nature of the topic) it is not.
42. Candidates should be aware of how much time they have to complete the task, and of how much they can realistically say in that time. The main purpose of the task is to obtain a sample of the candidate's English: there is no requirement that the candidate include a certain number of points or state a conclusion. If they feel that it is necessary, examiners will allow candidates to continue speaking after the timer has gone off, but this is the examiner's decision, not the candidate's. If an examiner asks a candidate whether they would like to continue after they have finished saying what they prepared, the candidate can decline.

### ***Part 2: Group Interaction***

43. In Part 2 of the paper, candidates discuss an education-related topic or situation. Candidates are expected to provide ideas and/or suggestions that are relevant to the topic under discussion and are internally coherent so that both the examiners and the other candidates can understand them. The topics were all related to the school context and designed to generate some talking points. On the whole, candidates were able to contribute relevant ideas in a manner that could be understood.
44. Candidates were generally able to express opinions and agree/disagree with others. However, formulaic responses such as "That is an interesting point" should be understood to be merely simple devices and not satisfactory in and of themselves. Often, candidates would say, "I agree with you," and then rather than adding more information to the other candidate's point, or clarifying or qualifying, would add a completely different point, thus stopping the flow of the conversation. Candidates should pay attention to the natural flow of conversations, where topics are explored and expanded upon.
45. A lack of genuine conversational strategies was also evident and many simply took turns to express an opinion. There was little sense of genuine

discussion or dialogue in these cases, and so little opportunity to demonstrate interaction skills.

46. A more serious point is that some candidates remained quiet for long periods of the group discussion. Candidates should note that the group discussion task requires them to contribute ideas to a discussion using a variety of strategies, and it is impossible to do this if conversational contributions are intermittent.
47. Candidates are encouraged to practice for this part of the test by speaking English with their colleagues on teaching-related issues.

### **Paper 5 (Classroom Language Assessment) <sup>2</sup>**

48. A total of 290 candidates were assessed between November 2010 and March 2011. The attainment rate was high, with 95.5% of the candidates attaining at least Level 3 or above on all the four scales of Grammatical and Lexical Accuracy and Range; Pronunciation, Stress and Intonation; Language of Interaction and Language of Instruction.
49. Overall, the performance of most candidates was satisfying with the strongest candidates displaying an outstanding level of competence in all scales. Some in fact achieved a very high standard in both accuracy and fluency and showed a good level of confidence and competence.
50. Grammatical and Lexical Accuracy and Range
  - 50.1 Candidates in general demonstrated a good grasp of basic grammar and were able to use language that was appropriate to the level of the students. The outstanding candidates also provided a good language model for their students, using a wide range of structures, vocabulary and idiomatic expressions.
  - 50.2 While most candidates manifested mindful use of grammar and syntactic structures, minor systematic errors were still present though communication was clear and unimpeded most of the time. The errors spotted included the faulty use of subject-verb agreement, singular/plural forms and tenses. When complex structures were attempted, word order problems occurred, with inversion of subject-verb order in indirect question forms being the most prevalent problem, such as “Do you know what is this?”, or “Can you guess what will he do next?”. The inappropriate use of prepositions after transitive verbs was another problem noted as in “raise up your hand” and “enter into the classroom”.
  - 50.3 Apart from grammatical competence, lexical range also proved a discriminating factor. The stronger candidates showed a good

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<sup>2</sup> Administered by the Education Bureau, which contributed this section of the Assessment Report.

quality of lexical choices. They were not only able to produce longer strings of language but were also capable of deploying appropriate idiomatic expressions that were relevant and concise, aiding fluency and providing students with rich language exposure. Weaker candidates tended to use very simple and repetitive language, with a low level of accuracy in common word collocations.

## 51. Pronunciation, Stress and Intonation

- 51.1 Pronunciation of sounds, sentence stress and intonation patterns were generally accurate. The stronger candidates in fact displayed not only accuracy but also fine variations in tone, pitch and voice to heighten effects and to convey different shades of meaning.
- 51.2 Consonant clusters, such as ‘-ed’ (past participle verb form) proved to be difficult for some candidates. The /ɪd/ was either inappropriately left out in such words as ‘painted’, or unnecessarily added in such words as ‘joined’.
- 51.3 Some recurring errors among the weaker candidates included the weak distinction between long and short vowels as in words like “feet/fit”; “sleep/slip”; and the confusion in articulation of particular vowel sounds including /v/ and /w/; /r/ and /l/; /θ/ and /f/. These errors on their own might not cause too big a problem in communication but if they occurred frequently, they would put strain on the listener.
- 51.4 Wrong syllable stress in multi-syllabic words like “Japanese”, “superlative”, and occasional inappropriate stress on weak syllables as in “polite”, “content” (as an adjective) and “method” also occurred.
- 51.5 Intonation patterns were generally well differentiated to convey intended meanings. The major problem was the inappropriate use of terminal rise or terminal fall in questions.

## 52. Language of Interaction

- 52.1 Most candidates were able to interact fairly naturally and adequately with their students using appropriate language. There was always a clear effort to elicit responses from the students, especially through prompting and hinting. The attempt at interaction was determined at times when the persevering teachers tried different functional language forms to engage even the weak and inattentive students. However, it was generally felt that the language used tended to be rather repetitive among the weaker candidates, with “What else?” and “How about you?” being the most frequently asked questions. It was also noted that many questions were display questions which only required very short and simple answers, which did not allow

the candidates to display their ability in using the interactive language.

- 52.2 Given the effort to initiate communication, the failure to maintain the interactive process often came as a letdown. Some candidates failed to respond to students' incomplete or wrong answers by providing proper clarification and feedback. While verbal praise was often generously handed out, concrete comments were scarce. This was particularly obvious in the senior forms when there was a greater need for specific guidance.

### 53. Language of Instruction

- 53.1 Most candidates were able to give clear instructions on classroom routines and conduct learning activities using natural language. When explaining new words and language items, the stronger candidates also made a commendable effort to give clear and precise presentations characterised by a logical flow of ideas and suitable examples. There was also the appropriate use of signalling devices to draw students' attention to various stages of the lesson in general. When handling students who were hesitant in their responses, stronger candidates were able to address the problem, paraphrase and clarify effectively with ease.
- 53.2 Occasionally noted among the weaker candidates was a lack of spontaneity in their speech as they tended to rely too much on the textbook and handouts and read extensively from prepared notes or even scripts. Such 'rehearsed' language tended to undermine these candidates' capacity to use natural language for giving clear and effective instructions as required in different circumstances.