



UNIVERSITY *of* CAMBRIDGE
ESOL Examinations

English for Speakers of Other Languages

Report for

Nordrhein-Westfalen

on the

Preliminary English Test (PET)
May 2005

and

First Certificate in English (FCE)
March 2005

October 2005

by
University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations

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1. Acknowledgements

University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations would like to thank the Ministerium für Schule, Jugend und Kinder des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen for the opportunity to participate in this exploratory programme of English language development. In particular, we would like to thank very much all the teachers involved both in the preparation of their pupils for the exams and in the administering of the exams in the schools.

In addition, thanks are extended to staff at all of the participating Cambridge ESOL examination centres who worked very hard to make the project such a success and, in particular, gratitude is expressed to Ms Christel Vlachou at the Englisches Institut, who coordinated the project.

Cambridge ESOL would also like to thank the Senior Team Leader for Germany, Davine Sutherland, and the Team Leaders Shirley Herrmann and Dr Graham Cass for their commitment and hard work to ensure the success of the Preliminary English Test (PET) and the First Certificate in English (FCE) in schools in Nordrhein-Westfalen.

2. Introduction to the Report

The Ministerium für Schule, Jugend und Kinder des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen initiated the introduction of external examinations, which gave school pupils - at different levels of their school development - the opportunity to participate in an internationally recognised language examination.

The levels selected for these students were B1 and B2 Council of Europe's *Common European Framework* of Reference for Languages (Cambridge University Press 2001). At level B1, the Preliminary English Test (PET) and at level B2, the First Certificate in English (FCE) - both of which are set by University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations (Cambridge ESOL) - were selected as the most suitable international examinations in English. The German school curricula and educational standards for languages are mapped below, illustrating the relationship between the curricula criteria and the CEF standards with the Cambridge ESOL exams.

Klassenstufe	GER stufe	Cambridge ESOL Prüfung
Hauptschulabschluss - (KMK Bildungsstandards)	A2	• Key English Test KET
Realschule - Klasse 10	B1	• Preliminary English Test PET
Mittlerer Bildungsabschluss – (KMK Bildungsstandards)	B1	• Preliminary English Test PET
Gymnasium – Übergang in Sekundarstufe II	B1, B2 angebahrt	• Preliminary English Test PET
Gymnasiale Oberstufe - Einheitliche Prüfungsanforderungen der KMK	B2/ C1	• B2: First Certificate in English FCE • C1: Certificate in Advanced English CAE

After these exams had been selected, Cambridge ESOL agreed, as part of its support for the introductory session, to provide the Ministry with a report on the results of the first group of candidates to enter for the examination. This report compares the results of the pupils in Nordrhein-Westfalen with those of typical PET and FCE candidates in the rest of the world (ROW), and also, for the benefit of teachers and others involved in the project, describes some of the important and interesting features of the performance of the candidates, in the examinations as a whole, and in individual skill areas.

In the March 2005 session of FCE, 649 pupils from schools throughout Nordrhein-Westfalen took the exam. The majority of the pupils were in Grades 11 and 12, with some in Grade 13 and a few in Grade 10. In May, 644 pupils from Grades 9 and 10 took the PET examination. PET candidates came from the Gymnasien group as well as the Realschulen.

Overall, the project was considered by both teachers and pupils to have been extremely successful and this is endorsed by the results: 93% of the FCE candidates passed, with nearly 26% achieving Grade A and another 37% gaining a Grade B. In the PET exam, a significant 99% passed the exams; 71% with merit.

Although the success rate was high, the exams still provided a significant challenge to the candidates, as can be seen from some of the comments from the examiners. The results suggest that PET is the correct level for pupils in Grades 9 and 10, and indicate a strong link between the PET syllabus and school curriculum at this level. This is substantiated by the fact that standards for the school leaving examination after Grade 10 (Mittlerer Bildungsabschluss) are set at this level.

For pupils in Grades 11-13, the FCE exam is the correct level and again strong links between the syllabus and the curriculum can be assumed. The very good performance of some of the candidates in Grades 12 and 13 suggests that some of these pupils could also succeed in the CAE exam, which is set at C1 level and consequently it was decided to offer this exam in future as well.

This would also coincide with fact that the KMK's "Einheitliche Prüfungsanforderungen in der Abiturprüfung Englisch" set the required level for the school leaving examination in English at a level between B2 and C1.

3. Comparison of PET Results with Rest of World Candidates

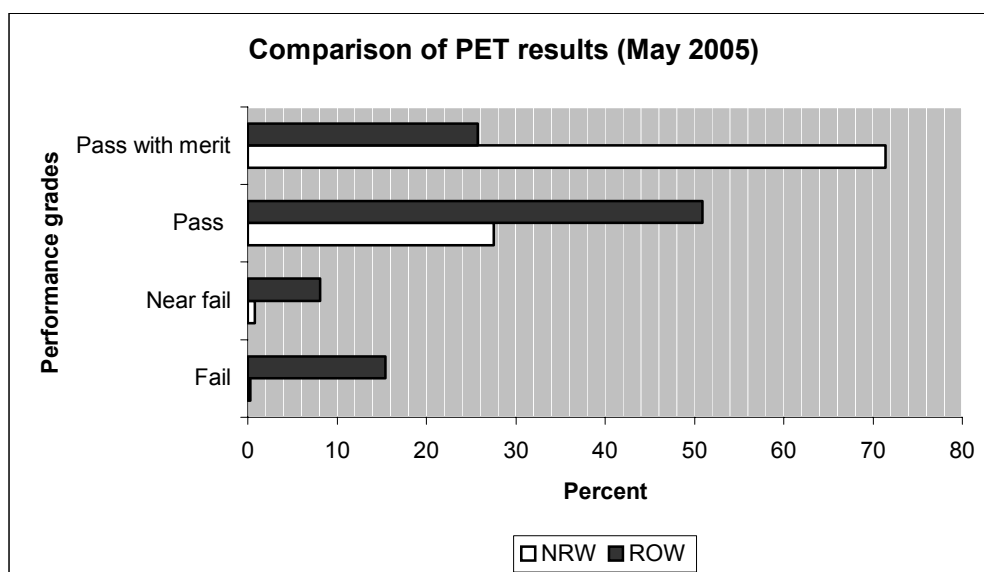
3.1 Overall Performance Comparison - PET examinations

In the PET exams, the final mark a candidate receives is an aggregate of the marks obtained in each of the three papers, Reading & Writing, Listening and Speaking. PET has two pass grades, Pass with Merit and Pass, and two failing grades, Narrow Fail and Fail.

Nordrhein-Westfalen (NRW) performance grades compare extremely favourably with those of the rest of world (ROW) grades in the May 2005 PET examinations, particularly in the higher pass category. In the overall performance of NRW candidates, 71% achieved a Pass with Merit, compared with the ROW result of 25%, representing a significant 45% higher occurrence of Pass with Merit awards.

Of the 644 NRW candidates who entered the examinations, 27.5% achieved a pass, whereas 51% of ROW candidates achieved a similar grade. At the lower grades of performance, less than 1% (0.8%) of NRW candidates were graded at Near Fail and less than half a percent (0.3%) were graded a Fail. Again, this compares with the ROW results where 8% were awarded a Near Fail and 15% a Fail.

These results indicate a significantly stronger performance by NRW pupils, with a high Pass with Merit rate and very few failing the exam, compared with a much lower Pass with Merit result for ROW candidates and higher Near Fail and Fail scores.



3.2 Performance Comparison by Exam Paper/Component - PET examinations

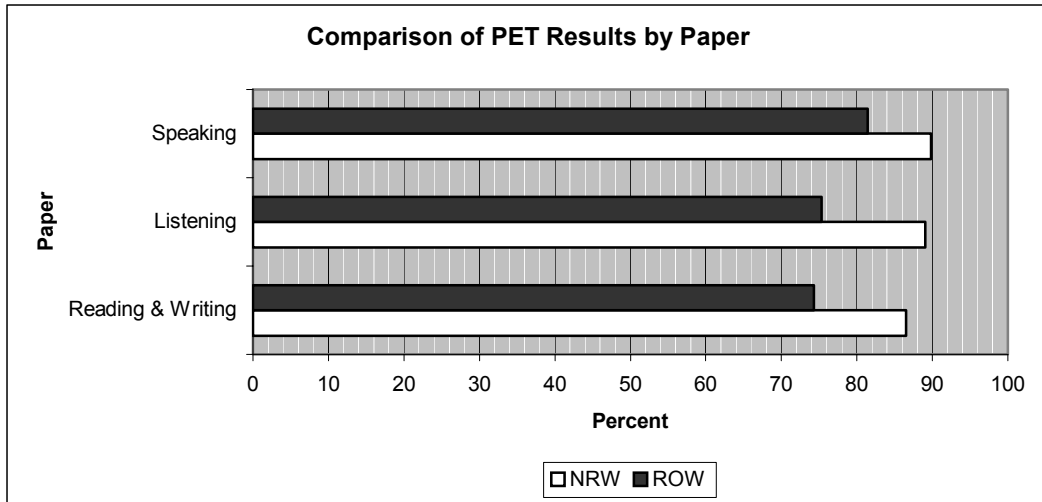
In the Speaking Paper, candidates should be able to understand and respond to public announcements, show precise understanding of short factual utterances, extract factual information from a speech and understand the sense of a dialogue. They should be able to ask and understand questions and make appropriate responses, and express emotions, reactions, etc.

In the Reading Paper, candidates need to understand public notices and signs, read and understand short factual texts, understand language structures relating to time, space, possession etc, and scan factual material for information to perform relevant tasks.

In the Writing Paper, candidates should be able to give information, report events, describe people, objects and places and convey reaction to situations. They are required to use the words they know appropriately in different written contexts and produce simple sentences.

The comparative results between NRW candidates and those of the rest of the world (ROW) demonstrate consistently higher achievement over the three papers. In the Speaking paper, NRW candidates scored an average mark of 89.8% while their counterparts from ROW scored 8% less at 81.4%. An increased difference in average score occurred in the Listening Paper; 89.1% (NRW), and 75.3% (ROW), reflecting a 14% difference.

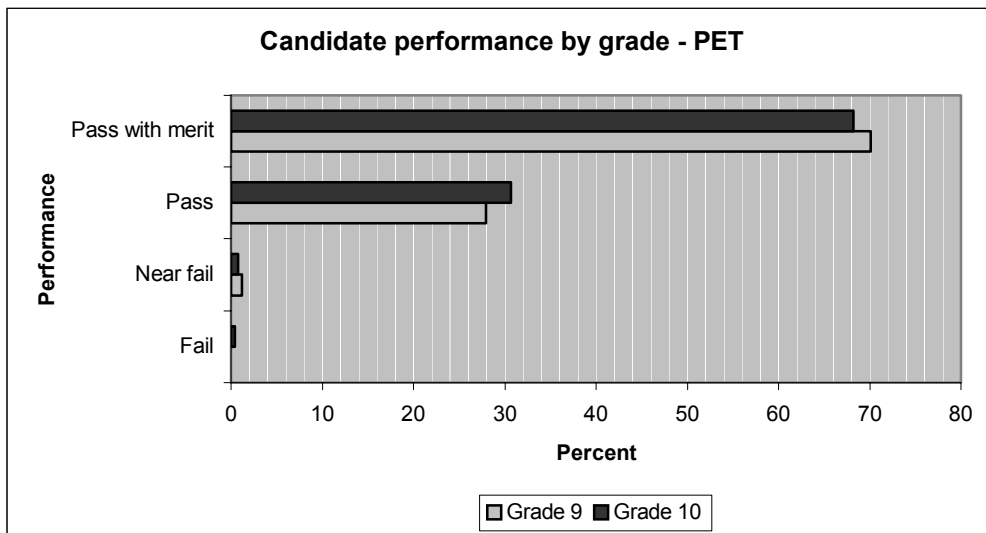
In the Reading & Writing Paper, there was a 12% difference in average scores, with NRW candidates achieving 86.5% and ROW candidates 74.3%.



3.3 NRW Candidate performance by grade - PET examinations

Grade 9 candidates received a high 88% Pass with Merit and 28% Pass result.

There were no fail results by Grade 9 candidates, and less than 1% at Grade 10. At the PET level, there were marginal differences in performance between Grades 9 and 10.

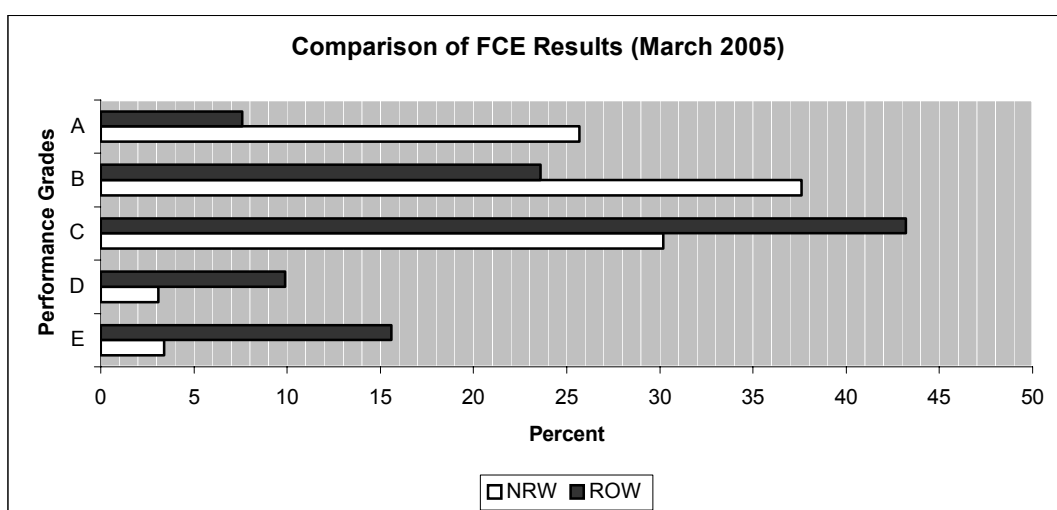


4. Comparison of FCE Results with Rest of World Candidates

4.1 Overall Performance Comparison - FCE examinations

The candidate's overall FCE grade is based on the total score gained by the candidate in all five papers. The passing grades are Grade A (80% and above), Grade B (75 - 79%), Grade C (60 to 74%). The failing grades are Grade D (55% to 59%) and Grade E (54% and below).

The NRW candidates performed substantially better than those from the rest of the world, with more than three times as many being graded A than ROW candidates; 25.7% (NRW) and 7.6% (ROW), with the converse consequence of fewer NRW candidates receiving lower Grades C, D and E. This comfortable attainment by NRW candidates at the higher achievement levels indicates that their language abilities match the requirements of FCE as it is mapped to B2 of the Council of Europe's Common European Framework.

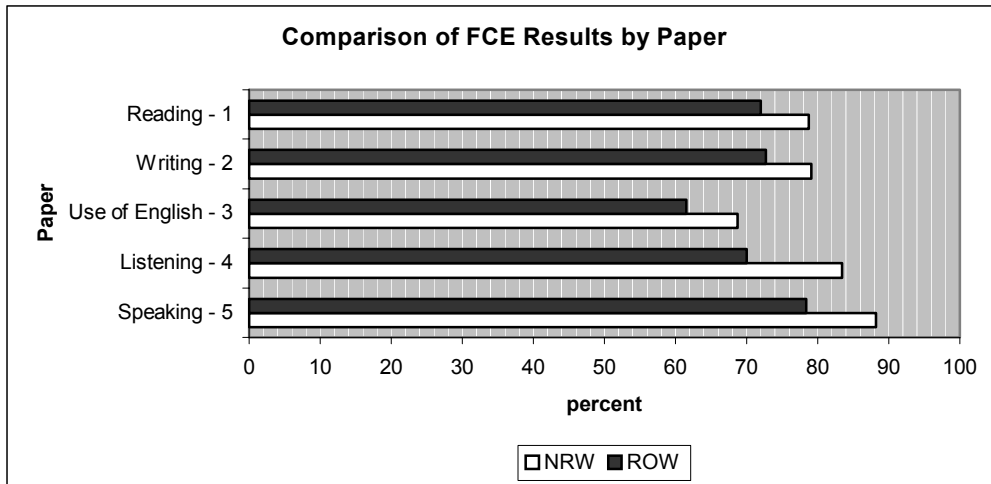


4.2 Performance Comparison by Exam Paper - FCE examinations

In the Speaking Paper, candidates' ability to provide information about themselves, offer opinions, produce an extended piece of discourse, and engage in discussion with various outcomes is tested. In the Listening Paper, candidates are required to listen for gist and detail, for specific words and phrases and produce written responses. The Use of English Paper examines the candidates' vocabulary and grammar.

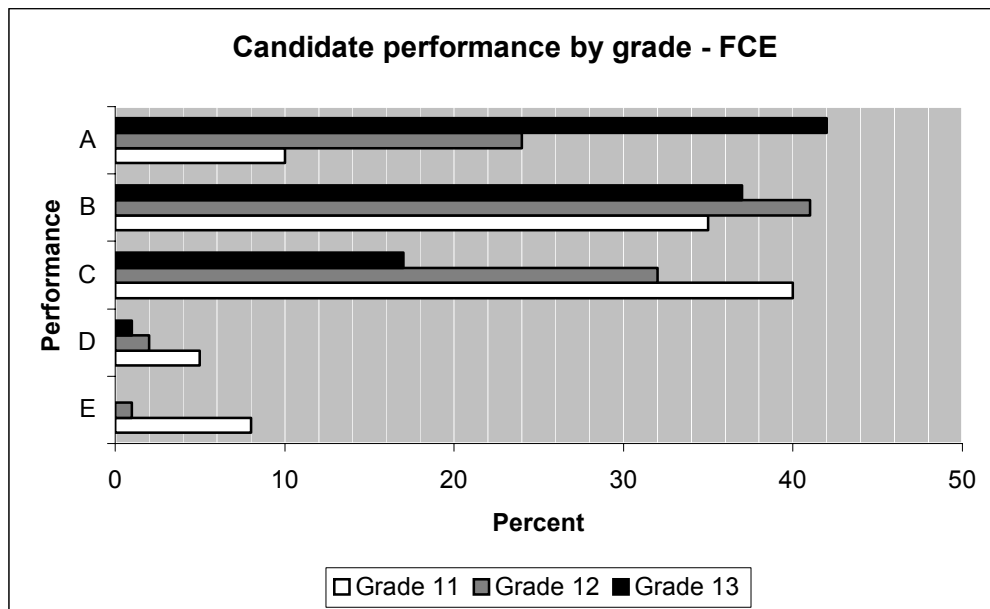
In the Writing Paper, candidates are tested on their ability to write a responding transactional letter and a choice of composition, article, report, letter of application, informal letter or short story, or answer set book questions. In the Reading Paper, candidates are tested on the ability to identify the main points in a text, demonstrate an understanding of a text, how it is structured, and to locate specific information.

In Paper 1 (Reading) NRW candidates' average grades were 6% above those of ROW candidates; 78.7% and 72% respectively. In the Writing Paper, NRW candidates scored 79.1% on average against ROW of 72.7%. In Paper 4 (Listening), NRW candidates scored an average of 83.4% while those from ROW scored a substantially lower average result of 70%. This difference in achievement was also reflected in the Speaking Paper, where NRW pupils scored 88.2% while their ROW counterparts achieved 10% less, with an average result of 78.4%. The trend is replicated in the weakest component, Use of English; NRW 68.7% against ROW 61.5%.



4.3 Candidate Performance by Grade - FCE examinations

In this FCE session, the rate of the performance level by candidates doubles through the progression of the grades; for example, Grade 11 – 10%, Grade 12 – 24% and Grade 13 – 42%. Conversely, as would be expected, the failure rate between the school grades was negligible – at 1% and less at Grades 12 and 13. Interestingly, the difference in the rate of failure between Grades 11 and 12 was more observable, with a 10% differential; 13% of Grade 11 were awarded a D or E, sharply declining to 3% failure (D or E) of Grade 12 pupils. These results indicate some pupils may achieve a good pass in the CAE exam. Because of this strong exam performance, teachers may want to consider entering their strongest FCE candidates for CAE.



5. PET WRITING

Report on Candidates' Writing Performance

Richard Frizell

Principal Examiner, PET Writing

Background information

The PET Writing test is included in Paper 1, together with the Reading test, although for the purpose of this report, commentary is provided on the Writing element only.

Part 1

This part of the Writing test consists of five sentences, each accompanied by a second sentence with a gap. The gap must be filled with a maximum of three words so that the second sentence means the same as the first.

Part 2

The second part involves writing a short message of 35 - 45 words, such as a postcard or an email. Candidates are required to include three specific pieces of information in the message. The focus in this part of the exam is on communication of content rather than accuracy of language, and a maximum of 5 marks may be awarded for an answer which clearly conveys all three points.

Parts 1 and 2 are marked by teams of trained clerical markers under the supervision of a Co-ordinating Examiner. Markers follow a detailed mark scheme and consult the Co-ordinating Examiner about any answers which require interpretation.

Part 3

Answers to Part 3 of the Writing test are marked by teams of trained examiners who are supervised by a Team Leader, who is in turn supervised by a Principal Examiner and an Assistant Principal Examiner. Examiners award marks in five bands, each of which is subdivided into three points.

Marks are given for the range and accuracy of the language used by the candidate, and ambition is rewarded; content is not taken into account unless the answer is completely irrelevant to the task, in which case 0 is given, or the task has been summarily treated or is partly irrelevant. In this case a penalty of one band is imposed, but only on answers which receive a mark in the four and five bands. Handwriting is not one of the criteria for marking, though extensive illegibility will have an effect of the mark given.

In Part 3 of the Writing test, candidates have a choice of two questions, both of which require answers of about 100 words. The first question asks the candidate to write a letter in answer to part of a letter received from a penfriend. A number of prompts are given in the letter from the pen-friend, but candidates are not required to respond to all the prompts, which are intended as guidelines only. They are, however, required to provide opening and/or closing formulae to the letter. Omission of both leads to the loss of one point, but in Bands 4 and 5 only. The second question requires candidates to write a story, either from a title or from an opening sentence which may be interpreted in any way that the candidate likes.

Overall performance

NRW candidates achieved an average of 86.5% on this paper, compared with 74.3% for candidates from the rest of the world, signifying a 12% higher achievement.

Task and language performance

Part 1

Candidates did well on this part. It seems that candidates had been well-prepared for this part of the paper; where there were problems, these were mostly caused by lack of familiarity with English tenses.

Typical errors and weaknesses were:

examples

1. In the sample of papers, 14% of the candidates produced an incorrect answer - instead of writing *used coins*
 - three candidates put *were using coins*
 - four candidates put *use coin*
 - one candidate put *have used coins*.
2. 10% of the candidates wrote *lesser, more, fewer, lass, don't earn more* instead of *less*.
3. Another common fault was the use of the words *till, from* and *in*, instead of *since*.
4. A further error that was fairly common was the misuse of tenses where candidates wrote *are giving* instead of *give*.
5. Instead of *if you*, some candidates wrote *when you* and *when you will*.

Part 2

Candidates were asked to write an email to an English friend, telling her

- a) that they had moved house
- b) why they had moved
and
- c) inviting her to visit

All candidates in the sample included all three points, so it appears they had been well trained in the requirements of the task.

Several candidates were given a mark of 3 for using tenses incorrectly or expressing themselves incorrectly, and 20% of candidates received a mark of 4 because their responses lacked clarity:

examples

- *my dad would risk his job*
- *my mum's job cancelled*
- *moved to a greater fla*
- *in this house is more place.*

A couple of candidates wrote answers which were much longer than the stipulated 35 - 45 words, though they were not penalised for this as the answers were relevant to the task. However, candidates should be advised not to write more than is necessary, as those who do so often wander off the points and lose marks. They should also be discouraged from attempting to be too ambitious in their answers, and should rather be taught to concentrate on communicating the points in simple, accurate language.

Part 3

Candidates had a choice of writing a letter about a national holiday in their country or writing a story with the title *An exciting journey by boat*. Of the sample, one-third chose the task of writing the letter and two-thirds elected to write a story.

None of the answers were too short, and all of the letters included appropriate opening and closing formulae. None was penalised for irrelevance or summary treatment of the task, so the marks given are based purely on the candidates' language ability, and suggest that the NRW candidates' ability was above-average in this area.

Scripts that received a mark in Band 3 were generally coherently organised, though linking of sentences was not always maintained. They were usually unambitious in the use of language, with a reliance on simple structures and vocabulary and a tendency to repetition:

examples

1. *At this day a friend has his birthday so it's a nice day for him so we make a party for him and all friends of him come.*
2. *We are drinking very much alcohol during the walk and often get home very drunken ... not just me and my friends are walking but everybody in the country is walking and drinking alcohol, too.*

Errors in prepositions, tenses and word order occurred, but were usually not impeding for the reader.

When candidates of this level attempted a more ambitious use of language, the results tended to be flawed, and the meaning was not always clear:

examples

1. *When he was in the water I got in panic because something dropped him down.*
2. *In the capital, I think our president and parliament make action for old terrible actions, I don't know.*

Band 4 scripts were more ambitious in their sentence structure and range of vocabulary, with coherent linking through simple cohesive devices:

examples

1. *No, it doesn't usually happen anything special but Eastern is always a good possibility to spend free time with your familie because everyone feels relaxed.*
2. *Being not able to swim she began to scream and having panic but David sprang into the water and rescued her. He was like our little 'superman' and we were happy to have him at our trip.*
3. *It was the first time I have seen such a big wave so I didn't know how to react. I went to the captain and told him that a massive wave is coming towards us.*

Though errors were still present in these scripts, they were not impeding to the reader, and were offset by the relative sophistication (at PET level) of the language.

Band 5 scripts displayed a confident and ambitious use of language, with a fluent and fairly natural style; there were a few errors, but they were minor and did not detract from the overall effect of the writing:

examples

1. *This is a time when everyone wears some crazy clothes. Everyone goes on the streets and sings and dances. It's a little bit like "Halloween" in England.*

2. *It would have taken us too long to go back and we decided to try to find another harbour. An hour later we finally reached one where we could spend the night, get a warm meal and calm down from this exciting journey.*
3. *But suddenly the weather changed and after only a few seconds rain and even hail came out of the big gray cloudes which had suddenly appeared.*

It was encouraging to see that a majority of the NRW candidates in the sample chose the story, which tends to give more scope for a wide range of PET-level language and to encourage a more ambitious approach to sentence structure. While there were a few weaknesses, for example in spelling, use of tenses and word order, most candidates produced well-structured narratives which displayed an impressive command of vocabulary and a good level of accuracy in grammar and spelling.

The letter is often chosen by candidates who feel they need to 'play it safe' as they can to some extent rely on the question to give them a structure for their writing, and the topics usually make fewer demands on vocabulary and range of grammatical structure than do the stories. However, the NRW candidates showed some enterprise in their approach to the topic, and there were a number of quite ambitious answers which drew on a wider range of tenses and vocabulary than was the case with many answers from candidates from other parts of the world.

In preparation for letter writing, students should be encouraged to go beyond reliance on one tense in their answers, and to avoid listing of activities.

They should be shown ways of introducing a variety of structures, for example conditional forms, and helped to develop wide vocabularies in areas which are likely to form the topics of letters.

Conclusion

NRW candidates generally did well in all three parts of the writing paper. They seemed to have been well prepared for the tasks involved, and were able to produce English that was appropriate and accurate, and often ambitious.

6. PET SPEAKING

Report on Candidates' Speaking Performance

Nick Kenny

Principal Examiner, PET Speaking

Background information

The tasks of the PET Speaking test are designed to elicit language of a suitable level and range. Candidates take the test in pairs, a format which allows for a variety of interaction patterns, and respond to a variety of visual and spoken prompts. The test is conducted by the interlocutor in the company of an assessor, who does not take part in the interaction.

Each candidate is awarded marks by the assessor on a scale of 0-5 for four separate criteria: Grammar and Vocabulary; Discourse Management; Pronunciation; and Interactive Communication. The interlocutor also provides a mark for Global Achievement for each candidate, which is double weighted, giving a total of 30 marks in all. This represents 25% of the total marks for the whole PET examination. Combining the analytical marks of the assessor and a global mark from the interlocutor gives a balanced view of candidate performance.

Overall performance

The NRW candidates performed strongly in this paper in relation to the candidature as a whole. The average mark for this component of the exam was 26.48, compared with 23.52 in the rest of the world. This average mark reflects the strength of the NRW candidates in oral skills.

Task performance

In general the candidates from NRW managed the test very well, and seemed at ease with the test format, the majority scoring between 3 and 5 marks out of a maximum 5 on the various criteria. The statistics bear this out, as the average score of NRW candidates was slightly higher in all criteria compared to that of Germany as a whole, and also compared to that of candidates in the rest of the world.

Part 1

In Part 1, candidates take part in a general conversation led by the interlocutor, who asks questions about their personal details, daily routines, likes and dislikes. Candidates are also asked to spell their names in English. Candidates are addressed in turn and are not expected to talk to each other at this stage. NRW candidates tended to perform well in this part. The questions were usually predictable ones about family, studies or work, free-time activities, etc.

Stronger candidates extended their responses to the more open-ended questions with details that backed up their answers. Some weaker candidates gave one- or two-word answers to all questions, and failed to develop their answers, or required additional prompts from the interlocutor. Very few candidates had problems spelling their name in English.

Part 2

In Part 2, candidates talk together about a situation described to them by the interlocutor which is supported by a sheet of visual prompts. In this part of the test, candidates manage the interaction themselves, giving their opinions about the ideas presented in the visual material and eliciting those of their partner. It is not expected that candidates will reach a conclusion, although some may, but they should be able to fill the allotted time without further prompting from the interlocutor. NRW Candidates performed well in this part, generally listening carefully to the interlocutor's instructions, thinking about the task and its context, and interacting meaningfully with their partner to move towards a conclusion or decision.

Well-prepared candidates talked about each of the suggestions given by the visual prompts and gave reasons for their opinions. These candidates involved their partner by asking for an opinion and following up on the points their partner had made. In this way, they kept the discussion going for the allotted 2-3 minutes. Where time allowed, some candidates summarised the reasons for their final choice to signal that they had completed the task. Some weak candidates, however, rushed to a conclusion without talking about all the visual material; others gave their own opinions but failed to elicit those of their partner. Only very rarely did candidates require further prompting from the interlocutor.

Part 3

In this part of the test, each candidate is asked to talk about a single colour photograph of an everyday situation. This gives the candidates the chance to demonstrate their range of vocabulary and their ability to organise language into a coherent description. Most NRW candidates achieved this and spoke for the full time allotted. They talked about the people and activities in the foreground (their clothes, what they are doing, the relationships between them, the objects in view, etc.), as well as commenting on the overall context (the location, furniture, etc.).

Strong candidates were able to deal with unknown items of vocabulary by using paraphrase strategies, such as providing a fuller description of objects and activities when they were unsure of the specific word to use. A few candidates spent time unsuccessfully trying to produce sophisticated

positional language (e.g. in the top right-hand corner, etc.) which is not expected at this level, and so wasted opportunities to demonstrate their range of PET-level vocabulary and expressions.

Part 4

In this part of the test, the candidates engage in a more personalised conversation on the topic introduced by their photographs. The interlocutor sets up the discussion, outlining the two elements to the task and then hands over management of the interaction to the candidates themselves. NRW candidates again generally performed well in this part of the test, listening carefully to the instructions and understanding that they should talk together with their partner. In their conversations, most candidates covered both elements of the task and filled the allotted time without the need for further prompting from the interlocutor. Some weaker candidates, however, addressed their comments to the interlocutor rather than the partner, or produced a lengthy monologue, failing to bring their partner into the discussion.

Grammar and Vocabulary

Although the average marks in this section were high, at PET level this does not indicate a faultless performance. Clearly some good candidates were ambitious in their use of language and made more mistakes as a result whilst others were more cautious and produced a narrower range of language as a result. It is worth reminding candidates that both accuracy and range of both grammar and vocabulary are assessed under this criterion. However, as might be expected, there were some instances of recurring errors, maybe arising from mother-tongue language interference, which are worth noting. These include:

- Tense errors generally, especially incorrect use of simple and continuous forms, for example:
 - *There sit some people; they make a picnic*
 - *The picture is showing three people*
 - *He look happy*
 - *He don't has to ..*
 - *He also bring a flower*
 - *I am living here all my live*
 - *They seem having a nice time.*
- Use of articles and prepositions, pronouns, etc, for example:
 - *in the nature*
 - *the most markets are ...*
 - *on the picture*
 - *on the weekend*
 - *in the near from my home*
 - *the birthday of the daughter*
 - *the mother of them*
 - *I like to sports*
 - *Playing on a piano*
- Syntax and general grammatical errors, for example:
 - *I study a bit Japanese*
 - *I like also beach*
 - *I can see two men who cycling*
 - *If I would tell it to him, I would said he go with ship*

There were, however, some very good examples of correct vocabulary and structure for this level from NRW candidates, for example:

- *I was born in Essen and still live there*
- *My parents moved to Essen three years after I was born*
- *By drawing a picture, he could express his feelings*
- *I work as a radio reporter at our local radio station*
- *I could never work in a hospital*
- *I love our living room, it's absolutely huge*

Discourse Management

This scale refers to the coherence, extent and relevance of each candidate's individual contribution. Again, NRW candidates did well on this scale, generally maintaining a coherent flow of language both within and between utterances and producing contributions that were relevant to what had gone before and to the task in hand. Some good examples of coherent extended discourse at this level included:

- *Well, first of all I can see a girl explaining something to ...*
- *I often go shopping with my mum. However, I choose what we're going to buy and she pays*
- *I wouldn't buy food in a fast-food restaurant because it's not healthy*
- *It's a good job, even if it's not very well paid*

Weaker candidates, however, tended to produce simple unconnected phrases, for example, simply listing vocabulary items in Part 3 or failing to say why visual prompts in Part 2 might or might not be a good idea. There were also examples of unfinished or abandoned utterances from weaker candidates.

Pronunciation

Pronunciation was generally clear from NRW candidates and candidates could be understood with little strain on the listener. Although candidates generally achieved high scores on this scale, and comprehension was not impeded, some typical problems included:

- making two syllables of mono-syllabic words, for example:

'cloh-this' for clothes
'skew-al' for school

- inappropriate word stress, for example:

ve-ge-ta-bles
com-for-ta-ble
concert

- unclear individual sounds, for example

Marths' for maths
Larv' for love
wery' for 'very'

- a tendency to produce utterances with equal stress on all syllables, for example:

It makes a good at-mos-phere

Interactive Communication

This scale refers to the candidate's ability to use language to achieve meaningful communication. In general, NRW candidates initiated and responded appropriately at this level, and were able to use interactive strategies to maintain or repair communication despite some instances of hesitation. There was generally a sensitivity to the norms of turn-taking and most candidates showed an interest in, and responded to, what their partner was saying. In parts 2 and 4 of the test particularly, candidates produced some good instances of using interactive language at this level, for example:

- *I'm not sure. What about you?*
- *I feel the same way. I'm not so interested in maths either*
- *Do you want to start?*
- *Let's talk about this one first*
- *I agree with you up to a point, but ...*
- *Do you want to talk about this one?*
- *I'm sorry, but I disagree.*
- *I'd choose this one. Which would you prefer?*
- *I totally agree with you*
- *Sorry? Could you repeat that please?*
- *Sorry, I don't understand what you mean*

Weaker candidates sometimes addressed their comments to the interlocutor rather than to their partner, or produced a lengthy monologue, failing to bring their partner into the discussion. Only rarely did candidates require additional prompts provided by the interlocutor.

Conclusion

NRW candidates have generally performed well in the PET speaking paper, understanding the format of the test and what was required of them by the various tasks. Candidates have clearly been well prepared by their teachers and as a result have been able to show their spoken language abilities to the full in the test with a good degree of confidence.

7. FCE WRITING

Report on Candidates' Writing Performance

David Carr

Principal Examiner, FCE Writing

Background Information

The FCE Writing Paper consists of two parts: Part 1 is a compulsory task for all candidates and Part 2 offers 4 questions (one offering the choice of two tasks based on set books) from which candidates must choose one. The paper is marked by trained examiners and their work is monitored by Team Leaders. Two mark schemes are used: a general mark scheme which is common to all tasks and a task-specific mark scheme tailored to each task. For each question, the examiner awards a mark in one of five bands (0-5, with 5 representing the highest achievement). Within each band (except 0), a maximum of three points can be awarded (5.3 representing the highest achievement, 3.1 representing 'acceptable' performance at FCE level). The marks awarded are related to task achievement, range of language, accuracy of language, organisation and register.

Overall Performance

The overall performance of candidates from Nordrhein-Westfalen in the Writing component of the exam was very strong. Their average mark was 79%, or 31 marks out of 40.

Task Performance

Part 1

This is a compulsory task, where candidates must produce a 'transactional' letter, based on given input. The question in the March 2005 paper involved responding to a letter from Mrs Anne Moss from whom a hall had been hired to celebrate a birthday party. Numbered notes had been provided to assist candidates in including all relevant information in their replies. Candidates needed to thank Mrs Moss, comment on the hall facilities (including one negative comment), apologise for the condition in which the hall was left, book the hall for another party, and refer to payment.

The majority of the NRW candidates performed well in terms of task achievement but a small number omitted to include a negative comment about the facilities. This was the point which caused most problems across the candidature worldwide - some candidates clearly did not understand the underlined '*apart from*' in the prompt and commented on only the positive facilities. The marks of these candidates were consequently brought down by one band; example: 4.2 to 3.2.

Most NRW candidates, however, not only included all the requisite content points but also expanded on them with some skill: lighting, windows, ventilation, state of DJ (disk jockey) equipment, toilets, and seating were the areas most commonly mentioned as problems with the hall facilities. Excuses for the condition of the hall were often imaginative and convincing. Points related to booking and payments were dealt with efficiently.

Success in terms of task achievement came through careful reading of the rubric and stimulus material, thorough planning and organisation of the response, and good achievement in terms of accuracy, range, and appropriacy of language. Most NRW candidates therefore succeeded in achieving the desired affect on the target reader.

Part 2

Question 2

This was a popular question across the candidature and the most popular among NRW candidates.

The task was to write a composition, arising from a class discussion, giving an opinion on the statement: '*All zoos should be closed down*'.

This seemed more popular than previous composition questions and there were some very interesting and competent answers. The subject matter seemed of genuine interest to many NRW candidates and there were some quite passionate pleas on behalf of caged animals. There were also well-reasoned discussions about the educative role they can play and the need to protect endangered species.

In all aspects of task achievement, NRW candidates performed well and most were awarded scores within Band 4 for this question. Organisation and cohesion were often strong features (paragraphing and linking were generally handled very appropriately) and well-balanced arguments were provided by most candidates. Candidates did well to demonstrate a good range of lexis and structure appropriate to the task.

Question 3

This was a reasonably popular question across the candidature. The task was to write an article about flowers for an international magazine. There were two elements to the question: '*Why do most people like flowers? When do people in your country give flowers?*' It was decided early on in the marking period that reference to the writer's country need not be explicit as many had referred to '*we give flowers...*' or '*people...*' or '*you*' etc. and this was also true of the NRW candidature.

There were some very competent answers which combined good language with quite a lot of specialist knowledge on the subject! Many of the stronger candidates adopted a nicely appropriate article style with good headings and imaginative opening or closing lines.

Examples

1. *Flowers – the most beautiful language in the world*
2. *So the next time you get flowers as a present, be glad that there is someone who cares!*
3. *So keep on supporting the power of flowers, and there will be more happiness in your life!*

Such attention to the genre of writing in part resulted in many NRW candidates receiving marks in Bands 4 and 5.

Question 4

The task was to write a story for a short story competition in an international magazine. The competition says that the story must begin with the following words:

Carl finished reading the advertisement and quickly picked up the telephone.

Some candidates obviously saw it as an opportunity to produce a story which they had practised in class. All the NRW candidates succeeded in positioning the prompt accurately at the beginning of the story and it was felt that because there were *two* elements in the prompt, links with *either* the advertisement *or* the phone call should be accepted (the way the prompt was worded meant that the latter did not necessarily depend on the former).

NRW candidates seemed to have little trouble in developing the narrative and the more ambitious candidates were able to build tension effectively by incorporating a wide range of lexis and structure. Stronger candidates inserted judicious amounts of direct speech into their narratives and this also added to the dramatic effect.

Question 5

In the sample, very few attempted this option. Question 5 is based around a set text. The task was:

'In class you have been talking about a decision made by a character in the book or short story you have read. Now your teacher has asked you to write a composition in which you say what the decision was and how this decision affected the story.'

Too often in these questions, candidates do not adhere closely enough to the rubric or instructions and take the opportunity to give a general summary of the plot. In one particular example, a candidate, however, used an excellent range of lexis and structure to link her answer closely to the two elements of the question and she was consequently awarded a score in the top band.

Language Performance

The NRW candidates demonstrated above-average language ability. Most candidates scored marks in Band 4 and a significant number achieved Band 5. Even Band 3 scripts displayed a good amount of ambition, although accuracy was flawed. Very few NRW candidates were given scores in the lower bands where errors impede communication.

It was encouraging to see that NRW candidates were able to combine conciseness with range. This ability demonstrated very good control of language – answers were within the appropriate word limits but included evidence of excellent organisation and range of structure and lexis. The following examples come from NRW scripts which achieved Band 5. It should be noted that a flawless answer is not required for Band 5 at FCE level as long as the answer fully achieves the desired effect on the target reader. Note the way in which a range of structures and lexis is used to very good effect (for

example, conditionals in the first and third examples, as well as appropriate collocations in these and the others).

Examples - Band 5

1. *The facilities were good apart from the lighting which we were unfortunately not able to dim. If the lights had not been that bright, the atmosphere would have been more intimate.*
2. *With the help of zoos, some animals are saved from dying out and often they have a lot of space and their cages resemble their natural surroundings.*
3. *A variety of animals could not survive if we did not give them into the protecting hands of zoos.*
4. *Flowers are not only there to look nice. They are a symbol for liking each other, for happiness, but also for grief.*
5. *He still could not believe that this was possible. With shaking fingers, he tried to dial the number.*

Band 4 answers also showed ambition but more errors and/or awkwardness appeared when attempting more complex language.

Examples - Band 4

1. *All hall facilities were satisfactory, except the air conditioner, with which we had lots of troubles because it was fixed on a very high level and we did not know how to switch it off.*
2. *I am persuaded of the idea of protecting animals with the help of a zoo rather than leaving animals in a world which consists of quick cars, pollutions, and buildings made of stone and steal.*
3. *After the wedding ceremony, she throws them into a couple of unmarried women. It is told that the one who catches it will marry next. Mostly it do not work, but it is an old tradition which you cannot ignore.*

Note here (particularly in the first two examples) the over-long sentences and, as a result of them, the reduced level of naturalness and fluency. In the last example, ambition can be seen to lead to the increased risk of not maintaining accurate referencing and agreement. In all cases, however, the ideas are appropriate and their meaning is not jeopardised by the errors.

Scripts that received Band 3 were generally clearly organised. The language was reasonably accurate and demonstrated an adequate range of structure and lexis. A number of errors, sometimes due to interference from German, tended to be present and, while not impeding communication, these prevented the candidates from making a wholly positive impression on the target reader and therefore from attaining a higher mark.

Examples - Band 3

1. *At the beginning, it was quite difficult to get along with it, but after a certain time I could handle the situation and the further evening was very enjoyable.*
2. *Fortunately, we could manage the problem nevertheless.*
3. *Your hall facilities were really good, apart from the ladies toilets because they broked down since some days.*
4. *When he asked the women if he could buy the tickets, she first told him that they had gone yet*
5. *He fastly tipped in the number and waited for an answer on the other side. "Hello, is there anybody?"*

Note that in these examples there is further reduction in fluency and naturalness. This is caused by poor lexical collocation and/or substantial errors of structure, for example, tenses, word order. Again, meaning is generally not compromised but the target reader needs to work a little harder to understand the message fully.

A mark of Band 2 was awarded to the small number of NRW candidates whose writing included impeding/distracting errors and/or inadequate organisation of ideas (only one candidate received Band 2 because omission of a content point in Question 1 reduced the score from Band 3).

Examples - Band 2

1. *Due to the payment we could arrange it in this way that we pay 100£ which result of the 50£ from the last party and the 50£ for the next.*
2. *Finally I wanna give to know that I'm very sorry about the last party.*
3. *Carl did not thought that Danny will get the job... but after the smalltalk, Danny got the job and Carl was send home.*

General suggestions for improved performance

- The rubric (instructions) for each question should be read carefully and, especially in the compulsory first task, all elements of the answer should be included.
- Candidates should think carefully about the target reader. Adopting and maintaining the appropriate register and tone can improve the marks of those candidates whose language is accurate but awkward. Particular attention should be paid to linking words – an otherwise appropriately chatty style is spoiled by overuse of inappropriately formal linkers, for example, 'moreover', 'furthermore' etc.
- To achieve Bands 4 and 5, ambition and range are necessary without compromising accuracy. Candidates should be encouraged to read as widely as possible and to note down new language, especially collocations.
- During preparation courses, candidates can be encouraged to make lists of their 'favourite' mistakes and monitor their progress in avoiding them. Typical influences from German include present simple versus continuous, word order, adverbial versus adjectival forms, 'this/these' versus 'that/those' etc.
- Weaker candidates should be encouraged to produce shorter sentences which reduce the risk of producing inaccurate referencing and/or agreement.

Conclusion

Most of the NRW candidates performed very well in the Writing Paper. They were clearly at ease with the task types, organised and presented their answers well, incorporated good range and control of language, and consequently produced lively, imaginative texts. There was therefore strong evidence that they had been very well-prepared by their teachers. They were able to demonstrate an above-average ability in both sections of the paper and performed well against the rest of the candidature in the world. Further work in the areas outlined above will enable them to improve their already impressive performance still further.

8. FCE SPEAKING

Report on Candidates' Speaking Performance

Petrina Cliff
Chair – FCE Speaking

Background Information

The FCE Speaking test is taken by pairs of candidates (or sometimes a group of three if a candidate is without a partner at the end of a session). The test consists of four parts. The interlocutor chooses from a range of personal questions in Part 1 of the test. A candidate is given one of a possible 20 tasks in Part 2 of the test and one of 10 Part 3 tasks. Part 4 tasks follow on from the topic of Part 3. In writing this report I will make reference to candidates' performance on the specific tasks used by the Interlocutors.

Part 1

3 minutes 5 minutes for groups of three)

These are short exchanges between the candidate and the interlocutor in which the candidates are encouraged to give information about themselves.

Part 2

4 minutes (6 minutes for groups of three)

Each candidate speaks for one minute on a topic introduced by the interlocutor and with the support of two visual prompts. They are also asked to comment briefly on each other's photographs

Part 3

(7 minutes overall for Parts 3 and 4; 9 minutes for groups of three)

Candidates are given a scenario followed by a range of picture prompts which they discuss in order to try to reach a negotiated conclusion although they are not penalised if they do not manage to reach a conclusion in the time allowed.

Part 4

The interlocutor encourages a discussion of matters related to the Part 3 topic area by questioning the candidates. The interlocutor may ask candidates to discuss questions together or may address the candidates individually.

Overall Performance

The NRW candidates' performance in the Speaking test was particularly impressive. Of the Grade 11s, the average score was 90%; of Grade 12s, the average score was 89%; of Grade 13s, the average score was 91%.

Task Performance

Part 1

Topics in Part 1 relate to the candidates themselves and to their personal experience and included questions concerning daily life, likes and dislikes, special occasions and future plans. Part 1 was well handled by virtually all candidates and this is generally the case in this part of the test as the candidates are on familiar ground. Sometimes candidates took a little while to get started particularly with questions asking them to make a choice, for example:

'What's the nicest thing that's happened to you this year?'

Some candidates tended to hesitate over questions like this in an attempt to find the 'right' answer. They should be encouraged to say something and respond straight away and with confidence as this will enhance their overall strong performance. However, candidates performed well in this part of the test giving well-sustained contributions and often using ideas and lexis above that expected at FCE.

Part 2

Candidates performed very well in this part of the test demonstrating very good discourse management. They were able to complete their long turn, seldom running out of things to say. In Part 2 candidates are invited to '*compare and contrast the photographs and say*'

Generally speaking, candidates were able to internalise the instructions, compare and contrast the photographs, and go on to answer the second part of the task. Some candidates were a little hesitant at times which detracted from their performance although there were very few instances of long pauses or contributions that fell short of the full minute.

Part 2 - Response question

This is intended as a candidate's very brief 20 second reaction to their partner's visuals. Candidates sometimes spoke at far more length than is required due to their good level of English and out of a desire to demonstrate what they could do, for example -

- *Which would you prefer?*
- *Well this depends on the mood I'm in ...*

The candidate goes on to try to explain how each situation would be preferable depending on her mood and is interrupted during her explanation. Candidates can feel worried when they are cut off by the Interlocutor in this way, but should be reassured that being asked to stop simply indicates that they have made an adequate contribution in terms of length.

Part 3

Candidates were sometimes a little more hesitant in Part 3 than in other parts of the test, finding it more difficult to demonstrate a range of lexis and grammatical forms. This was sometimes due to the fact that they had not remembered the instructions precisely. An example of this comes from a pair of candidates talking about the task '*Olympic Games*' where the instructions invite them to talk about the advantages and disadvantages of doing different temporary jobs. Instead the candidates talked about whether or not they would like to do the job:

- *I would like to do this job (interviewing athletes)*
- *It's not the best job but I'd do it (collecting rubbish)*

Approaching the task in this way meant that the candidates were less likely to produce a sample of language at the level. Candidates should be trained to listen carefully to the instructions and should ask for them to be repeated if they are unsure of what they have to do. They will not lose any marks for this.

Another pitfall in this part of the test was that candidates sometimes tended to reach their conclusions too quickly. They are asked to '*First talk about and then decide*'.

Candidates should aim to talk about the full range of visuals before coming to their decision so that they do not run out of things to say. An example of this was a situation where one candidate asked his partner '*What do you think is the most important?*' when the candidates had only discussed two of the seven pictures.

Having reached a conclusion early on in the interaction the candidates found themselves in the position of having to backtrack in order to continue the discussion and speak for the allotted time. There were, however, many examples of very natural interaction in this part of the test with candidates listening and responding to each other and demonstrating good sensitivity to turn-taking.

Part 4

Candidates took every opportunity to answer the questions they were asked fully and effectively in this part of the test. On the whole the candidates gave coherent answers which were confidently delivered and well sustained.

Grammar

Overall the candidates performed very well on this scale demonstrating very good control of grammatical structure. I give one example from each part of the test although there were many to choose from:

- *People living in Cologne are very open and friendly* (Part 1)
- *It must be cold otherwise they wouldn't be ice skating* (Part 2 Free Time)
- *Big stadiums like this can only be found in large cities* (Part 3 Life In The City)
- *You can become more open minded and learn to be more tolerant.* (Part 4)

Candidates did make isolated individual errors with grammar. The main grammar error affecting performance throughout the test for these particular candidates was their constant tendency to confuse the present simple and present continuous tense, using the present simple where the present continuous was needed. This was the most prevalent error and I give a number of examples, each produced by a different candidate, to demonstrate this:

- *It seems to be tourists who take pictures of each other*
- *I can see a child who learns to swim*
- *She's interviewed by someone*
- *They sit together*
- *They laugh and look at each other*

There were many more. Similarly they used the present continuous instead of the present simple, though this was less often the case, for example:

- *We're best friends and we're spending almost our whole free time together. The only thing I'm doing by myself is dancing.* (Part 1)

At times these persistent errors detracted from the candidates' overall performance.

Vocabulary

On occasion, candidates struggled to find precisely the word they needed, for example, the word 'ice rink', 'dolphin' etc. Candidates should be taught to develop paraphrasing strategies to deal with this and should not feel that they are expected to know the precise term – for example, 'canoe', and that the word 'boat' is sufficient at this level.

Overall however, the candidates' control of lexis was very mature. I give examples taken from different candidates and different tasks to demonstrate this:

- *a very friendly facial expression*
- *The picture at the top is dominated by colours which are softer and more blue*
- *I can see people walking along the coast. It seems to be an idyllic atmosphere*
- *In the first picture they're drawing for fun. In the second picture he's doing it for money somewhere on the street*
- *In America they have no social system*

Particularly impressive at this level however, was the very natural use of colloquial language:

- *Isabelle is more into writing* (Part 1)
- *They seem to be a couple of friends hanging out together* (Part 1)
- *to grab some food* (Part 3)

- *it's just an add-on* (referring to the luxury of having a fountain in the city - Part 3)

This level of precision and flexibility with lexis is at the top end of the scale at FCE and often above what would be expected at this level.

Discourse Management

Candidates demonstrated very good control of discourse management. They developed their ideas and organised their contributions very effectively. This was particularly evident in Part 2 of the test. Here is one example:

I can see a man fishing in the foreground and woods in the background – it's a relaxing atmosphere I would do this alone otherwise the fishing would be interrupted (Time Alone)

However, some candidates were hesitant at times which detracted a little from their performance. Some candidates tended to move backwards and forwards between the two pictures rather than dealing with one picture fully before moving on to the next. If they do this too often in a one minute turn it can lead to fragmented contributions and frequent repetition of phrases such as '*In this picture ..., in the second picture ..., in the first picture, etc.*', which tends to make the overall contribution in this part less effective.

Pronunciation

Pronunciation was very clear and put little or no strain on the listener. Strain on the listener, when there was any, tended to come from a narrow voice range with rather flat intonation patterns making some candidates sound a little bored by what they were saying. This was by no means representative of the candidates as a whole but this is one area of pronunciation that could be improved upon. Individual sounds were pronounced clearly for easy understanding with the exception of the occasional problem with individual sounds which caused confusion, for example, 'beer' when the candidate was referring to a toy bear in the Part 2 task *Places To Shop*. However this was not often the case.

Interactive Communication

Candidates were very well prepared for the test. They interacted very naturally with each other, listening to each other's contributions and picking up on what their partner said in order to maintain the interaction. A good example of this occurred when two of the candidates were discussing the relative merits of different experiences on a trip round the world:

- *What about rafting? It's fun to do together*
- *I would avoid doing things like that! ... Egypt would be really fun because you see the ancient culture don't you think?*
- *Yes and it's nice to go to the opera, but not when you're going on a trip round the world because you can do that in Cologne*

If any criticism could be made, it is that due to the candidates' ability to sustain their turn, on occasion they spoke for a long time before inviting their partner to contribute to the discussion. This tended to occur in Part 3 of the test. It is important for candidates to be sensitive to turn-taking, particularly in this part of the test and candidates who performed best were those who listened and responded to what their partner said and invited their partner to speak as well as making contributions themselves. There were many examples of this but I give one where a candidate was unable to understand one of the visuals in Part 3:

- *What do you think?*
- *I can't really recognise what it is*
- *I think it's a taxi, a car....*
- *Yes ... well it helps people to get from one place to another*

and another where the candidate didn't understand the task:

'Oh I misunderstood' says the candidate quite confidently as the other candidate gently guides her back to the task without undermining her for not having understood what she was supposed to do.

These are good examples of candidates supporting each other in order complete the task. The fact that one candidate has a problem interpreting one of the visuals and another needs redirection does not detract from the interaction and the interaction is sustained.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the candidates in the sample I listened to generally performed very well in the speaking test, many demonstrating ability at the top end of the FCE scale and some performing at a level higher than would be expected at FCE. They had been well prepared for the test and were confident in demonstrating their ability.

APPENDIX A

Preliminary English Test (PET) and the First Certificate in English (FCE) in a European context

The Common European Framework

University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations are linked to the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*, published by the Council of Europe.

FCE is set at Level B2 (Vantage) in the Common European Framework, the PET test is at Level B1, *Threshold Level* in the Common European Framework

The Council of Europe's Framework of reference for Language Learning and Teaching provides a model of language ability in the European context to be used by all those involved in the field of language learning. The framework document includes sections on the assessment of language ability in the context of the model and so provides the theoretical background which supports a communicative approach to language test design and development. This allows those designing and administering language tests to do so under the umbrella of a shared language testing system, to share a theoretical starting point and so produce tests that have a definite location and identity within the framework. The framework is further supported by a supplementary document entitled the *Users' Guide for Examiners*. This guide uses the Framework as a point of departure to provide models of test design and development with the aim of establishing European and international standards of test production.

Cambridge ESOL, a part of Cambridge Assessment, formerly known as UCLES and a non-teaching department of the University of Cambridge, has been closely involved with the development of the framework document and in particular with the *Users' Guide for Examiners*. Many of the models described in the Guide draw very closely on the experience of those designing and producing tests on a large scale in Cambridge. The focus of the Guide is on the principles that lie behind good practice. Each test will have its own individual character in order to meet the specific needs of its users. What the Guide provides is a model of suitable processes, based on clear principles, that allows valid tests to be produced, whatever the immediate context.

The Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE)

One example of the Common European Framework being used in practice is the ALTE system of levels. ALTE is the Association of Language Testers in Europe and Cambridge ESOL is a member of the Association. ALTE was formed in 1990, and its 18 members (including the Goethe Institut) are all providers of language examinations and certificates from European countries.

The three main objectives of ALTE are as follows:

1. to establish common levels of proficiency in order to promote the trans-national recognition of certification in Europe;
2. to establish common standards for all stages of the testing process: this is for test development, marking and grading, reporting of test results, test analysis and reporting of findings;
3. to collaborate on joint projects and in the exchange of ideas and know-how.

The ALTE Code of Practice focuses on the responsibilities of both examination providers and examination users and covers four main areas:

- developing examinations
- interpreting examination results
- striving for fairness
- informing examination takers

Five levels of proficiency have been defined for the tests produced by ALTE users and these are reflected in the levels offered in the Cambridge ESOL examinations. These levels also correspond to the Council of Europe Framework.

The chart below gives an overview of the Cambridge ESOL Main Suite - Certificate of Proficiency in English (CPE), Certificate in Advanced English (CAE), First Certificate in English (FCE), Preliminary English Test (PET) and Key English Test (KET), and Cambridge Young Learner English Tests (YLE), and where they fit on the ALTE and European frameworks:

Cambridge	ALTE levels	European Framework Levels
CPE	Level 5	C2 Mastery
CAE	Level 4	C1 Effective Proficiency
FCE	Level 3	B2 Vantage
PET	Level 2	B1 Threshold
KET/Flyers	Level 1	A2 Waystage
Movers/Starters		A1 Breakthrough

Flyers / Movers / Starters - YLE levels

The ALTE Can-Do project

An important project that ALTE is involved in is the development of a series of competency-oriented Can-Do statements. These statements cover activities in three categories - work, social/tourist and study - and are anchored to the Council of Europe's *Common European Framework*. The statements provide a tool for those involved in teaching and testing language students as well as a self-assessment tool for the learners themselves.

Below are some examples of Can-Do statements at ALTE Level 2 (Preliminary English Test; B1, *Common European Framework*) and ALTE Level 3 (First Certificate in English; B2, *Common European Framework*). A Nordrhein-Westfalen pupil with a pass in PET should typically be able to do the activities described at Level 2 (B1) and be working towards the language competences described

at Level 3 (B2). Candidates with a pass at FCE should typically be able to do activities described at B2 level and be working towards language competencies at C1 level.

Can Do statements at B1 ● Preliminary English Test (PET)

Listening/Speaking

- can give a clear/simple presentation or demonstration on a familiar topic
- can express opinions on abstract/cultural matters in a limited way
- can participate in a conversation in a casual or semi-formal situation for a short time

Reading

- can understand a factual article/report in a newspaper/magazine
- can understand a letter expressing personal opinions
- can understand basic instructions and messages

Writing

- can write letters of a generally routine nature or simple letters relating facts and events
- can make simple notes from written sources
- can write a simple narrative or description

Can Do statements at B2 ● First Certificate in English Level (FCE)

Listening/Speaking

- can keep up a conversation on a fairly wide range of topics
- can present his/her own opinions and justify opinions
- can ask questions, for example for reasons, clarification
- can give a clear presentation on a familiar topic

Reading

- can understand opinions where these are simply expressed
- can read the media for information quickly and with good understanding
- can scan text for relevant information and understand detailed instructions or advice

Writing

- can express opinions and give reasons
- can present arguments, using a limited range of expression
- can make notes that will be of some limited use for essay or revision purposes

Can-Do statements at C1 ● Certificate in Advanced English (CAE)

Listening/Speaking

- can contribute effectively to meetings and seminars within own area of work or keep up a casual conversation with a good degree of fluency, coping with abstract expressions.

Reading

- can read quickly enough to cope with an academic course, to read the media for information or to understand non-standard correspondence.

Writing

- can prepare/draft professional correspondence, take reasonably accurate notes in meetings or write an essay which shows an ability to communicate.

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