



Grammatical and Lexical Performance of Third-Year EFL Students at the University of Benghazi: Evidence from an Archived FCE Use of English Paper

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الأداء النحوي والمعجمي لدى طلبة السنة الثالثة الدارسين للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في
جامعة بنغازي: أدلة من نسخة مؤرشفة من اختبار FCE لاستخدام اللغة الإنجليزية

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Received: June 04, 2026

Accepted: August 13, 2026

Published: August 26, 2026

Abstract:

This study examined the grammatical and lexical abilities of 40 third-year EFL students at the University of Benghazi using an archived version of Cambridge FCE Paper 3: Use of English. A total of 65 items were included in the test, and the raw marks for the test were 75 due to the 10 items of word transformation in the test worth two marks each. The students achieved an average raw score of 15.45 out of 75 (SD = 12.06). The lowest score for any section of the paper was that of error correction, with an average score of 1.63 out of 15 (SD = 1.41). The most common errors for the students included lexical and grammatical errors, formation of words, and unnecessary use of words. Although these results indicate the difficulties that these students experience with controlled grammatical and lexical tasks, they are not a measure of the student's FCE grade or their overall proficiency in the English language.

Keywords: grammar assessment; lexical knowledge; FCE Use of English; Libyan EFL students; diagnostic testing.

الملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى فحص القدرات النحوية والمعجمي لدى 40 طالباً من طلبة السنة الثالثة بقسم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية بجامعة بنغازي، وذلك باستخدام نسخة مؤرشفة من اختبار كامبريدج FCE ، الورقة الثالثة: استخدام اللغة الإنجليزية (Use of English) وقد اشتمل الاختبار على 65 فقرة، في حين بلغ مجموع الدرجات 75 درجة، وذلك لأن فقرات الجزء الثالث من الاختبار تُحتسب بدرجتين لكل فقرة. وقد حقق الطلبة متوسطاً قدره 15.45 من أصل 75 درجة (الانحراف المعياري = 12.06). وكانت أدنى درجة متوسطة في جزء تصحيح الأخطاء، حيث بلغ متوسط الدرجات 1.63 من أصل 15 درجة (الانحراف المعياري = 1.41). وشملت الأخطاء الأكثر شيوعاً لدى الطلبة الأخطاء المعجمية والنحوية، وأخطاء اشتقاق الكلمات، والاستخدام غير الضروري لها. وعلى الرغم من أن هذه النتائج التي تشير إلى الصعوبات التي يواجهها هؤلاء الطلبة في التدريبات النحوية والمعجمية، فإن هذه النتائج لا تُعد مقياساً لدرجة الطالب في اختبار FCE الورقة الثالثة: استخدام اللغة الإنجليزية (Use of English) أو لمستواه العام في اللغة الإنجليزية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: تقييم القواعد النحوية؛ المعرفة المعجمية؛ اختبار FCE لاستخدام اللغة الإنجليزية؛ الطلبة الليبيون دارسو اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية؛ الاختبار التشخيصي.

Introduction

This study investigates the performance of third-year students at the University of Benghazi on a grammatical and lexical knowledge test in the First Certificate in English (FCE) Use of English paper. Forty students who took an advanced English course took the FCE Use of English paper of the First Certificate in English to investigate the importance of using tests of this type as well as proficiency tests to expose students to the type of tests that are standardised worldwide.

Achievement tests are used to measure the success of students within a specific course of study, while proficiency tests are used to assess the language skills that students have learned over time. For university students who are learning English as a foreign language, it is possible for students to pass all of the courses that they need to graduate without having enough language skills to succeed in their education. Thus, a proficiency test can provide another perspective on the language skills that students have learned over time. Recent research within the Libyan higher education system has revealed grammatical and lexical difficulties among EFL learners. At Benghazi University's Faculty of Arts and Sciences in Kufrah, for instance, Al Jawad and Mansour (2021) documented 205 errors made by students from ten grammatical categories, with articles, word and verb forms, and prepositions being the most used incorrectly. Another study involving 97 Libyan undergraduate students revealed pronunciation, spelling, word meaning, contextual use, and vocabulary difficulties (Halali et al., 2026). Furthermore, Aljoundi and Sheik (2025) also noted challenges in Libyan students' development of English language competence.

In the present world, the proficiency of students in the English language is of increasing importance for both postgraduate studies and employment. Standardised tests of English proficiency, such as the IELTS and the TOEFL are used to evaluate such proficiency for the purposes of education and employment. Based upon that most of our students are required to show their proficiency of English by sitting to international examinations like IELTS and TOEFL, for example. One of the main objectives of this study is, therefore, to make teachers and their students to be ready to such a challenge.

A study of the proficiency of students in English is inherently one that uses examinations of students' knowledge of the language. Such proficiency in English may be evaluated through tests like the FCE, for instance. However, little attention has been given to examining the performance of Libyan university students in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) on such tests. Therefore, a study into the performance of third-year English students at the University of Benghazi on the Use of English component of the FCE examination will investigate the grammatical and lexical knowledge of these students through the examination of their performance on the test.

Subjects and context of the study

The participants were 40 third-year English-major students enrolled in the Department of English, University of Benghazi. They were selected using whole-cohort convenience sampling. The group comprised female and male. All the participants learned English as a foreign language during their primary education but eventually chose English as their major during university. The participants lived in and studied in an Arabic-dominant community where English was taught as a foreign language. The test was administered in class, without access to reference materials. Participation was voluntary.

The participants' education system before university might have affected their education in university. For instance, in Al-Marj, teachers worked with large classes that had limited time and resources to teach English to students of varying proficiency (Orafi & Idris, 2023). Although this study took place in a different city from Benghazi, the results are generally reflective of the challenges of English education in Libya elsewhere.

Instrument of the study

The FCE Use of English paper was selected as the proficiency instrument to be used with the participating learners. This instrument was considered appropriate due to the level of proficiency that is targeted by the test and the expected proficiency of the participating learners. According to Harris (1969:70) essay questions tend to allow learners to avoid difficult grammar and vocabulary while objective tests reveal their weaknesses in these areas. Although these learners were enrolled in a university level course, this level does not necessarily indicate a proficiency level of C1. Therefore, the Use of English (UOE) paper was used to measure the learners' level of grammatical and lexical knowledge rather than determining their level of advanced (C1) English proficiency.

The Use of English paper assesses the learner's command of grammatical and lexical items through a series of controlled tasks. The Use of English paper that was used was the archived version of Cambridge's FCE Paper 3: Use of English (test code 0102/3 S03). Reproduced in Appendix A, this paper contained 65 items of five different types: multiple choice cloze, open cloze, key word transformations, error correction, and word formation (Geranpayeh, 2004). Each of the five sections contained 65 items except for the section on key word transformations, which contained 10 items. Thus, the paper contained 65 items but 75 marks (10 items x 2 marks

each for the key word transformations section). The scores from this test were solely used for descriptive purposes only.

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

The interpretation of the results is limited to the five grammatical and lexical task types included in this archived FCE Use of English paper. These results should not be understood as an official FCE grade for the candidate, their CEFR level, or an indicator of their proficiency in the English language. However, the published reliability coefficients for this examination do provide some information regarding the original examination that was created by Cambridge (Geranpayeh, 2004; Yan & Fan, 2021).

Reliability is a measure of the consistency and reliability of the scores in relation to the test, the test sample, the test items, and the testing conditions (Yan & Fan, 2021). Both the selected-response and limited-production items on Paper 3 of the Cambridge examinations require the candidates to provide predetermined answers to the questions on the examination. Within Cambridge examinations between the years 2000 and 2003, the 65-item Paper 3 examination of the FCE had reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alpha) values that ranged from .88 to .93 for each examination session; average reliability coefficients of around .91 were recorded for sessions held in 2001 and onwards (Geranpayeh, 2004). These results indicate the reliability of the original examination; however, they do not provide any information regarding the reliability coefficient of the current sample of participants.

Data analysis

The responses to the archived paper were scored according to the marking scheme for the archived paper. Descriptive statistics are reported for each part of the question, as well as for the total score for each participant. At the item level, responses were coded for correctness. Incorrect responses were grouped according to the grammatical/lexical feature that was targeted by that item. The analysis described in this paper is purely descriptive; no inferential statistics were performed on the data, and any conclusions drawn from this analysis only apply to the 40 participants included in this study.

Results and Discussion

This section illustrates results and discussions regarding the classifications of error and the participants' performance in the FCE paper 3 (Use of English). Brief details have been provided accompanied with 5 tables showcasing different classifications of grammatical and lexical errors from the test and another 6 tables emphasising the participant performances. For more information regarding this section, refer to appendix A and B.

Part 1 – MULTIPLE-CHOICE CLOZE

The errors were mainly related to lexical choice and collocation. For instance, many students used the word took for made in made a startling discovery, used amounts for numbers, and used caused for led in led to. The frequencies of these and other errors are reported in Table 1.

Table.1 Classification of Lexicon Errors in Part 1 of the FCE Use of English Paper

No.	Error Category	Frequency of correct Answers	Frequency of incorrect Answers	Frequency of avoided answers	Percentage of (%)		
					correct	incorrect	avoided
					answers		
1	Lexicon Choice	20	19	1	50	47.5	2.5
2	Lexicon Choice	15	25	----	37.5	62.5	----
3	Lexicon Choice	19	21	----	47.5	52.5	----
4	Prepositions	31	8	1	77.5	20	2.5
5	Lexicon Choice	24	15	1	60	37.5	2.5
6	Lexicon Choice	22	18	----	55	45	----
7	Verb Forms	5	35	---	12.5	87.5	----
8	Lexicon Choice	21	17	2	52.5	42.5	5
9	Transitional	14	26	----	35	65	----
10	Devices	22	18	----	55	45	----
11	Verb Forms	30	9	1	75	22.5	2.5
12	Lexicon Choice	17	21	2	42.5	52.5	5
13	Lexicon Choice	9	29	2	22.5	72.5	5
14	Lexicon Choice	24	13	3	60	32.5	7.5
15	Lexicon Choice Verb Forms	18	22	----	45	55	----

Part 1 scores ranged from 2 to 14 out of 15 ($M = 7.30$, $SD = 2.88$). Twenty-one of the thirty-five participants (52.5%) earned a score of 8 or more. Thus, this was the highest percentage of participants to score 8 or more among the five Parts of the examination. The full distribution of participants' scores for this Part are reported in Table 2.

Table 2. Participants' Performance in Part 1 of the FCE Use of English Paper

Frequency	Score	Percentage
1	14	2.5 %
1	12	2.5 %
1	11	2.5 %
9	10	22.5 %
3	9	7.5 %
6	8	15.0 %
2	7	5.0 %
4	6	10.0 %
6	5	15.0 %
3	4	7.5 %
2	3	5 %
2	2	5 %
40	Total	100%
Mean	7.30	
Standard Deviation	2.88	

Part 2 – Open CLOZE

Errors in Parts 3 and 4 were mainly related to function words and lexical choices. For instance, words like about were replaced with for, of was replaced with until, and out was replaced with their. The item-level frequencies of these and other errors are reported in Table 3.

Table 3. Classification of Grammatical and lexical knowledge (Forms and Meanings) in Part 2 of the FCE Use of English Paper

No.	Error Category	Frequency of correct answers	Frequency of incorrect answers	Frequency of avoided answers	Percentage of (%)		
					correct	incorrect	avoided
					answers		
16	Prepositions	13	16	11	32.5	40	27.5
17	Prepositions	3	29	8	7.5	72.5	20
18	Verb Forms	1	23	16	2.5	57.5	40
19	Lexicon Choice	1	15	24	2.5	37.5	60
20	Pronouns	6	19	15	15	47.5	37.5
21	Prepositions	3	25	12	7.5	62.5	30
22	Transitional Devices	8	17	15	20	42.5	37.5
23	Verb Forms	4	16	20	10	40	50
24	Prepositions	4	22	14	10	55	35
25	Pronouns	5	11	24	12.5	27.5	60
26	Conjunctions	----	27	13	----	67.5	32.5
27	Lexicon Choice	11	10	19	27.5	25	47.5
28	Lexicon Choice	5	18	17	12.5	45	42.5
29	Lexicon Choice	11	7	22	27.5	17.5	55
30	Pronouns	7	17	16	17.5	42.5	40

Part 2 scores ranged from 0 to 13 out of 15 ($M = 2.05$, $SD = 3.30$). Four of the thirty-five participants (10.0%) earned a score of 8 or more. Thus, this part of the examination was the most difficult for the participants. The full distribution of participants' scores for this Part are reported in Table 4.

Table 4. Participants' Performance in Part 2 of the FCE Use of English Paper

Frequency	Score	Percentage
1	13	2.5 %
1	12	2.5 %
1	10	2.5 %
1	8	2.5 %
2	5	5 %
2	4	5 %
1	3	2.5 %
4	2	10 %
10	1	25 %
17	0	42.5 %
40	Total	100%
Mean	2.05	
Standard Deviation	3.30	

Part 3 – Key Word Transformations

The students exhibited difficulties with preserving the meaning of the sentences while using passive constructions, clauses, and expressions. For instance, students replaced being extending with is being extended by and replaced worth to clean with is not worth cleaning. Full item-level frequencies are reported in Table 5.

Table 5. Classification of Key Word Transformations in Part 3 of the FCE Use of English Paper

No.	Error Category	Frequency of correct answers		Frequency of incorrect answers	Frequency of avoided answers	Percentage of (%)			
		2 marks	1 mark			correct answers		incorrect answers	avoided answers
						2 marks	1 mark		
31	Verb Forms	1	----	33	6	2.5	----	82.5	15
32	Verb omission	5	3	30	2	12.5	7.5	75	5
33	Auxiliaries	10	3	26	1	25	7.5	65	2.5
34	Verb Forms	1	20	17	2	2.5	50	42.5	5
35	Lexicon Choice	1	----	35	4	2.5	----	87.5	10
36	Lexicon Choice	2	2	31	5	5	5	77.5	12.5
37	Word Order	3	2	28	7	7.5	5	70	17.5
38	Verb Forms	2	----	36	2	5	----	90	5
39	Auxiliaries	5	----	33	2	12.5	----	82.5	5
40	Lexicon Choice	4	4	26	6	10	10	65	15

Part 3 scores ranged from 0 to 19 out of 20 ($M = 2.38$, $SD = 4.09$). Three participants (7.5%) scored 10 or more. Frequencies for the full participants are reported in Table 6.

Table 6. Participants' Performance in Part 3 of the FCE Use of English Paper

Frequency	Score	Percentage
1	19	2.5 %
1	14	2.5 %
1	11	2.5 %
1	8	2.5 %
2	6	5 %
4	3	10 %
5	2	12.5 %
9	1	22.5 %
16	0	40 %
40	Total	100%
Mean	2.38	
Standard Deviation	4.09	

Part 4 Error Corrections

Most participants incorrectly indicated the correct line or the wrong redundant word. Full item-level frequencies are reported in Table 7.

Table 7. Classification of Error Corrections in Part 4 of the FCE Use of English paper

No.	Error Category	Frequency of correct answers	Frequency of incorrect answers	Frequency of avoided answers	Percentage of (%)		
					correct	incorrect	avoided
					answers		
41	Lexicon Choice	----	36	4	----	90	10
42	Lexicon Choice	----	34	6	----	85	15
43	Zero error	9	24	7	22.5	60	17.5
44	Zero error	10	20	10	25	50	25
45	Verb forms	8	28	4	20	70	10
46	Prepositions	2	32	6	5	80	15
47	Articles	1	32	7	2.5	80	17.5
48	Verb Forms	4	31	5	10	77.5	12.5
49	Lexicon Choice	5	32	3	12.5	80	7.5
50	Lexicon Choice	5	29	6	12.5	72.5	15
51	Lexicon Choice	5	32	3	12.5	80	7.5
52	Zero error	14	18	8	35	45	20
53	Lexicon Choice	----	32	8	----	80	20
54	Lexicon Choice	1	33	6	2.5	82.5	15
55	Verb forms	3	28	9	7.5	70	22.5

Part 4 scores ranged from 0 to 5 out of 15 ($M = 1.63$, $SD = 1.41$). No participants scored 8 or more out of the possible marks for this part of the test. This part of the test was the lowest scoring compared to the other parts of the test. Frequencies for the full participants are reported in Table 8.

Table 8. Participants' Performance in Part 4 of the FCE Use of English Paper

Frequency	Score	Percentage
1	5	2.5 %
5	4	12.5 %
3	3	7.5 %
10	2	25.0 %
11	1	27.5 %
10	0	25.0 %
40	Total	100%
Mean	1.63	
Standard Deviation	1.41	

Part 5 Word Formation

Errors involved derivational morphology and word class selection, as indicated by errors such as vary to various, important to importance, and energy to energetic. These errors show a difficulty in selecting the word class and word formation necessary for the grammatical and lexical context. These types of errors have also been reported among Libyan university students studying English as a foreign language (Halali et al., 2026). Table 9 reports the frequencies of these errors.

Table (9) Classification of Word Formation in Part 5 of the FCE Use of English Paper

No.	Error Category	Frequency of correct answers	Frequency of incorrect answers	Frequency of avoided answers	Percentage of (%)		
					correct	incorrect	avoided
					answers		
56	Nouns (-hood)	24	14	2	60	35	5
57	Adjectives (-ous)	6	34	----	15	85	----
58	Nouns (-ance)	17	20	3	42.5	50	7.5
59	Nouns (-th)	10	29	1	25	72.5	2.5
60	Ordinal numbers	8	31	1	20	77.5	2.5
61	Nouns (-ment)	5	29	6	12.5	72.5	15
62	Prepositions (un)	1	39	----	2.5	97.5	----
63	nouns (th)	10	28	2	25	70	5
64	Adverbs (ly)	----	39	1	----	97.5	2.5
65	Adjectives	4	34	2	10	85	5

Part 5 scores ranged from 0 to 8 out of 10 ($M = 2.10$, $SD = 2.27$). Six participants (15.0%) had scores of 5 or more. Full participants' frequency distributions are reported in Table 10.

Table 10. Participants' Performance in Part 5 of the FCE Use of English Paper

Frequency	Score	Percentage
2	8	5 %
3	6	7.5 %
1	5	2.5 %
2	4	5 %
6	3	15 %
6	2	15 %
7	1	17.5 %
13	0	32.5 %
40	Total	100%
Mean	2.1	
Standard Deviation	2.27	

Overall Performance

The analysis of the five parts of the FCE Use of English paper presents the following obtained results. Third year participants have severe problems related to their explicit grammatical and lexical knowledge performance in both selected and limited-production tasks at the sentence and the discourse levels. These results have also reflected that participants have made a great number of the knowledge of grammar and vocabulary errors. However, the main problems participants have faced are in part 4, error corrections. The prominence of word-form and preposition errors also parallels findings from Benghazi University, where these categories were among the most frequent grammatical errors produced by EFL students (Al Jawad & Mansour, 2021).

Across the full paper, scores ranged from 2 to 58 out of 75 ($M = 15.45$, $SD = 12.06$). The mean represents 20.6% of the available raw marks. These results describe this sample's performance; they should not be reported as official FCE pass or fail outcomes.

Table 11. Participants' Performance in the FCE Use of English Paper

Frequency	Score	Percentage
1	58	2.5 %
1	49	2.5 %
1	39	2.5 %
2	29	5.0 %
1	24	2.5 %
2	23	5.0 %
1	22	2.5 %
3	21	7.5 %
2	16	5.0 %
2	15	5.0 %
2	14	5.0 %
1	13	2.5 %
1	12	2.5 %
3	11	7.5 %
1	10	2.5 %
1	9	2.5 %
2	8	5.0 %
5	7	12.5 %
4	6	10.0 %
3	5	7.5 %
1	2	2.5 %
40	Total	100%
Mean	15.45	
Standard Deviation	12.06	

Conclusion

The 40 participants obtained an average raw score of 15.45 out of 75 on the archived FCE Use of English paper ($SD = 12.06$). The lowest proportional mean raw scores were obtained in the error correction questions ($M = 1.63$ out of 15) and in the key word transformations questions ($M = 2.38$ out of 20). These results indicate difficulty in tasks relating to grammar and vocabulary use, such as identifying unnecessary words in sentences and transforming sentences whilst retaining the meaning of the initial sentence. These findings are diagnostic only for this cohort of participants. They indicate nothing of general interest regarding the participants' English language proficiency or the reasons for their errors on the Use of English paper. The limitations of this study are inherent to its methodology; as this group of participants only came from one cohort from one institution, and completed only one archived examination paper, further studies involving different institutions and a variety of examination papers would be required to draw general conclusions regarding proficiency and errors.

Limitations of the Study

The study has some limitations. The sample of participants was relatively small and drawn from a single cohort of participants from a single institution. Thus, the generalisability of the findings from the study may be limited.

Furthermore, the study used only the Use of English paper from the FCE examination. Thus, the findings of the study relate only to the knowledge of grammar and vocabulary required for the Use of English paper and do not reflect the overall English language proficiency of the participants.

Recommendations

Future research could address these limitations by using larger samples from multiple institutions and by incorporating a broader range of proficiency measures. The following recommendations are proposed to enhance participants' grammatical and lexicon performance:

- Assessment should address both grammatical and lexical knowledge, including learners' ability to recognise and apply forms and meanings in appropriate contexts.
- Regular assessment and systematic analysis of students' work should be used to identify recurring grammatical and lexical difficulties and to monitor progress over time.
- Students should be given regular opportunities to practise selected-response and limited-production tasks similar to those used in standardised proficiency examinations.
- Placement testing and appropriate remedial support should be considered to identify students' areas of difficulty and provide targeted instruction
- Students should be encouraged to use grammar reference books, dictionaries, and reliable online resources to support independent learning and self-assessment.
- Students should be provided with sufficient opportunities to use grammatical and lexical knowledge in meaningful contexts, alongside controlled practice, so that assessment addresses both accuracy and contextualised language use.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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Appendix A: Paper 3 FCE Use of English paper

Section A – Use of English

Part 1

For questions **1-15**, read the text below and decide which answer (**A, B, C** or **D**) best fits each space.

There is an example at the beginning **(0)**.

Mark your answers **on the separate answer sheet**.

Example:

0 **A** far **B** distant **C** remote **D** distinct

TWO CREATURES OF THE PAST- MAMMOTHS AND MASTODONS

The elephant has some **(0)** B relatives called mammoths, which lived in the Stone Age. More than 15,000 years ago people painted pictures of them on cave walls. Then, astonishingly, in 1799, a man walking along the banks of the River Lena in Siberia **(1)** _____ a startling discovery. Peering into a wall of ice, he could **(2)** _____ see the shape of a massive, hairy mammoth, apparently **(3)** _____ at him. He immediately ran **(4)** _____ in terror, but several days later he **(5)** _____ the courage to return and cut the mammoth's tusks – its two enormous teeth – out of the ice to sell them. Mammoth tusks are the biggest teeth of any known creature, some **(6)** _____ a length of five metres. These tusks were **(7)** _____ to good use, protecting the mammoths' young from other animals, and brushing away snow.

To most of us, mammoths are probably the most **(8)** _____ of the elephant's extinct relatives, but thousands of years earlier, in the woodlands of eastern North America, lived another of the elephant's relatives called the mastodon. Like mammoths, mastodons may also have had a hairy coat, but **(9)** _____ mammoths mainly ate grass on the plains, mastodons **(10)** _____ to eat twigs and leaves.

We do not know why mastodons **(11)** _____ extinct. However, computer studies of the decrease in mammoth **(12)** _____ suggest that it was a particular **(13)** _____ of over-hunting by humans, and **(14)** _____ in the climate at that time which **(15)** _____ to their disappearance.

- | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 | A made | B took | C did | D had |
| 2 | A rather | B quite | C well | D just |
| 3 | A watching out | B looking out | C looking after | D watching over |
| 4 | A across | B out | C away | D past |
| 5 | A grew | B felt | C experienced | D found |
| 6 | A reaching | B increasing | C expanding | D completing |
| 7 | A held | B put | C set | D kept |
| 8 | A usual | B frequent | C regular | D familiar |

9	A when	B while	C as	D even
10	A preferred	B enjoyed	C desired	D selected
11	A turned	B went	C became	D came
12	A quantities	B amounts	C totals	D numbers
13	A addition	B combination	C attachment	D connection
14	A transformations	B adjustments	C diversions	D changes
15	A led	B caused	C guided	D influenced

Part 2

For questions **16-30**, read the text below and think of the word which best fits each space. Use only **one** word in each space. There is an example at the beginning **(0)**.

Write your answers **on the separate answer sheet**.

Example: **0** **since**

DEVELOPMENTS IN UNDERWATER DIVING

People have been diving without mechanical aids **(0)** since ancient times. In those days, divers mainly went underwater to search **(16)** _____ pearls or sponges. Various ways of supplying divers with air, and so permitting them to stay underwater for long periods of time, have been tried for well **(17)** _____ two thousand years. Alexander the Great **(18)** _____ said to have gone underwater in an early **(19)** _____ of diving machine, and Aristotle talked about apparatus **(20)** _____ permitted divers to breathe underwater.

It was not **(21)** _____ the beginning of the 18th century that more advanced equipment was developed. In 1717, the first practical diving machine, or 'diving bell' **(22)** _____ it was called, was invented. This was a small wooden room with an open bottom, glass windows at the top to **(23)** _____ in light, and a supply of air coming through leather tubes. Something similar, made of steel, is **(24)** _____ use today for underwater work, **(25)** _____ as building the foundations of bridges.

However, **(26)** _____ divers want to move freely underwater, they require a suit. Early suits were made up **(27)** _____ a leather jacket with a metal helmet over the head into which air was pumped down from the surface through tubes. Divers gained even **(28)** _____ freedom of movement when they could **(29)** _____ rid of these tubes and carry **(30)** _____ own air with them in cylinders.

Part 3

For questions **31-35**, complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence, using the word given. **Do not change the word given.** You must use between **two** and **five** words, including the word given. There is an example at the beginning **(0)**.

Example: 0 You must do exactly what the manager tells you.

carry

Answer: You must **carry out the manager's** instructions exactly.

Write **only** the missing words **on the separate answer sheet.**

31 My daughter regrets spending all her savings on that car.

she

My daughter wishes _____ all her savings on that car.

32 They are extending this motorway by 100 kilometres.

being

This motorway _____ 100 kilometres.

33 It was a mistake for the company to install the new computer system.

should

The company _____ the new computer system.

34 We mended the roof to prevent the birds from making nests in it.

so

We mended the roof _____ not make nests in it.

35 I'm afraid I don't have time to go shopping this morning.

too

I'm afraid _____ to go shopping this morning.

Part 4

For questions 36-50, read the text below and look carefully at each line. Some of the lines are correct, and some have a word which should not be there.

If a line is correct put a (✓) by the number on the separate answer sheet. If a line has a word which should not be there, write the word on the separate answer sheet. There are two examples at the beginning (0 and 00).

Example: 0 ✓

00 been

WHERE I GREW UP

0 When I was young, I lived in a place called Coromandel in

00 New Zealand. I was been taken there by my parents when I was a few
36 weeks old, and lived there until I was fourteen years. I still think
37 of that period as the happiest time of my life. My life was much
38 uncomplicated then and Coromandel was a magical place. It
39 had been a busy gold-mining town, but that was long before
40 my family have arrived. By then it had become a very run-down
41 place. My father was a doctor, and people would pay to him
42 in sheep, pigs, hens and, occasionally, the pieces of gold. He would
43 have preferred paying money, of course, but they simply didn't have
44 any. My sister and I had no many cares at all. We went to the village
45 school, which together was attended by just twenty children of all ages.
46 Out of school hours, we looked after lots animals on the farms
47 around the town, although we didn't really have a clue how
48 long to do it. Coromandel is a large and busy tourist resort now,
49 but it was peaceful town when I was a child, and I would
50 like doing nothing better than to go back to relive my memories.

Part 5

For questions **51-60**, read the text below. Use the word given in capitals at the end of each line to form a word that fits in the space in the **same** line.

There is an example at the beginning **(0)**. Write your answers **on the separate answer sheet**.

Example: **0** **lover**

BREAD

I'm a great **(0) lover** of bread. Whenever I smell freshly baked bread, it
LOVE

reminds me of my early **(51)** _____ when I used to visit
CHILD

the little bakery that my grandfather owned.

And, of course, there are **(52)** _____ good medical reasons why
VARY

we should not forget the **(53)** _____ of eating plenty of bread.
IMPORTANT

Bread contains nearly all the protein needed for children's **(54)** _____
GROW

and for adults to stay fit and well. We can get a **(55)** _____ of our
THREE

daily protein **(56)** _____ from just six slices of bread.
REQUIRE

Bread, **(57)** _____ some popular foods which are not particularly **LIKE**

good for you, gives **(58)** _____ to bones and teeth when they
STRONG

are developing and keeps them healthy as we get older. **(59)** _____, **ADDITION**

bread helps us to feel **(60)** _____ as it contains iron as well as
ENERGY

several essential vitamins.

Appendix B: Item-Level Examples

Part 1 – MULTIPLE-CHOICE CLOZE

a) a man walking along the banks of the River Lena in Siberia (1) *took [made] a startling discovery. The student chooses the wrong word meaning *took instead of the correct word made. They may be confused because of his / her lack of knowledge of vocabulary.

b) he could (2) *well [just] see the shape of a massive, hairy mammoth,
The sentence shows a failure to use the correct adverb choice just. This sentence asserts that the participants have limited vocabulary.

c) apparently (3) *looking after [looking out] at him.
Replacing *looking after with looking out is incorrect.

d) He immediately ran (4) *across [away] in terror,
The use of the preposition *across is wrong, the student should use away instead.

e) but several days later he (5) *grew [found] the courage to return and cut the mammoth's tusks
The student uses *grew to achieve the meaning which is correct through the word found.

f), some (6) *increasing [reaching] a length of five metres.
The choice of lexicon is wrong, and the student chooses *increasing instead of reaching.

g) These tusks were (7) *held [put] to good use,
The student chooses the wrong past participle verb form *held to be the right choice, but that is wrong, and the answer should be put.

h) mammoths are probably the most (8) *usual [familiar] of the elephant's extinct relatives,
This is no good choice of using the adjective *usual instead of familiar. It seems that also here that some participants demonstrate limited performance to choose the correct choice.

i) but (9) *when [while] mammoths mainly ate grass on the plains,
The substitution of *when for while indicates confusion between the two linking words.

j) mastodons (10) *desired [preferred] to eat twigs and leaves.
The participants who choose *desired instead of preferred experience difficulties in performing correct past forms.

k) We do not know why mastodons (11) *came [became] extinct.
Some participants misuse the choice, and instead of *came they must choose became.

l) However, computer studies of the decrease in mammoth (12) *amounts [numbers]
The word *amounts is used, while participants must choose the word numbers.

m) it was a particular (13) *addition [combination] of over-hunting by humans,
The participants choose the wrong word meaning *addition instead of the correct word combination.

n) and (14) *transformations [changes] in the climate
The participants choose the noun word *transformations, not the correct noun word changes.

o) at that time which (15) *caused [led] to their disappearance.
This final gap illustrates that some participants do not link the sentences of the whole text all of it together, if they do so, then, they do not use the word caused instead of led since the existence of the preposition to after led absolutely helps them to the appropriate choice.

Part 2 – Open CLOZE

a) divers mainly went underwater to search (16) *about [for] pearls or sponges.
Here the participants should use for instead of *about.

b) have been tried for well (17) *until [over] two thousand years.
The preposition over is the appropriate one in this use, not *until.

c) Alexander the Great (18) *diver [is] said to have gone underwater.
The above example illustrates that some participants demonstrate insufficient knowledge to distinguish what suitable filler (subject, object, or complement) must be inserted in this slot (noun, verb, adjective). In addition, they are not able to identify verb to be (is, was) as an auxiliary to meet passive requirements from the text.

d) in an early (19) *where [kind] of diving machine,
This sentence needs a noun such as kind / type / sort not an adverb or conjunction like *where.

e) Aristotle talked about apparatus (20) *at [that] permitted divers to breathe underwater.
In this example some participants produce the preposition *at instead of the relative clause that / which.

f) It was not (21) *of [until] the beginning of the 18th century
The participant uses *of as a substitute of until or till.

g) the first practical diving machine, or ‘diving bell’ (22) *but [as] it was called,
This sentence shows failure to produce *but instead of as.

h) glass windows at the top to (23) *up [let] in light,
The use of the word *up is incorrect; the verb form let should be used.

i) Something similar, made of steel, is (24) *usually [in] use today
Prepositions should be used before nouns; in must be produced instead of the word adverb *usually.

j) (25) *well [such] as building to foundations of bridges.
Some participants are confused and use *well as an alternative to such.

k) However, (26) *as [if] divers want to move freely underwater,
This example sheds light upon the misunderstanding of the use between *as (although) and if (in that situation) as conjunctions.

l) Early suits were made up (27) *from [of] a leather jacket
There is a confusion of using the preposition *from as a replacement for of.

m) Divers gained even (28) *the [more] freedom of movement
The adjectives more or greater are the most appropriate and correct use than the definite article in this context.

n) when they could (29) *be [get] rid of these tubes
Without any explanation it is as simply as it could be that the phrasal verb is get rid of not *be rid of.

o) and carry (30) *out [their] air with them in cylinders.
Some participants insert *out since they take the existence of carry into their considerations. They should use the possessive adjective their instead.

Part 3 – Key Word Transformations

a) My daughter wishes (31) * that she will spending [that she hadn’t spent] all her savings on that car.
Here the student uses the wrong form *will spending, instead of hadn’t spent, which does not correspond to any English form, it seems that the student lacks knowledge of the uses of past perfect tense.

b) This motorway (32) *being extending [is being extended by] 100 kilometres.

In this example the student omits the auxiliary verb *is* that is needed in passive voice, and they also use the present participle **extending* as an alternative to the past participle *extended*.

c) The company (33) **should have* [should not have installed] the new computer system.

This sentence shows that some participants resort to some serious omissions. They omit the adverb *not* which should be inserted after *should* directly, and the main verb *installed* which must be put in the past participle form.

d) We mended the roof (34) **so prevent* the birds [so that the birds would] not make nests in it.

Some participants misuse the appropriate English sentence word order that is subject verb. They write **so prevent* the birds instead of *so that the birds would*. They also use the modal verb *would*, and use the ordinary verb *prevent*. This illustrates that they have problems with word order within a sentence as well as verb form appropriate choice.

e) I'm afraid (35) **too not having time* [that I'm too busy] to go shopping this morning.

The error which results in omitting the main verb *am* in a sentence that actually needs a main verb is quite evident in this example. This error shows that some participants do not have the basics of constructing sentences in English. They also do not use the adjective *busy* in order to transform the forms and the meanings of the lead-in sentence. However, they have written the wrong phrase **not having time* instead.

f) Matthew can't (36) **rely of* will help [rely on Alex to help] him if something goes wrong.

The correct preposition which should be used in this example is *on* not **of*, and thus this example asserts that some participants lack the use of collocations. The phrasal verb *rely on* is followed by somebody or something not an auxiliary.

g) There (37) **hardly had been taken* [were hardly any seats] left by the time we arrived at the theatre.

The student chooses the wrong form of *be* in the past perfect tense **had been* for the form *were* in the past simple tense. The student is confused or lacks the correct use in this context. They do not use the phrase *any seats* as an appropriate completion of the sentence, either.

h) Pauline is (38) **effort trying to* [making no effort to] solve her financial problems.

In this example the student avoids using the present participle form *making* because they may have problems in using present participles as integral parts to the present forms of verb *to be*. They omit the adjective *no* which should be used before the word noun *effort* to complete the meaning of the sentence.

i) Would (39) **I mind* [you mind not making so] much noise – I'm trying to get some work done.

Here the student uses the first-person singular **I* instead of the second person *you* and avoids using the present participle *making* or inserting *no* before it. This example can also be taken as strong evidence that participants face problems in using present participles. It may be said that the participants show evidence of difficulty in making distinction among verb forms in order to give reasons of why they demonstrate limited performance to use these forms appropriately.

j) It (40) **worth to clean* [isn't worth cleaning] the windows today because it's going to rain.

The student does not realise that what the sentence lacks in this context is a main verb to meet the English sentence pattern requirements and thus does not use the present 3rd person singular form of verb *to be*. This student does not write the present participle *cleaning*, instead they produce **it worth to clean* which is quite evident of his / her lack of knowledge of grammar.

Part 4 Error Corrections

a) I was fourteen [years]. I still (41) **think*

The word **think* is the incorrect identification of error. The word *years* should be underlined since it is not used correctly in this context.

b) (42) **as* the happiest time of my life. My life was [much] uncomplicated

The determiner *much* here is the extra incorrect word. There seems to be some confusion over the student who is actually identifying the conjunction **as* as an error.

c) (43) **then* [] and Coromandel was a magical place.

In this example, the student is unable to recognise that the sentence is correct because they lack grammatical knowledge.

d) but that was long (44) *before []

No extra incorrect word should be identified here since the sentence is correct.

e) my family [have] arrived. (45) *By then it had become a very run-down

This sentence shows lack of grammatical knowledge because the student experience difficulties in recognising have as an error, and instead they choose the preposition *by.

f) and people (46) *would pay [to] him

This sentence shows a wrong choice of the modal would which is used correctly here. The preposition to is redundant and therefore it is the incorrect word.

g) (47) *in sheep, pigs, hens and, occasionally, [the] pieces of gold

The extra incorrect word here is the definite article, not of course a preposition.

h) He would (48) *have preferred [paying] money

The use of the auxiliary *have is a must here, but the student achieves relatively low levels of performance to recognise the incorrect use of the gerund paying.

i) My sister and I (49) *had no [many] cares at all.

It is quite evident in this example that some participants lack grammar because it seems that they identify the extra incorrect words in a typically haphazard manner. In this example they choose the verb *had instead of the determiner many.

j) which [together] was attended (50) *by just twenty children of all ages

It seems that some participants also have problems with the use of adverbs because they are not able to identify the incorrect word together.

k) we looked (51) *after [lots] animals on the farm

Some participants choose *after as the extra incorrect word. It is quite evident that the word lots usually cannot stand alone unless it is followed by the preposition of.

l) although we didn't really (52) *have [] a clue how

No extra incorrect word should be identified here because the sentence does not deviate from the norms of the knowledge of grammar.

m) [long] to do it. Coromandel is a large and busy tourist (53) *resort now.

The adjective long is redundant and is used here as an extra incorrect word.

n) but it was peaceful [town] when I was a (54) *child

The above line shows that the student is confused since they choose *child instead of the incorrect noun town.

o) like [doing] nothing better than to go back (55) *to relive my memories

This final line of the text asserts that the majority of the participants are unable to recognise extra incorrect words.

Part 5 Word Formation

a) it reminds me of my early (56) *childish [childhood] when I used to visit the little bakery

In this example the student demonstrates insufficient knowledge of producing the appropriate formation of the word child according to the context, and thus they do not write childhood, but they fill the gap with the wrong word formation word *childish instead.

b) there are (57) *vary [various] good medical reasons

Most participants could not produce the appropriate word various of the stem word vary.

c) we shouldn't forget the (58) *important [importance] of eating bread

Here the student provides the adjective form *important instead of writing the suitable word formation importance.

d) all the protein needed for children's (59) *grew [growth]

The student uses *grew instead of the correct use growth in this gap.

e) We can get a (60) *three [third] of

It is quite obvious that most of the participants show evidence of difficulty in distinguishing between the uses of the cardinal and ordinal numbers.

f) our daily protein (61) *required [requirement] from just six slices of bread.

This line illustrates the misuse of word formation; the student fills the gap with a verb instead of a noun.

g) Bread, (62) *like [unlike] some popular foods

The word stem like gives a very bad impression of the participants' grammatical knowledge of how to form words, most of the participants are unable to fill the gap with the word opposite unlike.

h) which are not particularly good for you, gives (63) *stronger [strength] to bones

In this example the student persists in writing the inappropriate word formation, and thus they fill the gap with the adjectival comparative form *stronger as a replacement for strength.

i) as we get older, (64) *additions [Additionally], bread helps

All the participants could not form the adverb Additionally, some of them add the plural's' to make the unsuitable word formation *additions instead.

j) to feel (65) *energy [energetic] as it contains iron as well as several essential vitamins.

This final line of the text shows clearly that participants face problems with word formations. Here some participants demonstrate limited performance to provide the appropriate word formation of the stem energy in this context.
