



UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE

LINGUISTICS ADMISSIONS ASSESSMENT

60 minutes

First name(s)	
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Surname / Family Name	
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Interviewing College	
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INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

Please read these instructions carefully, but do not open the question paper until you are told that you may do so.

You should write your answer in the spaces provided in this question paper.

There are **three** sections in the test. You should attempt **all questions** in all three sections.

There is a total of **90 marks** available – 30 marks for each section.

Dictionaries and calculators may NOT be used.

Please wait to be told you may begin before turning this page.

This question paper consists of 12 printed pages.

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

Do not worry if you find you have little to say about some of the questions, or if you do not have technical terms for the features you wish to describe. How you go about finding answers and how you prioritise your time in producing the answers is more important to us than seeing a complete answer for each question in the test. Aim to spend about 20 minutes on each section. Your answers will be marked on the assumption that you have divided your time roughly equally between the 3 sections.

SECTION 1 (total value 30 marks)

(20 mins)

Consider the data below from Feluma, a fictitious language, and then answer the questions that follow.

The intermediate ('gloss') lines contain the following abbreviations:

- DEF – definite marker
- 3SG – third person singular (= 'he, she, it')
- 3PL – third person plural (= 'they')
- SUBJ – subject
- PL – plural
- ASP – aspectual marker (conveys that the action has been completed and is not ongoing)
- PAST – past tense
- NEG – negative marker
- INFIN – infinitive (eg 'to read'/'to eat')
- FUT – future
- POSS – possessive marker (marks 'one's own')

The Feluma data

- (a) Cali-ti to lo-kushma-f felo-to.
cat-the DEF 3SG.SUBJ-eat-PAST mouse-the
'The cat was eating the mouse (/The cat was eating at the mouse).'
- (b) Cali-si-ti ti si-ik-kushma-f felo-si-ti.
cat-PL-the DEF 3PL.SUBJ-ASP-eat-PAST mouse-PL-the
'The cats ate the mice up.'
- (c) Cali-mi to ingo-lo-xofa-f ik-kushma-fa in felo-to.
cat-my DEF NEG-3SG.SUBJ-want-PAST ASP-eat-INFIN NEG mouse-the
'My cat didn't want to eat the mouse up.'
- (d) Muka-ta lo-mufa-f fali fumbdu.
boy-the 3SG.SUBJ-read-PAST girl book
'The boy was reading a girl a book.'
- (e) Fali-ti e ta tu ingo-lo-ik-mufa-ra in muka-ta in fumbdu-tu.
girl-the him DEF DEF NEG-3SG.SUBJ-read-FUT NEG boy-the NEG book-the
'The girl will not read the boy the book.'
- (f) Mufu-si-ti se si-vita-f lukala-si-sixme.
women-PL-the POSS 3PL.SUBJ-hug-PAST daughter-PL-their
'The women were hugging their own daughters.'
- (g) Tiko-to e se lo-ik-vita-f shopo-soxme.
man-the him POSS 3SG.SUBJ-ASP-hug-PAST son-his.own
'The man gave his own son a hug.'

4. Identify and describe three respects in which Feluma differs from English. Use the specific data given above to motivate your answer, and cite appropriate examples from English; as above. [10 marks]

SECTION 2 (total value 30 marks)

(20 mins)

Figure 1 is taken from a study of ‘t-lenition’ in the Liverpool area of north-west England. This means that the ‘t’ sound in words such as ‘but’, ‘got’ and ‘what’ is pronounced in different ways, including ‘th’, ‘h’ and a glottal stop (think of the way the ‘t’ in ‘butter’ tends to be pronounced in Cockney English).

Study the graph and answer the questions below it. You’ll then be asked to compare two more graphs with Figure 1, before finally being asked to say how this study relates to your own experience of English dialect varieties.

Don’t worry about technical terminology – we’re more interested in how you analyse the graphs you’re presented with. Here’s the key information you’ll need to understand the graphs:

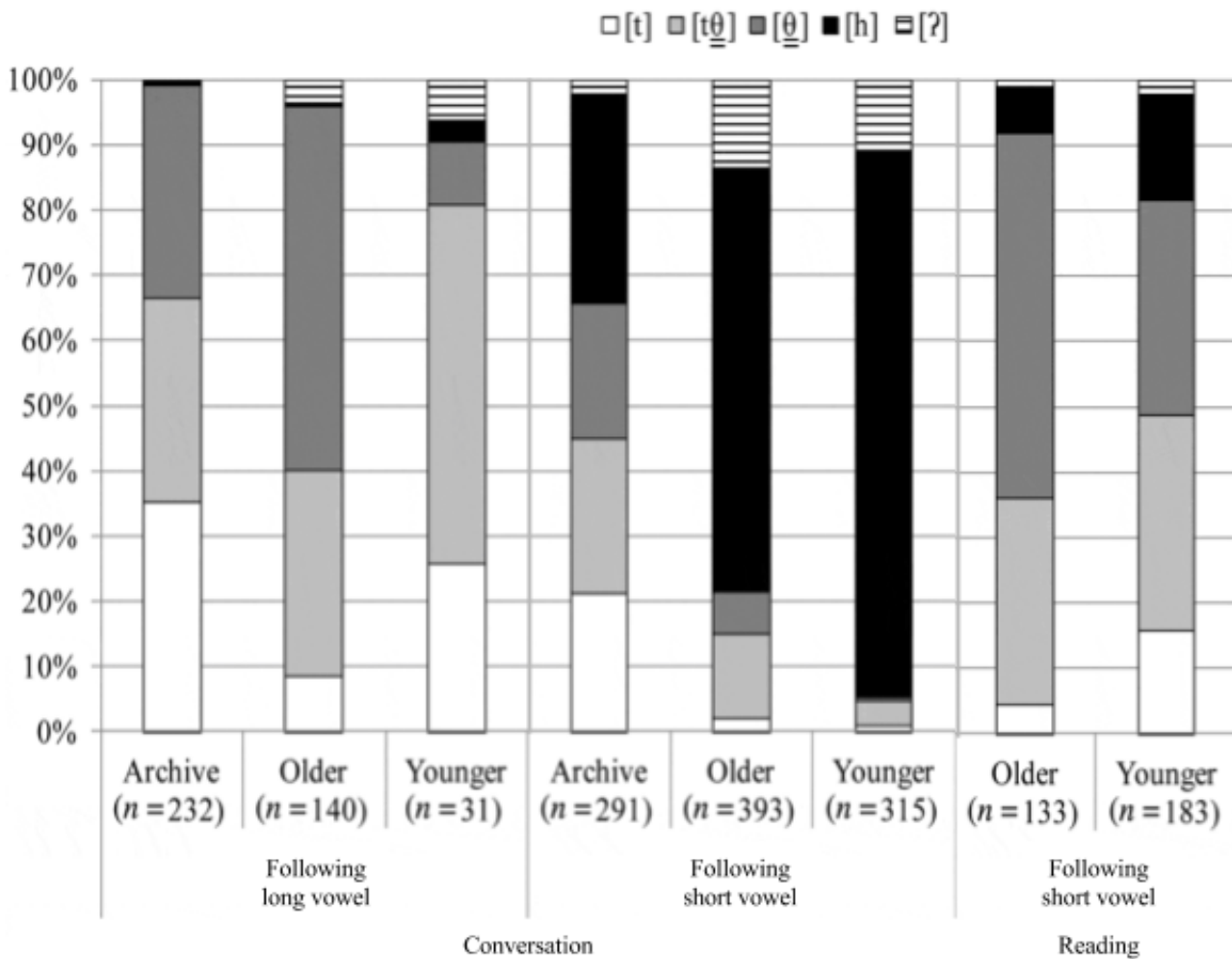
- [t] = the ‘t’ sound in words like ‘tap’
- [θ] = the ‘th’ sound in words like ‘three’
- [h] = the ‘h’ sound in words like ‘hop’
- [tʰ] = a ‘t’ sound with a hint of ‘th’
- [ʔ] = a glottal stop (imagine saying ‘butter’ without saying the ‘t’)

- Archive = speakers born between 1890 and 1943
- Older = speakers born between 1918 and 1945
- Younger = speakers born between 1992 and 1994

- Preceding long vowel = where the ‘t’ occurs in words like ‘beat’, ‘boot’, ‘gate’
- Preceding short vowel = where the ‘t’ occurs in words like ‘bit’, ‘but’, ‘get’

n = the number of words featuring a final ‘t’ on which the percentage counts (y-axis) are based.

Figure 1: Variants of 't' in monosyllabic words in Liverpool, following long and short vowels, in conversational and read speech.



QUESTIONS

1. Looking at Figure 1, which one of the following statements is correct? [2 marks]

- A. Most of the time, 't' following long vowels is pronounced as [t].
- B. Most of the time, 't' following long vowels is pronounced as [h].
- C. Most of the time, 't' following long vowels is pronounced as [tθ] or [θ].
- D. Most of the time, 't' following long vowels is pronounced as a glottal stop [ʔ].

2. Still with 't' following long vowels in mind, compare the different speaker groups: archive, older and younger. Which of the following statements is correct? [2 marks]

- A. The glottal stop [ʔ] has become less frequently used over time.
- B. [t] has become more frequently used over time.
- C. [θ] has become more frequently used over time.
- D. [tθ] has become more frequently used over time.

3. Now look at 't' following short vowels. Which of the following statements is correct? [2 marks]

- A. Younger speakers use [h] more than older speakers.
- B. Younger speakers use [ʔ] more than older speakers.
- C. Older speakers use [t] more than archive speakers.
- D. Older speakers use [h] more than younger speakers.

4. Compare 't' following short vowels with 't' following long vowels for conversational speech. Which of the following statements is correct? [2 marks]

- A. 't' is pronounced [h] more frequently after a long vowel than a short vowel.
- B. 't' is pronounced [ʔ] less frequently after a long vowel than a short vowel.
- C. 't' is pronounced [θ] less frequently after a long vowel than a short vowel.
- D. 't' is pronounced [t] less frequently after a long vowel than a short vowel.

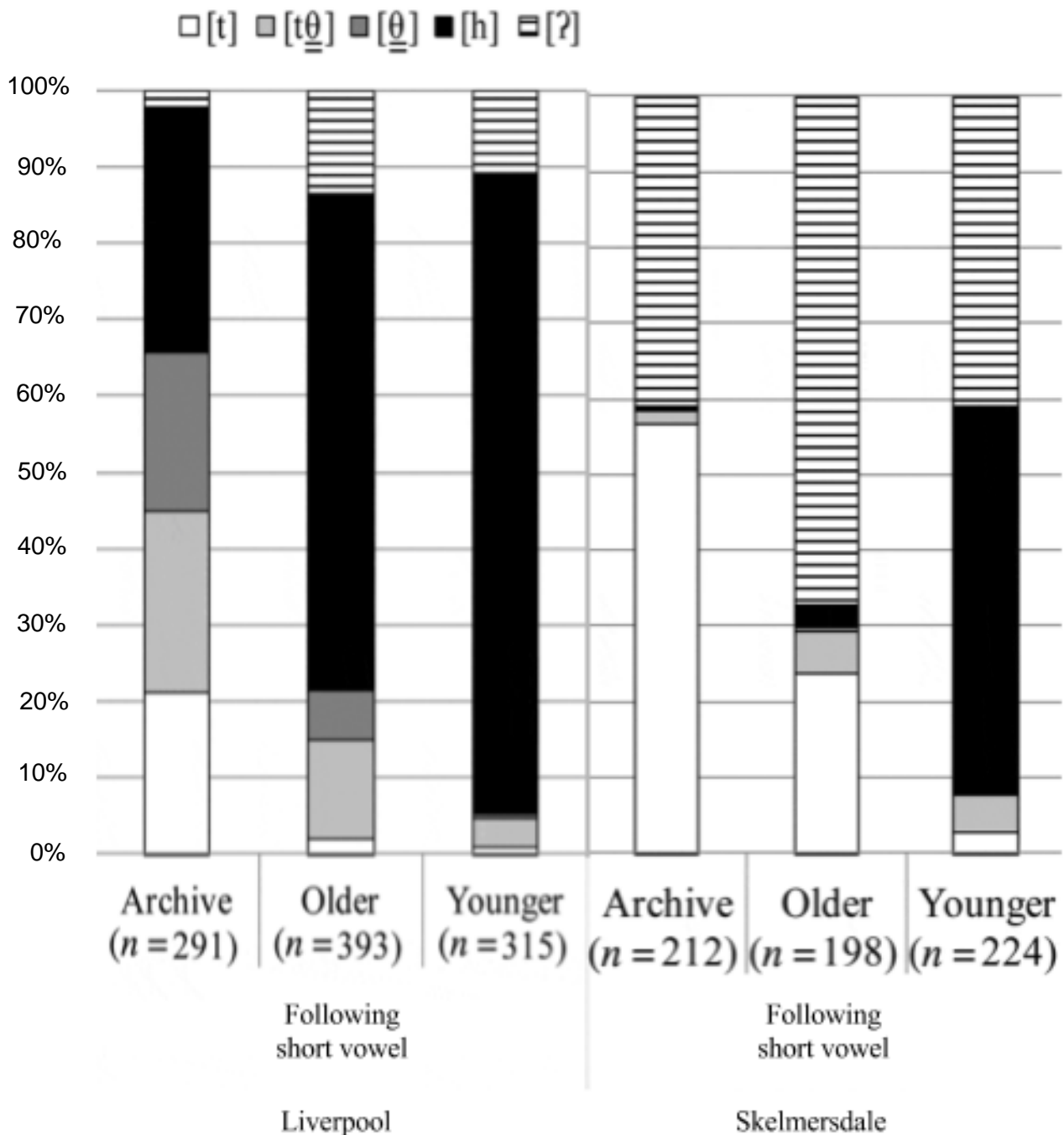
5. Look at 't' following short vowels when the words are carefully read aloud. Which of the following statements is correct? [2 marks]

- A. Speakers pronounce 't' as [h] more often in read speech than conversation.
- B. Speakers pronounce 't' as [ʔ] more often in read speech than conversation.
- C. Speakers pronounce 't' as [t] more often in read speech than conversation.
- D. Speakers pronounce 't' as [tθ] less often in read speech than conversation.

6. It has been observed that people say words more carefully when asked to read words aloud. Suggest two ways in which the rightmost bars for read speech indicate that people are indeed pronouncing 't' more carefully than in conversation. [4 marks]

The rightmost bars of Figure 2 (below) show how speakers produce word-final 't' sounds in Skelmersdale, a small town 24 km (15 miles) northeast of Liverpool. The Liverpool pronunciations from Figure 1 are repeated here on the left for convenience.

Figure 2. Variants of 't' in monosyllabic words in Liverpool and Skelmersdale, in conversational speech.



7. Give two ways in which the pronunciations of 't' have changed over time in Skelmersdale. [4 marks]

8. Compare the Liverpool and Skelmersdale pronunciations of 't' and give one similarity and one difference found. [4 marks]

9. Do you think Liverpool or Skelmersdale has the greater influence on the other in terms of accent? Suggest two ways in which accents might exert influences over each other in such situations, relating your answer to this particular example. [8 marks]

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ANSWER KEY AND MARKING CRITERIA

Section 1

Answers

1. B
2. Falisiti se sivitaf calisisixme.
3. Fali e ta tu ingoloxofaf ikmufafa in mukata in fumbdutu.
4. Any three of the following with appropriate examples drawn from the Feluma data and from their own knowledge of English (or further points that you can establish to be valid by comparing the data above with English):

- subject-Verb-Object (SVO) word order
- definiteness marked with an article
- bare nouns, ie subjects and objects can just be nouns without articles
- subject-verb agreement
- There is some suffixal inflection on the verb (although it differs in nature from English suffixal inflection)
- number is grammatically marked in subject-verb agreement (singular vs plural)
- negation occurs before the lexical verb
- future tense is overtly expressed
- non-finite verb is overtly expressed
- plurality is marked on the noun
- existence of possessive pronouns (*my, their*)
- conveys a progressive aspect (don't mark them down if they refer to this as a tense)

Allocation of marks

- 1 for each correctly identified property.
- 1 for an appropriate example illustrating the property from Feluma.
- 1 for an appropriate example illustrating the property in English.
- 1 for the clarity and completeness with which the parallels are presented (that's an impression mark, but if you find yourself having to fill in details to make a connection between what's on the script and the above answers, the mark shouldn't be awarded. And it can't be awarded for answers where there's no attempt to identify 3 properties).

5. Any three of the following with appropriate examples drawn from the Feluma data and from their own knowledge of English:

- it allows syllables that aren't CV
- it only has definite articles, not indefinite ones
- articles follow their associated nouns
- the form of articles depends on the final vowel of the associated noun or the plural marker (ie there is vowel harmony with the vowel in the immediately preceding syllable)

- it makes use of inflectional prefixes (as well as suffixal ones), whereas English inflections are suffixal
- negation is expressed as part of the lexical verb/inflectionally
- negation is duplicated before the nouns (double/triple negation)
- future tense is expressed as part of the lexical verb/inflectionally
- has an aspectual marker signalling completion. In the absence of the marker the verb has a progressive/durative/ongoing meaning
- possessive pronouns follow their associated nouns
- there is vowel harmony with possessive pronouns also
- the infinitive is one word
- it has clitics, which include: a virility clitic (for male humans); a definiteness clitic; and a 'possessive' clitic (signals one's own)
- there is no ambiguity with anaphoric pronouns

Allocation of marks (as for (3))

- 1 for each correctly identified property.
- 1 for an appropriate example illustrating the property from Feluma.
- 1 for an appropriate example illustrating the property in English.
- 1 for the clarity and completeness with which the parallels are presented (that's an impression mark, but if you find yourself having to fill in details to make a connection between what's on the script and the above answers, the mark shouldn't be awarded. And it can't be awarded for answers where there's no attempt to identify 3 properties).

Section 2

Answers

1. C
2. D
3. A
4. B
5. C

6. - Increase of [t], [tθ], [θ] variants and why these are more 'careful' than [h] or [ʔ] in the context of words with orthographic 't': something about the letter-sound relationship, or (non-)standard pronunciation.

 - Decrease of [h] and [ʔ] variants and why these are less 'careful' than [t], [tθ], [θ] in the context of words with orthographic 't': something about the letter-sound relationship, or (non-)standard pronunciation. [2 marks each]

7. Any two of... [2 marks each, maximum 4]
 - Reduction in [t]
 - Increase in [h]
 - Increase in [tθ]
 - Increase followed by decrease in [ʔ] (resulting in approximately similar frequencies, Archive to Younger)

8. One similarity from among... [2 marks]
 - High frequency of [h] by Younger speakers
 - Change over time towards increased [h] in both populations
 - Reduced frequency of [t] over time in both populations
 - Low frequency of [tθ] and [θ] in both populations

One difference from among... [2 marks]

- Lower [ʔ] frequency in Liverpool across samples
- Higher [h] frequency in Liverpool across samples
- Lower [θ] frequency in Skelmersdale across samples
- Lower [tθ] frequency in Skelmersdale across samples
- Higher [t] frequency in Skelmersdale across samples

9. Liverpool has greater influence on Skelmersdale [2 marks]

How exerted: candidates could discuss:

- diffusion of sound change as a way the influence is exerted, with higher use of [h] in Younger speaker groups, spreading out from Liverpool via the intervening areas;
- or they could talk about influence being exerted through the prestige of large urban areas
- or from contact with Liverpool via commuting, school, shopping, entertainment etc.
- or migration of people from Liverpool to Skelmersdale

[3 marks for each of any two reasons if the reasoning is set out, less for incomplete reasoning]

Section 3

I. **Quality of presentation** [maximum total mark for presentation: 15]

The essay should have clear paragraph structure, with at least one paragraph dedicated to the analysis of the example given in the question, and with one or more paragraphs for analysis of any additional examples and cases or arguments that the candidate decides to mention. The paragraphs should be coherent internally as well as with each other.

In arriving at the mark, you should consider:

- Have they expressed themselves clearly using concise, compelling and accurate English?

Level 1: **Rather weak presentation** [award up to 5 points]

- It is difficult to discern an argument developing over more than one sentence.
- Text is incoherent or unfocussed.
- No clear logic in paragraphing.
- Hesitant fluency/not easy to follow at times.
- Some flawed sentence structure.
- Faulty grammar.
- Limited range of vocabulary.
- Regular spelling/punctuation errors.
- Regular and frequent slips or errors.

Level 2: **Reasonably clear presentation** [award up to 10 marks]

- Clear evidence of arguments being developed over more than one sentence.
- Good use of paragraphs.
- Reasonably fluent/not difficult to read.
- Simple/unambiguous sentence structure.
- Fair range and appropriate use of vocabulary.
- Acceptable grammar.

- There may be some weakness in the effectiveness of the English, including some slips/errors.

Level 3: Good use of English [award up to 15 marks]

- Arguments are developed in a meaningful and persuasive way.
- There is excellent paragraph structure.
- Good sentence structure.
- Good use of vocabulary.
- Sound use of grammar.
- Good spelling and punctuation.
- Few slips or errors.

Where candidates have crossed out sections or added information, the essay should be judged on the quality of the resulting use of English (ie crossed out text ignored, and inserted text read as if it were originally in place). An essay that is judged to be below Level 1 on the scale will receive 0 marks for quality of presentation.

II. Quality of content [maximum total mark for content: 15]

In arriving at the mark, you should consider:

- Has the candidate addressed the question in the way demanded?
- Have they analysed the example that is given?
- Have they given additional reasons for why people might speak indirectly?
- If the answer to the above is 'yes', have they used examples to illustrate their additional points?
- Have they used their general knowledge and opinions appropriately?

Basic content

The topic is about indirectness. Candidates should be able to define indirectness informally, eg at the very minimum by describing it as a case of communication where the speaker says one thing but actually means another. The example given pertains to a case where someone speaks indirectly for the benefit of the listener, specifically out of considerations of politeness. It is generally considered polite not to impose upon others, because doing so violates people's independence. A request, whether easily granted (such as to close the window) or not (such as to help with a more difficult task), is a constraint on people's independence.

Developing these two cases further

Indirectness is considered polite in some languages and cultures (including mainstream British English). The rationale is that by asking for something indirectly, the speaker is giving the listener the opportunity not to grant the request, because the listener can always pretend they did not realise that the speaker was actually requesting something (as opposed to making a mere observation). Therefore, an indirect response gives the listener an 'out', an option not to comply. Though in some situations this option may not be available (because both speaker and listener may be sure that what was said is a request and not just a statement), still this token respect of the listener's independence is expected. Speakers are not likely to use indirectness all the time. They are more likely to use indirectness if the listener is in a position of power (eg employee to employer, student to teacher etc), if there is social distance and lack of familiarity between them (eg they have not met before) and if what they are asking the listener for is burdensome. Indirectness can come in many forms, sometimes more conventional (as in the example, which is a phrase which is

not uncommonly used for such a request) and sometimes in a more novel way (eg 'Winter is here!' as a request to turn the heating on). When someone speaks indirectly in order to be polite, they run the risk/cost of the listener not recognising the actual intent of what they said. But, as stated above, the benefit is that they are seen to respect the listener's independence. So there is always a trade-off between risk and benefit.

Note: applicants who have read about politeness may use the term 'Face' which is one's image in society. So, they might write that by being indirect, the speaker respects the listeners 'Face'.

Additional examples

- (A) Within the area of politeness candidates may give examples of indirectness for other speech acts that threaten the listener's 'Face' such as criticisms (eg 'Oh, that's nice. But next time, please don't hesitate to ask for feedback.').
- (B) In an area that is related but distinct from politeness, romantic propositions, bribes, threats and other speech acts that have a social cost for the speaker (whereas politeness is primarily for the listener's benefit) can be expressed indirectly, eg 'would you like to come to my flat for coffee?' as a romantic proposition, or 'is there some way we can settle this here without having to do to the police station?' as a bribe, or 'nice shop you have here, it would be a pity if something happened to it' as a threat. These examples pertain to cases where the speaker speaks indirectly for strategic reasons for their own benefit, because speaking directly would have high social, legal or other cost for the speaker. By speaking indirectly, the speaker of the second example can always pretend that they never made a romantic proposition (or the bribe, the threat) if they are turned down (or challenged for the bribe, threat etc).
- (C) Other cases of indirectness that a strong applicant may offer as additional material may include cases where the speaker is not fully helpful or cooperative or wishes to misdirect. Eg if someone wants to avoid admitting something, they might say something that is true and which is normally taken to imply the opposite of what they did.

Mary to John, her boyfriend: Did you go out tonight?

John: It's raining!

(which is true, because it is raining, but it implies that he didn't even though he did go out with someone. Here John purposefully misdirects Mary, because he doesn't want her to reach the correct conclusion but also doesn't want to lie. In the case of indirectness for politeness and for strategic reasons the speaker DOES want the listener to reach the correct conclusion, just not in a direct way for the reasons discussed above).

Other comments that a strong applicant may offer as additional material include that the use of indirectness is very culture-dependent, both for politeness and for strategic reasons. There are cultures (eg Spanish, Greek, Israel) where being indirect can be offensive (and this is true for different social groups within one culture, eg younger people).

Marks are awarded on a scale from 1 to 5.

Level 1 [3 marks] An answer that has some bearing on the question but which does not address the question in the way demanded, eg the answer may be severely incomplete.

Level 2 [6 marks] An answer that addresses most of the components of the question. There may be significant elements of confusion in the argument. The candidate may misconstrue certain important aspects of the answer.

Level 3 [9 marks] A reasonably well-argued answer that addresses all aspects of the question, making reasonable use of the examples provided and generating a reasonable argument. There may be some weakness in the force of the argument, or some aspect of the argument may have been overlooked.

Level 4 [12 marks] A good answer with few weaknesses. All aspects of the question are addressed, making good use of the material and generating a good argument. Ideas are expressed and arranged in a coherent way, leading to a good synthesis or conclusion. There may not be sufficient examples (or sufficiently clear examples) and no additional comments offered.

Level 5 [15 marks] An excellent answer with no significant weaknesses. All aspects of the question are addressed, making excellent use of the material and generating an excellent argument. There are ample and clear examples, and some additional insights have been offered.

An answer judged to be irrelevant, trivial, unintelligible or missing should be given 0 marks.