

Cambridge Linguistics Admissions Assessment

Marking criteria for sample test and Linguistics Test Key

MARKING CRITERIA FOR SAMPLE TEST

Part 1

1. 2 marks if correct
2. 4 marks if fully correct: 1 for each lexical item, and 1 for accurate marking of the accents
3. 4 marks if fully correct: 1 for *Mèná*, 1 for *way mùsába* (not just *mùsába*), 1 for *bàt o òmbel* (note *o* rather than *way*), and 1 for accurate marking of the accents
4. Full marks for 2 fully correct generalisations; 5 marks if only one. Deduction of points if incomplete or infelicitously worded generalisation
5. Full marks for 2 fully correct generalisations; 5 marks if only one. Deduction of points if incomplete or infelicitously worded generalisation

Part 2

1. 2 marks if correct
2. 2 marks if correct
3. 2 marks if correct
4. Full marks if 3 of 4 observations are made. 2 points deducted if only 2; 4 if only 1; further points deducted for poorly worded or incomplete point.
5. 4 marks for noting that summarisation can obscure a lot of the detail, 1 mark for each further relevant observation.
6. Marking criteria for question 6: Quality of content [10 marks]
Please consider:
 - Has the candidate addressed the question in the way demanded?
 - Have they used the evidence provided in the Part appropriately?
 - Have they used their knowledge and opinions appropriately?
 - Have they organised their thoughts clearly?

Marks are awarded on a scale from 1 to 5:

Level 1 [2 marks] An answer that has some bearing on the question but which does not address the question in the way demanded, is incoherent or unfocussed.

Level 2 [4 marks] An answer that addresses some of the components of the question. The candidate may misconstrue or omit certain aspects of the answer.

Level 3 [6 marks] A reasonably comprehensive answer but an aspect of the argument may have been overlooked.

Level 4 [8 marks] A good answer with few weaknesses. ALL aspects of the question are addressed, and the components of the answer are expressed and arranged in a coherent way.

Level 5 [10 marks] An excellent answer with no significant weaknesses. ALL aspects of the question are addressed. Ideas are expressed in a clear and logical way, considering a breadth of relevant points.

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

Part 3

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

In arriving at the mark, you should consider:

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

Marks are awarded on a scale from 1 to 3:

Level 1 [5 marks] Rather weak use of English:

- hesitant fluency/not easy to follow at times
- some flawed sentence structure/paragraphing
- limited range of vocabulary
- faulty grammar
- regular spelling/punctuation errors
- regular and frequent slips or errors

Level 2 [10 marks] Reasonably clear use of English: (There may be some weakness in the effectiveness of the English)

- reasonably fluent/not difficult to read
- simple/unambiguous sentence structure
- fair range and appropriate use of vocabulary
- acceptable grammar
- reasonable spelling and punctuation
- some slips/errors

Level 3 [15 marks] Good use of English:

- fluent
- good sentence structure
- good use of vocabulary
- sound use of grammar
- good spelling and punctuation
- few slips or errors

Where candidates have crossed out Parts or added information, the essay should be judged on the quality of the resulting use of English (i.e. crossed out text ignored, and inserted text read as if it were originally in place).

An essay that is judged to be below the level 1 on the scale will receive an 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 organised their thoughts clearly?
- Have they used their general knowledge and opinions appropriately?

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, is incoherent or unfocussed.

Level 2 [6 marks] An answer that addresses most of the components of the question and is arranged in a reasonably logical way. 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 material provided and generating a reasonable argument. There may be some weakness in the force of the argument or the coherence of the ideas, 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.

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. The argument is cogent. Ideas are expressed in a clear and logical way, considering a breadth of relevant points and leading to a compelling synthesis or conclusion.

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

KEY TO SAMPLE TEST

Part 1

1. C. Aná né há bòniàkà o way òmbèl.
2. A. Méndò mwèluku nyá.
3. B. Mèná way mùsába bàt o òmbèl.
4. Any two of:
 - Any overlaps in the sound (phoneme) inventory.
 - It has both mono- and multisyllabic words.
 - Content words are more complex than grammatical/function/auxiliary words (*mùsába* vs *o* or *way*, etc.).
 - Words can end on either consonants or vowels (=it has both open and closed syllables).
 - Sentences start with the subject
 - It has distinct lexical/content verbs and auxiliaries (or verbal units expressing tense/aspect and agreement/non-lexical meanings)
 - It has prepositions
 - It has possessives (*way*)
 - It marks “only” meanings (exclusivity) by placing the word meaning “only” in front of the relevant noun (phrase)/element
 - It has (noun-noun) compounds (e.g. *palm wine*)
5. Any two of:
 - It has variable word order: sometimes SVO and sometimes SOV, depending on whether the object is focused/emphasized/specially marked
 - It doesn't have articles (*the* or *a*)
 - It doesn't distinguish gender (he/she, his/her), at least in pronouns.
 - It doesn't have pronouns distinct from tense/aspect marking/the pronoun meanings are combined with the tense/aspect meanings; applicants who know languages like Spanish, Italian and Portuguese might pick up that this parallels the null-subject phenomenon in these languages
 - It permits initial consonant clusters (syllable onsets – some applicants may know these terms) featuring nasal+glide/approximant combinations (e.g. *mwèluku*) that are ruled out in English (they don't need to know the terms, although some might). Consonant clusters more generally don't seem to be permitted, though.
 - It is a tone language.

Part 2

1. B
2. D
3. A
4. The averages in Figure 1 show an overall pattern of er filled pauses being used more frequently than erm filled pauses in both accents.
 For the individual speaker data shown for York English in Figure 2, this pattern holds for 12 of the 20 speakers. One speaker uses no erm filled pauses at all, and 7 speakers use more erm than er.
 For the individual speaker data shown for SSBE in Figure 3, this pattern holds for 13 of the 20 speakers.
 In both accents, the relative proportions of er and erm filled pauses varies widely from one individual speaker to the next.
5. While taking averages can be a helpful way to summarise data, it can also obscure a lot of the detail, particularly if a wide range of individual differences is present. In the case of the present data sets, the averages in Figure 1 do broadly capture overall tendencies for these two groups of speakers, but reviewing the individuals' data shows that only a

little over half of each group of speakers conforms to the pattern displayed by the group averages for both accent groups. [7 marks]

6. Graphing techniques which allow the range or spread of the data to be displayed would provide a more detailed way of summarising the pausing behaviour of these speakers. For example, a histogram or stem-and-leaf plot showing the frequency of occurrence of particular values along the range of possible values enables the researcher to visualise the spread of values occurring and which values are most popular. A box plot also enables the researcher to see the spread of the data and where the majority of the values are concentrated. Bars indicating the spread of the data could also be added to the averages shown on the bar graph.

[we do not expect applicants to use statistical terminology such as 'histogram', 'stem-and-leaf plot' or 'box plot', although some may be able to – what is important here is whether they are able to demonstrate that they have thought about the spread of the data and different ways that this might be visualised.]

Part 3

Key elements

- Language processing is distributed across different areas of the brain, not just one 'language area'
- Example 1: demonstrates that Wernicke's is primarily responsible for processing meaning because the syntax is intact
 - Correct word order: SVO (subject verb object) as in "you know that smoodle pinkered"
 - Time (tense – some applicants might know this term) information present: -ed for past in "pinkered"
 - Prepositions present: - of in "take care of him"

However, despite correct syntax, sentences are nonsensical, i.e. contain little or no meaning → since Wernicke's was impaired, it can be concluded that this area plays a key role in processing meaning

- Example 2: demonstrates that Broca's is predominantly engaged in processing grammatical structure (syntax, morphology, in this example) because the patient is communicating some meaning through lexical words (nouns and verbs), but lacks the grammatical apparatus to allow the interlocutor to appropriately and unambiguously interpret the message.
 - No tense (past/present/future) markers are present (morphology – some applicants might know this term)
 - No grammatical (function) words (articles, prepositions, etc)
 - No subject-verb agreement is present – there are no subjects and the verb isn't marked to show whether it's I/you or he/she because with the latter it would be 'walks'
 - It's unclear whether word order is correct as we don't know what exactly the patient wanted to say, if "walk dog" means "the dog walked out of the yard", then word order would be wrong
 - Localised damage to brain areas can show how language is processed in the brain, and which areas are crucially involved in processing particular aspects of language

(note that applicants should not be penalised if they don't use terms like 'syntax' and 'tense' while they do make the correct observations)

Some examples of possible elaborations

- Tests in healthy populations are often insufficient to establish what is processed where as many factors play a role and meaning and structure are often intertwined. As becomes obvious in example 1, it is difficult to present structure without tapping into meaning, and as shown in example 2, it's difficult to express meaning without structure. This makes it difficult to test the anatomy that supports language processing in healthy subjects because multiple areas are involved at the same time. This is why brain damaged patients give the most reliable information on which brain areas do what.
- However, data of brain damaged patients also need to be treated carefully and with scepticism. Often more than just one area of the brain is affected in neurological damage and it's unclear what other conditions the patients suffer from. It can also happen that multiple 'language areas' are affected. In addition, the brain is adaptable and flexible so that in time, certain functions can be taken over by other brain areas.
- It could be the case that there are areas within those areas that are responsible for finer processing but because the patients had a larger area that was impaired we are missing this. E.g. perhaps within Broca's there is an area that is responsible for tense, one for word order, one for prepositions etc. (We know that this isn't the case but an applicant might reasonably assume this)
- Just looking at what patients produce naturally does not necessarily tell us the whole story. Does a patient with Broca's aphasia know for instance how to use prepositions? From the examples it's unclear so instead of just looking at output, patients would need to do more specifically targeted language tests for more specific conclusions to be reached.
- The shape and size of everyone's brain is slightly different so determining where exactly the same area is in somebody else is not easy, and this implies that pinpointing the precise location of activation for a specific task in an individual's brain is not straightforward (and therefore, there is a margin of error for data taken for a larger population, too).