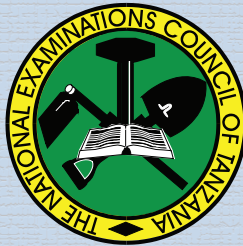


THE NATIONAL EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL OF TANZANIA



**ANALYSIS OF CANDIDATES' RESPONSES TO
PRIMARY SCHOOL LEAVING EXAMINATION
QUESTIONS FOR THE YEAR 2012**

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface	v
1.0 INTRODUCTION	1
2.0 ANALYSIS OF THE ITEMS	2
2.1 Section A: Grammar	2
2.2 Section B: Vocabulary	25
2.3 Section C: Composition	30
2.4 Section C: Comprehension	31
3.0 CONCLUSION	39
4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS	40

PREFACE


The Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination provides an evaluation of the culmination of the seven year primary education in Tanzania. The results of this examination are used as a basis for the selection of pupils who join form one in the various government secondary schools located throughout Tanzania. English Language is one of the five subjects examined at this level.

This report on the analysis of the answers of the examination questions on the English Language examination of the year 2012 was aimed at giving feedback to students, teachers, policy makers, curriculum developers and other education stakeholders on the students' answers to the examination items. The report identifies the factors which lead to the students' inability to provide the correct answers according to demands of the questions. Analysis of every item was conducted to identify the different mistakes/errors which occurred in answering the questions. In addition, the report shows the number and percentage of students who answered the item correctly, those who wrote incorrect answers, those who did not answer the questions and those who wrote more than one answer for each item. The analysis identifies the factors leading to students' inability to provide correct answers to the examination questions such as inability to identify and/or understand the demands of the item, lack of knowledge and skills of rules in grammar, appropriate use of tenses, inadequate vocabulary necessary for use in different situations, and inability to interpret and combine concepts in a comprehension passage to answer question provided.

Analysis of the students' answers to the different examination items in the English Language examination paper gives a clear indication of the problems in the teaching and learning process of the subject at the primary school level. The National Examination Council of Tanzania believes that

this feedback will facilitate the different stakeholders in taking the necessary steps to improve the teaching and learning process which will eventually lead to better performance in the English Language paper of the Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination. In addition, the National Examination Council of Tanzania is of the opinion that if the recommendations made in this report are implemented appropriately, the knowledge and skills which the students will acquire will lead to better performance not only in the primary school leaving examinations but also in other NECTA examinations at higher levels.

Finally the Examination Council of Tanzania would like to express its appreciation to all the teachers who participated in construction of the examination items and all the officers who were involved in the production of this report.



Dr. Joyce L. Ndalichako
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Primary School Leaving Examination of 2012 was held on 19th and 20th September 2012. A total of 894,839 students were registered for the examination. Among these, 865,827 (96.76%) of the students sat for the Primary School Leaving Examination and only 265,873 (30.07%) passed the examination by obtaining 100 marks out of the 250 marks possible.

An analysis of the results of the English Language Examination indicates that among the 865,176 who sat for the English Language paper only 182,145 candidates (21.06%) passed the examination which is a very low pass rate. Thus the subject contributed in pulling down the overall pass rate.

The English Language Examination for the Primary School Leaving Examination 2012 consisted of four sections A, B, C, and D. All items were objective. Each of the sections comprised of different areas of the subject as follows: Section A, 30 items on Grammar; Section B, six (6) vocabulary items; Section C, four (4) composition items; and Section D, ten (10) comprehension items. The analysis of the items was conducted in order to reveal items that were answered correctly by many candidates and to show mistakes and errors that were made by candidates who could not get the correct answer. It is expected that this analysis will be useful to students and teachers in realising common mistakes made by candidates and taking correct measures to avoid them in their use of English Language.

2.0 ANALYSIS OF THE ITEMS

2.1 Section A: Grammar

This section tested candidates' ability to use and recognize appropriate grammatical sentence constructions.

Question 1: The children _____ when the lights went off.

- A. where studying
- B. was studying
- C. were studying
- D. is studying
- E. are studying

Response pattern

Option	A	B	C*	D	E	Omitted	Others
No. of candidates	133,750	216,878	242,641	165,252	103,253	1,216	2,127
% of candidates	15.46	25.07	28.05	19.1	11.94	0.14	0.25

This question was intended to test candidates' ability to use appropriate tense and plural form of the word as well as the ability to identify appropriate spelling of words required to complete the sentence. Only 28.05% of the candidates managed to answer the item correctly. About a quarter of all candidates (25.07%) chose option B 'was studying'. These candidates made a common mistake among Tanzanian candidates of using the word "children" as singular instead of using the word "child". Thus, many candidates use the word "childrens" as the plural of children. Option D 'is studying' was chosen by 19.1 percent of the candidates indicating a similar problem as the choice of B 'was studying' but with an added problem of incorrect use of tense by using present continuous tense instead of past continuous tense.

The 11.94 percent who chose option E 'are studying' also indicated a problem in the use of tense although they knew the word 'Children' reflected a plural form. The choice of option A 'where studying' by 15.46 percent of the candidates is a sign of candidates incorrect pronunciation/ spelling of the words 'where' and 'were'. This also indicates that, they did not know the meaning of the word 'where'.

Question 2: The teacher _____ me with a stick yesterday.

- A. hits
- B. hit
- C. heat
- D. beats
- E. beaten

Response pattern

Option	A	B*	C	D	E	Omitted	Others
No. of candidates	144,477	249,115	196,131	120,592	150,576	2,086	2,140
% of candidates	16.7	28.8	22.67	13.94	17.41	0.24	0.25

The demand of this item included knowledge of the appropriate tenses as well as differentiation of the spelling of similar sounding words with different meanings. Only 28.8 percent of the candidates got the correct answer 'option B'. The choice of distracters options A, D and E indicated that the candidates had a problem with the correct use of tense. The choice of Option C by 22.67 percent of the candidates showed that they could not differentiate between the two similar sounding words 'hit' and 'heat'.

Question 3: Mr Kiula _____ in his vegetable garden now.

- A. worked
- B. is working
- C. has work
- D. work
- E. had worked

Response pattern

Option	A	B*	C	D	E	Omitted	Others
No. of candidates	116,289	429,386	133,662	119,948	61,122	2,164	2,546
% of candidates	13.44	49.63	15.45	13.86	7.7	0.25	0.29

This item tested the candidates' ability to use present continuous tense. Almost half of the candidates (49.63%) got this item correct. The candidates who chose incorrect answers were almost evenly distributed between options A, C and D with fewer candidates (7.7%) choosing option E. This indicates that most of the candidates knew that the answer needed to show something was happening at the moment but could not identify the correct choice. Candidates who selected option A "worked" had ignored the last word in the sentence "now" which indicates that the activity was happening at the moment so the answer could not be in the past tense.

Question 4: My friend _____ a bath before I arrived.

- A. taken
- B. taking
- C. will take
- D. had taken
- E. takes

Response pattern

Option	A	B	C	D*	E	Omitted	Others
No. of candidates	171,505	169,802	260,806	165,116	92,406	2,770	2,712
% of candidates	19.82	19.63	30.15	19.09	10.68	0.32	0.31

This item required candidates to demonstrate the use of appropriate tenses. Option D was the correct answer and was chosen by only 19.09 percent of the candidates. Option C 'will take' was chosen by the largest number of candidates (30.15%). These candidates did not take into account the tense of the last word in the sentence 'arrived' in providing their answer. Their answer would have been correct if the word was 'arrive'. This comment also applies to option E chosen by 10.68 percent of the candidates. Options A and B would not have fitted in either case and shows candidates' inability to recognize inappropriate sentence structures.

Question 5: Sometimes he _____ alone.

- A. go
- B. goes
- C. went
- D. have gone
- E. going

Response pattern

Option	A	B*	C	D	E	Omitted	Others
No. of candidates	155,860	263,656	158,929	125,977	155,112	2,336	3,247
% of candidates	18.02	30.48	18.37	14.56	17.93	0.27	0.38

The candidates were required to demonstrate the ability to use the appropriate form of the word/verb 'go' to complete the sentence. The correct answer, option B, was chosen by 30.48 percent of the

candidates. The incorrect answers were evenly distributed among the other four options A, C, D and E as indicated in the table for question 5. This pattern of responses may be an indication that most of the candidates did not have the bases in the correct usage of tenses.

Question 6: Some elephants _____ our crops.

- A. destroys
- B. has destroyed
- C. is destroying
- D. was destroying
- E. have destroyed

Response pattern

Option	A	B	C	D	E*	Omitted	Others
No. of candidates	193,068	136,647	190,800	142,160	195,984	3,422	3.036
% of candidates	22.32	15.8	22.05	16.43	22.65	0.4	0.35

This item required the candidates to show their ability to use appropriate tenses and plural form of the words. Only 22.65 % of the candidates got the item correct by choosing option E 'have destroyed'. Candidates' choice of all the incorrect options 'A' to 'D' indicates that the candidates neglected the role of the plural form in 'elephants' in their decision.

Question 7: If he _____, we will go with him.

- A. come
- B. coming
- C. comes
- D. came
- E. had come

Response pattern

Option	A	B	C*	D	E	Omitted	Others
No. of candidates	263,156	197,466	168,857	141,767	88,325	2,683	2,863
% of candidates	30.42	22.83	19.52	16.39	10.21	0.31	0.33

This item required the candidates to demonstrate their ability to recognize correct tenses and their use in the singular form. Only 19.52 percent of the candidates got the item correct by choosing option C. The option chosen by the largest number of candidates was A 'come' (30.42%) indicating that they could not differentiate the appropriate use of the two words 'come' and 'comes'. The choice of option B 'coming' by 22.83 percent of the candidates indicates that they knew they were supposed to use present tense but could not use the appropriate form. The choice of the options D and E shows that the candidates used past tense instead of the appropriate tense indicating lack of knowledge and skills of appropriate tense usage.

Question 8: Did you _____ your home work last night?

- A. finish
- B. finishes
- C. finished
- D. finishing
- E. do finish

Response pattern

Option	A*	B	C	D	E	Omitted	Others
No. of candidates	345,208	99,474	225,668	105,118	84,227	2,318	3,104
% of candidates	39.9	11.5	26.09	12.15	9.74	0.27	0.36

This item required the candidates to complete the question with the correct verb form. The question started with the past tense 'did'.

This was one of the items with a relatively good performance with 39.9% of the candidates choosing the correct option A. The candidates realised that they did not need to use the past tense form of the verb since the word 'did' already makes the sentence past tense. However, a large number of the candidates (26.09%) chose option C the past tense 'finished' failing to use the correct rule. The other three options B, D, and E were chosen by 33.39 percent indicating that they could not identify the past tense in the stem to choose the correct answer.

Question 9: Farmers _____ maize next year.

- A. will grow
- B. have grown
- C. has grown
- D. were growing
- E. had grown

Response pattern

Option	A*	B	C	D	E	Omitted	Others
No. of candidates	355,514	158,711	129,205	154,022	61,514	3,260	2,891
% of candidates	41.09	18.35	14.93	17.8	7.11	0.38	0.33

This item required the candidates to identify the future tense in the stem and choose the correct option. Many candidates were able to do it as 41.09 percent of the candidates answered the item correctly by choosing option A. However, the rest of the candidates were not aware that the phrase 'next year' in the stem required them to use future tense.

Question 10: Is Andrew _____ well in his studies these days?

- A. do
- B. does
- C. did
- D. done
- E. doing

Response pattern

Option	A	B	C	D	E*	Omitted	Others
No. of candidates	135,892	227,299	218,592	96,764	180,455	3,020	3,095
% of candidates	15.71	26.27	25.27	11.19	20.86	0.35	0.36

This item required the candidates to demonstrate the knowledge on the use of present continuous tense. Only 20.86 percent of the candidates were able to answer this item correctly by choosing option E. Options B and C were chosen by many candidates, 26.27% and 25.27% respectively. Those who chose option B realised that the stem used present tense but could not go beyond by choosing the correct form. The 15.71 percent who chose option A had a problem similar to those who chose B. Options C 'did' and D 'done' neglected the fact that the stem was in the present and used past and past participle forms.

Question 11: _____ she was tired, she worked hard.

- A. Although
- B. In spite of
- C. Despite of
- D. Despite
- E. Even

Response pattern

Option	A*	B	C	D	E	Omitted	Others
No. of candidates	449,783	95,246	142,423	81,583	89,842	3,215	3,025
% of candidates	51.99	11.01	16.46	9.43	10.38	0.37	0.35

This item required the candidate to show the ability to use the appropriate term to join two clauses and thus complete the stem correctly. The correct answer was option A 'although'. This item had one of the best performances in this examination paper with 51.99 percent choosing the correct option A. This indicates that the candidates were aware that the word 'although' is used to introduce a subordinate clause which contains a statement that contrasts the statement in the main clause. The most commonly chosen incorrect answer was option C (despite of) with 16.46 percent of the candidates choosing it. This indicates that the candidates recognized the contrast in the two clauses but could not choose the correct answer.

Question 12: We wear shoes _____ to protect our feet.

- A. so
- B. as
- C. because
- D. for
- E. in order

Response pattern

Option	A	B	C	D	E*	Omitted	Others
No. of candidates	94,161	100,709	218,432	124,375	321,106	3,241	3,093
% of candidates	10.88	11.64	25.25	14.38	37.12	0.37	0.36

This item required the candidates to demonstrate the ability to use the appropriate word to show the reason for doing something. The

appropriate option E was chosen by 37.12 percent of the candidates. The option C ‘because’ was chosen by 25.25% of the candidates. This is an indication that most of the candidates realised that the second clause in the sentence was the reason for the first clause and that the word ‘because’ indicated reason but did not have enough knowledge of its correct usage in a sentence or its alternatives. Option D “for” was selected by 14.38 percent of the candidates. The word “for” could be used to indicate a reason but given the structure of the sentence, its use could make the sentence grammatically incorrect, i.e., “for to protect”.

Question 13: This book is _____ big to fit in my bag.

- A. very
- B. too
- C. so
- D. to
- E. as

Response pattern

Option	A	B*	C	D	E	Omitted	Others
No. of candidates	147,385	514,296	62,774	94,816	40,475	2,719	2,652
% of candidates	17.04	59.45	7.26	10.96	4.68	0.31	0.31

The item assessed the candidates’ ability to identify the appropriate word used with the phrase “_____ big to” in a sentence. A large percentage of the candidates (59.45%) were able to choose the correct answer as option B and thus complete the phrase ‘too big to’. However, 17.04 percent of the candidates chose option A ‘very’ indicating that they knew that the book was very big because it could not fit in the bag but lacked the ability to choose the appropriate word in making comparison. The choice of option D by

10.96 percent also indicates that they knew the phrase to be used but did not differentiate the two similar sounding words ‘too’ and ‘to’.

Question 14: He looks _____ younger since he came back from Loliondo.

- A. many
- B. any
- C. much
- D. very
- E. some

Response pattern

Option	A	B	C*	D	E	Omitted	Others
No. of candidates	201,339	117,917	162,467	204,961	171,689	3,350	3,394
% of candidates	23.27	13.63	18.78	23.69	19.85	0.39	0.39

This item was intended to test the candidates’ ability to use quantities in a sentence by being able to identify the correct answer. Only 18.78 percent of the candidates managed to get this item correct by choosing option C. More candidates chose options A (23.27%), D (23.69%) and E (19.85%) instead of the correct option. This response pattern indicates that most of the candidates do not know the correct use of all the words, i.e., ‘many’, ‘any’, ‘very’ and ‘some’.

Question 15: The man _____ stole the books was caught at night.

- A. whose
- B. which
- C. who
- D. whom
- E. what

Response pattern

Option	A	B	C*	D	E	Omitted	Others
No. of candidates	245,890	197,425	254,921	87,823	72,967	3,157	2,934
% of candidates	28.42	22.82	29.47	10.15	8.43	0.36	0.34

This item sought to test the candidates' ability to use the relative pronouns ('wh' words) such as 'whose', 'which', 'who', 'whom' and 'what'. Only 29.47% of the candidates were able to identify the correct answer option C 'who'. The candidates were required to use 'who' as a pronoun at the beginning of a relative clause when specifying the person one is talking about or giving information. The option representing the highest number of incorrect answer was option A 'whose' with 28.42% of the candidates choosing it. The candidates failed to recognize that 'whose' is the possessive form of 'who'. Option B was also chosen by many candidates (22.82%). This indicates that they did not know that humans are not normally referred to as 'which'.

Question 16: Will you _____ me your pen, please?

- A. borrow
- B. lend
- C. take
- D. help
- E. assist

Response pattern

Option	A	B*	C	D	E	Omitted	Others
No. of candidates	248,537	126,735	233,626	188,642	62,206	2,658	2,713
% of candidates	28.73	14.65	27.01	21.81	7.19	0.31	0.31

The item required the candidates to identify the word which gives the correct meaning to the sentence. This item was the second

most poorly performed item in this paper. Only 14.65 percent managed to get the correct answer for this item by choosing option B 'lend'. Many candidates chose option A 'borrow' (28.73%) which is the exact opposite of the correct word 'lend'. This trend of responses depicts one of the most common errors among Tanzanian candidates even at higher levels of learning. It represents errors attributable to the influence of Kiswahili and other native languages commonly used by the candidates. The other three options 'C', 'D', and 'E' were also chosen by many candidates. This is also due to the influence of local languages which use translations of these words as a polite way of speech in borrowing and thus are used as alternatives to the word 'borrow'.

'Borrow' means 'to take something that belongs to someone else and use it with the understanding that it will be returned', while 'lend' means 'you allow someone to use something that belongs to you for a period of time.' Fewer candidates omitted or wrote multiple answers for this item than for most of the items in this examination indicating that the candidates did not realize their mistake.

Question 17: Write the indirect speech for the sentence "My brother will be here tomorrow." Mary said.

- A. Mary said that her brother could be there the next day
- B. Mary said that my brother will be there the next day
- C. Mary said that her brother would be there the next day
- D. Mary said that her brother will be there the next day
- E. Mary said that your brother will be there the next day.

Response pattern

Option	A	B	C*	D	E	Omitted	Others
No. of candidates	126,494	235,651	221,539	150,564	125,396	3,041	2,432
% of candidates	14.62	27.24	25.61	17.4	14.49	0.35	0.26

This item required the candidates to change the sentence provided into indirect speech. Only 25.61 percent of the candidates managed to identify the correct sentence as option C. The incorrect option chosen most frequently was option B (27.24%). In this option everything remained the same except the change of 'tomorrow' to 'the next day'. They were not able to change 'my' to 'her' making it a third person singular or 'will' to 'would' indicating what the person intended to do. The candidates who retained the word 'my' and those who changed it to 'your' were not able to use the possessive pronouns appropriately. The 14.62 percent who chose option A could not differentiate between the use of 'could' and 'would'. They did not know that the word 'could' represents something which is tentative while the word 'would' implies something is definite. Candidates who chose option D did not change 'will' into 'would' although they were able to make the other changes.

Question 18: Mr. Kalasamaki goes fishing every evening,_____?

- A. don't he
- B. wasn't he
- C. hasn't he
- D. isn't he
- E. doesn't he

Response pattern

Option	A	B	C	D	E*	Omitted	Others
No. of candidates	201,048	141,156	117,910	163,286	238,396	2,131	2,190
% of candidates	23.24	16.32	13.63	18.76	27.56	0.25	0.25

This item required the candidate to demonstrate the ability to use a correct question tag to complete the sentence. Only 27.56% of the candidates were able to use the correct question tag in option E 'doesn't he' to match tense of the stem. The incorrect option chosen most often was option A 'don't he' which was chosen by 23.24 percent of the candidates. This indicates that the candidates knew the correct tense to use but could not use the correct form which is singular.

Question 19: Mr and Mrs John have a _____ family.

- A. happily
- B. happy
- C. happiest
- D. most happiness
- E. more happiest

Response pattern

Option	A	B*	C	D	E	Omitted	Others
No. of candidates	131,438	399,506	102,792	158,793	67,837	2,536	2,215
% of candidates	15.19	46.18	11.88	18.36	7.84	0.29	0.26

This item tested candidates' ability to use comparative forms of the adjective 'happy' in a sentence. This item was one of the well performed items with 46.18 percent of the candidates choosing the correct option B. However, the choice of option D 'most happiness' by 18.36 percent of the candidates can be attributed to the

influence of candidates' first languages, e.g., Kiswahili. The students used direct translations and therefore made the mistake.

Question 20: He is both a committed prefect _____ a clever pupil.

- A. but
- B. with
- C. and
- D. for
- E. also

Response pattern

Option	A	B	C*	D	E	Omitted	Others
No. of candidates	140,189	165,360	355,597	111,777	86,163	3,177	2,854
% of candidates	16.2	19.11	41.1	12.92	9.96	0.37	0.33

This item tested candidates' ability to identify the appropriate coordinating conjunction between two phrases. A substantial number of candidates (41.1%) were able to choose the correct option C. The next most frequently chosen response was option B with 19.11 percent choosing it. This is not a conjunction but its choice was influenced by Kiswahili, the language most commonly used by the candidates. Candidates may have been translating the items into Kiswahili before answering them and therefore making the error. The word 'with' can be used as a subordinating conjunction or preposition depending on the context of the particular sentence.

Question 21: I was so exhausted _____ I did not work anymore.

- A. enough
- B. such
- C. although
- D. that

E. the extent

Response pattern

Option	A	B	C	D*	E	Omitted	Others
No. of candidates	131,062	123,125	177,483	337,258	89,634	3,523	3,032
% of candidates	15.15	14.23	20.52	38.98	10.36	0.41	0.35

The candidates were tested on their ability to use the conjunction 'that' in a clause showing results. The word 'that' can also be used after the expressions 'so---' to introduce results of effects of something. Although the correct option was the most commonly chosen answer (38.98%), a substantial number of candidates (20.52%) chose Option C 'although'. The candidates did not have the knowledge of the proper usage of the word. The word 'although' is used to introduce a subordinate clause which contains a statement which contrasts with the statement in the main clause.

Question 22: Did you send me _____ empty parcel?

- A. a
- B. few
- C. an
- D. some
- E. many

Response pattern

Option	A	B	C*	D	E	Omitted	Others
No. of candidates	143,656	149,898	231,243	189,866	143,242	4,055	3,157
% of candidates	16.61	17.33	26.73	21.95	16.56	0.47	0.36

This item seems to be a very simple item with the candidates being required to demonstrate the proper use of the indefinite article used before a word with a vowel sound. However, only 26.75

percent of the candidates chose the correct option C. The other candidates' answers were almost evenly spread out among the other options with the option D being more frequent with 21.95 percent choosing it. This pattern of choices may indicate a general problem in the understanding of these concepts.

Question 23: Mr Tajiri's house is _____ big _____ Mr Maskini's house.

- A. so ... as
- B. as ... as
- C. too ... as
- D. so ... that
- E. too ... to

Response pattern

Option	A	B*	C	D	E	Omitted	Others
No. of candidates	77,342	156,919	111,127	233,053	279,853	2,808	4,015
% of candidates	8.94	18.14	12.85	26.94	32.35	0.32	0.46

The correct answer to this item was option B 'as ...as'. Only 18.14 percent of the candidates got it correct. The most highly chosen option was E 'too....to' with 32.36 percent of the candidates choosing it. This choice was illogical since a large percentage of candidates (59.45%) were able to use 'too ... to' appropriately in question number 13. These candidates would have discarded this option outright if they knew the rules of grammar in their answer to question number 13. In addition to this interesting occurrence, more candidates chose option D 'so ... that' (26.94%) instead of the correct answer. This may have been influenced by the candidates' use of Kiswahili translation in answering their English Language questions. The other two options A and C were chosen by a

substantial percentage (21.97%) of the candidates. The lack of appropriate language skills to answer this item was however, made more evident by the fact that 4,015 (0.46%) of the candidates provided more than one answer. This question had the highest number of multiple answers in this examination paper.

Question 24: He got up early _____ catch the aircraft.

- A. because
- B. so that
- C. that to
- D. in order to
- E. therefore

Response pattern

Option	A	B	C	D*	E	Omitted	Others
No. of candidates	233,793	195,524	116,854	257,903	54,432	3,823	2,788
% of candidates	27.02	22.6	13.51	29.81	6.29	0.44	0.32

This question required the candidate to choose the most appropriate word or group of words to indicate the reason for the action in the second part of the sentence. The correct option D was the most commonly chosen by 29.81 percent of the candidates. The second most commonly chosen item was option A 'because' chosen by 27.02 percent of the candidates while the third most common choice was option B 'so that' with 22.6 percent of the candidates choosing it. This spread of choices is an indication that the candidates realised that the item required the joining of two clauses with the second one explaining the first. However, they could not choose the correct answer based on the context of that question.

Question 25: It is cloudy, _____ it will rain today.

- A. and
- B. that
- C. perhaps
- D. as
- E. so as

Response pattern

Option	A	B	C*	D	E	Omitted	Others
No. of candidates	166,967	259,671	286,947	85,409	59,560	3,545	3,018
% of candidates	19.3	30.02	33.17	9.87	6.88	0.41	0.35

This item sought to test whether candidates could identify the appropriate word to use when there is a probability of something happening. Although the correct option 'C' is the most commonly chosen answer with 33.17 percent of the candidates choosing it, an almost equally large percent (30.02) of the candidates chose option B. The candidates who chose option B may have expected the sentence to read "It is **so** cloudy **that** it .." and did not realize that the 'so' was not present in the first clause. These candidates, together with those who chose option A 'and', failed to realize that the presence of clouds does not guarantee it will rain. In addition, they did not realize that the sentence was not grammatically correct when the two options were used.

Question 26: My mother uses _____ onion as a spice.

- A. an
- B. a
- C. and
- D. many
- E. a few

Response pattern

Option	A*	B	C	D	E	Omitted	Others
No. of candidates	306,319	152,610	170,737	137,783	90,316	4,341	3,011
% of candidates	35.41	17.64	19.74	15.93	10.44	0.5	0.35

This question was testing the candidates' ability to use the indefinite article 'an' before a noun beginning with a vowel sound. Only 35.41 percent of the candidates were able to choose the correct answer option A. The other candidates' choices were almost evenly spread across options B to D with fewer candidates choosing option E. This pattern of answers together with the fact that 4,341(0.5%) candidates did not answer this item indicates that candidates did not have the required skills to answer the item.

Question 27: We have known him _____ 1995.

- A. for
- B. since
- C. by
- D. at
- E. in

Response pattern

Option	A	B*	C	D	E	Omitted	Others
No. of candidates	104,580	543,398	81,520	50,590	79,176	2,767	3,086
% of candidates	12.09	62.81	9.42	5.85	9.15	0.32	0.36

This item tested candidates' ability to use the preposition 'since' and 'for'. The item had one of the best performances with 62.81 percent of the candidates choosing the correct option B 'since'. The most commonly chosen incorrect answer was option A 'for' chosen by 12.09 percent of the candidates. This answer would have been correct if the number of years rather than the exact year was given.

In spite of the good performance demonstrated in this item, a total of 2,767 (0.32%) candidates did not answer the item and 3,086 (0.36) wrote multiple answers. Candidates providing multiple answers may not have realised that their answers would be automatically disqualified.

Question 28: There was _____ rainfall in January than in February this year.

- A. plenty
- B. most
- C. best
- D. less
- E. plentiful

Response pattern

Option	A	B	C	D*	E	Omitted	Others
No. of candidates	145,914	304,527	187,332	117,863	102,216	4,157	3,108
% of candidates	16.87	35.2	21.65	13.62	11.82	0.48	0.36

The candidates were tested on their ability to use the comparative 'less....than'. This question had the worst performance in the whole of this paper with only 13.62 percent of the candidates choosing the correct answer as option D 'less'. In addition, 4,157 (0.48%) candidates did not attempt the item while 3,108 (0.36%) wrote multiple answers. The candidates seemed to realize that a comparison was implied in the question by their choice of option B 'most' by 35.2 percent, and the choice of option C 'best' by 21.65 percent. For some reason the candidates seem to have had the idea that there was more rainfall in January than in February and were trying to express this view. Most candidates had difficulties in identifying the correct answer.

Question 29: Rehema bought a _____ of soap and a kilo of sugar.

- A. bunch
- B. pile
- C. crowd
- D. loaf
- E. bar

Response pattern

Option	A	B	C	D	E*	Omitted	Others
No. of candidates	246,012	131,599	212,436	120,159	147,787	3,659	3,465
% of candidates	28.44	15.21	24.56	13.89	17.08	0.42	0.4

This item was also among the poorly performed items in this examination with only 17.08 percent of the candidates choosing the correct option E 'bar'. The choice of the option A 'bunch' by 28.44 percent and option C 'crowd' by 24.56 percent indicates that the candidates did not know the meaning of the words. The choice of the correct answer may have proved to be difficult because the word 'bar' has several meanings and most of the candidates seem to know only one meaning of the word 'bar' 'a place where alcohol is sold" and therefore could not choose it as the correct option.

Question 30: She injured herself _____ a knife.

- A. with
- B. by
- C. on
- D. and
- E. of

Response pattern

Option	A*	B	C	D	E	Omitted	Others
No. of candidates	322,179	194,758	124,034	108,846	107,888	3,643	3,769
% of candidates	37.24	22.51	14.34	12.58	12.47	0.42	0.44

The item intended to test candidates' ability to use the appropriate preposition in completing the given sentence. The correct option A 'with' was chosen by 37.24 percent of the candidates. The most commonly chosen incorrect answer was option B 'by' chosen by 22.51 percent of the candidates. This indicates that candidates confused the use of the two prepositions. Although the performance of this item was not among the very poor performance, it had a large number of candidates omitting it or writing multiple answers.

2.2 Section B: Vocabulary

This section, testing the candidates' mastery of vocabulary, had a performance ranging from 19.91 percent in question 36 to 33.87 percent in question 33 indicating that the candidates found this section difficult. Furthermore, some of the items in this section were omitted by a large number of the candidates, e.g., 0.67% omitted number 36 and 0.60% omitted question 32.

Question 31: A person who cuts other people's hair is called a _____.

- A. saloon
- B. barber
- C. hair cutter
- D. hair dresser
- E. hair saloon

Response pattern

Option	A	B*	C	D	E	Omitted	Others
No. of candidates	213,845	232,958	160,382	105,691	144,800	3,705	3,736
% of candidates	24.72	26.93	18.54	12.22	16.74	0.43	0.43

This item tested the candidates' knowledge of different occupations. Only 26.93% of the candidates were able to provide the correct option B 'barber'. Although the correct answer was the most commonly chosen option, option A 'saloon' was chosen by a substantial number of candidates (24.72%), i.e., almost equal to those who chose the correct answer. The candidates who chose options A and E intended to indicate the place where people's hair is cut which was contrary to the question demand.

Question 32: A person who defends a country when there is war is called _____.

- A. a doctor
- B. a soldier
- C. a police
- D. an ambassador
- E. a pilot

Response pattern

Option	A	B*	C	D	E	Omitted	Others
No. of candidates	160,262	223,346	236,295	151,899	84,622	5,201	3,492
% of candidates	18.52	25.82	27.31	17.56	9.78	0.6	0.4

The correct option B 'a soldier' was chosen by only a quarter of the candidates (25.82%). The most commonly chosen option was option C 'a police' by 27.31 percent of the candidates. This term may be more familiar to the candidates because the Swahili translation 'polisi' sounds the same/similar to the English word

while that of the soldier ‘mwanajeshi’ is very different. In addition, the police force is found in all parts of the country ensuring safety of the people and their property while the soldier is only in a few parts of the country where the army barracks are located. This fact may also explain why a large number of candidates (5,201) did not answer this item. They may have realised that police was not the appropriate answer but did not know the correct answer.

Question 33: Our cow has just given birth to a _____.

- A. piglet
- B. puppy
- C. calf
- D. chick
- E. kitten

Response pattern

Option	A	B	C*	D	E	Omitted	Others
No. of candidates	104,067	178,194	293,011	160,636	122,823	3,176	2,310
% of candidates	12.03	20.6	33.87	18.57	14.2	0.37	0.37

This item tested the candidates’ knowledge of the names of young ones of domestic animals. The correct option C was chosen by only 33.87 percent of the candidates. The choice of options B and D by many candidates, 20.6 percent and 18.57 percent respectively, indicates that candidates did not have a mastery of this topic. The choice of these two may be due to the fact that dogs and chickens are commonly found in all parts of Tanzania. This may also apply to the children from the rural areas who may have been familiar with them and therefore chose option E ‘kitten’ (14.2%) and option A ‘piglet’ (12.03%).

Question 34: The items: skirt, shirt, pair of trousers and coat are all _____.

- A. dresses
- B. wears
- C. blouses
- D. clothes
- E. pajamas

Response pattern

Option	A	B	C	D*	E	Omitted	Others
No. of candidates	157,637	139,451	174,391	265,370	122,958	2,796	2,514
% of candidates	18.22	16.12	20.16	30.67	14.21	0.32	0.29

The correct option D was chosen by 30.16 percent of the candidates who attempted this question. Although the incorrect answers were distributed among the other options the most commonly chosen incorrect answers were C (20.16%) and A (18.22%). These answers suggest that the candidates may have expected to be asked to add other items of clothing to the list given. Interestingly, this item was among the items which had few candidates omitting (0.32%) or giving multiple answers (0.29%) indicating that the candidates thought they knew the answer. This may indicate that the candidates thought the item was easy and therefore rushed to answer it without reading the whole stem carefully.

Question 35: A pedestrian is a person who _____.

- A. pedals the bicycle
- B. walks on foot
- C. travels by car
- D. uses a pedal
- E. travels by train

Response pattern

Option	A	B*	C	D	E	Omitted	Others
No. of candidates	216,425	278,415	153,477	94,528	117,300	2,674	2,298
% of candidates	25.02	32.18	17.74	10.93	13.56	0.31	0.27

The correct answer option B 'walks on foot' was chosen by 32.18 percent of the candidates. More than a quarter of the candidates (25.02%) chose option A 'pedals the bicycle'. The choice of this option may have been due to the candidates' inappropriate association of 'pedestrian' and 'pedalling'. Option C 'travels by car' was chosen by 17.74 percent of the candidates indicating that the candidates did not know the meaning of pedestrian. Despite this trend of responses, this item had the lowest number of candidates omitting (0.31%) and giving multiple choices (0.27%).

Question 36: When a person does not get some food nutrients, he/she can get

- A. dehydration
- B. diabetes
- C. measles
- D. constipation
- E. malnutrition

Response pattern

Option	A	B	C	D	E*	Omitted	Others
No. of Candidates	126,411	163,061	192,395	202,189	172,275	5,829	2,957
% of candidates	14.61	18.85	22.24	23.37	19.91	0.67	0.34

This item was answered correctly by only 19.91 percent of the candidates. In addition, a substantial number of candidates, 5,829 (0.67%) did not attempt this item. Most of the candidates chose options D (23.37%) and C (22.24%). This pattern of responses

indicates that candidates were not sure of the correct answer. So they chose words they had heard before although they did not know their meaning. In addition, many of the candidates may have had a problem with the meaning of the term 'nutrients'.

2.3 Section C: Composition

This section has four mixed sentences. The candidates were required to arrange the sentences so as to make a good composition by giving them letters A-D. The sentences were as follows:

Question 37: She jumped out of bed and ran to her mother happily.

Question 38: She found her mother in the kitchen with a cake and some toys.

Question 39: Diana was still fast asleep in the morning dreaming about her birthday.

Question 40: Suddenly, she heard her mother calling her.

This item required the candidates to arrange the sentences in a logical manner. The following is the proper arrangement with the percent of those who got the item correct.

Item number	Correct option	No. of candidates	% of candidates	% of items omitted	% with multiple choices	% who chose E
37	C	275,602	31.86	0.5	0.33	3.34
38	D	290,024	33.52	0.44	0.36	3.67
39	A	473,016	54.68	0.45	0.38	4.29
40	B	251,867	29.11	0.41	0.4	4.55

More than half of the candidates (54.68%) were able to identify the first sentence of the composition. However, fewer candidates were able to arrange the rest of the sentences in their appropriate positions. The second sentence presented the greatest problem with only 29.11% of the candidates being able to locate it appropriately. It is also quite surprising that some candidates chose option E although the instructions asked them to arrange the sentences by using letters A to D. In addition, a substantial number of candidates omitted the item (between 0.41 to 0.5 percent) and others (between 0.33 and 0.4 percent) gave multiple answers.

2.4 Section D: Comprehension

This section presented candidates with questions to test their comprehension skills. Candidates were required to read a passage and answer ten questions based on the passage.

This section had some of the items with relatively good performance such as question 39 with 54.65% correct answers, question 41 with 47.10% correct and question 50 with 56.85% correct. The performance was however, not as good as would have been expected since all the answers could be extracted directly from the passage. The presence of a high number of candidates who did not provide any answer for the question in this section was difficult to explain. For example, item number 43 was omitted by the largest number of candidates (6,139) in the whole paper.

The passage is presented below after which the response pattern of each question is presented and discussed separately.

A long time ago, there was a Monkey and his wife who had a garden full of different crops such as beans, peas and

cabbages. They also had plenty of yams. Mr and Mrs Monkey worked very hard day and night. During the dry season, they watered their garden by using water from the nearby well.

Near their garden lived a Tortoise who was slow and lazy. Mr Tortoise never did any work. He used to sing his favourite songs all day while Monkey and his wife worked in their garden.

There was a lot of food in the Monkey's house. The house was so small it could hardly keep all the food from the garden. This was different from Mr Tortoise's house since there was no food at all. When Tortoise wanted some food, he got it by telling stories and singing songs. He used to tell children from different homes to take food along when going to his house for the stories and songs.

These children's parents discovered that Mr Tortoise was using their children for his survival. So they stopped their children from going there, hence Tortoise suffered from hunger. One day, the Tortoise sent his son to the Monkey's house to borrow some food and promised to pay him the next day. The Monkey gave the Tortoise some food.

The following day, Monkey went to Tortoise's house and asked to be paid his money. Tortoise told him not to worry as he would pay him "the next day". Unfortunately for the Monkey, the next day never came.

Question 41: Who worked hard in his garden?

- A. The Monkey
- B. The Tortoise
- C. Monkey's friends
- D. Tortoise's children
- E. Monkey's children.

Response pattern

Option	A*	B	C	D	E	Omitted	Others
No. of candidates	407,456	143,846	126,609	96,013	83,501	4,378	3,314
% of candidates	47.1	16.63	14.63	11.1	9.65	0.51	0.38

This item was very simple requiring the candidates to identify information which was available directly in the passage. However, less than half the candidates (47.1%) were able to answer the question correctly. It was also surprising that 4,378 (0.51%) candidates did not attempt the item and 3,314 (0.38%) gave multiple answers. The answer to this item is also provided in the stem of question 42, which implies that if the candidates were observant enough they would have got the answer even if they had a problem getting the correct answer before.

Question 42: Who lived near the Monkey's garden?

- A. The Monkey's wife
- B. The Monkey's friends
- C. The children
- D. The Tortoise
- E. The children's parents.

Response pattern

Option	A	B	C	D*	E	Omitted	Others
No. of candidates	245,782	143,933	134,526	264,687	69,036	3,786	3,367
% of candidates	28.41	16.64	15.55	30.6	7.98	0.44	0.39

Only 30.6 percent of the candidates were able to answer this item correctly. The most commonly chosen incorrect option A ‘the monkey’s wife’ may indicate that the candidates did not read the passage carefully or did not refer back to the passage for the answer but instead used logical thinking to come up with the answer. They expected Mr. Monkey to be living near his farm with his wife.

Question 43: How did the Tortoise get food?

- A. Telling stories
- B. Stealing food
- C. Selling food
- D. Growing food
- E. Working hard.

Response pattern

Option	A*	B	C	D	E	Omitted	Others
No. of candidates	300,681	161,522	147,506	137,631	108,316	6,139	3,322
% of candidates	34.76	18.67	17.05	15.91	12.52	0.71	0.38

Only 34.76% of the candidates got this item correct. The incorrect answers were distributed almost evenly among the other four options. The fact that 6,139 (0.71%) of the candidates did not answer this question is an indication that they did not have the relevant skills to do this comprehension task. This item was omitted by more candidates than any other item in this paper.

Question 44: Whose house was full of food?

- A. The children's house
- B. The neighbours' house
- C. The Tortoise's house
- D. The Monkey's house
- E. The Monkey's friends' house.

Response pattern

Option	A	B	C	D*	E	Omitted	Others
No. of candidates	125,943	107,044	188,578	314,166	121,889	4,162	3,335
% of candidates	14.56	12.37	21.8	36.31	14.09	0.48	0.39

Only 36.31 percent of the candidates chose the correct option D 'the monkey's house'. Another 21.8 percent chose option C 'the tortoise's house' which indicates that they were not sure of the answer since the situation of the two households was opposite. The poor performance may have been due to the candidates' low level of English proficiency.

Question 45: Why did the Tortoise suffer from hunger?

- A. Because he was a beggar.
- B. Because he was lazy.
- C. Because he liked stories.
- D. Because he liked visiting friends.
- E. Because he liked singing.

Response pattern

Option	A	B*	C	D	E	Omitted	Others
No. of candidates	116,314	325,059	174,551	143,840	97,307	4,603	3,443
% of candidates	13.44	37.57	20.18	16.63	11.25	0.53	0.4

This item required an answer which was stated directly in the passage. However, only 37.57 percent chose the correct option B ‘because he was lazy’. The choice of option C ‘Because he liked stories’ by 20.18 percent of the candidates indicates that they had got some information about the tortoise’s activities/life but could not identify the reason why he went hungry.

Question 46: Who did the Tortoise send to the Monkey’s home?

- A. His niece
- B. His daughter
- C. His son
- D. His nephew
- E. The children.

Response pattern

Option	A	B	C*	D	E	Omitted	Others
No. of candidates	109,709	133,322	249,119	96,403	268,320	4,420	3,824
% of candidates	12.68	15.41	28.8	11.14	31.02	0.51	0.44

The most commonly chosen answer is option E ‘the children’ chosen by 31.02 percent. This incorrect answer was chosen by more candidates than the correct answer C, which was chosen by only 28.8% of the candidates. This confusion may have occurred because Tortoise used to tell children from the different homes to bring food when coming to listen to his stories. It is only on one occasion that the son is mentioned while the word ‘children’ is mentioned several times. The candidates were therefore not cautious when answering this item.

Question 47: When did Tortoise promise to pay Monkey for the food?

- A. After a week
- B. The following day
- C. In two days time
- D. The same day
- E. In the morning.

Response pattern

Option	A	B*	C	D	E	Omitted	Others
No. of candidates	131,277	313,706	160,398	149,708	101,803	4,803	3,422
% of candidates	15.17	36.26	18.54	17.3	11.77	0.56	0.4

The candidates were required to be able to change ‘the next day’ to indirect speech ‘the following day’. Only 36.26 percent of the candidates managed to answer the item correctly. The incorrect answers were distributed in an interesting manner with 18.54 percent choosing option C ‘in two days’ and 17.3 percent choosing D ‘the same day’. These answers indicate that the candidates did not have the knowledge on how to change the phrase to the required form.

Question 48: Where did Monkey get water from in the dry season?

- A. The ocean
- B. The river
- C. The sea
- D. The garden
- E. The well.

Response pattern

Option	A	B	C	D	E*	Omitted	Others
No. of candidates	101,473	138,020	128,862	313,849	175,386	3,994	3,533
% of candidates	11.73	15.95	14.9	36.28	20.27	0.46	0.41

This item was the most poorly performed item in this section with only 20.27 percent of the candidates choosing the correct option E 'the well'. The most commonly chosen option was D 'the garden' chosen by 36.28 percent of the candidates. This trend of responses indicates that the candidates did not understand the question or did not know the meaning of the phrase 'the well' in this context. It seems many candidates know a different meaning of 'well' and therefore did not choose this option.

Question 49: Who used to give food to Tortoise?

- A. The Monkey
- B. The parents
- C. The children
- D. The son
- E. The friends.

Response pattern

Option	A	B	C*	D	E	Omitted	Others
No. of candidates	313,469	114,353	240,898	109,337	80,889	3,514	2,657
% of candidates	36.23	13.22	27.85	12.64	9.35	0.41	0.31

The answer to this question was option C 'the children' but it was chosen by only 27.85 percent. A larger percentage of the candidates (36.23%) chose option A 'The monkey'. The candidates may have been referring to the end of the paragraph where Mr. Monkey lent Mr. Tortoise food with the promise of being paid the next day. They ignored or did not understand the role of the verb phrase 'used to' in the question which should have made them realize the answer required the person or people who gave Mr. Tortoise food several times who in this case were 'the children'.

Question 50: What did Tortoise borrow from Monkey?

- A. Some food
- B. Some beans
- C. Some cabbages
- D. Some peas
- E. Some yams

Response pattern

Option	A*	B	C	D	E	Omitted	Others
No. of candidates	491,779	101,250	131,561	68,729	66,820	2,584	2,394
% of candidates	56.85	11.7	15.21	7.94	7.72	0.3	0.28

This item tested the candidates' ability to identify specific details about the story. A large percentage of the candidates were able to choose the correct option A (56.85%). The other four options identified specific food items. The choice of any of these options, B to E, was not logical since the passage did not specify food items eaten by the various animals in the passage. The most unexpected incorrect answer was the choice of option E 'Some yams' by 66,820 (7.72%) of the candidates. This answer was interesting because 'yams' were not mentioned anywhere in the passage.

3.0 CONCLUSION

The item analysis in English Language has indicated the challenges faced by candidates in attempting the questions. Most of the candidates showed lack of knowledge in using proper grammar, tenses and proper use of vocabularies. It is also evident from the report that students lack composition skills as well as basic comprehension skills. Those shortcomings have been reflected in their performance in different topics tested in the examination. It can therefore be concluded that most students who are completing

primary education do not have a basic understanding of English Language.

Teachers should take initiatives in making sure that students master all the topics properly as stipulated in the Primary School English Language Syllabus. Taking into account the fact that English Language is the medium of instruction for secondary education, it is high time that teachers and all other education stakeholders take appropriate measures to address the challenges that make candidates unable to acquire the basic skills that are necessary for understanding English Language.

It is essential to ensure that all primary school pupils in Tanzania are taught English and are given opportunity to practice the language through various exercises so that they can be able to use it efficiently in their day to day life. This is because it is easy for them to master the language since they are still young. The most important thing is to ensure that they have competent teachers who teach the subject effectively. By so doing, primary school leavers will be in a good position to proceed smoothly with secondary and higher education. They will also be equipped to participate in global activities taking into account the fact that English language is a language used in most international forums.

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to improve candidates' knowledge and skills in English Language and eventually improve their performance the following are recommended:

- (a) The Ministry of Education and Vocational Training should make sure that all schools in Tanzania are well equipped with enough books for English Language.
- (b) Teachers should ensure complete and thorough coverage of the topics which are stipulated in the syllabus.
- (c) Teachers should give students enough exercises in composition and exercises related to the all topics taught and give them feedback on their performance.
- (d) Students should be encouraged to use English Language in their day to day conversation so that they can improve their vocabulary. Furthermore they should be encouraged to read short story books to improve their grammar.
- (e) Students should prepare themselves well for the examinations so as to be able to answer the questions as required. In the examination room, they should read the questions carefully so as to be able to identify the demand or requirement of the questions. Students should also be equipped with question answering skills to improve future performance in examinations.

