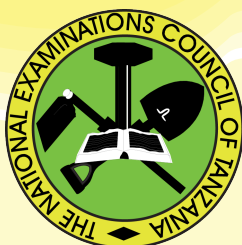**THE NATIONAL EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL OF TANZANIA**

PUPILS' ITEMS RESPONSE ANALYSIS REPORT FOR STANDARD FOUR NATIONAL ASSESSMENT (SFNA) 2015

02 ENGLISH LANGUAGE

THE NATIONAL EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL OF TANZANIA

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PREFACE

The items response analysis report for Standard Four National Assessment provides an evaluation of the four years of Primary Education. This analysis will enable teachers to help the pupils perform better and give remedial classes to those who did not do well so that they can improve their performance.

This items analysis of the pupils' responses to the questions on the English Language Assessment for the year 2015 was done to show the success or failure in answering the questions so as to take measures in helping them do better. The report also shows the number and percentage of pupils who answered the items correctly and those who wrote incorrect answers. Some pupils failed to provide correct answers due to lack of knowledge and skills on advanced reading, writing, listening and comprehension. The analysis of the pupils' answers to the different questions in the English Language Assessment gives a clear indication of the problems faced during the teaching and learning process of the subject at this level.

The National Examinations Council of Tanzania believes that this feedback will be of great assistance to different stakeholders and will help them to take necessary measures to improve the teaching and learning process which will eventually lead to better performance in the subject.

Finally, the Council would like to thank the examiners and all those who participated in preparing and analysing the data used in this report as well as in typesetting of this document.

Dr. Charles E. Msonde
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

1.0   INTRODUCTION

The analysis of the items for Standard Four National Assessment 2015 has been done in order to reveal items that were answered correctly by pupils as well as those that were not performed well. It also shows the extracts obtained from the pupils' scripts.

The Standard Four National Assessment of 2015 in English Language was held on 25th and 26th of November 2015. This assessment consisted of four sections A, B, C and D. Each of the sections comprised different areas of the subject as follows: Section A, 5 (five) items on dictation; Section B, five (5) vocabulary items; Section C, ten (10) items on grammar; and Section D, five (5) comprehension items. Each item weighed two (2) marks.

A total of 1,054,728 pupils were registered for the assessment. Among these, 991,277 pupils sat for the Standard Four National Assessment. Those who passed were 964,572 and only 26,705 failed.

2.0   ANALYSIS OF THE ITEMS

This part shows the questions which were examined and the answers which were given by the pupils according to the requirements of each section. The number and percentage of the pupils as well as their scores have been given. The analysis in each topic was also done by considering the following criteria: The pupils who scored from 0 to 20% were, categorised as poor performers. These were indicated by using red colours the pupils who scored 22 – 60 percent were regarded as average performers and were

indicated using yellow colour. Those who scored 62 – 100 marks were labelled good performers using green colours.

2.1 Section A: Dictation

This section tested the pupils' ability to listen to the sentences read and then transfer what is heard into writing. Each of the five items had four words. Each word carried $00^{1}/_{2}$ a mark, making a total of 2 marks for the four correct words in each sentence.

Question 1:   This is my sister.
Question 2:   My dog likes meat.
Question 3:   We are reading books.
Question 4:   Juma is in class.
Question 5:   Is this your pen?

The pupils who attempted questions 1 to 5 on Dictation were 94 percent, of which 62.8 percent passed question 1; 54.2 percent passed question 2; 50.6 percent passed question 3; 77.8 percent, passed question 4; and 65.3 percent passed question 5, as shown in Figure 1.
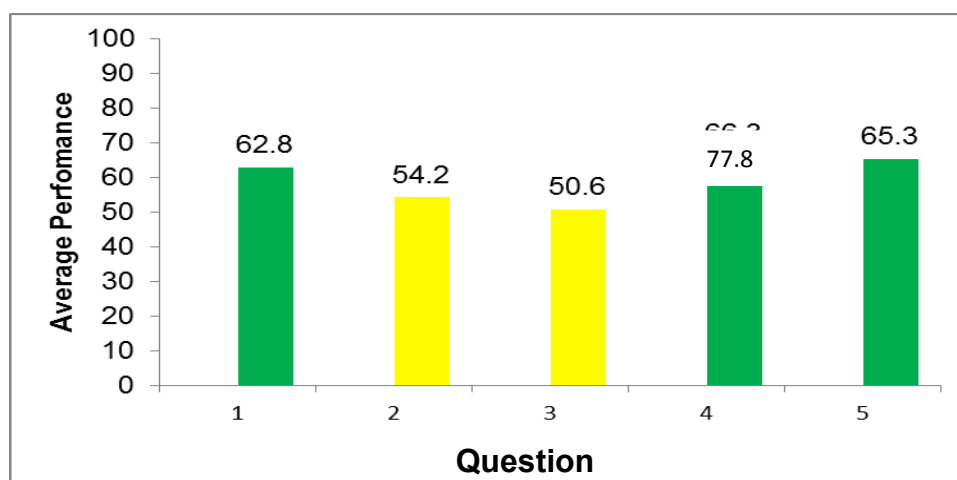
Fig. 1: Pupils' performance per question

Questions 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 on dictation were performed well and the best performed question was number 4 with 66.3 percent of the pupils scoring from 1 to 2 marks. Of these, 38.4 percent scored full marks. The marks from 1 to 2 were scored as follows; 53.2 percent question 1, 38.6 percent in question 2, 31.6 percent in question 3 and 52.2 percent in question 5.

The pupils who scored zero had poor listening skills. The trend of responses suggest that they did not know the proper spellings and pronunciations of the words in the given sentences. Extract 1 is a sample of a response from a pupil who could not write any correct word.

Extract 1

1.	nzi dhi maSista
2.	Mado gu MA hilo do
3.	Wi haDda nana
4.	Jama hini NKASI
5.	hiSi Wi peni

Extract 1 shows a sample of a response from of a pupil who failed to write any word correctly.

The pupils who scored high marks were able to listen to the dictation and write the sentences correctly. They were able to start each sentence using a capital letter and could use the correct punctuation marks. Extract 2 shows a sample of a good response.

Extract 2

1.	_This is my sister._
2.	_My dog likes meat_
3.	_We are reading books._
4.	_Juma is in class._
5.	_Is this your pen?_

Extract 2 shows a sample of a response from a pupil who was able to write correctly all five sentences read.

2.2 Section B: Vocabulary

This section tested the pupils' ability to name different types of occupations and describe activities of different occupations. It had 5 multiple choice questions which weighed 2 marks each, making a total of 10 marks for the section.

Question 6: What do you call a person who works on the farm?

        A.   A farm

        B.   A garden

        C.   A farmer

        D.   A gardener

This item required the pupils to show their ability to name different types of occupations. The correct option C 'a farmer' was selected by 56.0 percent of the pupils. These pupils knew the different types of occupations and hence were able to write the correct name for a person who works on the farm.

The pupils who opted for incorrect responses were 44 percent. Those who opted for A 'A farm' could not realise that a farm is a piece of land to be cultivated and therefore the word 'farm' can not be associated with a person. The pupils who opted for B 'a garden' confused the word 'garden' which is a piece of land next to or around a house where flowers or vegetables can be grown by a person. Those who opted for D 'a gardener' did not understand that a garden is taken care of by a gardener and that it is smaller than a farm and so confused between a farmer and a gardener.

Question 7: Where does a teacher work?

      A.   At the hostel
      B.   At school
      C.   In class
      D.   At the playground

The pupils who opted for the correct answer were 63.6 percent. On the other hand, the pupils who opted for the incorrect responses were 36.4 percent, as seen in Figure 2.
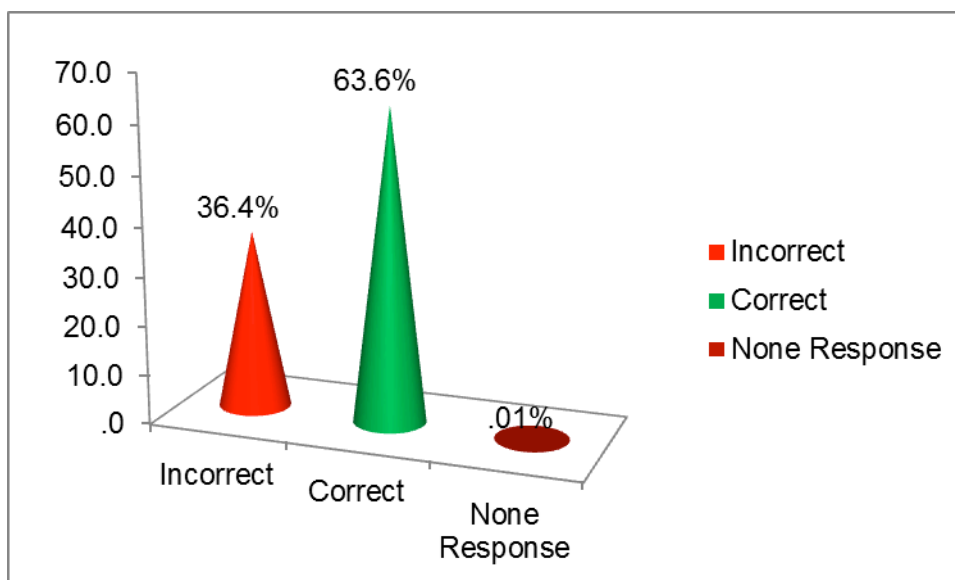
Fig. 2: Pupils' performance per score

This item required the pupils to demonstrate their ability to name the place of work according to occupation. Option B 'at school' was the correct option which was chosen by 63.6 percent of the pupils. This option shows that a teacher works at a school and educates children. The pupils who opted for this answer were able to identify the place of work for a teacher. This question was the best performed under vocabulary. Those who chose the incorrect option C 'in class' did not realise that while a teacher works in school, he/she does his/her teaching of subjects in class. The pupils who chose option A 'at the hostel' confused the occupation of a teacher to that of a matron who takes care of pupils when they are at the hostel. Those who opted for D 'at the playground' did not realise that the teacher who goes for sports with them is a sports master and that sports is only part of his work (extra curricula activity) which he/she does while at school.

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**Question 8:** Where do sick people go to be treated?

        A.   To their home

        B.   To the shop

        C.   To the hospital

        D.   To the market

This item tested the pupils' ability to name the place where sick people are given medical treatment and care by doctors/nurses. A good number of the pupils (52.8%) were able to choose the correct option C 'to the hospital.' This response indicates that the pupils realised that a hospital is a place where people who need care from doctors and nurses go when they are ill. On the other hand, the choice of the incorrect option A 'to their home' indicates that these pupils did not realise that a home is a place where one lives. Option B 'to the shop' shows that pupils did not realise that this is a place where one pays money for a service/buys things and D 'to the market suggests that the pupils did not know that this is a public place where people sell goods on tables.

Question 9: A person who sells things in a shop is called

        A.   A carpenter

        B.   A shopkeeper

        C.   A builder

        D.   A housekeeper

The pupils who opted for the correct answer were 61.0 percent while those who opted for incorrect answers were 39.0 percent, as seen in Figure 3.
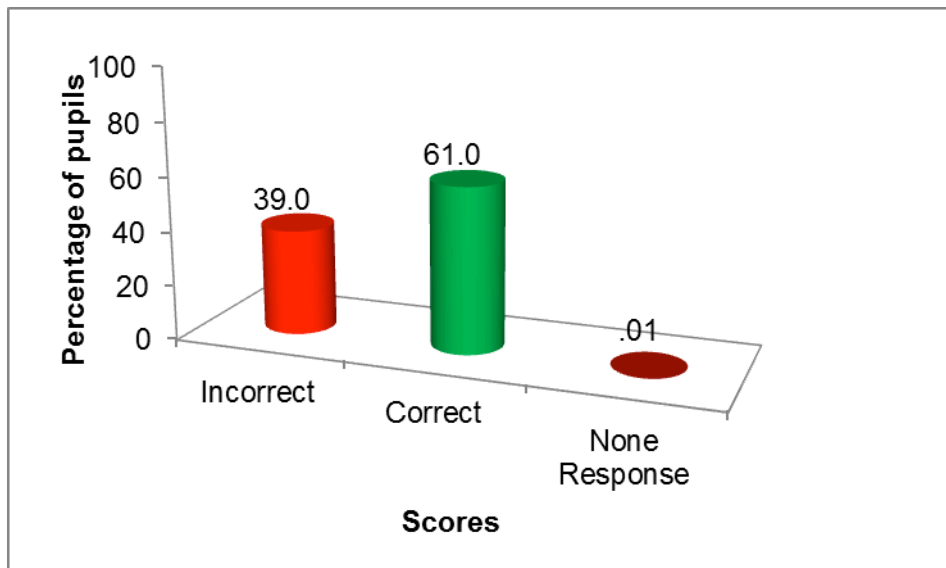
Fig. 3 : Pupils' performance per score

This item required the pupils to show their ability to name different occupations of people. Option B 'a shopkeeper' was the correct answer which was selected by 61 percent of all the pupils who attempted this question. These pupils realised that a shopkeeper is someone who owns or manages a shop. The pupils who opted for A 'a carpenter' did not know that a carpenter is someone who makes or repairs things made of wood. Those who opted for C 'a builder' did not realise that a builder is one whose job is to build and repair houses. Option D 'a housekeeper' was chosen by pupils who did not know that a housekeeper is one whose job is to clean someone else's home and sometimes cooks their meals. The general performance for this question was good.

Question 10: What is the opposite of the word **happy**?
> A.　angry
>
> B.　sad
>
> C.　happily
>
> D.　joy

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This item tested the pupils' ability to give the opposite of simple words. The correct answer B 'sad' was selected by 31.3 percent of the pupils. This response shows that the candidates knew that when someone has a seasonal affective disorder, he/she will be sad. Option A 'angry' was chosen by those who were not aware that one gets annoyed about something when he/she loses his/her temper. Those who opted for C 'happily' and D 'joy' were not aware of the meaning of the word 'opposite' because happily is used when one is pleased about something while joy means a feeling of great happiness.

2.3   Section C: GRAMMAR

This section had two parts, A and B: with a total of ten questions, five from each part. In Part A questions 11 to 15, the pupils were required to fill in the blank spaces with the correct word among those provided. The words provided included the following: **hers, their, at, have, has, by, on,** and **with.** In Part B, questions 16 to 20, the pupils were required to fill in the blank spaces using the correct form of the word in brackets. This section was not very well done as it had a pass average of 20.51 percent.

Question 11: This is Jane and Hamisi's teacher. He is _____teacher.

The correct word is 'their' which implies that the teacher is for them because he teaches them. 'Their' in this case denotes belonging to. This question was poorly done as 68.8 percent of the candidates scored zero while 31.2 percent got the question right. Most of the pupils who got the question wrong seemed to guess

the answer as they just picked words which did not match the required relative pronoun to fill in the space in the sentence.

Question 12: Birds _____wings.

This item required the pupils to show their ability to use the verbs 'has' and 'have' which mean to possess or own. The correct word 'have' was selected by 23.9 percent of the pupils. These pupils were able to pick 'have' to show that they were aware that the verbs 'have' and 'has' are determined by the number in the noun and therefore 'have' is used with the plural form of the noun as in 'birds', while 'has' is used with the singular noun. The incorrect options were selected by 76.1 percent of the pupils who seemed to guess as they just picked any word without considering the pattern and meaning of the sentence. The analysis for this question shows that the pupils' performance was poor as only 23.9 percent of the pupils opted for the correct answer while 76.1 percent opted for the incorrect answers, as shown in Figure 4.
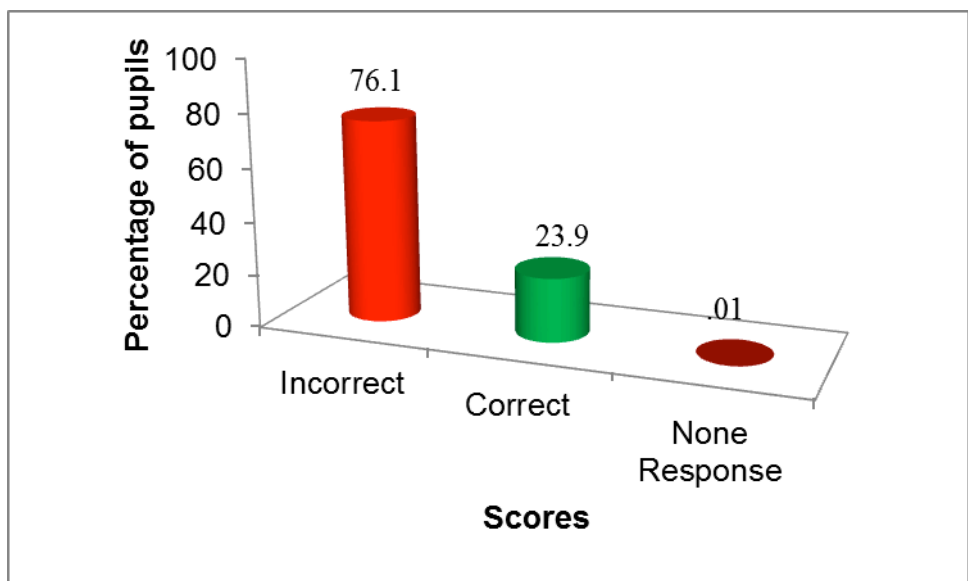
Fig. 4: Pupils' performance per score

Question 13: I will travel to Dodoma _____bus.

This question required the pupils to use the preposition to show the means of transport which they would use. The correct word 'by' was chosen by 53.6 percent of the pupils. These were able to choose the correct preposition to express the means of traveling. About 46.3 percent of the pupils scored zero. These did not know what was required and therefore just picked any word. The general performance for this question was average as 53.6 percent of the pupils opted for the correct option while 46.4 percent chose the incorrect options, as seen in Figure 5.
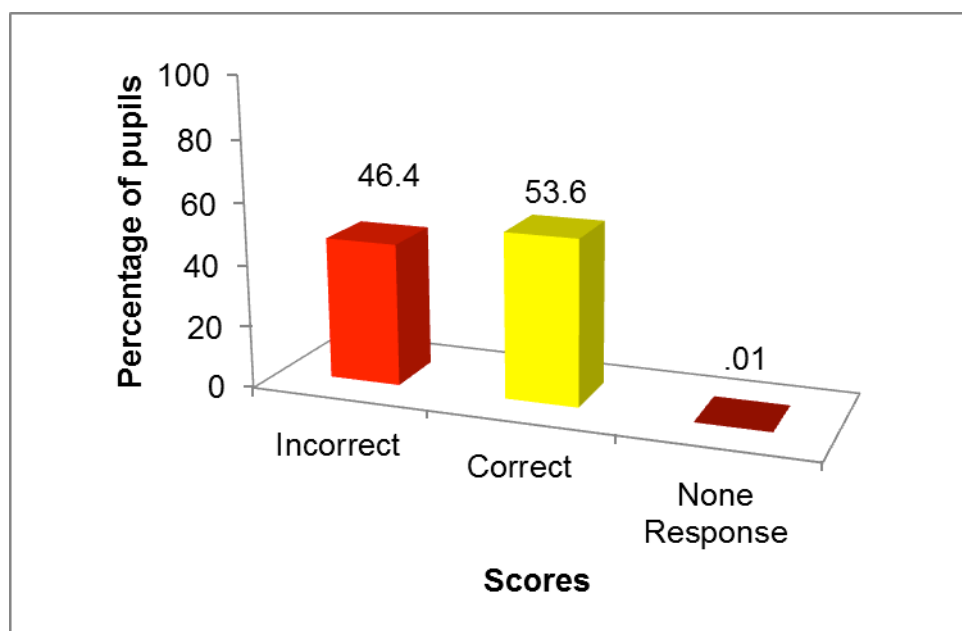
Fig. 5 : Percentage of pupils' performance per score

Question 14: Mary has long hair. She combs it _____ a comb.

This question required the pupils to show their ability to use the preposition 'with' which was the correct answer. This option was chosen by 30.5 percent of the pupils who sat for this assessment. These pupils knew that 'with' is used together with an instrument. Those who wrote 'hers', 'on' and 'at' did not know the meaning and correct use of prepositions.

Question 15: I always wake up _____ quarter past six every morning.

This question required the pupils to tell the time of action by using the preposition of time 'at' which is the correct answer. Most of the pupils got it wrong as 71.7 percent chose the incorrect options. These pupils did not realise that the preposition 'at' is used to tell the specific time. Some used the preposition 'on' which is used with days of the week, for example, 'on Monday'. Extract 3 is a sample from a script of a pupil who chose the incorrect options and therefore failed to score any mark.

Extract 3

11.	This is Jane and Hamisi's teacher. He is _____ a _____ teacher.
12.	Birds _____ by _____ wings
13.	I will travel to Dodoma _____ has _____ bus.
14.	Mary has long hair. She combs it _____ hers _____ a comb.
15.	I always wake up _____ have _____ quarter past six every morning.

Extract 3 shows that the pupil just picked the words without relating them to the patterns and meanings of the given sentences.

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On the other hand, only 28.3 percent of the pupils filled in the spaces with correct words and therefore scored all marks. These pupils (28.3%) were aware of the meaning and use of the preposition 'at' to tell the time of the action, as seen in Extract 4.

Extract 4

11. This is Jane and Hamisi's teacher. He is ___their___ teacher.

12. Birds ___have___ wings.

13. I will travel to Dodoma ___by___ bus.

14. Mary has long hair. She combs it ___with___ a comb.

15. I always wake up ___at___ quarter past six every morning.

Extract 4 shows a sample of a response of a pupil who was able to choose the correct words and filled in the blank spaces correctly.

Question 16: Yesterday we _____ (drink) tea with milk.

This question tested the pupils' ability to use the correct form of the word 'drink' when it is used in the past form in a simple sentence due to the usage of the word 'yesterday'. Very few pupils (9.3%) were able to change the verb 'drink' into the past tense 'drank'. These pupils were aware of the use of past events. Those who wrote incorrect words such as 'drinking' and 'drink' were 90.7 percent. These responses show that the pupils did not realise that they were supposed to complete the sentence with the simple past form of the word 'drink'. Others wrote 'drunk' which is the past

participle of the word 'drink' and is usually used with the helping verb 'has' or 'have'.

Question 17: The baby _____ (cry) when he wants food.

This question required the pupils to show their ability to use the present simple with actions that often happen. The correct word 'cries' was chosen by only 6.0 percent of the pupils. These were aware that, when an action occurs repeatedly, one uses the present simple form of the word. The pupils who chose the incorrect word 'cry' were not aware that when referring to something single as a baby, one has to add 'es' to change it into simple present and hence 'cry' would change to 'cries'. If the word 'baby was replaced by the word 'babies', then the word 'cry' would have been correct. Those who chose 'crying' changed the verb into the continuous form. These were not aware that the word 'crying' is used with an auxillary verb to show an activity that is continuing and not one that happens repeatedly. The pupils who could not use the correct form of the verb were 94.0 percent. These pupils failed to chose the correct verb due to various reasons/weaknesses. Figure 6 shows the performance of the pupils in this question.
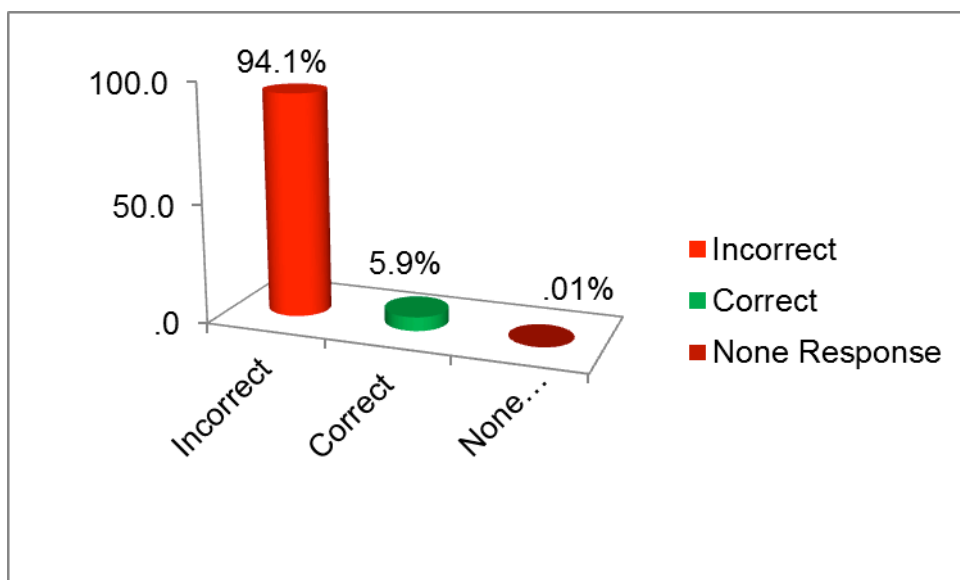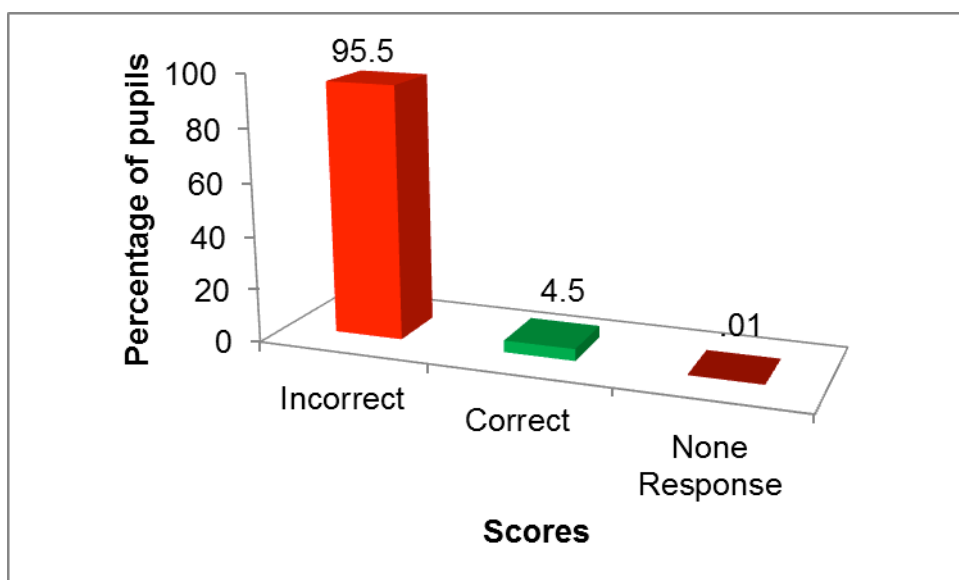
Fig.6: Percentage of pupils' performance per score

Question 18: We _____ (write) an English
exercise now.

This question tested the pupils' ability to use the present
continuous form of the verb 'write'. Many pupils (95.5%) failed to
write the correct form which is 'are writing' and just wrote 'write' or
just 'writing' without any auxiliary verb. These responses show that
the pupils had no knowledge on the use of the verb in the
continuous form. On the other hand, 4.5 percent of the pupils were
able to write the correct form 'are writing' because of the word
'now' which shows that an activity is being done and continuing.
They were aware that the subject 'we' is in the plural therefore the
auxiliary verb to be used with the main verb 'writing' would be 'are'.

The analysis for this question shows that the performance was
poor as only 4.5 percent of the pupils opted for the correct option

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while the majority of the pupils (95.5%) opted for incorrect options, as seen in Figure 7.

Fig. 7: Percentage of pupils' performance per score.

Question 19:   The doctor was _____(talk) to a
                   sick girl during visiting hours.

This question required the pupils to use the past continuous form of the verb. The correct form is 'was talking' which shows that a certain action was taking place while another one was going on in past time. Many pupils (90%) failed to write the correct form of the verb. Some pupils wrote 'talk' while others wrote 'talked'. These responses show that the pupils did not know the requirement of the question. Those who wrote the correct answer 'was talking' were only 10 percent. These pupils realised that they were supposed to complete the sentence using the '-ing' form because of the auxiliary verb 'was'.

Question 20: The standard four pupils _____
(go) to the beach next week.

This question tested the pupils' ability to express future events using the auxiliary verb 'will' with the main verb 'go'. The correct form of the word is 'will go' which was chosen by only 6.5 percent of the pupils. These pupils were able to write the correct form because the adverb 'next week' shows that the particular event would take place sometime in future. A large number of pupils (93.5) failed to write the correct form of the word. Some of them wrote 'go', others wrote 'going' and some wrote 'went'. This shows that the pupils had little knowledge on the use of the tenses since 'go' and 'going' are used in the present tense while 'went' is used in the past tense.

2.4   Section D: COMPREHENSION

The section tested the pupils' comprehension skills. The pupils were required to show their ability to read the given passage carefully, comprehend the content and then transfer the information read in the passage by answering the questions given. There were 5 questions in this section which carried 2 marks each, making a total of 10 marks for this section. The average score in this section was 34.14 percent.

The comprehension passage was as follows:

Amina and Rehema are good friends. They always play together after school. Amina is ten years old and Rehema is eleven years old. They are both in standard four. Amina is the best pupil in her class because she is always the first in all the tests. Yesterday, the class

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teacher gave Amina a gift because she did well in the test. She was very happy to get the gift.

Question 21:   What is the name of the best pupil?

The name of the best pupil is _____.

This question required the pupils to comprehend the passage and identify the name of the best pupil according to the passage. The correct answer 'Amina' was written by 30.5 percent of the pupils. These pupils were able to comprehend the passage and answer the question well.

On the other hand, the pupils who failed to give the correct answer were 69.5 percent. Some of these wrote 'Rehema', while others just copied some words from the passage such as 'yesterday' and 'happy'. This shows that they were unable to read and understand what was written in the passage.

Question 22:   When do the girls play together?

The girls play together_____school.

This question tested the pupils' ability to get information from the passage according to the requirements of the question. The pupils were required to mention the time when these girls play together. The correct answer was 'after' school and it was chosen by 35.7 percent of the pupils. These were able to write the correct answer because they realised that when pupils are in school, they are supposed to learn but after school, they are free to play.

On the other hand, 64.3 percent of the pupils who wrote incorrect answers had poor comprehension skills and hence did not read and

understand the passage well. Most of these pupils just guessed a few of them, copied words from the passage and used them as answers.

Question 23: Who is Amina's friend?

Amina's friend is _____.

This question tested the pupils' ability to identify the required information from the passage. The correct response 'Rehema' was chosen by 36.6 percent of the pupils. They were able to deduce the correct information because they understood the question and the given passage.

The pupils who failed to write the correct answer were 63.4 percent. These wrote incorrect answers because they did not understand the passage due to poor masterly of English language.

Question 24: In what class are the two girls?

The two girls are in standard _____.

In this question, the pupils were required to obtain information from the passage by writing the class in which the two girls were. The correct answer is standard 'four' which was written by a total of 41.4 percent of the candidates. Those who wrote incorrect answers were 58.6 percent. Many of these pupils did not know the requirements of the question and as a result just picked any word from the passage.

Question 25: Who gave Amina a gift?

The _____ gave Amina a gift.

This question required the pupils to mention the person who gave a gift to Amina. The pupils' performance in this question was weak as only 24 percent of them answered it correctly. These were able to write the correct answer 'class teacher'. This shows that the pupils were able to comprehend the passage. Extract 5 is a sample of a response of a pupil who had advanced knowledge of comprehension skills as he/she was able to write all the five answers

Extract 5

21.   What is the name of the best pupil?   The name of the best pupil is ___Amina___.   22.   When do the girls play together?   The girls play together ___after___ school.   23.   Who is Amina's friend?   Amina's friend is ___Rehema___   24.   In what class are the two girls?   The two girls are in standard ___four___.   25.   Who gave Amina a gift?   The ___clas teacher___ gave Amina a gift.

Extract 5 is a sample of a response from a pupil who was able to comprehend the passage and therefore wrote correct answers for all the five questions on comprehension.

The pupils who failed to give the correct answer were 74.0 percent. These encountered difficulties in reading and comprehending a

short passage due to poor reading and comprehension skills. Extract 6 shows a sample of a response from a script of a pupil who failed to comprehend the passage and as a result wrote incorrect answers for all the questions in this section.

Extract 6

21.   What is the name of the best pupil?
      The name of the best pupil is _Rebena_____.

22.   When do the girls play together?
      The girls play together _Anina_____ school.

23.   Who is Amina's friend?
      Amina's friend is _because_____.

24.   In what class are the two girls?
      The two girls are in standard _Thotwa_____.

25.   Who gave Amina a gift?
      The _friends_____ gave Amina a gift.

Extract 6 shows a sample of a response from a script of a pupil who did not score any mark because all the answers were incorrect.

The pupils who attempted questions 21- 25 on Comprehension had average performance of 34.14 percent and their performance in each question was as follows: question 21, 30.7 percent; question 22, 35.7 percent; question 23, 36.7 percent; question 24, 41.6 percent; and question 25,26.0 percentas shown in Figure 8.
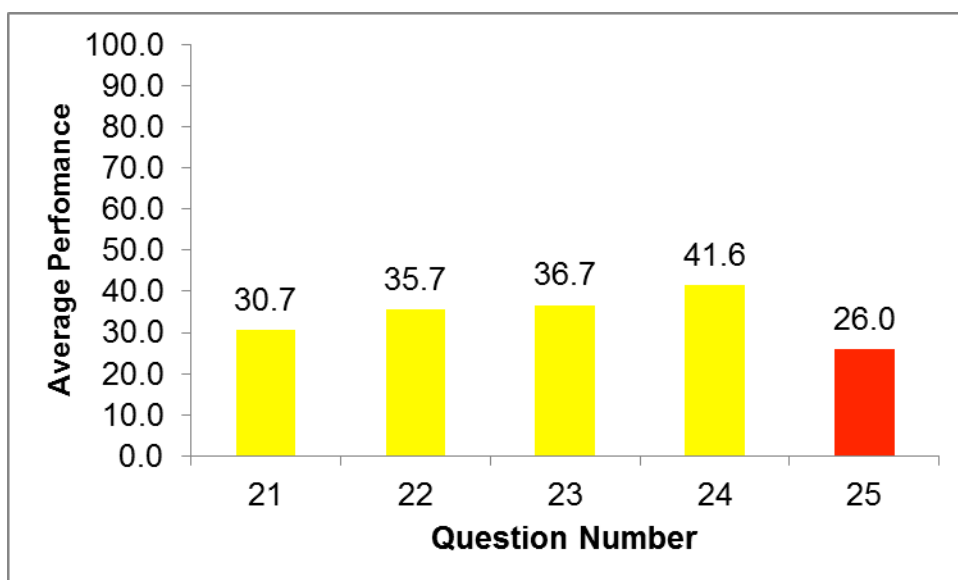
Fig. 8: Percentage of pupils' performance per question

3.0 PERFORMANCE OF PUPILS IN EACH TOPIC

The topic-wise analysis shows that the pupils' performance in section A on *Dictation* was good as 62.14 percent of the pupils performed above average. The performance in *Vocabulary* was average as it was done well by 53.02 percent of the pupils. *Comprehension* had average performance as 34.14 percent of the pupils did well. The performance in *Grammar* was weak as only 20.51 percent of the pupils scored above average. The Appendix on page 26 shows the summary of pupils' performance per question and topic in the assessment.

4.0   CONCLUSION

The item analysis in English Language has revealed the challenges faced by pupils in answering the questions. Most of the pupils lacked advanced knowledge on Reading and Writing and had poor Comprehension skills. These drawbacks have been reflected in their performance in the topics tested in the assessment.

The general performance of pupils in English language (SFNA) was average as 42.45 percent of the pupils scored average marks. The pupils' average performance could be attributed to lack of advanced knowledge of the pupils in listening, reading, and writing. The analysis shows that the pupils experienced difficulties in grammar where the performance was weak with 20.51 percent. Dictation was the best performed with 62.14 percent of the pupils performing well.

The pupils' performance in this year's assessment is summarised in the Appendix.

5.0   RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to improve pupils' performance in English Language, the following are recommended:

(a)   Teachers should ensure complete and thorough coverage of all the topics which are stipulated in the syllabus so that the pupils will be familiar with all questions asked.

(b)   Teachers should continue to give pupils enough exercises related to all the topics taught and give them feedback on their performance so that they can improve their performance in all areas.

(c)   Pupils should be encouraged to use English Language in their day to day conversations so that they can improve their vocabulary. Furthermore, they should be encouraged to read simple short story books to improve their grammar.

(d)   Teachers should take initiatives in making sure that pupils master the basic skills in Listening, Writing and Reading. Teachers and all education stakeholders are encouraged to take appropriate measures to address the challenges that make pupils unable to acquire the basic skills that are necessary in the usage of English Language.

ANALYSIS OF PUPILS' PERFORMANCE IN EACH TOPIC IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE

No	Topic	Assessment for 2015		Average performance (%)	Remarks
		Performance Per Question			
		Number of question	performance %		
1	Letters of the English Alphabet (Dictation)	1	62.8	62.14	Good Performance
		2	54.2		
		3	50.6		
		4	77.8		
		5	65.3		
2	Occupation (Vocabulary)	6	56.3	53.02	Average Performance
		7	63.6		
		8	52.9		
		9	61		
		10	31.3		
3	Extensive Reading (Comprehension)	21	30.7	34.14	Average Performance
		22	35.7		
		23	36.7		
		24	41.6		
		25	26		
4	Grammar	11	31.2	20.51	Weak Performance
		12	23.9		
		13	53.7		
		14	30.5		
		15	28.3		
	Tenses	16	9.3		
		17	6		
		18	4.6		
		19	10.1		
		20	7.5		