

Language Testing

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Definition of test

- A test, in simple terms, is a method of measuring a person's ability, knowledge, or performance in a given domain

Types of tests

- aptitude test,
- proficiency tests,
- placement tests,
- diagnostic tests, and
- achievement tests

Aptitude Test

- A language aptitude test is designed to measure capacity or general capability to learn a foreign language and ultimate success in that undertaking. Language aptitude test is ostensibly designed to apply to the classroom learning of any language.

Proficiency Tests

- A proficiency test is a test designed to test global competence in a language. It is not limited to any one course, curriculum, or single skill in the language; rather, it tests overall ability. Proficiency tests have traditionally consisted of standardized multiple choice items on grammar, vocabulary, reading comprehension, and aural comprehension. Sometimes, a sample of writing is added, and more recent tests also include oral production performance. The example of standardized proficiency test is TOEFL.

Placement Tests

- Placemen test. Certain proficiency tests can act as placemen test. The purpose of placement test is to place a student into a particular level or section of a language curriculum or school. A placement test, usually but not always, includes a sampling of the materials to be covered in the various courses in the curriculum.

Diagnostic Tests

- A diagnostic test is designed to diagnose specified aspects of a language. A test in pronunciation, for example, might diagnose the phonological features of English that are difficult for learners and should therefore become part of a curriculum. Usually such test offers a checklist of features for the administrator to use in pinpointing difficulties.

Achievement Tests

- An achievement test is related directly to classroom lessons, units, or even a total curriculum. An achievement test should be limited to particular material addressed in a curriculum within a particular time frame and are offered after a course has focus in the objectives in question. Achievement tests can also serve the diagnostic role of indicating what a student needs to continue to work on in the future, but the primary role of an achievement test is to determine whether course objectives have been met, and appropriate knowledge and skills are acquired by the end of instruction.

Attributes of a good test

- Good tests must be:
- valid,
- reliable,
- Practical,
- Authentic
- Offering positive backwash effect to the teaching and learning process

Validity

- Validity is the extent to which inferences made from test results are appropriate, meaningful, and useful in terms of the purpose of the test. A valid test of reading ability actually measures reading ability, not vision, nor previous knowledge in a subject, nor some other variables of questionable relevance

Reliability

- A reliable test is consistent and dependable. If we give the same test to the same student or matched students on different occasions, the test should yield similar results. The issue of reliability of a test may be addressed by considering a number of factors that may contribute to the unreliability of a test, the fluctuations in the students, in scoring, in test administration, and in the test itself.

Practicality

- A practical test is not excessively expensive, stays within appropriate time constraints, is relatively easy to administer, and has a scoring /evaluation procedure that is specific and time efficient. The value and quality of a test sometimes hinge on such nitty-gritty practical consideration.

Authenticity

- The next attribute of good test is authenticity. Authenticity is the degree of correspondence of the characteristics of a given language test task to the features of a target language task. An authentic task is a task that is likely to be enacted in the real world. Many test items fail to simulate real world tasks. They may be contrived or artificial in their attempt to target a grammatical form or a lexical item. Test authenticity may be presented in the following: 1) The language in the test is as natural as possible, 2) Items are contextualized rather than isolated, 3) Topics are meaningful (relevant, interesting) for the learner, 4) Some thematic organization to items is provided, such as through a story line or episode, and 5) Tasks represent, or closely approximate, real world tasks.

Some Practical steps to test construction

- 1. Preparing the test:
 - Defining general purposes
 - Assessing clear, unambiguous objectives
 - Drawing up test specification
 - Devising test tasks
- 2. Tryout of test items

Suggestions for writing multiple choice items

- The stem of multiple choice items should state a specific direct question. The stem should clearly formulate a problem.
- Choose words that have precise meaning.
- Avoid complex word arrangements
- Adapt the range of difficulty of the item to the group and propose for which it is included.
- Keep the options as short as possible
- Use negative statements as sparingly as possible.

- The distractors in a multiple choice item should be definitely incorrect but plausibly attractive to the weak students
- Multiple choice items should provide at least four alternative answers.
- Some of the most effective multiple choice items call for a best answer rather than an absolutely correct answer
- Be sure no unintentional clues to the correct answers are given
- Distractors should be related to the problems
- Alternatives should be randomly ordered for each item.

Questions for Reading and Listening

- 1. menemukan gambaran umum, pikiran utama (overview questions)
- 2. Informasi tertentu (factual questions)
- 3. informasi rinci
- 4. informasi tersirat (inference questions)
- 5. makna kata, makna frasa, . makna kalimat
- 6. Reference questions

