

Contents

<u>Title</u>	<u>Page</u>
Preface	XIII
Chapter One: Preliminaries	1
1.1 Importance of Testing	1
1.2 Decision Making	2
1.3 Test, Measurement and Evaluation	2
1.4 Language Testing	3
1.5 Why Test?	4
1.6 Teacher-Made Tests Versus Standardized Tests	5
1.7 Language Teaching and Language Testing	7
1.7.1 Traditional Tests	7
1.7.2 Multiple-Choice Items	10
1.7.3 Testing Communication	12
Activities	13
Chapter Two: Functions of Language Tests	15
2.1 Introduction	15
2.2 Prognostic Tests	16
2.2.1 Selection Tests	16
2.2.2 Placement Tests	18
2.2.3 Aptitude Tests	20
2.3 Evaluation of Attainment Tests	21
2.3.1 Achievement Tests	21
2.3.2 Proficiency Tests	23
2.3.3 Knowledge Tests	25
Activities	25
Chapter Three: Forms of Language Tests	26
3.1 Introduction	26
3.2 The Structure of an Item	27

	Page
3.3 Classification of Item Forms	28
3.3.1 Subjective vs. Objective Items	28
3.3.2 Essay-Type vs. Multiple-Choice Items	31
3.3.3 Suppletion vs. Recognition Items	32
3.4 Psycholinguistic Classification	33
Activities	36
Chapter Four: Basic Statistics in Testing	37
4.1 Introduction	37
4.2 Choice of Actions Suggested by Statistical Studies	38
4.3 Tabulation of Data	39
4.3.1 Rank Order	40
4.3.2 The Frequency Distribution	40
4.3.3 Determining Percentiles	42
4.3.3.1 Relative Frequency	42
4.3.3.2 Cumulative Frequency	43
4.4 Graphic Representation of Data	45
4.4.1 Drawing a Frequency Distribution	46
4.4.1.1 The Bar Graph	46
4.4.1.2 The Histogram	48
4.4.1.3 The Frequency Polygon	49
4.5 Descriptive Statistics	50
4.5.1 Measures of Central Tendency	50
4.5.1.1 The Mode	50
4.5.1.2 The Median	51
4.5.1.3 The Mean	51
4.5.2 Measures of Variability	53
4.5.2.1 Range	53
4.5.2.2 Variance and Standard Deviation	54
4.5.2.3 Computing Variance from Raw Scores	58
4.6 Correlation	60

	Page
4.6.1 Linear Correlation	60
4.6.2 The Coefficient of Correlation	64
4.6.3 Rank Order Correlation	68
4.6.4 Point Biserial Correlation	69
Activities	71
Chapter Five: Test Construction	76
5.1 Introduction	76
5.2 Determining the Function and the Form of the Test	77
5.3 Planning (Specifying the Content of the Test)	78
5.4 Preparing Items	81
5.4.1 Suggestions for Preparing True-False Items	81
5.4.2 Suggestions for Preparing Matching Items	84
5.4.3 Suggestions for Preparing Multiple-Choice Items	85
5.5 Reviewing	90
5.6 Pretesting	91
5.6.1 Item Facility	91
5.6.2 Item Discrimination	93
5.6.3 Choice Distribution	96
5.7 Apply Logic	97
Activities	98
Chapter Six: Characteristics of a Good Test	110
6.1 Introduction	110
6.2 Reliability	111
6.3 Methods of Estimating Reliability	119
6.3.1 Test-Retest Method	120
6.3.2 Parallel-Forms Method	121
6.3.3 Split-Half Method	122
6.3.4 KR-21 Method	125

	Page
6.4 Factors Influencing Reliability	126
6.4.1 The Effect of Testees	127
6.4.2 The Effect of Test Factors	127
6.4.2.1 The Structure of the Test	128
6.4.2.2 The Effect of Administration Factors	133
6.4.2.3 The Influence of Scoring Factors	133
6.5 Validity	134
6.5.1 Content Validity	135
6.5.2 Criterion-Related Validity	137
6.5.2.1 Concurrent Validity	138
6.5.2.2 Predictive Validity	138
6.5.3 Construct Validity	139
6.6 Factors Influencing Validity	141
6.6.1 Directions	141
6.6.2 Difficulty Level of the Test	141
6.6.3 Structure of the Items	141
6.6.4 Arrangement of Items and Correct Responses	142
6.7 The Relationship Between Reliability and Validity	142
6.8 Reliability, Validity, and Acceptability	143
6.9 Practicality	145
6.9.1 Ease of Administration	145
6.9.2 Ease of Scoring	146
6.9.3 Ease of Interpretation and Application	146
Activities	147
Chapter Seven: Theories of Language Testing	149
7.1 Introduction	149
7.2 Discrete-Point Approach	151
7.3 Integrative Approach	153
7.4 Functional Approach	156
7.5 Interpretation of Test Scores	159

	Page
7.5.1 Norm-Referenced Interpretation	159
7.5.2 Criterion-Referenced Interpretation	161
Activities	163
Chapter Eight: Testing Vocabulary	165
8.1 Introduction	165
8.2 Guidelines for Constructing Vocabulary Items	168
Activities	171
Chapter Nine: Testing Structure	174
9.1 Introduction	174
9.2 Guidelines for Constructing Structure Items	176
Activities	179
Chapter Ten: Testing Pronunciation	181
10.1 Introduction	181
10.2 Recognition	182
10.2.1 Sound Discrimination	182
10.2.2 Stress Recognition	183
10.2.3 Intonation Recognition	185
10.3 Production	186
10.3.1 Imitation	186
10.3.2 Reading Aloud	187
10.3.3 Retelling	187
10.3.4 Talking about Pictures	187
10.4 Guidelines for Constructing Pronunciation Items	188
Activities	189
Chapter Eleven: Testing Listening Comprehension	193
11.1 Introduction	193
11.2 Types of Items	194

	Page
11.2.1 Pictures	195
11.2.2 Questions	197
11.2.3 Statements	197
11.2.4 Dictation	198
11.2.5 Dialogs	198
11.2.6 Lectures and Talks	199
11.2.7 Distorted Messages	201
11.3 Guidelines for Constructing Listening Comprehension	
Items	202
Activities	204
Chapter Twelve: Testing Oral Production	209
12.1 Introduction	209
12.2 Indirect Measures	209
12.2.1 Using Pictures	210
12.2.2 Making Transformations	213
12.2.3 Following Commands	213
12.2.4 Retelling	213
12.2.5 Explanation	213
12.2.6 Short Talks	214
12.2.7 Role Playing	214
12.3 Direct Measures	214
12.4 Guidelines for Conducting and Scoring Interviews	218
Activities	219
Chapter Thirteen: Testing Reading Comprehension	223
13.1 Introduction	223
13.2 Guidelines for Constructing Reading Comprehension Items	228
Activities	230

	Page
Chapter Fourteen: Testing Writing Ability	234
14.1 Introduction	234
14.2 Writing Readiness	234
14.2.1 Copying	234
14.2.2 Spelling	235
14.2.3 Punctuating	235
14.2.4 Combining Sentences	236
14.2.5 Reducing Sentences	236
14.2.6 Completing Sentences	236
14.2.7 Transforming Sentences	237
14.2.8 Expanding Sentences	237
14.2.9 Recognizing Errors	238
14.3 Controlled Writing	239
14.3.1 Transforming Sentences	239
14.3.2 Building from Words	239
14.3.3 Building from Answers to Questions	239
14.3.4 Building from Notes	240
14.3.5 Organizing a Paragraph	240
14.3.6 Completing a Paragraph	241
14.4 Free Writing	241
14.5 Guidelines for Preparing Writing Tests	246
Activities	247
Chapter Fifteen: Cloze and Dictation Type Tests	249
15.1 Introduction	249
15.2 Cloze Procedure	251
15.3 Varieties of Cloze Procedure	257
15.4 Scoring a Cloze Test	261
15.4.1 Exact Word Method	261
15.4.2 Acceptable Word Method	261
15.4.3 Weighted Response Method	262

	Page
15.5 Dictation Type Tests	263
15.5.1 Standard Dictation	264
15.5.2 Partial Dictation	266
15.5.3 Elicited Imitation	266
15.5.4 Dicto-Comp	267
15.5.5 Dictation with Competing Noise	267
15.6 Scoring Dictation Type Tests	268
Activities	269
Chapter Sixteen: Functional Testing	271
16.1 Introduction	271
16.2 Problems with Discrete-Point Tests	273
16.3 Problems with Integrative Tests	273
16.3.1 Problems with Reliability	275
16.4 Procedures for Developing Functional Tests	276
16.4.1 Selection of the Functions	278
16.4.2 Social Factors	279
16.4.2.1 Social Setting	279
16.4.2.2 Social Relation	279
16.4.2.3 Social Status	280
16.4.3 The Performance Criteria	280
16.4.4 Developing the Item Stems	280
16.5 Pretesting	281
16.5.1 Phase 1: Pretest with Native Speakers	282
16.5.2 Phase 2: Pretest with Non-Native Speakers	282
16.5.3 Selecting the Alternatives	282
16.5.4 Phase 3: Pretest with Native and Non-Native Speakers	283
16.6 Scoring System	284
16.7 Concluding Remarks	284
Activities	285
References	286
Appendix	288

Preface

Testing in general, and language testing in particular, is a challenging field. On the one hand, tests are used to make decisions which influence people's lives. Therefore, tests must provide as accurate information as possible to enable testers to make fair decisions. This makes testing a very delicate responsibility. On the other hand, testing is rooted in many complicated scientific disciplines, such as, linguistics, psychology, and sociology, each of which has its own intricate and unresolved issues. This makes testing a very complex responsibility. The delicacy of decision making and the intericity of different related fields have made language testing a challenging field.

The challenge has forced the field of testing to grow rapidly in the last few decades. Developments in different language related fields have contributed to swift changes in language testing. To accommodate these developments, several excellent textbooks have been written by distinguished scholars. From Harris, 1969, up to Backman, 1991, many people have contributed to capturing the evergrowing evolutions in the field.

Then why another textbook on language testing? Of course, the existing textbooks cover a wide variety of topics in language testing and collectively fulfill the needs of students. Any one of them, however, would not serve this purpose individually for several reasons. First of all, they mostly focus on testing English as a second language rather than a foreign language. Second, each of these books, covers the field of language testing from a particular perspective. And finally, they do not accommodate peculiarities related to testing situation in our country, Iran.

Thus, the main motivation for producing this book as an addition to the ones already in the market was to provide students with a single textbook dealing with the issues from different perspectives, which would meet most of their needs. Furthermore, a deliberate attempt is made to gear the text

towards the needs of the Iranian students.

Besides, *Testing English Skills* enjoys certain unique characteristics. The first is its organization. The book is organized in such a way that it leads the students from the first to the last stage of language testing. That is, the chapters are organized to help students develop, administer, score, and interpret the scores of language tests they have developed.

The second characteristic of *Testing English Skills* is its lucid style. The concepts are explained without appealing to pedantic language. Highly technical treatment of testing concepts is avoided. Attempts are made to communicate ideas to the readers through utilizing plain language, so that it would not create any serious barrier to the comprehension of the ideas due to the lack of native-like language competence. The third quality of this book is its scope. A conscious attempt is made to cover a wide range of topics which would provide students with a fairly comprehensive picture of language testing. In other words, very little need is left to be fulfilled by an additional text.

Even with these peculiarities, no claim is made that the book needs no improvement. Nor is it claimed that it has exhausted all topics. It is, however, hoped that the book will fulfill a considerable number of students' needs. It is also hoped that reader's constructive comments will improve the book in the future editions.

Dr. H. Farhady

Dr. A. Ja'farpur

Dr. P. Birjandi

June, 1994