

- iv. While administering any test, the background of the candidates and their mental level must be kept in mind.
- v. The instructions in the test should be clear and easily comprehensible to the candidates.
- vi. The evaluators should be partial and fair to their best.
- vii. Tests should reflect, in scientific terms, the exact performance of the candidates, in term of their weaknesses and achievements.
- viii. Tests should enable the teachers to carry out their advisory and approbatory duties more effectively and more appropriately.

In short, as in every field of life usefulness of things and suitability of actions is judged by the fruit they bear, the validity of tests is assessed by the results they produce when administered.

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the test. In general terms it means tidy and pleasing printing of the test, clean and peaceful atmosphere in the examination room, polite and honest invigilators and adequate seating arrangement.

Moreover, the test instructions should also be clear, comprehensible and complete in ever sense, otherwise there would be a negative impact on the candidates.

iv. **Discrimination.**

A test must be able to discriminate, as much as possible, among the candidates in order to distinguish between ones with high level from the ones with low level. It is not out of place to mention here that the degree of discrimination varies from test to test. For example in aptitude tests, the degree of discrimination is needed more as they help the tester to select the candidates more appropriately and accurately, whereas, in achievement tests, the main stress is on measuring how well the students have grasped what they have been taught during the course.

## ***CONCLUSION***

After focusing on various types of tests and the requirements for their success, suitability and utility, we can sum up the discussion as follows:

- i. A test must serve the purpose for which it is administered.
- ii. Unnecessarily long test should be avoided, as instead of being useful they create burden and cause boredom both for the candidates and the evaluators.
- iii. Tests should be conducted in a friendly and tidy atmosphere.

### 3. PRACTICALITY

Practicality is the feature of a test that counts a lot. Without practicality both validity and reliability of a test carry no weight. If a test is beyond the means of learner, it may prove invalid and unreliable. In translation test, for instance, practicality refers to the ease with which a test can be translated.

Regarding practicality of a test we discuss some practical issues such as economy, scorability, ease of administration and discrimination.

#### i. Economy

While preparing a test the aspect of economy must be considered. The test must be neither too long nor too short. It should cover its requirements without being cumbersome both in terms of finance and time. Extraordinary long tests usually give birth to problems such as difficulty in administration, fatigue on part of the examinee and unusual expenditure and thus the very utility of a test becomes at stake.

#### ii. Scorability

The practicality of a test also demands its easy assessment or scoring. Translation tests are usually difficult to be assessed and cause a heavy burden to the evaluator, so more than one evaluator are deputed for the sake of accuracy and adequacy in the assessment of such tests.

It is to be noted that designing of scorable tests is not an easy task as it involves much consumption of time and hard labour to sort out a text that fulfils the scorability requirements.

#### iii. Ease of administration.

Ease of administration means that the teacher should be able to provide every thing necessary for the administration of

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**i. Stability Reliability.**

A test possesses stability reliability if the candidates produce the same or nearly the same answers to the test conducted twice at different occasions. Validity coefficients can be achieved by comparing the test scores with a trustworthy criterion; whereas reliability coefficients are usually obtained by correlating the students' performance in the same test twice.

It is notable that the performance obtained from the test is not perfectly representative as the time interval between the two implementations of the same test may result in low or high performance without reflecting exactly the level of students. Moreover the candidates very often take it as boring while going through the same test repeatedly. Particularly it happens when translating the same passage again and again.

**ii. Equivalence Reliability.**

A test is called equivalent to the other test if both of them give the same results when applied to the same students. For instance if a candidate performs relatively the same while translating two different texts aiming at testing the same skills or elements, the two tests can be referred to as equivalent.

This method seems better than the one applied in the stability reliability, as it reduces the element of boredom in candidates because two different texts are used at different occasions.

It should be noted that the concept of reliability differs from that of validity as a test may be reliable without being valid. It is obvious that neither concept, in itself, is enough to guarantee the success of a test, therefore, other qualities such as practicality and discrimination should be given an appropriate consideration while designing any test.

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Anyhow, face validity alone does not serve the purpose. Instead, It works in combination with the other aspects of validity of tests.

ii. **Content validity.**

This aspect of validity deals with the test items as they should belong to the course programme and should cover at least the most important, if not all, the areas which have been taught. It must be ensured that the test items are associated functionally with the teaching programme. For instance if a translation test is intended to measure grammatical structure problems, it should be observed carefully that the contents of the test successfully serve and are compatible with the desired purpose.

iii. **Empirical validity.**

Empirical validity concentrate on measuring the usefulness of a test for any specific purpose. It is 'purely scientific' in nature as very often some statistical techniques are applied for estimation and assessment and are usually expressed in terms of 'expectancy tables' and 'correlation coefficient'.

But validity, in broad spectrum, is not the only touchstone of the usefulness of any test, as the usefulness is related to other criteria such as reliability as well . Certainly a test can not be valid unless it is reliable.

## 2. **RELIABILITY**

Reliability of a test can be achieved by comparing the results of the same tests conducted at different times or by comparing two equivalent tests.

Reliability can be subdivided into two categories: stability, reliability and equivalence reliability.

We discuss in detail these two types of reliability.

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criteria so as to be efficient in assessing learners' abilities and needs.

## ***TEST REQUIREMENTS***

Tests are essential as they provide the teachers with the needed information to determine their learners' difficulties and needs. Tests also help teachers in prescribing their course of studies, therefore utmost care should be observed while preparing such tests.

In particular tests should have the characteristics of validity, reliability, practicality and discrimination. Let us discuss these characteristics in detail in the following pages.

### **1. VALADITY.**

Validity of a test simply refers to its quality of measuring, as accurately as possible, what it is supposed to measure.

This characteristic has different aspects such as face validity, content validity, and empirical validity.

#### **i. Face validity**

This aspect of validity shows whether or not the learners are familiar with any peculiar type of test. Learners not familiar with a test may not be able to demonstrate their real ability.

It is must that a test indicates some sort of validity to its conductor as well to the students. Teachers should be able to provide some impressive reason as a background of conducting the test and the students should realize the importance of the test, otherwise the students won't be able to perform in the way which truly reflects their ability.

in determining how well and quickly a trainee is likely to succeed in grasping these skills.

As these tests are based mainly on something that the teacher might not have taught, they may not be viable.

In brief, such tests concentrate on assessing the learner's general readiness and aptitude to embark on a particular course. Aptitude tests, particularly, when employed in translation courses, tend to focus on factors considered as predictive, such as phonology and grammar.

#### 4. DIAGNOSTIC TESTS.

These tests are generally set out to determine the areas of weakness or failure which the learner encounters. They enable the teachers to take up the remedial measures accordingly.

Regarding such test one problem is obvious on the part of the teachers as it becomes difficult for them to determine what exactly should be included in such tests because of the shortage of time devoted to the testing activity.

It is advisable that such tests should not serve for the diagnostic purposes solely as they may not be able to provide desired information in detail..

Consequently, such tests are generally just a part of the other tests such as proficiency and achievement tests. Significance of such tests lies in their very nature as they help the teachers to know exactly about the learners' strengths and weaknesses and in enabling them to prescribe remedies for such problems without any waste of time in teaching what is already known.

In a nutshell we can say as the scope and purpose of these tests varies, therefore they should be based on strict

candidate has reached a certain standard regarding certain specific abilities.

As compared with the achievement tests, proficiency tests are not concerned with what has been done but rather what will be done.

While achievement tests are necessarily based on a definite course or syllabus, proficiency tests are in no way related to any syllabus. Instead they can help to shape the teaching programme. Teachers can benefit from the proficiency tests in designing or modifying the syllabus according to the requirements of the teaching programme.

It is interesting to note that proficiency tests can look backwards and forwards; as they can serve as achievement tests when served at the end of a course. It may also be noted that an achievement test can never be used as a general proficiency test.

It is worth mentioning , however, that proficiency tests are not usually employed to compare the students' performance. Rather, they indicate whether the trainees, as separate individuals , are able to do a particular task. As the teacher has to deal with all the learners relatively in the same way and at the same time and he can not design specific syllabus for each learner, such tests help him in determining the relatively appropriate teaching path for the group as a whole.

### 3. APTITUDE TESTS.

Aptitude tests, sometimes referred to as predictive or prognostic tests, indicate approximately how well and how quickly a person is likely to succeed in learning some particular skill. For instance in the process of learning any language, where translation skills are a distinctive feature, such tests help

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Another feature of the achievement test is that progress tests are usually designed by the teacher, whereas the final tests are conducted by external examiners. The teachers are advised to use these tests as frequently as possible to familiarize learners with the final tests and to know

- i. How far learners have succeeded in grasping the class room deliveries.
- ii. To which extent the teaching materials prove effective and objectives are attained.

It is worth mentioning that the achievement tests should generate a set of high marks otherwise the teacher is required to adopt remedial measures.

However, before starting their course, teachers in general, need to classify students according to their level as they come from different backgrounds.

The students may be equal in terms of their academic qualification (e.g. all graduates or undergraduates), their competence of learning usually differs as they come from different aspects and from different countries where the educational system differs. It then becomes essential to test the candidate ability before starting any language course. The proficiency tests are the most appropriate tools for such purposes.

## 2. PROFICIENCY TESTS.

Such tests are designed primarily to measure how suitable certain candidate will be for a specific course. For instance language demands vary from situation to situation. The requirements for the master's degree are not the same as for a certificate and the test given in medicine will inevitably vary from one in metallurgy. It can be argued that tests such as proficiency and aptitude tend to estimate whether or not a

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candidates, teachers use tests to evaluate the achievement of their students and their grasping level.

In short, it is not inappropriate to say that the existences of tests is there in every field of life, though with different purposes and aims and that they are not in any way confined to the academic activities.

### ***TYPES OF TESTS***

Tests are not always of the same type and of the same kind. They vary in categories according to the need, purpose and occasion. We will put a light on some types of tests as they are in vogue in our institutions.

#### **1 ACHIEVEMENT TESTS**

Such type of tests are designed to let the teacher know to what extent the learners have grasped the knowledge imparted to them. These tests provide an opportunity to the learner to demonstrate what has been learnt.

Achievement tests are usually subdivided as progress achievement tests and the final achievement tests. The former cover a short area as a single lesson or unit whereas the latter ones aim at assessing the learner's level after the whole course of study.

Achievement tests tend to cover the maximum of a programme as it is impossible to include in a single test all that has been taught during the whole period of a course.

Another problem is of sampling, as it is difficult for a test of technical translation for instance, which has a limited number of words, to cover all aspects of a technical translation. Therefore, test designer has to be selective, focusing on the relevant items of the translation.

# **Tests Their types and utility in the academic sphere**

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جامعة 7 أكتوبر

## *INTRODUCTION*

Tests and trials are an integral part of the human life. Since the very emergence of man on the face of this tiny planet which we call earth, a formidable phenomenon of trials took its shape, which certainly has only one everlasting feature - the everlasting diversity.

In the following pages an attempt is made to focus on the topic of tests and exams , their scope, their vitality and their significance in the academic sphere of our existence; particularly their use as a tool of assessing the learner's acquisition of foreign languages.

During discussion merits and demerits of today's systems of test and exams will also be highlighted with an attention to look for the means to purge this system, as far as possible, from the flaws.

## *SCOPE OF TESTS*

Tests are not confined to any single sphere of human life. Tests have always been and will always be. Scientists test hypothesis, scholars examine opinions, lawyers cross examine

