
SAMPLE TEST ITEMS USING THE INTEGRATIVE- PRAGMATIC TYPES OF TEST

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Theoretical Framework

For more than a decade, the methods in the teaching of English as a foreign or second language have been modified, expanded, improved, examined and discussed. Along with these methodologies, testing has also undergone a series of modification and improvements for, as many testing authorities hold, teaching and testing go hand in hand. In other words, what a teacher teaches, he must test.

In the past, language testing focused on testing the linguistic competence of the learner. This method of assessing the language proficiency of the learner took its departure from Lado's approach (1961) which broke down the complexities of language into isolated segments. The method gave rise to the discrete-point type which tested bits and pieces of the language. Thus, there was a separate sub-test for phonology, morphology, syntax and lexicon.

Adherents of the audio-lingual approach, on which the discrete point type of test was based, believed in emphasizing over-learning - a principle that led to endless mimicry and memorization - and attention to form. However, this approach has failed to make the learners communicate outside of the classroom. In fact, knowledge of the elements of a language is not equivalent to knowledge of the language.

Now, second-language teaching and testing are slowly undergoing a change as a result of developments in theoretical linguistics and the emergence of psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics

as disciplines. These much talked-about developments are leading towards more communicative-based materials aimed at catering to the new demands of language instruction - communicative competence.

Emphasis has shifted from pre-occupation with structures and setting to the communicative purpose of the speech acts (Hymes, 1971). Knowing a language means being able to use it effectively in social situations, selecting the appropriate style, matching language to context, perceiving the speaker's intention and performing successful speech acts.

Moreover, discussing testing means talking about the nature and substance of the language teaching theories. As Swain (1980) has said, tests should be reflective of the theories of teaching. Thus, in order for a communicative-oriented teaching program to be effective, tests given to assess performance should be based on these theories. Therefore, tests should reflect four areas of knowledge or skills (Canale and Swain, 1980), namely:

1. Grammatical competence which refers to knowledge of lexical items and of rules of morphology, syntax and sentence, semantics and phonology;

2. Socio-linguistic competence which is knowledge of socio-cultural rules of use or the appropriateness of language in terms of topic, role relationships, setting and purpose;

3. Discoursal competence, which involves knowledge of combining and connecting utterances to form a coherent and cohesive spoken or written text. The unity of a text is achieved through cohesion which deals with how utterances are linked structurally and facilitates interpretation of a text. Examples are use of cohesive devices such as pronouns, synonyms, ellipsis and others, and through coherence in meaning which refers to the relationships among the different meanings in a text, where these meanings may be literal meanings, communicative functions and attitudes;

4. Strategic competence which refers to mastery of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies that may be called into action to compensate for breakdowns in communication or to enhance the effectiveness of communications.

Widdowson (1971) also claims that the speaker's competence should include knowing how to recognize and how to use sentences to perform what he calls rhetorical acts such as: defining, classifying, reacting, etc. This obviously means that grammatical rules and rules

of use are equally important components of communicative competence; one without the other is inadequate.

Wilkins (1972) advocates the notional or semantic syllabus which brings into sharp focus the function or functions of language. This kind of syllabus aims to develop in the learner the ability to say and do what he desires to do through language so that he will be able to produce comprehensible and appropriate language according to speech situations.

As a result of all these theories about language learning and teaching, the pragmatic approach to language testing has evolved. Oller (1973) defines pragmatic test as "any procedure or task that causes the learner to process sequences of elements in a language that conforms to the normal contextual constraints of that language and which requires the learner to relate sequences of linguistic elements via pragmatic mappings to extra-linguistic context."

Language testing, to the pragmatists, emphasizes assessment of the efficiency of the learner's internalized expectancy grammar. Corder (1975) thinks that the learner possesses transitional competence which enables him to produce and use an 'inter-language' (Selinker, 1972). Therefore, the language tests should be able to invoke and challenge the efficiency of the learner's developing grammar.

Rionda (1981) further says that "the test should activate the learner's internalized grammar in order to understand a message even with reduced redundancy, e.g., he must be able to predict or anticipate a message or to make intelligent guesses about missing elements in a passage. Likewise, a test must assess the ability of the learners to relate grammatical sentences to the context of the situation."

The best examples of tests based on the pragmatic view are the integrative tests. Carroll (1968) has made a clear position about integration:

...since the use of language in ordinary situations call upon all these aspects of language, we must further recognize that linguistic performance also involves the individual's capability of mobilizing his linguistic competencies and performance abilities in an integrated way, e.g., in the

understanding, speaking, reading or writing connected discourse.

The integrative tests whose validity rests on their efficiency to test the learner's global proficiency in the language or his communicative competence, assess the learner's knowledge and skills of the language. They further test the efficiency of the learner's expectancy grammar which is the skill to predict meaning on the basis of the redundant nature of the language.

Thus, on the basis of these theories on language testing, sample test items are designed which provide situations similar to normal communication. These tests measure the ability of the learners to identify grammatical from non-grammatical sentences and to select and use sentences which are appropriate to the situation. These sample test items are prepared as guide for teachers of English in the field.

Profile of Needs

Participant: Freshman College Students

Sex: Male and female

Age: 17-18

Native Language: Maranao

Target Language: English

Present Level: Intermediate

Purpose: English for Academic Purposes

Situation: Formal classroom instruction

Non-formal classroom instruction

Lectures in the laboratory

Setting: Classroom

Laboratory

Library

Role: Student

Group leader

Role set: Learner

Teacher

Laboratory teacher

Instrumentality:

Medium: Receptive - listening and reading

Productive - speaking and writing

Mode: passage, taped (dictated), diagrams

Table of Specifications

Terminal Objectives:

Listening Skill

Students will be able to follow oral directions performing some actions.

Speaking Skill

Students will be able to express themselves orally by repeating and passing on information and messages and taking part in discussions.

Reading Skill

Students will be able to understand and comprehend information read.

Writing Skill

Students will be able to write their own paragraphs, using a combination of rhetorical patterns.

Enroute Objectives

Students will be able to:

get main idea

pick out specific details

make inferences

derive meanings from context

understand interrelationship among ideas expressed or implied

take down important notes

transfer information on graphs or maps

describe a process

- skim for key words, phrases and summary
- paraphrase selection freely
- discuss language features and forms
- interpret the text by going outside it using exophoric reference
- read between the lines
- interpret data in the text with own experience
- understand meaning of unfamiliar words through synonymy and hyponymy
- identify functions of link words and substitute them with similar forms
- make inferences through contextual clues
- Write a coherent report on any of the suggested topics using cohesive devices and rhetorical patterns
- participate in oral discussion using conventions of polite discussion

Sample Test Items

The following passage is either read or given as a listening text. The students are asked to answer true or false by basing their answers on the passage:

How a Bicycle Pump Works

A bicycle pump is a mechanical device for forcing air into a bicycle tire. It forces air into the tire through the valve, an opening in the tire with movable parts that regulate the flow of air. Essentially, it consists of a hollow barrel, a piston connected to a handle by a rod, and a leather washer at the end of the piston. The piston is a piece of metal that moves up and down the hollow barrel. The washer is a soft leather that moves away or against the sides of the barrel. This pump uses a force in the air called pressure in transferring air into the tire.

When the piston stays at the bottom of the barrel, the pressure of air inside the barrel is almost equal to the pressure of air in the atmosphere. When the piston moves sharply upwards, the air below the piston also rises, causing its pressure to fall. Air pressure above the piston then pushes the leather washer away from the barrel, causing air from above the piston to enter. When a person pushes down the handle, the piston goes down, causing the air pressure below

the piston to rise. This pressure forces the sides of the soft leather washer against the sides of the barrel, causing no air to escape. The air is pumped, then, through the tire-valve into the tire.

(Note: If this passage is going to be read aloud, it should be read twice to the students.)

Direction: Tell whether the sentence is true or false according to the information expressed in the passage.

1. A bicycle pump is a device for forcing water into a bicycle tire.
2. A leather washer is found near the handle of the piston.
3. When the piston stays at the bottom of the barrel, air pressure in the barrel is almost equal to the air pressure in the atmosphere.
4. The sharp upward movement of the piston causes the air below the piston to rise.
5. The washer moves slowly towards the sides of the barrel.
6. Air pressure pushes down the handle of the bicycle.
7. When air below the piston rises, the pressure falls.
8. Air pressure below the piston pushes the leather away from the barrel.
9. When air pressure above the piston pushes the leather washer away from the barrel, air above the piston enters.
10. When the handle is pushed down, the piston also goes down.
11. When the piston goes down, air pressure below the piston rises.
12. When the leather washer moves against the sides of the barrel, air escapes.

Test 2. Contextual Reference: Choose the letter of the correct answer:

1. In sentence no. 2, *it* refers to:

a. bicycle

b. bicycle pump

c. pump

d. air pressure

2. In sentence no. 3, *it* refers to:

- a. valve
- b. pump

- c. bicycle pump
- d. washer

3. In sentence no. 8, *its pressure* refers to:

- a. air below the piston
- b. pressure of air in the atmosphere
- c. air pressure above the piston
- d. pressure of air below the piston

4. In sentence 11, *this pressure* refers to:

- a. pressure of air below the piston
- b. pressure under piston
- c. pressure of air above the piston
- d. pressure of air around the piston

Test 3. The following are mixed-up parts of sentences.
Join these parts correctly.

Column A

1. If the sun shines,
2. If we put water over the fire,
3. When cabbage seedlings are placed in an enclosed box for 3 days,
4. If we put a candle over a flame,
5. When cabbage seedlings are placed in an open field for 2 days,
6. If we put water in the refrigerator,

Column B

sunlight does not reach
the plants,
it freezes,
it melts,

water evaporation,
they get so much sunlight,

it becomes heated,

Column C

causing water to boil.
causing is to turn ice.
causing clouds to form.
causing the leaves to
wither.
causing it to drip.
causing the leaves to turn
pale.

- d. Moreover, these products are very expensive.
3. There are certain advantages in buying an established firm.
 - a. You may find that the owner has sold the company only because he found that it was not profitable.
 - b. You may be able to buy the business cheaply, especially for retirement or other personal reasons.
 - c. For example, there is little risk in buying a business that is known and established.
 - d. The firm may have a bad reputation.
 4. While many organisms produce thousands of young ones per individual,
 - a. man is usually limited to one young one per individual at intervals or not less than nine to ten months.
 - b. other animals have only very few young ones.
 - c. man usually has several children per family.
 - d. many others never have offsprings (children) at all.
 5. Some things are chores for most people. Filing in complicated income tax returns is just one of them. Others are going to the market every week for the week's food supplies; going to the dentist once every six months; doing homework every day of the week;
 - a. watching television.
 - b. going to the cinema.
 - c. sweeping the house every morning and evening.
 - d. solving interesting but difficult scientific problems.
 6. Lack of money is only one of the problems faced by developing countries. There are other drawbacks as well. For instance, these

countries do not have enough trained and experienced personnel to start businesses; politically, they are not very stable and

- a. they have a large land supply.
- b. most foreign investors like to invest their money in developing countries.
- c. they do not have roads and other facilities which are necessary for industrialization.
- d. they do not suffer from much crimes or pollution.

7. Animals make their abode in various places. Some animals, like ants and earthworms, have subterranean homes. Other animals, like monkeys and squirrels have arboreal dwellings, e.g., they live in trees. Yet, other animals like bats live in caves.

- a. domesticated animals live in farms and in the homes of people.
- b. Animals like tigers and lions are very fierce
- c. Animals like tigers and lions live in the jungles and mountains.
- d. There are many other kinds of animals.

8. President Aquino critically needs higher visibility, particularly in the handling of the counter-insurgency problem, in prescribing economic solutions and in untangling the mess over the OICs.

- a. But the first cabinet ministers she meets every morning are lawyers.
- b. But she seems to lose control over Aquilino Pimentel.
- c. Malacañang sources tell us she is directly involved in these decisions.

d. Malacañang denies her involvement in any decisions.

9. A picket had been scheduled in front of Malacañang to show support for the anti-nuclear movement.

a. After the Kiev accident, there should be no need for a picket or prolonged discussion on the plant.

b. The Bataan nuclear plant should be discontinued.

c. The Filipino people should be worried about nuclear pollution.

d. An anti-nuke campaign should be staged.

10. In its effort to introduce sweeping changes in the government machinery,

a. The Aquino government is leaning on the people for support.

b. The Aquino administration has had to depend on the military.

c. The Aquino administration has had to depend on the U.S.

d. The Aquino government has had to depend on whatever assistance and information it can get from whatever quarter.

Inferring meaning from context:

Listen to the following dialogue, then indicate:

1. Where this interchange may have occurred (setting)
2. Under what circumstances did this dialogue occur (nature of language event)
3. Why the persons are talking to each other the way they are (purpose)

4. What tone did A and B use (mood)

5. Who the speakers may be (status or role)

6. How the speakers feel (attitude)

Dialogue A

A. Why did you arrive so late?

B. I was held up by the heavy traffic...Sorry, but I just had to attend Cory's thanksgiving mass at EDSA.

A. You mean, you attended the EDSA Mass?

B. Of course, I did! That is why I am late for our dinner appointment. Oh, you should have seen the number of people who came to see Pres. Cory!

Test on social and cultural sensitivity:

Dialogue B

Elaine: Gosh! What a lot of buntings! It's like a fiesta. Does your place always look like this, with all these beautiful decorations? (pointing at the decorations around)

Amina: Oh, no, only during big occasions like weddings, kandori (thanksgiving) and big Muslim holidays. Today is our Hariraya day - the end of Ramadhan and the day we end our fast.

Elaine: What do you usually do during this day?

Amina: All Muslims throughout the world celebrate this day by going to the mosque to pray. After the prayer, each family has its own celebration, in which everyone is invited to partake of a sumptuous meal prepared for the occasion.

Elaine: Do you also exchange gifts during this day?

Amina: Yes, sort of.. But instead of gifts, we exchange food, and children are given money in the form of coins for the occasion.

Elaine: Your Hariraya is like our Christmas day.

Amina: In a way, yes. But we don't go out carolling like you do.

1. Elaine is surprised because

- a. She sees many beautiful buntings.
- b. she meets her friend Amina.
- c. it is Hariraya day.
- d. it is Christmas day.

2. Hariraya is

- a. the end of Ramadhan
- b. the beginning of fasting
- c. similar to Christmas
- d. the end of Christmas

3. During Hariraya

- a. everybody celebrates by making merry.
- b. everybody goes to the mosque to pray.
- c. everybody exchanges gifts.
- d. everybody goes to the mosque and celebrates afterwards.

4. Elaine is confused because

- a. it must have been her first time to come to Amina's place.
- b. it must have been her first time to see beautiful buntings.
- c. it must have been strange to see people go to mosque in the morning.
- d. letters A and B.

Asking Additional Information:**Paraphrasing (Strategic Competence)**

Imagine that you are talking to a friend who knows very little English. You are telling her the event when your mother was brought to the hospital for an immediate operation for an acute appendicitis. How can you get across your meaning without using the words themselves? Think of short paraphrase for each of the following words using the given example as your guide:

Example: bathroom - it is a place where one takes a bath.

Match Column A with B:

*Column A**Column B*

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| a. ambulance | 1. it is something given to a person who is undergoing operation so he will not feel pain. |
| b. ambulate | 2. it is a surgical procedure to remedy a physical ailment |
| c. operation | 3. a vehicle used to carry the sick or wounded to the hospital |
| d. scalpel | 4. to move about after an operation |
| e. anesthesia | 5. a small sharp knife used in surgery |

Synonymy

Read the following passage. Replace the underlined word with another word which means the same thing. Choose the letter of the correct answer:

Life 's Tests

Mountains and seas: How formidable they seem when you look at them from a distance. Yet, you must know that the highest mountain can be climbed, the widest sea can be crossed.

The obstacles that you meet as you prepare for your career may sometimes seem like unconquerable mountains and seas. But you will find out that they can be overcome by perseverance, purpose and enthusiasm. Charles Schwartz was a crippled hunchback, but he became a world-renowned scientist and inventor. Demosthenes was said to stammer but he overcame this difficulty to become the foremost orator of his time. Helen Keller was blind, deaf and dumb, yet astonished the world with her unusual accomplishments.

1. obstacles means:

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| a. obstructions | c. sacrifices |
| b. difficulties | d. differences |

2. formidable means

- | | |
|-------------|---------------|
| a. strange | c. terrible |
| b. fortress | d. fortifying |

3. career means

- | | |
|---------------|-------------|
| a. occupation | c. cart |
| b. course | d. ambition |

4. unconquerable means

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------|
| a. undefeated | c. undying |
| b. unforgettable | d. uncontrollable |

5. overcome means

- | | |
|-------------|---------------|
| a. overdo | c. succeed |
| b. surmount | d. penetrated |

6. perseverance means

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| a. perspiration | c. patience |
| b. loyalty | d. persistence |

7. enthusiasm means

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| a. happiness | c. loyalty |
| b. intense interest | d. intense sincerity |

8. stammer means

- | | |
|------------|----------------|
| a. stutter | c. lisp |
| b. stilted | d. talk slowly |

9. foremost means

- | | |
|----------|------------|
| a. first | c. famous |
| b. only | d. reknown |

10. astonish means

- | | |
|------------|-------------|
| a. astound | c. surprise |
| b. acclaim | d. frighten |

Explaining a Process

Explain (describe) orally or in writing the water cycle by following the order as it appeared in the drawing. Show the correct sequence of the process by using the following discourse markers: first, second, third, lastly, similarly, next, finally:

When the sun shines, water evaporates, causing clouds to form.

(The first sentence is already done for you.)

Describing an Object/Thing:

Read the following passage, then choose the letter of the correct answer to each of the numbers that follow:

Birds

Few of us realize what a vast amount of information has been gathered about our feathered friends, the birds. Birds are very valuable because they destroy insects harmful to agriculture, because they feed on the farmer's crops, and because some of them eat mice which might feed on the farmer's crops. A scarlet tanager has been known to eat six hundred and thirty caterpillars in eighteen minutes,

and one nighthawk which was killed had recently eaten sixty grasshoppers, and another five hundred mosquitoes. We can estimate the vast quantity of insects that birds consume when we know that a pair of chickadees were found to have fed their young forty times in thirty minutes.

Some migratory birds, the golden plover, for example, fly from Labrador or Nova Scotia to South America over the Atlantic Ocean without stopping once.

Are you surprised to know there are between thirteen and fourteen thousand species of birds in the world? Many of them have gorgeous plumage, melodious songs, and strange homes.

1. This selection deals primarily with a. birds b. the consumption of mice by bird c. the migration of birds d. the destruction of insects
2. The number of species of birds in the world is found to be a. millions b. very many c. impossible to estimate d. thousands
3. This selection states that birds are a. valuable to agriculture b. poisonous to man c. harmful to agriculture d. poisonous to animals
4. The golden plover can fly from Labrador to South America a. with a short rest b. without stopping once d. with no long rest d. after four hours of rest
5. The selection tells us that the plumage of some birds is a. very beautiful b. most marvelous in coloring c. of many different shades d. gorgeous
6. The bird known to have eaten over six hundred caterpillars is the a. golden plover b. scarlet tanager c. chickadees d. nighthawk
7. Some birds subsist on a. poisonous weeds b. every kind of ~~worms~~ c. seeds of weeds d. various weeds
8. A nighthawk is reported to have contained a. sixty grasshoppers b. vast number of grasshoppers c. many field mice d. various insects
9. Birds' songs, it is stated, are a. well worth hearing b. a source of joy to lovers c. piping tune d. melodious

10. The author would like to tell of the homes of the birds because they are a. made in odd ways b. strange c. of interesting workmanship d. of various materials

Test on Linguistic Competence:

Choose the letter which carries the correct answer:

example: When we change the volume of the sound from high to low, we _____ the sound:

- a. operate b. adjust c. load

1. All birds are warm-blooded. Birds _____
 - a. always are warm-blooded
 - b. are always warm-blooded
 - c. are warm-blooded always
2. Relatively few mammals live in water. Mammals _____ live in water.
 - a. always b. often c. rarely
3. Most reptiles have legs. Reptiles _____ have legs.
 - a. never b. usually c. sometimes
4. Many trees lose their leaves in summer. Trees lose their leaves in summer.
 - a. frequently b. occasionally c. almost never
5. The only metal which is liquid at room temperature is mercury. Mercury is the _____.
 - a. generalization b. likelihood c. exception
6. If an animal is warm-blooded, then it _____ either a mammal or a bird.
 - a. will b. is being c. will be
7. If an animal is warm-blooded, it is _____ to survive on land.
 - a. certain b. likely c. possible
8. It is possible _____ it will rain tomorrow

- a. then b. that c. so that
9. The likelihood that the sun _____ in the north is nil.
a. rise b. rises c. will rise
10. _____ that the book is short, we can finish quickly.
a. we provide b. provided c. to provide
11. We can choose a good radio station. We can _____ a good radio station
a. dilute b. select c. sieve
12. Salt can be _____ by mixing an acid with an alkali.
a. obtained b. sublimed c. saturated
13. Before repairing an electrical device _____ that the flex has been unplugged from the wall socket:
a. ensure b. endure c. encase
14. _____ that liquid in a beaker, place the beaker over a flame.
a. by heating b. heating c. to heat
15. Make sure that _____
a. clean the flask c. the flask is clean
b. to clean the flask
16. Mammals breathe _____ lungs.
a. the means of c. by meaning
b. by means of
17. Temperature can be controlled _____ a thermostat.
a. by using b. to use c. by uses
18. The way we perform an experiment is called the _____
a. substance b. precaution c. procedure
19. The reason we perform an experiment is called the

- a. procedure b. purpose c. method

20. Bananas grow well in India. India is warm enough for bananas _____

- a. to grow b. growing c. grow

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