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**AN OFFICIAL PUBLICATION
OF THE INTERNATIONAL TEST COMMISSION**

EDITOR'S NOTE

Anita M. Hubley
University of British Columbia
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Dear Friends,

One of my goals as Editor has been to encourage submissions to *Testing International* from scholars in a wide range of countries around the world. Over the last couple of years, there have been articles and reports from authors in Argentina, Brazil, Canada, France, Israel, the Netherlands, Portugal, Scotland, South Africa, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the United States. In this issue, I am very pleased to present several articles on issues related to test development and testing in China, Japan, and Brazil as well as a report on two tests for Brazilian Portuguese and the announcement of a new International Research and Applied Center of Human Resource Development in Indonesia. Thus, authors in this issue are from Brazil, China, Indonesia, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States. I encourage readers from countries that are not listed above to submit a brief article or report to *Testing International* on testing issues and developments that involve, or are occurring within, your country.

One piece of news that is not covered in detail in this issue, but is certainly worth noting, is the passing of John (Jack) B. Carroll on July 1, 2003. Carroll is perhaps best known for his 1993 book *Human Cognitive Abilities: A Survey of Factor Analytic Studies*, although he made many contributions to factor analysis, psycholinguistics, and the psychometric study of intelligence and cognitive processes. Rather than provide a brief sketch in this issue, I urge readers interested in learning more about Carroll to read the fascinating obituary written by Arthur Jensen in the journal *Intelligence* (2004, Vol. 32, issue 1, pp. 1-5) that is also available online at www.sciencedirect.com.

Finally, there are two ITC events that I hope you will mark on your calendars. The first event is the ITC General Meeting that will be held at the 28th *International Congress of Psychology* in Beijing, China in August, 2004. It is at this meeting that a new President-Elect will be elected. The second event is the 4th *ITC International Conference on Equitable Assessment Practices: Building Guidelines for Best Practices* that will be held in Williamsburg, Virginia, U.S.A. in October, 2004. Please note that the deadline for submissions is April 1, 2004!

PRESIDENT'S LETTER**Planning, Tilling, Planting, Tending, and Harvesting**

Bruce Bracken
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U.S.A.

As any farmer will attest, one only harvests what is sown. During the past year, the International Test Commission Council spent considerable effort metaphorically planning, tilling, planting, tending, and preparing to harvest. This column will briefly discuss some of the efforts made by the Council on behalf of the membership to grow the ITC and its worthwhile activities.

Plans were developed in Vienna at the annual Council meeting to host a conference in Williamsburg, Virginia, U.S.A. in October 2004. The conference is dedicated to the topic of equitable assessment practices. Test developers, test users, test takers, and assessment researchers, as well as policy-makers, client advocates, and civil rights offices and agencies have become more acutely aware of the need to ensure that tests are fair, assessment procedures are equitable, and the consequential validity of test results are fully considered when tests are used with diverse populations. Individuals interested in these important issues should plan to attend this conference.

This fourth ITC international conference will include such notable international keynote speakers as Robert Sternberg, Past-President of the American Psychological Association as well as several of its divisions (e.g., General Psychology, Educational Psychology, Psychology and the Arts, Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology); David Bartram, Past-President of the ITC; Fannie Cheung, Past-President of the Hong Kong Psychological Society and the Division of Clinical and Community Psychology of the International Association of Applied Psychology; and, Elias Mpfu, formerly of Zimbabwe, representative for sub-Saharan Africa on the Executive Committee of the International Association for Cross-Cultural Psychology, and Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of Psychology in Africa*.

Planning for the conference also has ensured a full day of pre-conference workshops that will present attendees with skill-building information and explore equity issues in all forms of psychological

and educational assessment. Pre-conference workshops will focus on clinical tests that assess constructs such as intelligence, adaptive behavior, neuropsychology, executive functioning, cross-cultural assessment, bias detection, and structural equation modeling. Workshop presenters include renowned test authors, test developers, and leading experts in the field of measurement and assessment.

ITC's tilling and planting efforts included introducing the ITC to organizations and individuals who were previously not well aware of our activities. I made a point to mention the good works of the ITC and promoted the organization at every conference at which I presented during the past year. I was most pleased, however, with the opportunity afforded me to present specifically on the ITC at the First National Conference on Psychological Assessment and VI International Conference on Psychological Assessment, in Campinas, Brazil last July. Two of my goals as President of the ITC were to increase ITC membership and to encourage the membership of organizations and individuals throughout the Americas. This opportunity to bring the ITC message to Brazil was greatly appreciated as an opportunity to achieve both goals.

The ITC has been tending to its projects and goals in a variety of productive ways. Jacques Gregoire, ITC Secretary, recently developed and distributed an informative brochure that describes the organization and promotes our constructive efforts. Anyone interested in receiving or distributing copies of this brochure should contact Professor Gregoire (jacques.gregoire@psp.ucl.ac.be). Dave Bartram and Iain Coyne continue to refine *The ITC International Guidelines on Computer-Delivered and Internet Testing*. Individuals interested in reviewing or previewing these guidelines should contact either Dave (dave.bartram@shlgroupp.com) or Iain (i.j.coyne@hull.ac.uk) or may view the guidelines on the ITC website (www.intestcom.org). The ITC also will sponsor several symposia at the 28th International Congress of Psychology in Beijing, China in August 2004, where it will also tend to its obligation of holding a General Meeting of all ITC members and elect a new President-Elect. Professor José Muniz (Spain) will assume a two-year term as President at the General meeting.

The ITC also has harvested some of the fruits of its labors as evidenced by the increasing number of countries that continue to translate the *ITC*

Guidelines on Test Use. The most recent translation and adoption has been the Lithuanian translation of the Guidelines.

The ITC is an active organization that continues to grow in membership and its involvement in testing. The continual and ongoing tasks of planning, tilling, planting, tending, and harvesting requires many talented contributors. As President of the ITC, I encourage all members to become active in their participation and involvement, and ask each of you to help the organization to grow in its meaningful contributions to the field of testing.

Become a Member of the ITC

ITC membership is open to organizations as well as individuals. Information and forms are available at:

<http://www.intestcom.org/membership.htm>

BRIEF ARTICLES

Psychological Testing in China Today

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Psychological testing in China has a long past, but only a short history, to paraphrase Ebbinghaus (1908). For example, thousands of years ago, the Chinese emperors set up the Kejue examinations, a set of written tests used to select civil servants and, in the 5th century BC, Confucius, the famous philosopher, aware of individual differences in ability, classified his students according to their intelligence and taught them accordingly. However, the Chinese did not systematically develop these ideas of psychological assessment

and it was not until 1915, that modern, Western psychological testing was introduced into China, where it rapidly became popular.

Unfortunately, during the Cultural Revolution, psychological testing came to be thought of as anti-socialist and it was abandoned (Higgins & Sun, 2002). Since the 1980s and the Open Door Policy, psychological testing has been revived and it is now an important area of development in China. This article will describe the range and scope of psychological testing in China today.

Education

About one third of psychology graduates currently find work in middle and high schools. Some work as teachers in school mental health programmes which aim to enhance the level of mental health of all students, to develop their potential and “improve” their personality (The Ministry of Education of the People’s Republic of China, 2002). Such mental health education includes activity lessons and special lectures as well as individual and group counselling. The main topics are adapting to new situations, interpersonal relationships, sex education, study skills, and career preparation. At the primary school level, a play approach is used to learn how to study and how to understand oneself; at the middle school level, the main content is self-awareness and interpersonal relationships; at high school, the topics are interpersonal relationships, life skills and social skills. Positive attitudes to self, peers, parents, teachers and the opposite sex, to learning and school work are all encouraged and developed. All schools are required to provide a special counselling room and “mental health records” are kept for all pupils. These records usually contain some test information about ability, personality and career interests.

Intelligence testing is widely used in Chinese schools. A few elite primary schools even use intelligence testing to select their pupils. All children with IQs below 70 are offered places in special schools with specially trained teachers or special classes in normal schools. In most schools, intelligence testing (often Raven’s Standard Progressive Matrices) is repeated at intervals to check for intellectual development.

Personality tests are also often used in middle and high schools to check “mental health”. Teachers, parents and students are all concerned about learning difficulties in schools and how emotional problems may influence school work. The

personality scales most often used are the 16PF, MMPI, EPQ, CPI and SCL-90. Wang and Cui (2003) have recently developed a Chinese Personality Scale (QZPS) and the Ministry of Education is currently developing a system to diagnose psychological problems in college students.

About 16% of college students showed problems with mental health as measured by SCL-90 (Fu, 2002; Lin & Chen, 2000; Wang & Fan, 2002; Zhang, Zhu, & Li, 2003). With 2 million university places for a population of 47 million middle school students (Becker, 2000), and with high parental aspirations for their one child, there is undoubtedly tremendous pressure placed on these young people starting college. Other psychological tests used in educational settings would be for research purposes (e.g., attitude tests), and may be devised by teachers or researchers.

Medicine

Most psychologists working in psychiatric hospitals have a medical background. In 1999, the Law of Practising Doctors in the People's Republic of China was put into effect. This law requires staff working in hospitals to have special certification. In particular, they must have a graduate diploma in a medical subject and pass a practising doctor's exam. Some psychologists become doctors if they want to work in hospitals and some doctors take psychology degrees if they want to do psychology in hospitals. Psychologists in hospital settings deal largely with inpatients who have serious mental illnesses and they use diagnostic tests such as the WAIS, MMPI and the SCL-90.

Human Resource Management

With China’s expanding market economy, many companies have recently introduced human resource management which offers new career opportunities for psychology graduates. Psychological testing is increasingly being used in recruitment and training (e.g., Shi, 1994; Wang, 1999). In 1999, the Ministry of Personnel in China developed a set of psychological tests for companies which included ability, personality and work attitudes. However, since different companies have their own company cultures and need different testing systems, this official set of tests did not suit all companies and some large companies are currently developing their own tests.

Competency trait testing is now a very popular topic in China (Shi, Wang & Li, 2002) and is used to measure motivation, personality, self image, attitudes and special skills that can identify good workers.

Psychological Research Organisation

In 1958, the Chinese Academy of Sciences set up the Institute of Psychology which is the main psychology research organisation in China. It produces two journals: *Acta Psychologica Sinica* and *The Development of Psychological Science*. Psychology in Chinese universities began as a major subject in education departments but now there are more than 30 psychology departments in China, while Beijing Normal University and Southwest China Normal University both have Psychology Schools. Academic Chinese psychology has three main research directions – general, educational and applied and all three have bachelor, masters and doctorate degrees. It is estimated that there are over 5,000 psychology students and 500 psychology lecturers in China today (R.C. Zheng, personal communication, September, 2003).

The university curriculum for psychology undergraduates continues to expand. The basic curriculum includes general, educational, experimental, developmental, social psychology and personality together with psychological measurement and statistics. The Ministry of Education sets out the required courses and individual colleges decide on their own electives, with some specialising in areas such as educational psychology (e.g., Beijing Normal University) or engineering psychology (e.g., Zhejiang University). Psychological measurement is a higher-level course for undergraduates and it includes test theory, methods of scale construction, how to use a test, reliability and validity.

Management of Psychological Tests

In China, teachers, counsellors and psychologists can use psychological tests. In 1992, the Chinese Psychology Society (C.P.S.) produced *Management Regulations for Psychological Tests* (Zheng, Cia, & Zhou, 1999) which include the following:

Test Register. All psychological tests (individual and group) which are compiled, revised, published or sold must be registered with the C.P.S. Psychological Testing Commission. Only standardised tests based on scientific

procedures are registered. All tests registered are given a code number and published in *Acta Psychologica Sinica*.

Test Practitioner Qualifications. Test practitioners must have either a bachelor's degree in psychology or have used tests for two years under the direction of qualified testers. The Psychological Testing Commission provides tester training and sets the qualifying examination. There are two types of qualification: one for a single named test and the other for more than one test.

The Control and Administration of Tests. A test manual must show the scope and procedure for the test. Only qualified testers can obtain tests and testing materials. The testers must abide by the test instructions in the manual. Testers must select the most appropriate test to use. If tests are sold or revised, the test author's agreement is required. Organisations that print, publish or sell psychological tests must register with the Psychological Testing Commission and only sell tests to qualified users. The contents and materials of tests cannot be published in non-professional publications.

Ethical Rules for Psychological Test Practitioners

In 1992, the Psychological Testing Commission published a set of ethical rules for test practitioners (Zheng, Cia, & Zhou, 1999). Firstly, these state that all practitioners who use psychological tests for diagnosis, assessment, counselling or recruitment must have qualifications recognised by the Psychological Testing Commission. Testers must be aware of their social duties and their attitudes to testing must be scientific, serious, cautious and modest. They must abide by national laws and professional regulations.

Testers must also respect the confidentiality of information about test takers. However, when test takers may cause harm to others, then testers may inform relevant persons. Test results must be objective and accurate. Testers must give appropriate verbal feedback, including help and suggestions, not just a set of scores. Psychological tests may only be used for social or research purposes: they must not abuse or exploit. Testers must protect the validity of psychological tests and keep contents, materials, scoring, etc. confidential. When compiling, revising, selling and using tests, commercial interests must not be allowed to conflict with the ethical development of tests.

Conclusions

Four major problems remain for psychometric testing in China. One is the lack of tests specifically devised for the Chinese culture and language; another is the issue of copyright; the third is the public's attitude toward testing; and the fourth is a lack of qualified testers to provide practical supervision in testing. In the last few years, more and more Chinese tests have been developed and standardised and the main ones are listed below. China does have copyright laws but they are not strictly enforced in this field, and this discourages test developers. While Chinese psychologists have recently begun to look at qualitative research and question some aspects of psychometric testing, some type of psychological measurement is used in most articles apart from cognitive psychology articles published in Chinese psychology journals. A recent analysis of research trends in psychology showed an increase in developmental and educational topics using psychological measurement, and a decrease in general, cognitive, experimental and applied psychology (Yao & Quan, 2002).

The Chinese public, however, may not share the professionals' views about testing. In the early 1980s, most people thought of psychological testing as just another kind of examination because of its use in schools and universities, but today the internet, books and newspapers are full of popular tests for fun or general interest, so people believe they are just games and do not appreciate their scientific value. Chinese psychologists will need to ensure that the scientific nature of psychological tests is more widely understood; otherwise, when establishing the validity of new tests, participants may not take it seriously. Once new Chinese tests are established, there will be a great need for more psychology graduates to administer them in all fields.

Recently Developed Tests

The four most widely used tests in China (Ryan, Dai & Zheng, 1994) are the WAIS and WISC Chinese revisions, the EPQ, and the MMPI.

Recently, many psychological tests have been developed. Intelligence tests include the Draw-a-Person Test (Fu, 1999), the Fagan Test of Infant Intelligence (FTII; Yuan, Tan & Lu, 2002), the Clinical Memory Scale (Liu et al., 2002) and the Intelligence Scale for Young Chinese Children (ISCYC; Cai & Tai, 2002). New tests for children

with learning disabilities include measures of adaptive behaviour (Zhang, 2002), the revised Visual Retention Test (Jing, Guo, Wang, Chen & Li, 1998), and Creative Thinking for ADHD Children (Sang, 2002).

Other new tests include the Diagnostic Test of Achievement Factors (DTAF; He & Dong, 2002), the Chinese Moral Judgment Competence Rating Scale (Gu & Li, 1997), the Chinese version of the WHO Quality of Life Scale (Fang, Hao & Li, 1999), the Diabetic Patient Family Support Scale, (Zhu, Wang, Mao & Tang, 2000), the Diagnostic Scale for Mental Disorders (DSMD; Xiao, Chen, Qiu, Chen & Chen, 2001), the Chinese Personality Scale (QZPS) based on a Chinese theory of personality (Wang & Cui, 2003), the Adolescent Time Management Disposition Inventory (Huang & Zhang 2001), test duration stress for college students (Zhang & Huo, 2001), Test Anxiety Scale - Chinese Version (Wang, 2001), Social Intelligence Scale (SIS; Xie & Jin, 2002), the Parenting Style Questionnaire (Fang, Xion & Guo, 2003), the Self Rated Health Measurement Scale - Revised Version 1.0 (Xu, Tan, Wang & Hu, 2003), the revised Child Behaviour Checklist (CBCL; Su, Li, Luo, Wan & Yang, 1998), the Piers-Harris Children's Self Concept Scale for Chinese Urban Children (Su, Luo, Zhang, Xie, & Liu, 2002), the revised Hasagawa Dementia Scale (HDS-R; Mu, Lu, Feng, Zhou & Jiang, 2000), the Shame Scale for Chinese College Students (Qian, Andrews, Zhu & Wang, 2000), and neuropsychological tests such as the Halstead-Reitan Neuro-Psychological Test Battery (Tang, Yue, Lu & Jiang, 1998).

New personnel tests include the Administration Occupational Aptitude Test (Chen & Yu, 2002), the assessment centre technique (Wu & Zhang, 2001), and the Organisational Career Management Questionnaire (OCMQ; Long, Fang & Ling, 2002).

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The Construction of a Database of University English Entrance Examinations in Japan

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The purpose of this article is twofold: to provide a brief introduction to the university entrance examination system in Japan, and to show how we aim to construct a test database of university English entrance examinations by establishing a framework for item specification. The study will be of interest to those involved in test development and language testing research.

A Brief Summary of the University Entrance Examination System in Japan

University entrance in Japan is based largely on the scores achieved by students in entrance

examinations, although universities are increasingly accepting applicants who enter through a system of recommendation and are not required to take the regular exam.

Applicants wishing to enter a national or public university take two entrance examinations: first, a nationally administered achievement test, the *Center Test*, and then, an examination developed and administered by the university itself. The *Center Test*, developed by the National Center for University Entrance Examinations, is the only large-scale centralized test used to screen applicants for university entrance. It is taken by a huge number of applicants (there were 555,849 test takers in 2003) and plays a major shaping role in the educational cycle in Japan. The test is administered in mid-January, and the subjects taken depend on the applicant's field of interest and university that he or she wishes to enter. By far, the most popular foreign language subject is English, which is taken by almost all of the test takers each year. The second examination, held by the individual universities, is then taken at the end of February or the beginning of March.

Applicants to private universities, on the other hand, need to take only the university's own examination. Competition for a place, and the content and difficulty of the exams, varies widely from university to university. An increasing number of private universities, however, are beginning to use the *Center Test*; in 2003, as many as 387 private schools adopted it in some way or another.

Table 1
Number of four-year universities and first-year students in 2002

	National	Public	Private	Total
No. of universities	99	75	512	686
No. of new students	103,301	24,276	481,760	609,337

Aims and Scope of the Study

The goal of our project is the construction of a database of university English entrance exams. In Japan, very little analysis of test items has been done after administration of the tests. The National Center for University Entrance Examinations publishes annual reports, but these are primarily concerned with qualitative aspects of the tests. Recently though, Yoshimura et al. (2003) have constructed a database of test items

using past *Center* English tests. While this provides useful statistical information, it has little to tell the language teacher or item writer about test construction or item specification. However, by working in close cooperation with Yoshimura's team, we aim to establish a database which will be of practical use to teachers and others concerned with the development of reliable and valid English tests in Japan.

The Need for an Item Specification Framework

In test and item development in general, test and item specification is a prerequisite for the construction of items. University entrance examinations in Japan, however, are developed by anonymous item writers in each institution and no information regarding the test development process is available. It was, therefore, necessary for us to examine a selection of entrance exams in order to identify the specification of the items. To this end, we first evaluated some of the existing frameworks for test analysis and/or item specifications.

Current thinking in English language testing is strongly influenced by the notion of communicative language ability and Bachman et al.'s (1996) proposed framework consisting of language competence, strategic competence and psychophysiological mechanisms. Drawing from this, and the test item analyses proposed by Aoki (1985) and Heaton (1988), we developed our own tentative framework consisting of rubrics, task and response types, main skills tested, and other necessary components. This framework was then applied to sample examinations (seven different universities plus the *Center Test*). However, it was found to have limited applicability, as we encountered a wider variety of task types than had been predicted by the previously-proposed frameworks. (Despite the current emphasis on communicative language ability in the English classroom in Japan, a "skills and components" model of language tests, influenced by structural linguistics, is clearly still dominant in university entrance exams.)

After making the necessary modifications to our framework, we constructed a prototype database which, at the time of writing, contains a total of 2,944 test items from 109 university entrance examinations and from the *Center Tests* in 2001-2003.

A Prototype of the Database

The new item specification framework developed categorizes test items in terms of task type (34 categories), response type (2 major categories, i.e., open-ended and closed, with three and two subcategories respectively), as well as the main and supplementary skill(s)/aspect(s) tested (7 categories: four language skills plus grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation). Other features of a test item characterized by the framework include the language used (English or Japanese) for testlet and item directions and answers, and the passage used (the language, word count, readability and genre). Examples of task types include "phoneme discrimination", "information matching", "explanation / exemplification", "summary", "referent identification", "completion", "grammatical usage judgment", and "free composition". In cases where, for instance, both reading ability and grammatical knowledge were required to answer, one of the two skills was judged as the main skill tested, and the other as supplementary. Using the framework, all 2,944 items were assigned specific features according to the above aspects.

The results of item specification were then used to compile a prototype database using FileMaker Pro (version 6). This software was chosen because it does not require any prior experience or knowledge of database handling and for its ease of use on the Internet.

Some Preliminary Findings

As is clearly shown in Table 2 below, the bulk of the test items focus on the test takers' reading comprehension skill. Items focusing on grammar and vocabulary come next. This confirms the fact that university entrance examinations continue to be reading and grammar/vocabulary oriented despite the ostensible shift toward communicative language teaching in high school classrooms.

...cont'd

International Journal of Testing (IJT)

Official Journal of the ITC

Editor: Bruno D. Zumbo

Publisher: Lawrence Erlbaum Assoc.

<http://www.educ.ubc.ca/faculty/zumbo/ijt/>

Table 2
Main or Supplementary Skill Tested

Main/Supplementary Skill Tested	No. of Items	%
Reading	1754	59.6
Grammar	814	27.7
Vocabulary	706	24.0
Writing	280	9.5
Speaking	260	8.8
Pronunciation	79	2.7
Listening	25	0.9

Note. The database contains 2944 items. However, some items test more than one skill; thus, the sum of the % column exceeds 100%.

The tendency to focus on the reading comprehension skill and grammar/vocabulary is reflected in the task types employed as summarized in Table 3.

Table 3
Top 8 Frequently Used Task Types

Task Type	No. of Items
Completion	887
Meaning Recognition	425
Information Matching	285
Translation	248
Grammatical Usage Judgment	183
Rearrangement	179
Explanation / Exemplification	141
Question Answering	133

A larger proportion of items use a "closed" rather than an "open-ended" response type (see Tables 4 and 5). This is probably to reduce the burden in marking, which is inevitable considering the number of applicants and the limited time allowed for the marking process. However, it should be noted that, although there is a wide range of possible task types, the variety of task types found in the tests is rather limited, especially with "open-ended" response types. Furthermore, although the test takers are required to read lengthy passages, the task types actually used tend to measure only "local" understanding of the relevant parts of the passage. In order to measure "global" understanding of the whole passage, task types such as "title giving", "diagramming", and/or "summary" could have been used, but items using such task types are rare. This leads us to doubt the necessity of using such lengthy passages as well as the rationale behind the task types employed. The lack of item specification in item and test development is clearly an issue.

Table 4
Task Type x Closed Response Type in Reading

Task Type	No. of Items	%
Completion	585	48.2
Information Matching	273	22.5
Meaning Recognition	108	8.9
Question Answering	102	8.4
Referent Identification	31	2.6
Rearrangement	23	1.9
Paraphrase	19	1.6
Title Giving	18	1.5
Explanation/ Exemplification	15	1.2
Diagramming	10	0.8
Translation	7	0.6
Summary	6	0.5
Paraphrase by Completion	0	0.0
Others	17	1.4
Total:	1,214	

Note. Closed response type refers to true/false or multiple choice responses.

Table 5
Task Type x Open-ended Response Type in Reading

Task Type	No. of Items	%
Translation	153	37.2
Explanation/ Exemplification	124	30.2
Completion	51	12.4
Referent Identification	23	5.6
Summary	16	3.9
Meaning Recognition	6	1.5
Information Matching	5	1.2
Rearrangement	1	0.2
Paraphrase	1	0.2
Paraphrase by Completion	1	0.2
Others	30	7.3
Total:	411	

Future Directions

Our preliminary findings have shown that the database enables us to detect which skills or aspects of the test takers' proficiency are being measured in university entrance examinations, and how such measurement is done. Our next concern would be to determine whether or not a typically used task/response type is a reliable and valid format to measure the intended skill(s) or aspect(s). Simultaneously, the item specification framework used in the present project itself will have an important role to play in informing future item and test development. Further reports are forthcoming.

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Test Development and Use in Brazil: Its History and Current Status

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Brief History on the Test Movement in Brazil

The history of test development and use in Brazil conveys a story of beginnings, pitfalls, recovery, and highlights. Tests were used widely between 1950 and 1970. Instruments developed in Europe and the United States typically were translated and then administered for various purposes (Rosas, 1984). During this period, federal and state agencies invested somewhat heavily to develop tests for personnel selection and vocational guidance, thus facilitating the development of various group tests of intelligence, other aptitudes, and interests (Van Kolck, 1981). The use of tests for personnel selection became accepted nationally.

As was true in some other Iberian and Latin American countries (e.g., Spain, Portugal, and Venezuela), federal laws stimulated test use in Brazil. For example, in 1962, applicants for drivers' licenses were required to take a psychological test. Private offices, state, and federal psychology departments were established and became dedicated exclusively to evaluate these applicants. This effort helped legitimize the work of the psychologist. During the late 1990s, efforts by scientific psychology societies to eliminate the legal requirement for this psychological test were opposed by psychologists providing these services.

Their well-organized political efforts were successful in eliminating this threat to their work (Wechsler, 2000).

Unfortunately, this wider interest in psychological assessment was not followed by a greater investment in research leading to improvements in test quality and their adequacy for Brazil. Brazilian scholars harshly criticized psychological tests for their inadequacies. Many tests were developed in other countries and never adapted to the Brazilian culture. Others were created in the 1960s in Brazil and were not renormed. Additionally, political theories that characterized test use as labeling individuals held back the dissemination of psychological tests for at least twenty years (Wechsler, 2001).

Efforts to Improve the Scientific Qualities of Tests

Opposition to the use of psychological tests did not fulfill Brazil's needs for methods to acquire and use reliable and valid psychological data. The need to conceptualize and assess intelligence, personality, and other important psychological traits led to the recognition that research and development laboratories were urgently needed to help address this need. Thus, efforts to establish laboratories dedicated exclusively to the construction, adaptation and standardization of tests within universities throughout Brazil were initiated.

In 1980, the first Laboratory for Psychological Measures (LABPAM) was created at the Federal University of Brasilia. Three other laboratories in state, as well as private, universities soon were formed in the state of Sao Paulo: LIPTEP-University of Sao Paulo; LAMP- Pontifical Catholic University of Campinas; and LABAPE-University of Sao Francisco. Two other laboratories inside psychology departments of federal and private universities were formed in the state of Rio Grande do Sul: LM-Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul and LIAP- University of Vale dos Sinos. Other university-affiliated laboratories dedicated to the scientific study of psychological instruments are being organized in other Brazilian regions.

In 1997, the National Institute of Psychological Assessment (IBAP) was formed to assist in coordinating this national movement to promote scientific test development. The purposes and work of IBAP were readily supported by Brazilian psychologists, given its attempts to address important national needs. IBAP publishes a journal

Avaliacao Psicologica (Psychological Assessment), and is an active participant on the national coalition of psychological societies.

In July 2003, IBAP organized the First National Conference on Psychological Assessment, held in Campinas. This conference coincided with the IX International Conference on Psychological Assessment, a conference typically held in Europe and organized by Portuguese and Spanish psychologists. The large participation of Brazilian and foreign psychologists (930 persons) further reflected the strong support nationally and internationally for efforts that promote test development and use.

The influence of the International Test Commission (ITC) is seen in these efforts, in part, through its giving IBAP permission to translate into Portuguese the ITC guidelines for test users (2000) as well as in the publication of its guidelines for test users.

The Federal Council of Psychologists, the accredited federal institution responsible for regulating the practice of psychologists in Brazil, has received various proposals to address issues pertaining to test development and use. In response, the Council organized four national commissions during the last three decades to study needs and to propose ways to improve the development and use of tests. A recent proposal for evaluating tests (Prieto & Muñiz, 2000), together with the availability of guidelines for test users established by the ITC (2000), revived interest by the Federal Council of Psychologists. It now requires all tests published in Brazil to be evaluated by a commission of national experts that reports on a test's scientific qualities (e.g., validity, reliability, and norms) for the Brazilian population. The results of this evaluation will be available to everyone online. The use of instruments not displaying scientific standards will be considered an ethical violation.

The Future

These and recent positive changes in Brazil indicate a growing level of maturity as psychologists work to improve standards and practices for test development and use. Efforts by the Federal Council of Psychologists, IBAP, the various laboratories for psychological measures, together with hundreds of psychologists and their students strongly suggest a future marked by scientific production in this area, creation of new instruments that have high scientific qualities, and

improved practices, resulting in higher professional services to the Brazilian population.

These efforts within Brazil may serve as a model to other countries that also are striving to improve testing practices. The continued work of the ITC also remains instrumental to these efforts.

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Note: The author acknowledges the kindly review and suggestions to this text made by Dr. Thomas Oakland.

REPORTS

A Self Assessment and a Computerized Adaptive Test for Brazilian Portuguese

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This is a brief description of two new tests for Brazilian Portuguese (BP), concluded in 2003, at the University of Kansas, in Lawrence, Kansas, U.S.A. One is a Self-Assessment Test, available on the internet at www.ku.edu/~brasilis, and the other is the first Computerized Adaptive Test (CAT) written for Portuguese, available on a CD-ROM or

by downloading via the same web address as listed above.

We have these two tests available for free to accredited institutions, thanks to a Title VI grant from the U.S. Department of Education. We are interested in having as many students as possible take these tests because of our need to continue collecting data on item performance. In the case of the Self-Assessment, its results are sent to us immediately after the test is taken on the internet. As for the BP CAT, the results will go initially to a directory created upon installation of the program. Then, we would like to have those data sent to us every once in a while depending on how often the test is given.

Both tests are intended to be multifunctional and are based on a similar scale of language level. This scale was developed to organize the items of both exams. We acknowledge that currently there are no empirical data or a theoretical rationale for this scale. The purpose of creating this scale was mainly a practical one because all decisions regarding language skill levels in relation to this BP self-assessment exam will depend on statistical results, which we are still analyzing.

The Self-Assessment Test

The main function of the self-assessment is to help Brazilian Portuguese students determine their placement classification level relative to other students in the same program. In addition, its questions reflect the type of knowledge students want to consider when studying Brazilian Portuguese. In other words, the content of this self-assessment can also help students to establish their goals when studying Brazilian Portuguese. Furthermore, with proper interpretation of the student responses, this test may also be useful to language specialists in the design of language curricula.

This test was not designed for use in a competitive situation or for determining grades. It was designed for a motivated student population, such as students going abroad. This type of student will be more motivated and more careful when taking this test than students who are simply fulfilling language requirements.

Although the organization of the 48 test items used for the subjective evaluation follow a scheme based on the aforementioned scale, the items are presented in random order. Therefore, any question item, regardless of its complexity might appear at

any point (i.e., beginning, middle or end) in the test. Therefore, the order was intended to be unpredictable, just as a situation would present itself in a natural language context.

The test items were prepared according to the following content areas: (1) Culture/Civilization, (2) Oral proficiency, (3) Pronunciation-specific, (4) Listening, (5) Writing, and (6) Reading. These linguistic and cultural areas are divided into eight levels: Novice (2 sublevels), Intermediate (2 sublevels), Advanced (2 sublevels) and Superior (2 sublevels).

The BP CAT

The BP CAT was first used in 2003 and we have not collected enough data for it yet. All the items in the item pool of the BP CAT have been piloted by administering them to a group of more than 200 students from different universities in the U.S.A. and Brazil. Native and non-native speakers of BP have taken all the question items. From the data obtained from these students, the items were calibrated based on the Rasch model with the use of the software Bilog.

The underlying schema of the BP CAT has six content areas: (1) Culture and Civilization, (2) Grammar with a Focus on Verbs, (3) Grammar in General without a Focus on Verbs, (4) Listening, (5) Reading, and (6) Vocabulary. The language areas not assessed in this test are oral and written production. Each content area assessed has 30 test items, which makes a small, but valid, item pool of 180 items. All test items take into consideration cultural elements (e.g., behavior and body gestures) as well as discursive and pragmatic aspects of BP.

We have designed this test for measuring a learner's language proficiency, placing students in language programs, measuring the learner's language gains, and measuring learner outcomes at the end of a language program. We hope this test will be useful for language and testing specialists interested in Brazilian Portuguese.

Acknowledgements - These tests were developed thanks to the assistance of Dr. Elena C. Papanastasiou (University of Cyprus), Dr. Nina Garrett (Yale University), and Dr. Dale A. Koike (University of Texas at Austin). The two assistants to the author, Renato Maggioli Frias and Gustavo Sudré, helped provide technological expertise.

THE NOTICEBOARD

Fourth ITC International Conference Equitable Assessment Practices: Building Guidelines for Best Practices

Bruce Bracken
College of William and Mary
U.S.A.

Thomas Oakland
University of Florida
U.S.A.

The International Test Commission (ITC) is featuring its fourth international conference, *Equitable Assessment Practices: Building Guidelines for Best Practices*, to be held October 7-10, 2004. This conference is co-chaired by Drs. Bruce A. Bracken and Thomas Oakland, and will be hosted by Project Athena and the Center for Gifted Education on the campus of The College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia, U.S.A.

This ITC conference will highlight advancements in methods for developing and using tests and assessment data in a manner that helps ensure fairness for all individuals, regardless of age, gender, race/ethnicity, and exceptionality. The conference will explore and discuss issues related to equitable assessment practices and fairness in testing, as well as offer skill-building training in clinical assessment and psychometric practice. Pre-conference assessment and measurement workshops and conference presentations will highlight recent advances in theory, research, and practice that promote equity to those who take tests, those who use test results, and those engaged in the business of test development and distribution. Assessment contexts addressed by the conference will include education/school, clinical/counseling, industrial/organizational, health/medical, occupational/vocational, and test publishers/research laboratories. Consistent with prior ITC conferences, a primary goal of this conference is to develop, publish, and promote guidelines for equitable assessment.

International conference keynote speakers will include David Bartram (SHL Group, United Kingdom), Fanny Cheung (The Chinese University of Hong Kong), Elias Mpofu (formerly of

Zimbabwe, now Pennsylvania State University, USA), and Robert Sternberg (Yale University, USA).

Pre-conference workshops will include such topics as adaptive behavior, intelligence, personality assessment, neuropsychology, differential item functioning, and structural equation modeling, and will include such speakers as: Barbara Byrne, Thomas Oakland, Hector Ochoa, Bruno Zumbo, among others.

In addition to invited keynote speakers and workshop presenters, all ITC members and other participants are encouraged to submit proposals for symposia, papers, posters, and conference workshops. Abstract submissions that focus on theoretical issues, empirical research, or case studies relating to equitable assessment within any of the above contexts are invited. Topics may include a variety of testing methods and procedures (e.g., computer-based / internet-based assessment, individual / group assessments, interviewing, nonverbal assessment, objective / projective techniques, observational techniques, paper / pencil, play-based assessment, self / other-report). Abstracts also may address issues related to differential effects of examinee demographics in test construction and application. Successful abstract submissions will highlight aspects of equitable assessment practices.

Conference registration is \$295 (US) for ITC members and \$330 (US) for nonmembers; however, the nonmember registration fee entitles the registrant to a one-year complimentary Individual Membership in the ITC.

Direct inquiries to: *Bruce A. Bracken, President
International Test Commission
E-mail: babrac@wm.edu
Phone: (757) 221-1712
Fax: (757) 221-2975*

Or, bookmark the ITC Conference website (<http://www.intestcom.org/itc2004/>) to monitor conference plans and to download registration and abstract submission forms.

4th ITC International Conference

*Equitable Assessment Practices:
Building Guidelines for Best Practices*

October 7-10, 2004

Williamsburg, Virginia, U.S.A.

**University of Indonesia Building an
International Research and Applied Center of
Human Resource Development**

Sarlito W. Sarwono
University of Indonesia
INDONESIA

Indonesia is one of the Asian countries that suffered the 1997 multidimensional (i.e., monetary, political, and social) crisis. While neighboring countries like Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand have recovered from the crisis, Indonesia really is still in it.

However, during the last 12 months we have witnessed significant progress in the country's efforts to survive. Economic, political, social, and security indicators, as well as trust toward president Megawati showed significant increase (KOMPAS, July 21, 2003).

The School of Psychology at the University of Indonesia, Jakarta, is the oldest and most prominent school of psychology in the country. It has been involved in various recovery programs carried out by the government, UN organizations, local or foreign foundations and NGOs or combination of them, in the forms of survey and research, psychosocial intervention, personal assessment and training or personal counseling, including post trauma counseling. To implement its role, the school has developed various institutions, including the Institute of Applied Psychology (since the 1970s), the Crisis Center (since 1998) and a publisher for psychological texts and tests.

Going International

After 50 years of experience, particularly during the time of crisis in the last 5 years, the faculty realizes that Indonesia is a very unique case. It is evident that the problem in Indonesia is not its political, economic, or social systems, but rather it is the people, the human being. Therefore, the problem of Indonesia and the way it recovers is psychological, not economic or political. However, the Western psychological paradigm does not fit into Indonesian ways of thinking. Indonesia and the hundreds of different ethnic groups and cultures within the country have their own paradigms, and their indigenous psychology.

For that reason, the faculty is taking the initiative to build a psychological research and applied center, which is not designated only for Indonesian

psychologists, but also for visiting scholars from overseas.

The Objectives

As a country with a population as big as the U.S.A. or Western Europe - with 220 million people and hundreds of ethnic and cultural groups - Indonesia is an ideal place to study cross-cultural psychology. It is also a good place to study inter-Asian psychology given that the university is located in Jakarta, which is only a few hours flight from neighboring countries such as Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Cambodia, the Philippines, China, Taiwan, and Japan. And last, but not least, Asia is a phenomenon to be observed due to its resilience towards change and global revolution. It is very different from other developing parts of the world such as Africa and South America.

The Facilities

The Center is located off campus in the middle of the city of Jakarta and within minutes of driving from government offices and shopping centers.

The 15 floor venue has a library, meeting rooms, class rooms, auditorium, 56 bedrooms, and office rooms for visiting scholars. Each room is equipped with air conditioning, computers and internet facilities.

A number of staff will be available to assist scholars in dealing with local authorities, connecting to other universities, and travelling to other areas. Faculty members will be available as partners or co-researchers.

Division 52 APA: International Psychology

It is the honour of the School of Psychology at the University of Indonesia, that the Center has developed in collaboration with Division 52 of APA: International Psychology.

The international members of the Division might like the opportunity to work in Asia, with Asian and particularly with Indonesian psychologists, whereas the school and the university will have the benefit of learning from the experience and international network of the visiting scholars.

Center Opening

At this moment, we are in the process of preparation. We are planning to open the Center in 2004.

**UPCOMING CONFERENCES ON
TESTING & ASSESSMENT**

VII European Association of Psychological Assessment

April 1-4, 2004
Málaga, Spain

Website: <http://www.uma.es/petra/eapa2004>
Contact e-mail: eapa2004@uma.es

This conference will focus on assessment as it relates to: sports & rehabilitation, health psychology, schools, organizational & working environments, personality, neuropsychology, clinical psychology, intelligence & aptitudes, families, individuals, special populations, and methodology. Keynote speakers include: Stephen Haynes, Hans Westmeyer, Ian M. Ivans, and Rocío Fernandez-Ballesteros.

National Council on Measurement in Education

April 13-15, 2004
San Diego, CA, U.S.A.

Website: <http://www.ncme.org>

The NCME conference is held in conjunction with the American Educational Research Association (AERA) conference. Topics typically include: classroom assessment, performance or alternative assessment, large-scale assessment, licensure and certification testing, computer-based testing, test use with specific populations, technical and statistical issues in test development, as well as policy, legal, and ethical issues.

The Japan Association for Language Teaching (JALT) Testing & Evaluation SIG

Contact e-mail: yvonne@sc4.so-net.ne.jp

The JALT Testing and Evaluation SIG is considering events for a 2004 Conference. If you are interested in presenting at this conference, please contact Yvonne Ishida (Ritsumeikan University).

International Conference of Multiple Intelligences Theory and its Application & The Third Annual Conference of DISCOVER in China (DIC)

May 19 – 21, 2004
Beijing, China

Website: <http://www.ConferencesChina.org/>
Contact e-mail (International): Dr. Linna Wang at lwang@alliant.edu

The theme of this conference is research on multiple intelligences and its application in teaching, assessment, and curriculum design. The keynote speaker will be Howard Gardner (Harvard University).

Second Biannual Joint Northumbria/Earli SIG Assessment Conference

June 23-25, 2004
Bergen, Norway

Website: <http://www.assessment2004.uib.no/>
Contact e-mail: assessment2004@uib.no

Call for proposals: Deadline is Jan. 27, 2004.

The main theme of this conference is “Raising standards in formative and summative assessment”.

32nd International Congress on Assessment Center Methods

October 5-8, 2004
Las Vegas, Nevada, U.S.A.

Website:

<http://www.assessmentcenters.org/pages/intlconference.html>

Contact e-mail: cathy.nelson@ddiworld.com

This annual conference focuses on trends, research, and recent developments in assessment that are of interest to assessment and HR professionals.

**Submission deadline for the June 2004
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