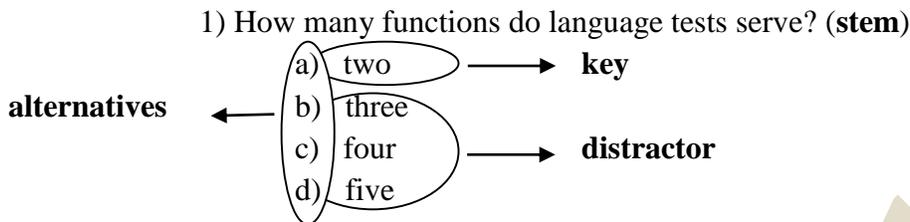


## Chapter Three: Forms of Language Test

The **form** of a test refers to its physical appearance.

### 1. STRUCTURE OF AN ITEM

An item, the smallest unit of a test, consists of two parts: the *stem* and the *response*.



### 2. CLASSIFICATION OF ITEM FORMS

#### 2.1. Subjective vs. objective items

**Subjective** → the scorer must make an opinionated judgment

**Objective** → the correctness of the test taker's response is determined by objective criteria

☛ **Note:** You should know that objectivity and subjectivity refers to the way a test item is *scored*.

*The most beautiful season is .....*

1) spring    2) summer    3) fall    4) winter

*There are ..... seasons in a year.*

1) four    2) three    3) two    4) five

#### 2.2. Essay-type vs. multiple-choice items

**Essay-type items** → examinee is required to *produce* language elements

**Multiple-choice items** → examinee is required to *select* the correct response from among given alternatives

#### 2.3. Suppletion vs. recognition items

**Suppletion items** → examinee supplies the missing part(s) of the sentence or complete an incomplete sentence

**Recognition items** → examinee selects an answer from a list of possibilities

### 3. TYPES OF ITEMS

#### 3.1. Receptive response items

Advantages of Multiple-Choice (MC) items:

- ☺ highly structured nature of items → test writer can get directly at the specific skills and learning he wishes to measure → diagnostic function
- ☺ practicality → include a large number of different tasks in the testing session
- ☺ Scoring can be done quickly

- ☺ no judgments as to degrees of correctness → reliability

Disadvantages of items:

- ☹ test only recognition knowledge but not language communication → passive
- ☹ harmful washback,
- ☹ expose students to errors,
- ☹ de-contextualized,
- ☹ time-consuming to construct,
- ☹ simpler to answer than subjective tests,
- ☹ encourage guessing.

To compensate for students' guessing on tests:

$$\text{Guessing Correction Formula} = \text{Right} - \frac{\text{Wrong}}{n-1}$$

where  $n$  refers to the number of options.

- ➔ **Example:** In a test which consisted of 80 items with four options, a student answered 50 items correctly and gave 30 wrong answers. After applying guessing correction formula his score would be -----

$$\text{Score} = \text{Right} - \frac{\text{Wrong}}{n-1} = 50 - \frac{30}{4-1} = 50 - 10 = 40$$

### 3.2. Personal response items

In recent years, language teachers have stepped up efforts to develop non-test assessment options. Such innovations are referred to as **alternative assessment options** that encourage the students to produce responses that hold personal meaning.

#### 3.2.1. Self-assessment

Any items wherein students are asked to rate their own knowledge, skills, or performances. It provides the teacher with some idea of how the students view their own language abilities and development

- ☺ speed
- ☺ direct involvement of students → increased motivation
- ☺ the encouragement of autonomy
- ☹ subjectivity

- 🌟\* **Note:** *Peer-assessment* is a variation on this theme that requires students to rate each other

Categories of self- and peer-assessment:

- Direct assessment of a specific performance
- Indirect assessment of general competence

- Student-generated tests
- etc.

**3.2.2. Journal**

An interaction between the teacher and the student through dialogues or responses  
 Teachers become better acquainted with their students, in terms of both their learning progress and their affective states → become better equipped to meet students’ individual needs

- ☺ Journals afford an opportunity for a teacher to offer various kinds of feedback
- ☹ Journals are too free to form to be assessed accurately
- ☹ Critics have expressed ethical concerns

**3.2.3. Conference**

Any assessment procedure that involves students visiting the teacher’s office alone or in groups for brief meetings.

- ☺ Teacher’s being able to direct feedback toward a student’s specific needs

Teachers assume the role of a facilitator and guide, rather than a master controller and deliverer of final grades.

**3.2.4. Portfolio**

A purposeful collection of students’ work that demonstrates to students and others their efforts, progress, and achievements in given areas

CRADLE → Collecting, Reflecting, Assessing, Documenting, Linking, Evaluating.

**4. ALTERNATIVE vs. TRADITIONAL ASSESSMENT**

against the notion that all people and all skills could be measured by traditional tests → alternative assessment to triangulate data about students

Traditional Assessment	Alternative Assessment
One-shot, standardized exams Timed, multiple-choice format Decontextualized test items Scores suffice for feedback Norm-referenced scores Focus on the right answer Summative Oriented to product Non-interactive performance Fosters extrinsic motivation	Continuous long-term assessment Untimed, free-response format Contextualized communicative tasks Individualized feedback and washback Criterion-referenced scores Open-ended, creative answers Formative Oriented to process Interactive performance Fosters intrinsic motivation