

FIRST THINGS FIRST

Scope of the presentation

- Some intractable terms
- Assessment or appraisal
- Evaluation/ evaluate
- Measurement/ measure
- Tests/ testing
- Exams or examinations
- Quizzes



QUOTATION FOR THOUGHT

Language assessment is used in free variation with language testing although it is also used somewhat more widely to include for example classroom testing for learning and institutional examinations.

Alan Davies



WHAT IS A TEST?

❖ Two definitions

A. A test is a method of measuring a person's ability, knowledge, or performance in a given domain.

A well-constructed test is an instrument that provides an accurate measure of the test taker's ability within a particular domain.

B. A test is a measurement instrument designed to elicit a specific sample of an individual's behavior.

Language tests can thus provide the means for more carefully focusing on the specific language abilities that are of interest.



- A language test is a method.
- A language test measures performance.
- A language test gauges ability or knowledge.
- A language test is targeted at a specific area.
- A language test is necessarily quantitative.
- A language test provides information.
- A language test is a measurement type.
- By implication, a test is the narrowest term because it only elicits a sample of behavior and nothing else.



PURPOSES OF LANGUAGE TESTS

❑ Pedagogical purposes

1. To motivate students to study
2. To review material taught

❑ Descriptive or research purposes

1. To test language proficiency
2. To test language processing
3. To test language acquisition
4. To test language attrition
5. To test language teaching—effects of instructional settings and techniques on language acquisition



ASSESSMENT OR APPRAISAL

- ❑ The act of collecting information and making judgments on a language learner's knowledge of a language and ability to use it.
- ❑ The process of collecting information about a given object of interest according to procedures that are systematic and substantively grounded.



Some features of assessment

1. Systematicity of assessment
2. Substantive groundedness of assessment
3. Both quantitative and qualitative nature of assessment. (results report)
4. A wide range of techniques to collect information: elicitation and observation such as multiple-choice tests, extended responses: essays and portfolios, questionnaires, oral interviews, introspections and observations.



MEASUREMENT

- I. Defining measurement: quantification of characteristics of persons according to explicit procedures and rules
 - A. quantification: assignment of numbers
 - B. Characteristics:
 - 1. Physical characteristics such as age, gender, etc
 - 2. Mental characteristics such as intelligence, knowledge, ability, attrition etc
 - 3. Explicit rules and procedures: replicability of measuring instrument or observation of an attribute



- II. Test scores, ratings, and rankings are clear examples of measurement.
- III. Labels such as good, fair, and letters such as a, b, and c can be converted into measurement.
- IV. Measurement is necessarily quantitative.



EVALUATION

- Systematic collection of information for the purpose of decision making about the effectiveness of total language programmes
 1. System level evaluation
 2. Course level evaluation
 3. Student learning evaluation
- The use of both measure and non-measure data to make decisions



- Measure data: test scores, ratings, rankings, questionnaires, surveys
- Non-measure data: observations, verbal descriptions, portfolios
- Purpose: decision-making function



TESTING VS EVALUATION

□ Testing:

1. Necessarily quantitative
2. Information-providing function
3. Pedagogical and research purposes

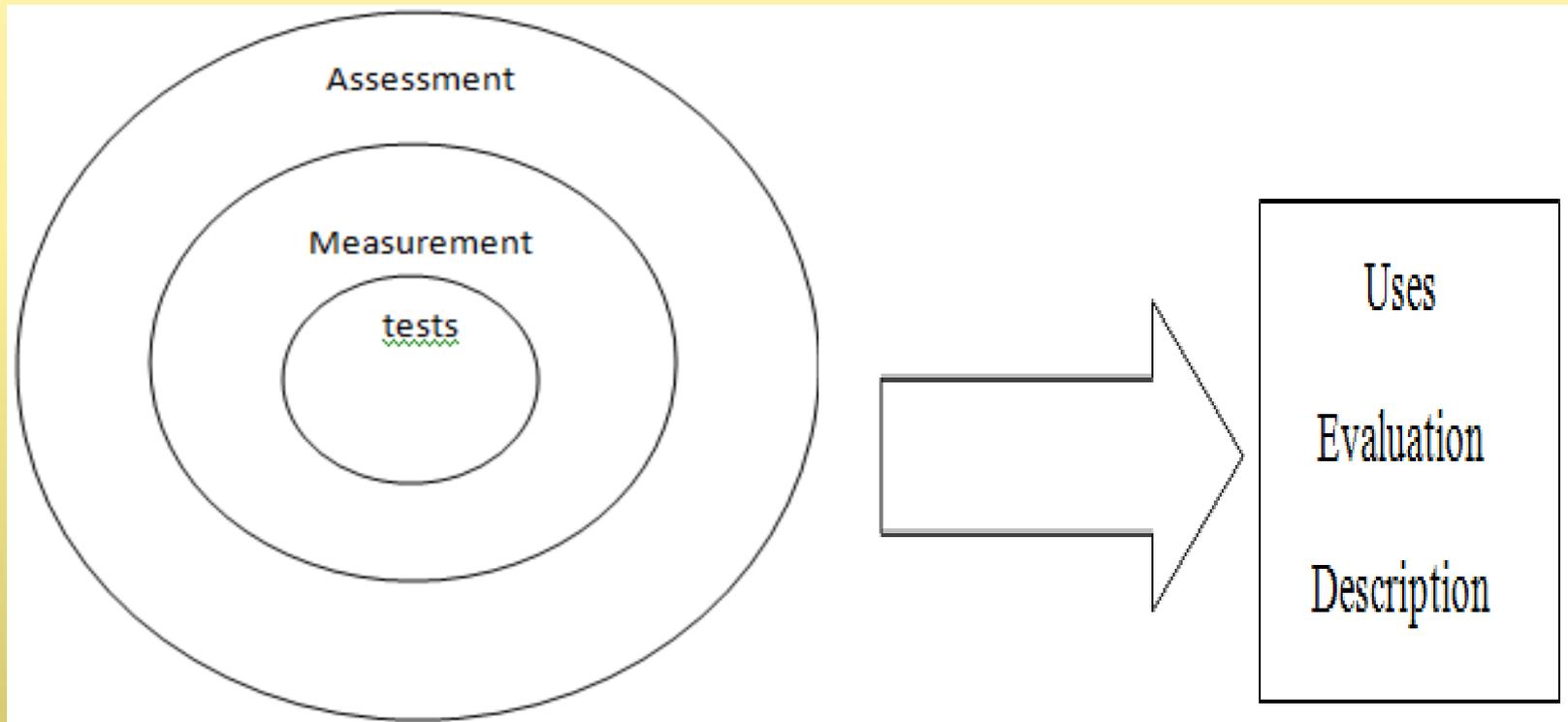
□ Evaluation:

1. Both quantitative and qualitative
2. Not necessarily entails testing
3. Decision-making function



TO WRAP IT UP

The relationship among assessment, measurement, and test and their uses for description and evaluation in different settings



EXAMS OR EXAMINATIONS

- ❖ Any formal set-piece of assessment
- ❖ No use of books, dictionaries, calculators, etc
- ❖ Separation of students from one another
- ❖ Given either by teachers, headmasters or mistresses, or an external body



TESTS VS EXAMS

- I. Length:
 - A. Shorter and less time-consuming
 - B. Longer and more time-consuming
- II. Hierarchy
 - A. A school teacher tests pupils
 - B. A university professor examines students.
- III. Interpretation
 - A. Objective
 - B. Subjective
- IV. Comprehensiveness
 - A. Less comprehensive
 - B. More comprehensive



QUIZ

I. Definition:

A trade-off or compromise between short-term, subject evaluation based on daily work and the longer term achievement test (a compromise between informal assessment and formal assessment)

II. Objective:

To check initial comprehension of any segment of material, not final mastery



III. Nature of the quiz:

- A. Length: very brief and short, easy to construct, administer, and score
- B. Focus: very narrow in terms of
 - 1. Coverage of content
 - 2. Variety of items
- C. Announced or unannounced: when unannounced it is called a pop quiz
- D. Time: not time consuming



IV. Advantages of quiz

- A. Positive or beneficial backwash
- B. Its review nature when given at the beginning of the class
- C. Its diagnostic feedback when given at the end of a class: students' alertness
- D. Familiarization with final exam
- E. Devotion more time to learning on part of students
- F. Punctuality, attendance, and discipline



THE TRIANGLE OF LANGUAGE TESTING, LANGUAGE TEACHING, AND APPLIED LINGUISTICS

- I. What is the relationship between linguistics, applied linguistics, language teaching, and language assessment?
- II. How does language assessment fit into applied linguistics?
- III. How does language assessment relate to language teaching studies?
- IV. What does language assessment mean?
- V. Why do we use language assessment?
- VI. What does language assessment draw on?



WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LINGUISTICS, APPLIED LINGUISTICS, LANGUAGE TEACHING, AND LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT?

I. Linguistics:

- A. descriptive: what of language
- B. explanatory: why of the language

II. Applied linguistics:

- A. descriptive: use of language
- B. Interdisciplinary: not limited to linguistics

III. Language teaching studies

- A. procedural: how of language
- B. explanatory: why of the language



IV. Language assessment:

- A. Descriptive: what to be assessed
- B. Procedural: how to assess
- C. Explanatory : why to assess



WHAT DOES LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT DRAW ON?

- I. Language:
 - A. Linguistic view: psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics
 - B. Applied linguistic view: language teaching and learning
 - C. Lay person view:
- II. Measurement: reliability, validity, and practicality
- III. Language ability: test use and test purpose



HOW DOES LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT FIT INTO APPLIED LINGUISTICS?

- A. Operationalisation of its theoretical constructs and provision of data for its researchers for analysis of language knowledge and use
- B. A methodology to carry out empirical research in applied linguistics
- C. A means of establishing goals and standards for teaching courses and syllabuses



HOW DOES LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT RELATE TO LANGUAGE TEACHING STUDIES?

- I. Bidirectional:
 - A. Methods of assessment may affect teaching/learning in the classroom: the issue of backwash
 - B. New theories of language learning and teaching lead to changes in assessment practices: structuralism led to discrete-point testing



WHAT DOES LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT MEAN?

- I. Doing language assessment means seeking to provide information.
- II. Types of information:
 - A. Research information: to test hypotheses in relation to our understanding of language and language learning
 - B. Reflexive information: backwash
 - C. Progress information: measuring progress
 - D. Selection information: for programmes
 - E. Evaluation information: courses, materials, methods



WHY DO WE TEST STUDENTS?

- A. To measure the amount of learning
- B. To foster learning through diagnostic feedback
- C. To find out ability or suitability to follow a course of study
- D. To make sure of students' progress during the course of study and
- E. To identify problem areas before the end of the course



- F. To compare students' performance with that of other students
- G. To determine and adjust it to the ability level of students
- H. To determine the efficacy of instruction, the appropriateness of materials, the coverage of course objectives, the equal emphasis of skills and subskills
- I. To offer remedial work



- I. To place students into groups of similar ability
- J. To sharpen our understanding of language leaning and language acquisition processes



CONCLUSIONS

- A. Language assessment is field of study in and by itself.
- B. Language assessors must keep up with changes in Linguistics, Applied Linguistics, and Language Teaching Studies.
- C. Language assessors need be applied linguists.

