



تقييم اختبارات اللغة الإنجليزية في الشهادة العامة للتعليم الثانوي في ليبيا

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المستخلص: يتناول هذا البحث امتحانات اللغة الإنجليزية للمرحلة الثانوية العامة في ليبيا، ويقدم أمثلة من السنوات السابقة. الهدف من الدراسة هو فحص أنواع مختلفة من اختبارات اللغة الإنجليزية ومعرفة المهارات التي تختبرها وكيفية اختبارها. ويعتبر فحص هذه الاختبارات طريقة مناسبة لهذا النوع من الدراسة، حيث تمكن الباحث من الإجابة على الأسئلة المذكورة أعلاه ومن ثم تقديم الطرق البديلة المناسبة لتقييم مهارات التواصل لدى الطلاب. ونظراً لأن معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية يدخلون مهنتهم بإعداد أكاديمي ناقص ولا يتلقون تدريباً أثناء الخدمة لتطوير مهاراتهم في التدريس والاختبار، فقد تم تقديم أمثلة على اختبار القراءة والكتابة والاستماع لتوضيح الطريقة المناسبة للاختبار هذه المهارات. ولهذا السبب، يُعتقد أن هذه الدراسة مهمة من حيث أنها تقوم بتقييم اختبارات اللغة الإنجليزية الحالية وتقدم أمثلة جيدة لكيفية تحسينها.

الكلمات المفتاحية: امتحانات اللغة الإنجليزية، الثانوية العامة، تقييم، ليبيا

The Assessment of English Language Tests in the General Certificate of Secondary Education in Libya

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Abstract: This paper examines copies of English language examinations of the general secondary school stage in Libya. It presents examples from previous years. The study objective is to examine different types of English language tests and to find out which skills do they test and how they are tested. The examination of these tests is an appropriate method to this kind of study. It enables the researcher to answer the questions mentioned above and then provide the alternative suitable ways to assess students' communicative skills. Due to the fact that English language teachers enter their profession with deficient academic preparation and they do not receive in-service training to develop their teaching and testing skills, examples of testing reading, writing and listening have been given to show the appropriate way to test these skills. For this reason, it is believed that this study is important in the sense that it evaluates the current English languages tests and provides good examples of how to improve them.

Keywords: English language exams, secondary school, assessment, Libya

Introduction

English language testing is of the most important issues in teaching English as a foreign language. From personal experience in teaching English at teachers training colleges and at the University, this important topic has not been given the full attention it deserves. During teaching the module “Language testing” to students teachers, the question that has always been raised is “What do we assess?” In other words what are the areas that should be taken into account when English language is tested. The immediate answer to this big question is the fact that English language teachers should assess students’ linguistic and communicative skills. Examples of tests’ questions which are supposed to assess students’ knowledge of grammar and their communicative skills are provided in this study. The study objective is to examine different types of English language tests in secondary schools and to find out which skills do they test and how they are tested. The examination of these tests is an appropriate method to this kind of study. It enables the researcher to answer the questions mentioned above and then provide the alternative suitable ways to assess students’ communicative skills.

Due to the fact that English language teachers enter their profession with deficient academic preparation and they do not receive in-service training to develop their teaching and testing skills, examples of testing reading, writing and listening have been given to show the appropriate way to test these skills. For this reason, it is believed that this study is important in the sense that it evaluates the current English languages tests and provides good examples of how to improve them. It is worth mentioning that the researcher is aware of the differences between the two types of assessment which are *formative assessment* and *summative assessment*. The tests which have been examined in this study fall in the category of summative assessment which

Rea-Dickins (2009: 376) states that “*Usually it has to fit into the administrative requirements of an institution, for example a private language school, or a school curriculum in which all subjects are required to be assessed.*”

One cannot ignore the benefit of formative assessment both in teaching and learning and it is believed that it will be one of the topics that will be tackled in future studies

1. The Assessment of English Language in the General Certificate of Secondary schools’ education

Learners in Libya attend 5 sessions in a week. Each session lasts for 45 minutes.

The dominant approach to teaching is through grammar and translation. English is not taught to be a medium of communication. Normally, the teacher reads a text to the class, translates new words and any words the students ask about. In addition, grammar occupies many sessions during the school year.

A writing class is held once a week, though, sometimes, teachers leave it until the end of the year. This is because, first, teachers are forced to finish the textbook and, second, providing learners with ready pieces of composition to learn for the examination does not take much time.

Time is not specifically put aside for listening. When listening is practised, however, learners listen to

their teachers reading aloud a text which has not been prepared as spoken language. Thus, learners are exposed to a type of language which they are unlikely to hear in real life as these texts are taken from a written rather than a spoken source. Some teachers, more recently, may use the language laboratory for listening. The same problem nevertheless still exists. Learners do not hear genuine spoken language but are exposed to written text read aloud.

Accordingly, all tests throughout the school year emphasise vocabulary and grammar. Progress tests are given to encourage the learners to follow the textbooks and to study at home. Some of these periodic tests are also used as achievement tests as students get marks which are scored as part of their final result.

This situation is a reflection of the dominance of the final examination. The main objective of the English language teacher is to cover as many lessons as possible from the text books. This means that students are studying to pass examinations rather than learning English as a means of communication. In the final examination, concentration is on composition, grammar and reading.

Though a composition occurs in the final examination, it is not considered important by teachers or students. This is because writing is not part of their normal lives and because, as mentioned above, the test allows for the learning by heart of a given composition at the end of the year. "Good teachers" who have the appropriate prediction skills will select possible subjects and write a composition which will enable their learners to pass the final examination. The only function of writing is, thus, as a channel through which students convey their answers to other questions. Accordingly, learners' writing ability does not develop and they are apparently exercising a language skill which they are unlikely to use in real life. But the English exam papers in their new forms do not assess students' writing abilities and skills.

An example of a typical writing test is:

Write on one of the following subjects:

1. The first of September Revolution prosperity.
2. Industry in Libya.
3. Agriculture in Libya.

There is no input of information and so such tests can be called free or creative. They are quick and easy to set. The learners are given complete freedom to express their own ideas and are required to create the content of their writing from their imagination.

An important issue here is whether the learners have the imagination and knowledge needed to write about such topics. Even if they do have the knowledge it is doubtful whether they will be able to express themselves about such things in a foreign language. In the example above learners are expected to talk about industry or agriculture before and after the Revolution and they are supposed to mention the prosperity following the Revolution. Such a test is really a type of propaganda. Not all students are interested.

The production of a set composition learned by heart from their teachers' model does not test their ability to write and text security is in danger. It is, however, an effective technique in getting students to pass the examination. To control these problems relatively unfamiliar information can be provided for the learners. For instance, visual information is useful in this respect and another example using notes is given below in section 3.

In the grammar questions students typically fill gaps with given words, change from one form to

another, choose the correct form and give the correct form of given words. From personal experience in Libyan schools, it is clear that, among the above, certain types of questions are repeated each year. Thus "good teachers" can predict what questions may occur in the final examinations and their students are likely to get high grades. Commonly recurring questions are:

1. *Fill the spaces below with suitable prepositions
(through - in - on - under - at)*

- A. Sami is looking ____ me.
- B. I am looking for my pencil. It is ____ my bag.
- C. Amina went to the beach ____ Friday.
- D. She put her bag ____ the table.
- E. The teacher is looking ____ the window.

2. *Change the following sentences into the passive*

*Example: Ali broke the window.
The window was broken by Ali.*

- A. Salem is writing a letter.
- B. The teacher explained the lesson.
- C. The boys played football.
- D. The students have done their homework.

3. *Change the following sentences into the negative.*

- A. Hani is going to school.
- B. Ali went to the cinema.
- C. She likes her brother.
- D. I will visit my friend tomorrow.

4. *Choose the correct form or the verbs in brackets.*

- A. If you work hard you _____ (pass - will pass - have passed) the examination.
- B. If she saw Ali, she _____ (will tell - would tell - tells) him.
- C. If we had seen the thief, we _____ (would have told - will tell - would tell) the Police.

5. *Change the following sentences into indirect speech.*

- A. "I will go to school tomorrow," she said.
- B. "Amina wrote the letter," Sami said.
- C. "This is not a joke," said the teacher.

6. *Give the correct form of the verbs in brackets.*

- A. Samira (visit) _____ her friends yesterday.

- B. My father (go) _____ to Benghazi next month.
- C. She usually (play) _____ tennis with her friends.
- D. The sun (rise) _____ in the east.

In such questions learners are required to recognise appropriate linguistic forms rather than to understand or produce appropriate language in an appropriate context.

In the final examination students also answer questions following a passage. This so-called test of reading comprehension is not really a test of the reading skill because, on the whole, students seek the sentences or phrases which are given in the question. They copy them as the answer. For instance, for, who killed him?

from the text:

There was a fierce lion wandering in the city streets. People were horrified.
No one wanted to kill it. King Hakiem took his sword and killed the lion.

Students can easily identify *King Hakiem took his sword and killed the lion* as an answer. This is no proof of understanding as is illustrated by what often happens in situations like the following where the question *Who killed the lion?* cannot be answered quite so easily.

There was a fierce lion wandering in the city streets. People were horrified.
No one wanted to kill the lion. King Hakiem took his sword and rode his horse towards it. The lion attacked the king but he was so strong that he cut off its head.

Students will seek the phrase including the two words *kill* and *lion*. Experience shows that they may produce the following answers - **wanted to kill the lion* or **kill the lion King Hakiem*.

In conclusion, the skills of speaking and listening are not tested at all either in final examinations or in tests occurring throughout the school year. As a result, students do not really exercise either skill during their English lessons.

Of the items tested in the final examination in Libya writing must be marked subjectively. Objective marking is possible, however, with grammar and reading comprehension. In both of these cases many questions use multiple choice. For instance, with regard to the text about King Hakiem given above on page 5, it would be common to find a question like:

Who killed the lion? Tick the correct answer.

- 1. King Habieth did.
- 2. The people killed it.
- 3. King Hakiem did.
- 4. None of the above killed it.

However, open-ended questions also commonly occur as those shown in the examples above on page 4. Ideally, the 6 examples of grammatical tests given above on pages 2-3 are objective in that there is supposed to be only one correct answer. We note, though, that with 1, for instance, the required answer is probably *Sami is looking at me*. A possible answer is also, of course, *Sami is looking through me*.

In all cases, there are no fixed criteria and there are no standardisation meetings. Individual teachers are the judges. Their marking is not revisable and their verdicts are ultimate.

In all cases, whatever is being tested, it is conventional that bad handwriting, spelling mistakes and

grammatical mistakes are obstacles to scoring good marks. In the writing no overall impression of the effectiveness of a piece of writing is considered. Nor do teachers take account of the features that make a good piece of writing.

New electronic examinations after 2007

In 2007, the general directorate of examinations in Libya decided to use what might be seen as multiple-choice questions (MCQ) to test students' knowledge of English language in the final years of compulsory education and the secondary education. It is believed that these types of test are called achievement tests.

Students are given exams booklets which include questions on English grammar, vocabulary and statement from the text books so students can mark them false or true. These kinds of exams can be easily marked as students are asked to highlight the number in the circle which represent the right answer.

Looking the types of questions, one can see that they do not assess reading, writing, listening and speaking skills. Instead they assess students' ability to memorise information provided in their text books, they also assess their knowledge of grammar. A close examination of these tests shows that they include three types of questions:

- 1) True or false questions
- 2) Multiple choice questions.
- 3) Matching questions (heads and tails) which require students to match a series of stems to responses. One column of statements, words and phrases and another column of responses.

Students are instructed to use pencils to shade the circles which coincide with the position of the right answer. In the next few pages we will look at examples of the three types of questions and see whether they assess students' performance in reading, writing, listening and their knowledge of grammar.

Students are exposed to false and true questions. Here are few examples of these questions:

Generally speaking the English language examinations are divided into three categories of grammar, vocabulary and previous knowledge of reading text which students study during the academic year.

Grammar

The word "fresh" is an adjective.	A) true	B) false
We use "play" for (activates) with a ball and games.	A) true	B) false
To make the past simple tense of irregular verbs add "ed".	A) true	B) false
We can talk about the future in different ways.	A) true	B) false
We use "the" to refer to unique and special things.	A) true	B) false
Might is more common in spoken British English.	A) true	B) false
I've done a decision, I want that one.	A) true	B) false
The adjective "failure" is appositive word.	A) true	B) false
If you studied hard, you would have passed your exams.	A) true	B) false
I am not late aren't I?	A) true	B) false
They enjoyed to watch the film.	A) true	B) false
She shouldn't have driven through a green light.	A) true	B) false
She will arrive until 6 p.m.	A) true	B) false
I look forward to vising you again.	A) true	B) false

The following questions are supposed to assess reading.

Naguib Mahfouz was born in Cairo in 1939. .	A) true	B) false
There are three groups of buildings in Alhambra. .	A) true	B) false

Brasilia is 3 hours behind G.M.T.	A) true	B) false
When it is 2p.m in London it is 5 in Libya.	A) true	B) false
Leather comes from animals skin.	A) true	B) false
Big Ben is clock in Cairo.	A) true	B) false
Naguib Mahfouz wrote his first novel in 1939.	A) true	B) false
Norgay and Hillary reached the summit at 11:30 p.m.	A) true	B) false
Naguib Mahfouz wrote thirty two novels.	A) true	B) false
Mahfouz was born in Cairo in 1920.	A) true	B) false
"Great failures" is a title for serious texts.	A) true	B) false
In humans, there are four forms of <u>malaria</u> .	A) true	B) false
The main symptoms of malaria are chills fever and sweating.	A) true	B) false
Edison invented the electrical light bulb.	A) true	B) false
Integration and equation is a book written by Newton.	A) true	B) false

Multiple choice questions

Vocabulary

Centre or inside of an object:	A) drift	B) Core	C) disasters
Not sure, uncertain.	A) refuse	B) leave	C) doubtful
Light is the opposite of	A) hot	B) float	C) heavy
I can play	A) Chess	B) Swimming	C) Camping

..... means to remove a sentence from your text.

- A) Edit B) Select C) Delete D) click

The lowest number in a set of numbers

- A) median B) mean C) maximum D) minimum

..... means light sporadic rain.

- A) shower B) Coastal area C) High ground D) Flash flood

Previous or general knowledge

..... is a good conductor of electricity. A) copper B) glass C) Wood

Who built the Great pyramid? A) the Spanish B) The ancient Egyptian C) The French

The Capital of Oman is ... A) Cairo B) Tripoli C) Muscat

About people worked in the colosseum

- A) 20 to 30 B) 200 to 300 C) 2000 to 3000 D) 20000 to 30000

The Nazca lines were not discovered until the

- A) 1920s B) 1930s C) 1940s. D) 1950s.

Taj Mahal is made of

- A) White marble B) red marble C) black marble D) green marble

The Sherpa People came from Tibet about

- A) 400 hundred years ago. B) 500 hundred years ago. C) 600 hundred years ago.

Taj Mahal is in A) Turkey B) Venezuela C) India

- Amr Shaban is from A) Egypt B) Morocco C) Tunisia
- Angel Falls are in A) England B) America C) Venezuela
- Who invented the radio? A) Marconi B) Morcello C) Marino

Grammar

- We are very good football. A) at B) in C) on
- The flight leaves 8 O'clock A) on B) at C) in
- The past of the verb "do" A) die B) does C) did
- You haven't got any brothers,? A) do you B) haven't you C) have you
- I can remember to swim. A) learning B) to learn C) learns
- Are you interested computers? A) on B) in C) of
- I to the airport tomorrow. A) went B) am going C) go
- There is old man in our street. A) an B) a C) the
- They are very kind me. A) of B) at C) to
- I wish I as fast as my brother. A) can run B) run C) Could run
- The infinitive can't be used after A) why B) what C) when
- He was interested Sports. A) in B) on C) for

Matching heads and tails

Q	41	When did they build it?	A	To make a tomb for the pharaoh
Q	42	How did they transport the materials?	B	4.600 years ago
Q	43	What did they use to build the Great Pyramid?	C	They rolled them on long pieces of wood.
Q	44	Why did they build it?	D	stone
Q	45	Holding his breath	A	The first appearance of light in the morning
Q	46	Mosquito net	B	Looked carefully
Q	47	Peered	C	Not breathing
Q	48	Down	D	A thin curtain which protects a sleeping person from insects

Q	41	narrow	A	Not breathing
Q	42	marking	B	Formal social occasions
Q	43	ceremonies	C	A thin curtain which protects a sleeping person from insects
Q	44	Holding his breath	D	Lines
Q	45	mosquito	E	The opposite of wide
Q	46	A-Idrisi's	A	Physics
Q	47	Galileo	B	Botany

Q	48	Newton	C	Mathematics
Q	49	Al Khwarizmi	D	Cartography
Q	50	Linnaeus	E	Astronomy

Q	41	Coach	A	Very big
Q	42	Huge	B	Keep quiet
Q	43	Hurry up	C	Bus
Q	44	Steel	D	Come on
Q	45	Don't say a word	E	Type of metal
Q	46	Fresh	A	Leave
Q	47	Raw	B	Choose
Q	48	Tournament	C	cooked
Q	49	Select	D	Frozen
Q	50	Depart	E	A sporting competition with several parts

It is clear from the previous demonstration that the types of questions used in that the final year of the secondary schools' tests do not assess students' ability to master the language skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking. Rather they assess their knowledge of information studied during the schools year. These questions require students to memorise certain information about famous people, ancient places, stories from different cultures and scientific phenomena. They also test students' knowledge of grammar but not their ability to use grammar. These kinds of tests may negatively affect the way teachers teach in Libyan schools. This is called testing washback effect on learning. Harmer (2009) claims that

"The washback effect occurs when teachers see the form of the test their students are going to have to take and then, as a result, start teaching for the test."

It is likely that the English language achievement examinations left its impact on teachers. From personal experience, most of the students who obtained the Secondary school certificate and applied to join the English department could not speak English or understand questioned impart on them. They also had some difficulty in reading the reading text. Their answer to the reading comprehension questions was to select the sentences or phrases which include the words provided in the reading questions and write them as answers. Their writing indicated that they were not aware of punctuations, capitalisation and no awareness of grammatical rules. In addition to that their spelling mistakes are very many.

Looking at the secondary school three text books which are taught in first, second and third years, one can see that they are based on the communicative approach. Their learning activities centralise around reading, listening, speaking, writing and mastering grammatical rules. But, it is true that examination papers' questions require students to memorise pieces of information in order to answer them. In addition, they do not assess students' reading, writing and listening skills. One can conclude that the English language questions illustrated above are concerned with students memorizing pieces of previously studies information. If the examiners are trying to develop analytic skills of learners' tests that require them to recall are inappropriate and will cause students to conclude that memorization is the examiners objective. (Clay,2001: 6)

2. TEST SPECIFICATION

(Who): The learners are 18-19 years old. They are studying English in secondary schools in Libya. They have already spent 5 -6 years studying English as a foreign language. This is the last year of their English course. The level they have reached is supposed to be basically intermediate. The ultimate

purpose of many of these students is to continue their studies in the university and some of them may join the English departments.

(What): In this assignment the two skills of listening and writing have been chosen for test development because, as suggested by the discussion above, listening is currently neglected in Libyan tests and examinations and writing is not treated well. If such items were included in the final examination it would encourage teachers and textbook writers to include these in the teaching schedule.

(When & Where): The tests suggested below would be held at the end of June, at the end of the course in the teacher training institute. The tests are intended for about 20 candidates.

The listening test would be recorded on a tape and candidates would write their answers on the sheet provided.

(Why): The tests are meant to give an example of how to test listening and writing skills. The type of writing and listening tasks illustrated test skills that are needed by Libyan students who would continue their education in the University. The two tests which are given are authentic. After filling in a form to apply for a course, it is common to have to write a letter to ask for accommodation. Students commonly listen to informational talks given by their lecturers as part of their courses.

(Marking): *(a) Writing:* There are certain problems in marking the type of work produced by the writing question. We cannot avoid subjectivity in marking productive language like writing. We can, however, reduce it by breaking the total performance down into various categories and give marks to each category. The number of marks given to each category should be small so that the scorer has a restricted range to choose from.

The following scheme based on that illustrated in the Module lectures is suitable, especially for the intermediate level and for Libyan teachers who have had little training in this field.

Message:

- Is the required information included?
- Is irrelevant information excluded?
- Is the content complete?

Language:

- Is the grammar accurate?
- Is the vocabulary accurate?
- Is the spelling accurate?
- Is there a good range of language?

Text:

- Is the text well-organised?
- Is the language fluent?
- Is the text layout suitable?

A total of 60 marks will be given for the writing. Each question indicated above can be given a maximum of six marks. It is intended that the letters should be double-marked after a standardisation meeting with two markers.

(b) Listening: For the listening, scoring is objective in that learners do not respond in writing. They

produce only ticks and numerals. In each case there is only one possible answer.

The listening is marked out of a total of 60. Two marks are awarded for each correct item according to the following key.

1. (a) (i) False
(ii) 60%
- (b) (i) False (ii) 40%
2. Asia 3
Europe 1
Latin America 3
the Middle East 2
3. food 2
art galleries X
sunshine 1
meeting people 3
historical sites & museums 4
4. England 2
Ireland X
Scotland 2
Wales 1
5. friends 3
newspapers & magazines 3
television 1
travel agencies 2

(Feedback): The information can be used to see whether candidates have reached an appropriate level in the skills of listening and writing to go on to study further in the medium of English. This could represent a part of the information needed in selecting candidates for study abroad.

3. THE TESTS

(a) Writing

For the writing test please turn to the following page.

1. Complete the application form.
2. Write a letter to book your accommodation. Address it to the manager:

Mr G. Coll
Grove House
Whitworth Park
716 Oxford Road
Manchester
M13 9N6

3. Make sure that your letter contains the following information:

- a. your full name
- b. your home address and nationality
- c. the dates of the English course
- d. the date of your arrival in Manchester
- e. the date of leaving the accommodation

(Note: All bookings run from 12.00 noon, Friday to Friday)

Cost: 1995, £32.50 per week for a small study room)

(b) Listening**Candidates' Answer Sheet**

Listen and complete the following.

1. Look at the following statements and

- (i) *True or False*
 (ii) if False, write the correct number in the box
 [8 marks]

80% of English people travel abroad for their holidays

(a)	(i)	True	
	(ii)	False	

**20% of English people travel in the United Kingdom
for their holidays**

(b)	(iii)	True	
	(iv)	False	

2. English people visit the following places abroad. Order the according to their popularity. To do this write the numbers 1 to 3 in the spaces provided. (Note: 1 is the most popular).[8 marks]

Asia _____
 Europe _____
 Latin America _____
 the Middle East _____

3. Look at the following. Choose the 4 things English people seek abroad. Order them according to their popularity. Write the numbers 1 to 4 in the spaces provided. (1 is the most popular). Write X in the remaining space. [10 marks]

food _____
 art galleries _____

sunshine _____
 meeting people _____
 historical sites _____
 & museums

4. From the following choose the places people visit in the U.K. Number them 1 to 2 according to their popularity. (1 is the most popular). Write X in the remaining space. [8 marks]

England _____
 Ireland _____
 Scotland _____
 Wales

5. Number the following sources of information in order of their popularity. (1 is the most popular). [8 marks]

friends _____
 newspapers & magazines
 television _____
 travel agencies _____

Notes from which the Speaker will deliver the Talk

1. Research - 2 years - by travel agents

✓ How do English people spend their holidays?

(A) Travelling						
(80%)						
In the UK			Abroad			
(40%)			(60%)			
Wales (40%)	Scotland (30%)	England (30%)	Europe (60%)	M. East (20%)	Asia (10%)	L. America (10%)

(B) In their houses		
(20%)		
TV (40%)	Gardening (20%)	a drink/ meals with friends

		(40%)
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✓ **What do English people look for on their holidays?**

Sunshine (40%)	Food (30%)	Historical sites & museums (20%)	Meeting people (10%)
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(English food) (English weather)

✓ **How do English people get their information on travel?**

TV (60%)	Travel Agencies & Magazines (20%)	Newspapers (10%)	Friends (10 %)
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✓ **Where would they like to go next time?**

Morocco (30%)	Europe (50%)	Asia (10%)	L. America (10%)
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Example of a Possible Listening Script Produced from the Notes

You are going to hear some information about a travel survey. Listen and take notes so that later you can complete your answer sheet.

"Hello, my name is Nigel, Nigel Smith - ah, I'm going to tell you about some research which was done, 2 years ago - research done by some travel agencies. They wanted to find out how the English spend their holidays - do they travel abroad or stay at home? - if they do like to travel, what do they seek when they go abroad? I mean, when they go abroad do they look for sunshine, or do they like to meet people, or what exactly do they like to do? - and which countries have they been to and where would they like to go next?

O.K. Let's begin ... Oh, another question - How do the English get information about travelling and ways of spending their holidays?

Right. As I said a group of travel agents carried out this research about two years ago. They found that 80% of the people they talked to like to spend their holidays travelling, but 20% said that they didn't like travelling and that they like to stay

in their own houses at holiday time. Then, when they were asked where they liked to travel, those people who said they liked travelling - 60% go abroad while the other 40% travel inside the United Kingdom.

Then, in answering which places they have visited, 60% said they'd travelled in Europe - to France, Spain, Italy, and Malta

- I guess a lot of them like French food and wine - 20% have travelled to the Middle East - I wonder how many would have changed their minds if they'd heard about the problems there before they went. So, 60% have been to Europe and 20% to the Middle East. A remaining 10% travelled in Asia going to

Thailand, Malaysia and China where they found that life is cheap and that there are many interesting things to see - probably the magic of the East. The last 10% had their experiences in Latin America.

Then, next the survey looked at the other group - the ones that holiday in the United Kingdom. They are divided into three groups - 30% travelled in each of Scotland and England while Wales was slightly more popular with 40% of the holiday makers going there for their holidays - so Wales, Scotland and England.

An obvious question is what do English travellers seek abroad? In answering this question we got some interesting answers - let's look at the figures - 40% of the English who travel abroad go to seek sunshine - it seems they want to escape from the English weather. Of the rest, 20% said that they travelled so that they could visit historical sites and museums while just 10% wanted to meet other people. Then, next important after the weather, 30% said that they wanted to eat different food - maybe English food is not very interesting.

The last question was to do with where the people interviewed would like to go next time and there was the usual range of opinion. This time Morocco got a mention and there were 30% who showed an interest in going there. Even more popular though is Europe with 50% saying they'd like to visit Europe

- 10% said they'd like to go to Asia and another 10% said they liked the idea of Latin America. It's notable that nobody wants to go to the United States.

Actually, sorry, that wasn't the last question. There was also a question about where people got information about holidays. The people questioned made it clear that television programmes had a big influence on their decisions - among the figures we've got there are 60% who get their information on travelling and how to spend their holidays from T.V. - 10% said they had been told by their friends where they should go while another 10% said they collected information from newspapers and magazines. So 60% from TV, 10% from friends and 10% newspapers and magazines. The final 20% had been to travel agents where they talked with the people there or collected their brochures and magazines."

That is the end of the information about travelling and you will now have 3 minutes to complete your answer sheet.

4. TEST COMMENTARY

In real life people receive information from attending public lectures, watching television, listening to radio; or from reading books, newspapers, magazines, and letters. On the other hand, they either speak or write to express themselves and communicate with others. Similarly, in education, learners collect information from text books and periodicals and from lectures. On the other hand, they pass information on in the form of seminars or assignments. This illustrates the process of communication which has the purpose of exchanging information effectively.

As a result of adopting a communicative approach in teaching, language testing must also include communicative tasks. The two tests designed for this paper are intended to be communicative. Let us explain this.

1. Interaction based: Language in use is based on interaction. For instance, in the writing test given in this assignment, writing a letter is a weak form of interaction. This activity involves both the writer who is the test candidate and the addressee who is the manager of Grove House.

The expectation of the accommodation manager should be taken into account by the writer of the letter. The content of the letter and the way it is expressed should be affected by this expectation. For instance, the Grove House manager will expect the writer to provide him with the appropriate information to enable him to book the accommodation for a specific period of time. The style expected is semi-formal.

The listening test is also based on interaction between the candidates and the speaker. This simulates the process which takes place in the real world when people listen to informational talks. It is common for people to listen to get information.

2. Unpredictability: The information in the letter is unpredictable because, for the candidate, writing such a letter is a new experience. The candidate is given new information to write the letter in a short time, in an effective way. The time pressure in processing the language input and writing the letter in this test is considered to be a relevant feature of language use. Each interaction in real life is likely to be new and unpredictable.

Similarly, the information in the listening text is unpredictable because the facts included are new information for the candidates.

3. Context: All language takes place in a certain context. The linguistic forms are different according to the features of this context. A communicative test should measure the appropriateness of the language used for this context. In this test, the letter form is appropriate, the style should be semi-formal, there should be descriptive information which provides the requirements for booking accommodation.

In the listening text candidates are exposed to a spoken semi-formal description. The test is intended to measure their ability to listen for the significant features of this type of language. For instance, the types of holiday and their popularity.

4. Purpose: In the real world, every utterance is made for a reason. For instance, this writing test is intended to measure the ability of the candidate to recognise and use the function of writing a letter for the specific purpose of booking accommodation at the university.

In the listening test candidates are given specific tasks for listening. They help them to find descriptive information about English people's holiday choices.

5. Performance: Conditions such as memory limitations, errors, hesitations, false-starts and repetitions exist in real language situations. Many of them are more significant in spoken language. Learners must formulate strategies for dealing with them. In this listening text, normal features of spoken language occur. Thus, this test is intended to measure the candidates' "strategies for receptive performance". (Morrow, 1977:26).

The provision of a clear context in the writing test is intended to measure the candidates' ability to perform appropriately.

6. Authenticity: The writing test simulates a real communicative situation. Authenticity of both text and task is emphasised. This test is based on a real application form and a real situation. Many students of English language in Libya come to England to join English language classes. That is, as a communicative test, it is based on the learners' possible performance in real life.

The high memory load referred to above with regard to the present Libyan composition test is avoided in this test. The learners are not required to create the content of their writing from their knowledge of a particular subject or from their imagination. Information about who to write to is, for instance, provided. Other information, like their personal details, is immediately available to them. The input provided requires a certain amount of reading. This can be justified by the authenticity of the task. Although the filling in of the form is not at the same level of writing as that of writing a letter, it reflects the authenticity of the test. In real life, it is common to finish registration for a course by

writing a letter to book accommodation.

As with writing, communicative tests of listening should be authentic in both text and task.

Authenticity of text means that learners should be provided with the types of language they are likely to hear in the real world. So learners must not listen to texts which are written to be read. Instead, they should hear spoken language with its normal features of repetition, false starts, semi-formal style and so on. Also, the task itself should be authentic. Candidates should carry out tasks which are similar to the tasks they will experience in the real world.

In the listening test provided here a text has been produced to parallel real life. The speaker is intended to speak from the notes that have been provided. This will enable the production of a semi-scripted informational talk. Such a talk is typical of the listening experience of Libyan learners ultimately studying in the medium of English.

There is one potential problem with the task. In real life people do not always respond to the spoken language in writing notes or sentences. For the sake of marking, however, learners are here asked to listen and write their responses.

7. Behaviour based: "The success or failure of an interaction is judged by its participants on the basis of the behavioural outcomes" (Morrow, 1977:26) For instance, a request for accommodation in the real world can be judged by whether it is obtained or not. This cannot be measured in the test situation because the letter does not actually go to the accommodation office.

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Unit 4: "Testing Writing Skills"

Unit 5: "Testing Listening Skills"

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