Language Testing

THE CONSTRUCTION AND USE OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE TESTS

ROBERT LADO

LANGUAGE TESTING

The Construction and Use of Foreign Language Tests

A Teacher's Book

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TO
CHARLES CARPENTER FRIES
AND
HERSHEL THURMAN MANUEL
AND TO L.A.L.

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PREFACE

This book is a comprehensive introduction to the construction and use of foreign language tests. It incorporates modern linguistic knowledge into language testing as one of its chief contributions. The development of modern linguistics during the past thirty-five years permits the analysis of the problems that students have in learning a foreign language with an accuracy and precision that can result in vastly improved testing instruments and programs.

The theory of language testing evolved from the experience that led to this book is discussed in Part I. Specific techniques for testing the "elements of language," namely pronunciation, intonation, stress, grammatical structure, and vocabulary, appear in Part II. Part III presents the testing of auditory comprehension, reading, writing, speaking, and translation, which are labeled "integrated language skills." Part IV, "Beyond Language," discusses possible ways of testing cross-cultural understanding and other higher values. The last part deals with the refining and use of language tests. This part includes norms, validity, reliability, item analysis, equivalent forms, designing experiments, and diagnostic, achievement, and aptitude testing.

The material is primarily intended for teachers of foreign languages and of English as a foreign language. Test makers will be interested in its linguistic content and point of view. Prospective language teachers will gain valuable insights from its perusal, and scholars interested in research and experiments on teaching and learning language will want to read it. Linguists who are not acquainted with modern testing can use the book as an introduction to the field as it concerns foreign languages. The author hopes that teachers and graduate students will be encouraged to conduct language learning experiments and to report them in the professional journals so that increasingly we may speak on the basis of knowledge rather than from opinion and

hypotheses alone, valuable as these are at proper stages in the development of man's thought.

The style has been kept as non-technical and as simple as possible because of the variety of backgrounds of the intended readers. Linguistic terminology is not always familiar to the average teacher and test maker; and testing terminology is not often familiar to language teachers and linguists. The chapters will vary in difficulty, but they can be read with understanding by the average reader for whom it is intended.

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