

Bachman, L.F., & Palmer, A.S. (1996)
Language Testing in Practice. Oxford
 University Press.

Misconceptions	Resulting problems
1 Believing that there is one 'best' test for any given situation.	1 Tests which are inappropriate for the test takers.
2 Misunderstanding the nature of language testing and language test development.	2 Tests which do not meet the specific needs of the test users.
3 Having unreasonable expectations about what language tests can do and what they should be.	3 Uninformed use of tests or testing methods simply because they have become popular.
4 Placing blind faith in the technology of measurement.	4 Becoming frustrated when one is unable to find or develop the perfect test.
	5 Loss of faith in one's own capacity for developing and using tests appropriately, as well as a feeling that language testing is something that only 'experts' can understand and do.
	6 Being placed in a situation of trying to defend the indefensible, since many students, as well as administrators, have unreasonable expectations.

Table 1.1: Some misconceptions and resulting problems

(p. 7)

Competence in language testing involves the following:

- 1 An understanding of the fundamental considerations that must be addressed at the start of any language testing effort, whether this involves the development of new tests or the selection of existing language tests;
- 2 An understanding of the fundamental issues and concerns in the appropriate use of language tests;
- 3 An understanding of the fundamental issues, approaches, and methods used in measurement and evaluation;¹
- 4 The ability to design, develop, evaluate and use language tests in ways that are appropriate for a given purpose, context, and group of test takers;
- 5 The ability to critically read published research in language testing and information about published tests in order to make informed decisions.

Table 1.2: Requirements for competence in language testing

(p. 9)

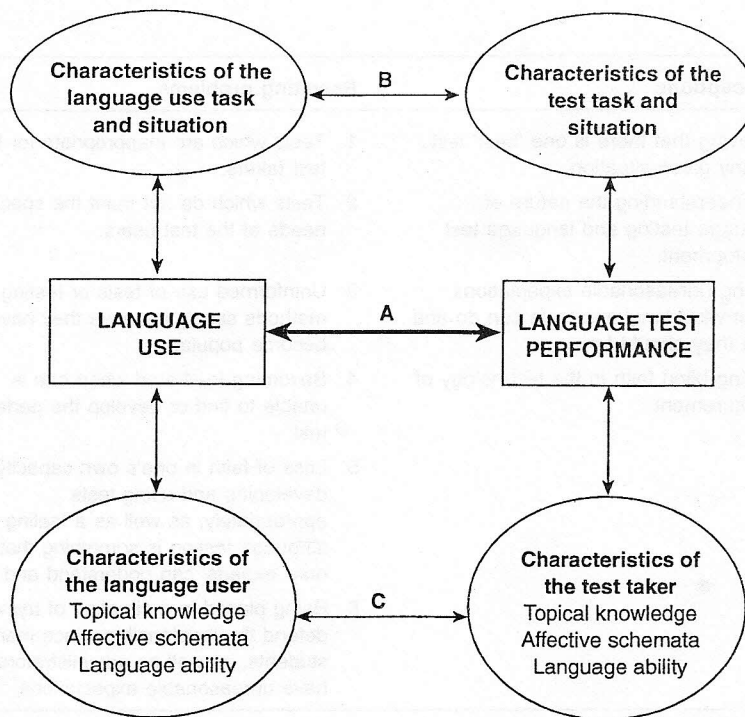


Figure 1.1: Correspondences between language use and language test performance

(p. 12)

Our philosophy of language testing

- 1 Relate language testing to language teaching and language use.
- 2 Design your tests so as to encourage and enable test takers to perform at their highest level of ability.
- 3 Build considerations of fairness into test design.
- 4 Humanize the testing process: seek ways in which to involve test takers more directly in the testing process; treat test takers as responsible individuals; provide them with as complete information about the entire testing procedure as possible.
- 5 Demand accountability for test use; hold yourself, as well as any others who use your test, accountable for the way your test is used.
- 6 Recognize that decisions based on test scores are fraught with dilemmas, and that there are no universal answers to these.

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Table 1.3: Our philosophy of language testing

(p. 13)

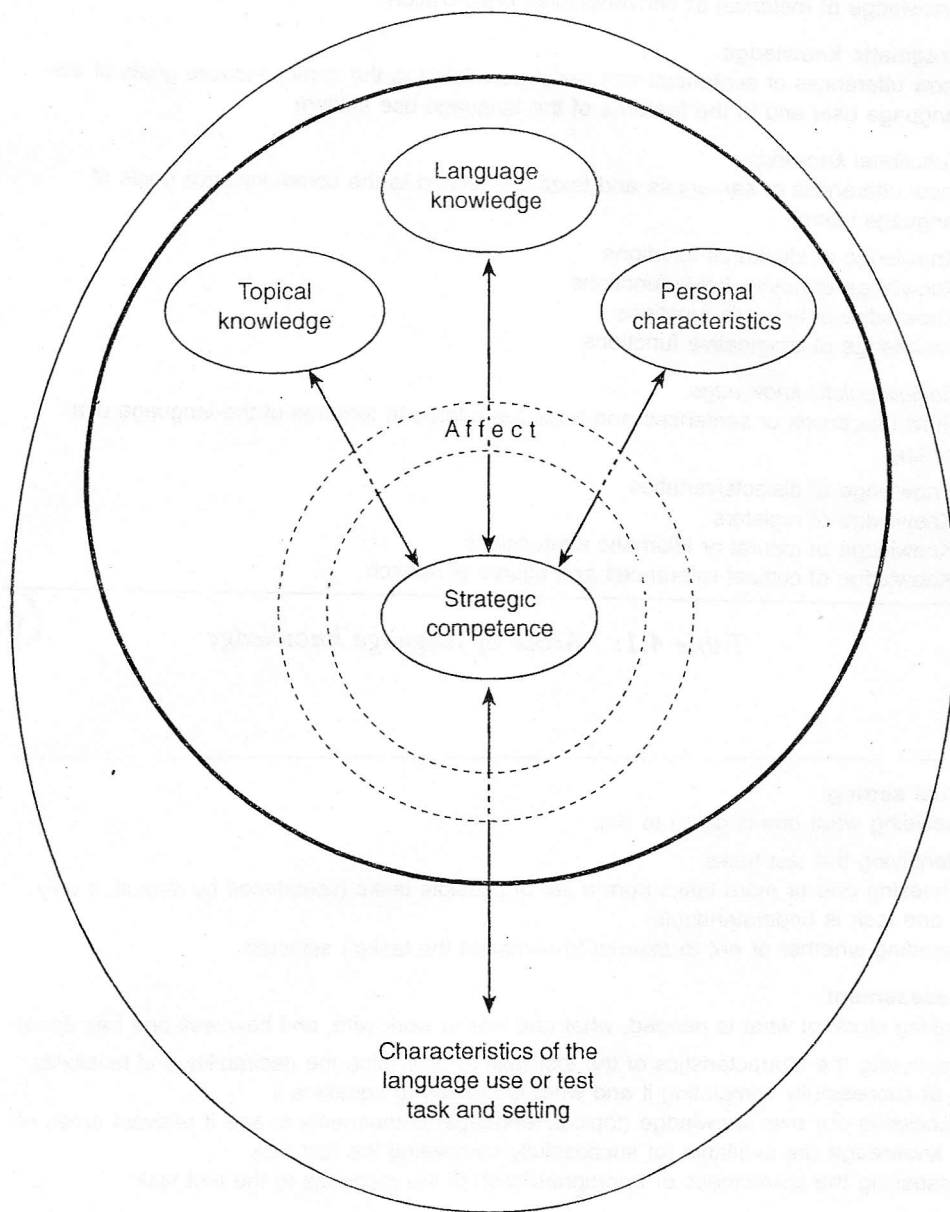


Figure 4.1: Some components of language use and language test performance

Organizational knowledge

(how utterances or sentences and texts are organized)

Grammatical knowledge

(how individual utterances or sentences are organized)

Knowledge of vocabulary

Knowledge of syntax

Knowledge of phonology/graphology

Textual knowledge

(how utterances or sentences are organized to form texts)

Knowledge of cohesion

Knowledge of rhetorical or conversational organization

Pragmatic knowledge

(how utterances or sentences and texts are related to the communicative goals of the language user and to the features of the language use setting)

Functional knowledge

(how utterances or sentences and texts are related to the communicative goals of language users)

Knowledge of ideational functions

Knowledge of manipulative functions

Knowledge of heuristic functions

Knowledge of imaginative functions

Sociolinguistic knowledge

(how utterances or sentences and texts are related to features of the language use setting)

Knowledge of dialects/varieties

Knowledge of registers

Knowledge of natural or idiomatic expressions

Knowledge of cultural references and figures of speech

Table 4.1: Areas of language knowledge

(p. 68)

Goal setting

(deciding what one is going to do)

Identifying the test tasks

Choosing one or more tasks from a set of possible tasks (sometimes by default, if only one task is understandable)

Deciding whether or not to attempt to complete the task(s) selected

Assessment

(taking stock of what is needed, what one has to work with, and how well one has done)

Assessing the characteristics of the test task to determine the desirability and feasibility of successfully completing it and what is needed to complete it

Assessing our own knowledge (topical, language) components to see if relevant areas of knowledge are available for successfully completing the test task

Assessing the correctness or appropriateness of the response to the test task

Planning

(deciding how to use what one has)

Selecting elements from the areas of topical knowledge and language knowledge for successfully completing the test task

Formulating one or more plans for implementing these elements in a response to the test task

Selecting one plan for initial implementation as a response to the test task

Table 4.2: Areas of metacognitive strategy use

(p. 71)

Component of language ability	Comments
GRAM: Vocabulary	
GRAM: Syntax	
GRAM: Phonological/ Graphological	
TEXT: Cohesion	
TEXT: Rhetorical organization	
FUNCT: Ideational	
FUNCT: Manipulative	
FUNCT: Heuristic	
FUNCT: Imaginative	
SOCIO: Dialect	
SOCIO: Register	
SOCIO: Naturalness	
SOCIO: Cultural references and figurative language	
META: Goal setting	
META: Assessment	
META: Planning	

Table 4.3: Components of language ability: A test design and analysis checklist

(p. 77)

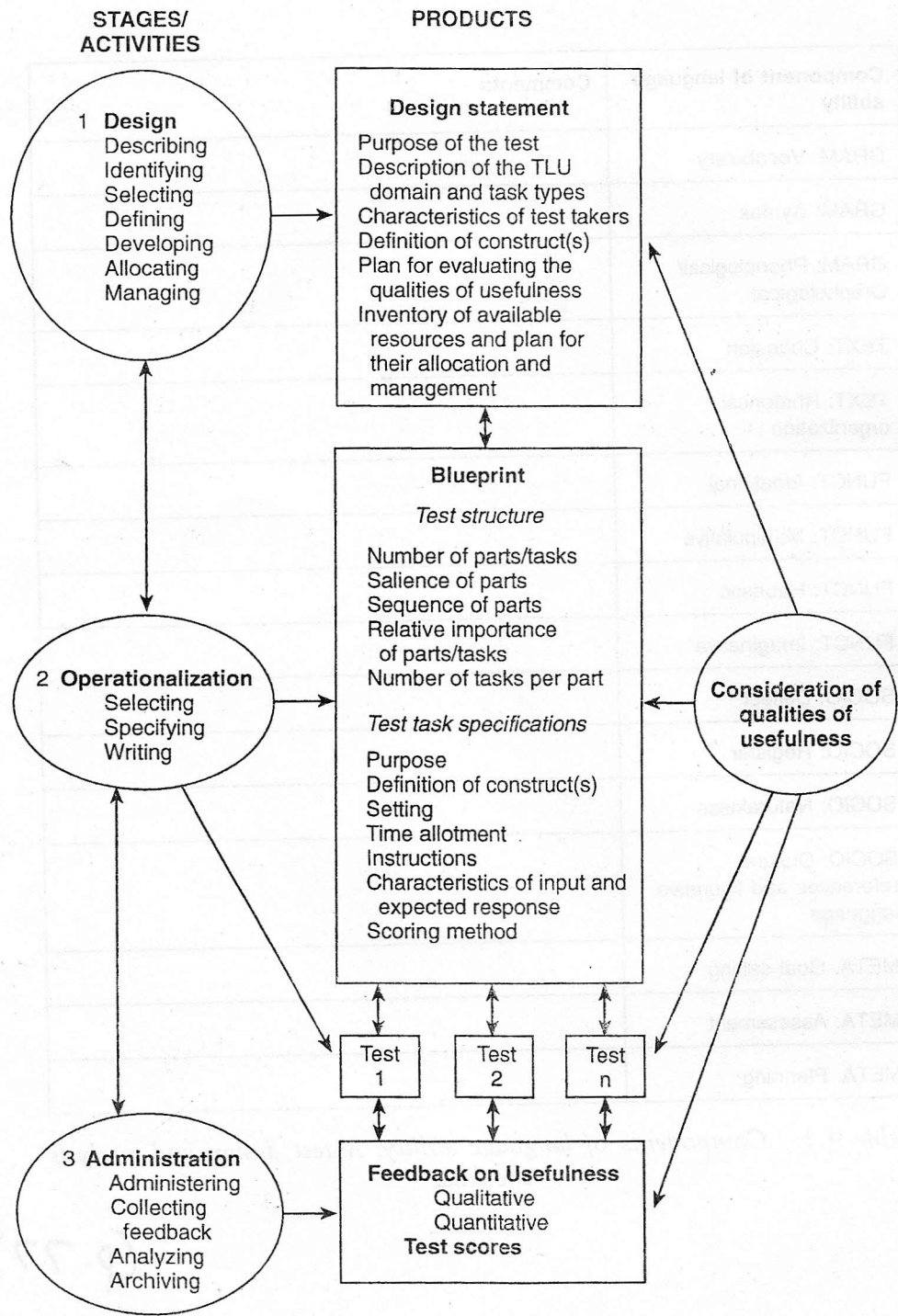


Figure 5.1: Test development