

UNIVERSITY OF COLOMBO – SRI LANKA

FACULTY OF ARTS

THIRD YEAR EXAMINATION IN ARTS – SEMESTER II – 2018

ESL 3245 – Second Language Assessment

Time: Two (02) Hours

This paper consists of Part A and Part B. Follow the instructions given in each part.

PART A - Answer only two (2) questions.

30 marks

Question 01

- i. Define objective testing and subjective testing. (2 marks)
- ii. In what way do objective testing and subjective testing affect the reliability of a test? Support your answer with examples of test items. (5 marks)
- iii. Comment on the adequacy of using only objective test techniques in a given test. (8 marks)

Question 02

- i. Define construct validity and content validity in second language testing. (4 marks)
- ii. How will the lack of content validity in a test affect the teaching and learning in a particular course? (5 marks)
- iii. Examine the following test item and its objective. Make a judgment on its construct validity. Explain the reasons for your conclusion. (6 marks)
 - Objective of the test item: To test the candidate's ability to use passive sentence structures.
 - Test item: Write a 150 word essay on "Globalization and its impact on developing countries".

Question 03

- i. Define the concept of backwash which is also referred to as washback by some scholars. (3 marks)
- ii. Explain how backwash/washback can be beneficial or harmful. (6 marks)
- iii. Reflect on the English Language Teaching Programme in secondary education in Sri Lanka and discuss an instance of harmful backwash/washback. (6 marks)

Question 04

“To ‘know’ a grammatical rule is not just the ability to recite it, to know a lexical item is not the ability to tell its meaning.”

- i. Discuss this statement with reference to definitions of knowledge of grammar and vocabulary developed in the paradigm of communicative language learning.
(08 marks)
- ii. Examine the implications of those definitions for testing grammar and vocabulary.
(07 marks)

Question 05

“There are advantages and challenges in using alternative assessments.” Discuss this statement with reference to two of the following. (15 marks)

- Observations
- Portfolios
- Self-assessments

PART B - Answer only one (1) question.

30 marks

Question 01

Imagine you teach a class of lower intermediate level students. You have taught them how to write two to three connected paragraphs using cohesive devices and topic sentences.

- i. Design a one hour formative in-class writing assessment task for testing the students’ ability to write two to three connected paragraphs. Provide the necessary guidelines.
(5 marks)
- ii. State the scoring method (holistic, analytic, primary trait) that you would choose for assessing this formative assessment task. Justify your choice discussing its strengths in comparison with the other scoring methods. (10 marks)
- iii. Design a rubric for assessing the task. The task is marked out of 20. (15 marks)

Question 02

(i)

a) Design test items to test the following reading sub skills of a group of students. Use **one** test technique of your choice for all three sub skills. You may design **one** test item per sub skill. Use the reading passage titled “The Paleolithic Age” given below. (12 marks)

- Ability to identify specific information
- Ability to recognise relations within the text through reference words
- Ability to deduce meaning of unfamiliar words

b) Justify your choice of the test technique. (5 marks)

c) Provide a scoring guide. (3 marks)

(ii)

Evaluate the suitability of using this passage (“The Paleolithic Age”) to test the following reading sub skills of a group of students learning academic reading at the advanced level in a Faculty of Management and Finance.

- Ability to recognise the main ideas and supporting details
- Ability to distinguish facts from opinions and the

The Paleolithic Age

Historians call the early period of human history the Stone Age. They do this because it was the time when people used stone to make tools and weapons. The earliest part of this period was the Paleolithic Age. In Greek, *Paleolithic* means “old stone”. Therefore, the Paleolithic Age is also called the Old Stone Age. The Paleolithic Age began about 2.5 million years ago and lasted until around 8000 B.C. Remember, that is about 4,500 years earlier than recorded time, which starts about 5,500 years ago.

Try to imagine what life was like during the Paleolithic Age. Think about living in a time long before any roads, farms, or villages existed. Paleolithic people often moved around in search of food. They were nomads, or people who regularly move from place to place to survive. They traveled in groups, or bands, of about 20 to 30 members.

Paleolithic people survived by hunting and gathering. The search for food was their main activity, and it was often difficult. They had to learn which animals to hunt and which plants to eat. Paleolithic people hunted buffalo, bison, wild goats, reindeer, and other animals, depending on where they lived. Along coastal areas, they fished. These early people also gathered wild nuts, berries, fruits, wild grains and green plants.