J. King Saud Univ., Vol. 13, *Lang. & Transl.*, pp. 11 - 24 (A.H. 1421 / 2001).

Test as Text

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(Received A.H. 5/10/1420; accepted A.H. 22/1/1421)

Abstract. This paper hypothesizes that textual issues, or the way in which the tests are written, impact their outcome. The paper's conclusions are reached through analysis of the text of a sample IPAT personality test. This paper contends that psychologists have created an odd communication system inherent in personality tests. The text that results exhibits poor readability, is full of ambiguities, and is riddled with rhetorically-related problems. As a result, test writers have unfortunately de-textualized, de-historicized, de-socialized, and largely de-personalized the tests. The paper concludes that test writers, in this case psychologists, with the goal of writing tests aimed at assigning personality types to individuals would be well served by awareness of rhetoric, discourse analysis, and psycholinguistics. If they view tests as texts, their tests will become more proper as evaluation tools.

Introduction

In professions concerned with behavioral science, studies are attempting to analyze whether personality tests are valid predictors of job performance. Barrick and Mount [1], and Tett, Jackson, and Rothstein [2] all conducted meta-analyses aimed at answering this question. While "some grounds for optimism" in using personality measures in selection processes were found [2, p. 703], researchers also express concern about the "imprecise nature" of specifying dimensions of the 5-factor model, as well as disagreement over the "precise meaning" of the factors [1, p.3]. While these researchers have attempted to evaluate the practical application(s) of personality testing, other researchers have studied the tests themselves. Psychologists (including Briggs [3], Goldberg and Kilkowski [4], McCrae and Costa [5; 6], Peabody [7], and Trapnell and Wiggins[8], also have been studying personality testing in the context of the "Big 5" or the major components of personality (conscientiousness, agreeableness, openness, extraversion, and neuroticism). They show how test-makers have used adjective-based and phrase-based measures as the basis of the test design. Some recent psychological studies make unsound contentions that attempt to create artificial chasms between psychological and language studies. One study by McCrae and Costa argues that language cannot possibly encode certain aspects of personality [9, p. 196]. While

language can be a faulty vehicle, perhaps the ultimate failure of the communication process rests with the person manipulating the language. More unsound is the claim made by Joh, Holdberg, and Angleitner, that "there is reason to distrust the 'accumulated wisdom' of any language" [9, p. 196]. This comment is analogous to the worst sort of prescriptivism that linguists for the most part rejected twenty years ago. Block interprets the following about undergraduate students: "One can learn a lot about them from them. But their modal level of articulation of the domain of personality should not be accepted as the standard for scientific study within the field. If only laypersons or naive, unworldly observers are studied, the basic level at which information will be represented will be that of a novice" [9, p. 197]. Block's scornful comment shows up his own lack of ability to communicate with lay folk, a telling comment since language at any level of use communicates a great deal of information for the person who is capable of decoding the message.

All these researchers arrive at the same stumbling block. Once word choice on personality tests is perceived as a semantic issue, and adjectives or phrases have been placed in some social norming context, researchers seem bewildered as to where next to proceed. Part of the problem seems to be that they have not looked at the tests as texts, i.e., the vehicle of communication between reader and writer. The words and phrases have been removed from context, and placed on a continuum that exhibits some meaning as if the sum total of personality can be found/illustrated within discreet words and phrases. The Institute for Personality and Ability Testing has been developing personality assessment instruments since 1949. Its tests are now available in over 35 languages and the 16PF is currently in its fifth edition [10]. An analysis of the 1978 edition of the IPAT personality test from a linguistic perspective will attempt to illustrate what occurs in the communication act in the context of the personality test. Since the test is representative of other similar personality measures, conclusions will then be drawn about problems inherent in the test and suggestions made from a linguistic perspective as to why these problems are occurring.

Research in a variety of fields can lend insights into this analysis. Rhetoricians, social cognitive theorists, and discourse analysts (like Burke[11], Caldas-Couthard and Coutlhard [12], Corbett[13], Flower [14], Flower et al.[15], Haynes [16], Irmscher [17], Kinneavy [18], Meyer [19], Perinbanayagam [20], and vanDijk and Kintsch [21]), look at writing and reading as different components of a process involving encoding and decoding meaning through a wonderfully complex web of signals, cognition, social meaning, and behavioral science, all of which are filtered through the "eyes" of the reader and writer. In a rhetorical framework, one assumes the text is produced with a purposeful end in mind, whether it be to inform, dictate, or convince. The intent is to convey meaning. The better trained reader and writer are to the process of encoding and encoding meaning, and the more attuned each is to the potential of language, the richer and deeper will be the shared meaning. Such meaning is interpreted through many layers of syntactic signals, semantic connotations, and the spark making each of us unique members of larger social groups attuned to picking up assigned meanings inherent in language. In reading/writing theory, researchers (like Bartholomae and

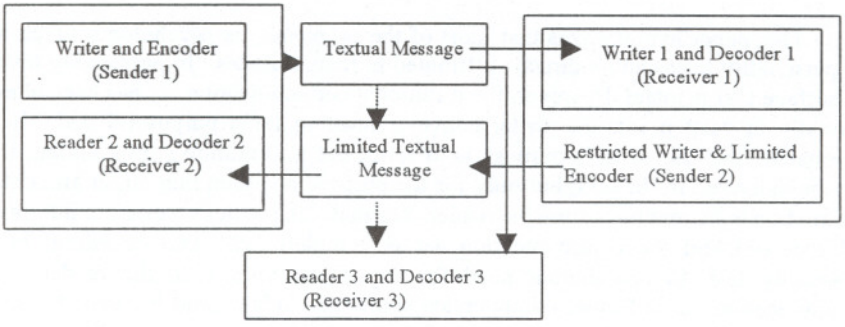
Petrosky [22], and McCormick [23]) have attempted to probe the theory of text as a mediator between reader, writer, and culture or ideology. Furthermore, psycholinguists (including Brand [24], and Horning [25]) have researched the issue of readability from the viewpoints of redundancy and cohesion. All this research brings points to bear on the discussion.

This paper hypothesizes that most of the problems the psychologists face with the personality tests can be directly attributed to textual issues. In personality testing, the surface text is intact. However, the traditional communication act has been altered. Normally in written acts the writer conveys meaning for a purposeful end. In the personality test, the writer's purpose is to ferret out information. Information, then, may be delivered in the text, but only for the purpose of prompting larger amounts of information to be sent back from the reader. Normally the writer's words are interpreted and received and the communication act is complete with that decoding. In the personality test, the paramount need for expression rests with the reader. The communication act is further compounded since the "judge" (and the decoder in this case) is the writer on the receiving end of the reader's responses, a condition alien to most communication acts where the writer's words and self are probed and judged. The reader is placed in the odd position of being forced to interpret the writer's meaning but at the same time having no power to interpret the meanings since it is his/her own meaning which should be the focus of the test; the reader is expected to bare his/her soul to an unidentified individual who will then judge the test-taker's innermost self, or personality; the judgment, further, is based on standards which are probably unclear to the reader since the writer has intentionally not stated that purpose. This realization brings up another and related point: the test as a multiple choice type has all answers written by the writer who has assigned meanings before sending the messages, meanings which may or may not fit the reader's point of view to start with. The reader must fit meaning into limited choices provided by the original sender. The reader is subsequently forced to "say" things the way sender 1 formulated them rather than being given any chance at self expression. Another form of coercion within the communication triad has then occurred.

Normally writers take on a persona or a self from which they write their views. In the personality test the persona of the writer, by needs, must be negated so that a reader is responding to ideas, not to the personality of the writer. The nature of the communication act, however, makes this ideal feat virtually impossible. A writer who is obtuse has an obtuse stance; this is not an absent identity or there would be no text at all. Thus, the communication act looks something like this.

On the receiving/giving end, the test-taker or reader is perceived to have a mask or outward self that must be removed or set aside so his/her "real" personality will be revealed. How then is this revelation to be achieved? In the test, i.e., the text. Bizarre communication acts result from the psychologists' attempts to put the stress of the "I" on the reader (even though at first glance it seems to be the writer's "I" or persona). Analysis of different linguistic/rhetorical manifestations within text points up the

muddling that results from this unusual communication situation. The textual muddling takes the form of odd syntactic structures, linguistic manipulations, peculiar word choices, and variations in tone.



Test Directions

The page of directions in the 1978 IPAT personality test provides the first view of mixed signals. Language is rule-governed for if it were not, no one would understand any sort of written or spoken discourse. Part of the agreed-upon behavior dictates that particular meanings of language are ascribed to particular contexts. In the classroom or in the military, one expects figures of authority to utter commands. The same is true of test-givers. They exhibit their authority in the directions they give. The test-taker on the receiving end of the orders is immediately placed in a subservient position, the position of one expected to listen and carry out the orders. The test context immediately establishes an unequal playing field.

In paragraph two of the directions, the voice of authority comes across clearly in the imperative sentence, "Write your name." Paragraph three picks up the voice of authority and intensifies the tone. "... turn to Side 1 and print your name. . . blacken the letter box below your name with a No. 2 pencil only. Do NOT use ink or . . . and avoid stray pencil marks." At this point the test-takers should be thoroughly aware of their position in this relationship. The writer doesn't even trust those administering the test. At the beginning of paragraph three he/she states, "If a separate, machine-scorable answer sheet has been given to you, . . ." implying that perhaps the answer sheets haven't been distributed. Perhaps those administering the test haven't done their job. Of course this comment could also signal that the reader is reading ahead and failing to listen to directions and is, thereby, uncooperative and unruly. The writer's persona at this point is mean-spirited. The test-writer has delivered the message that "You'd better well do this test right, or else." As if the tone isn't strong enough, it intensifies even more. "IMPORTANT:" The word is in bold and capitalized. "You must . . ."

Paragraph five starts with the following: "Now, read the four EXAMPLES . . . ." Here the test-taker is addressed the same way one would talk to a child. The directions don't lead the reader; they patronize and let the reader know who is in charge. After the example, the directions state, "Ask now if something isn't clear." No soft words. No polite tone.

Blended in with all this authority is the message that there are no right or wrong answers and the reader should respond naturally. The reader in a bludgeoned state will have trouble believing the sincerity of that command. Finally, as if the directions haven't convinced the reader he/she better do it right, the directions end by telling the reader not to use answer *b* unless necessary. Right there, any acquiescent docile reader will cross *b* off the check list and affect the results of the test.

The ultimate absurdity in the directions is to say there are no right or wrong answers and then give an example that has a right answer. This example is followed by the comment, "But there are very few such reasoning items." A self-respecting reader by now should be thoroughly confused, believe there are right answers and he/she better choose them, and that he/she better mark the test up "properly" (a term used on the test with some regularity). The answer sheet with its neat rows of little boxes underscores this standardization and erases any stray idea that there is any possible way to answer this test other than what the writer wants despite any statements made to the contrary.

Sound Sense

Another place to analyze the test is with the sound senses of the text. Matters of style including euphony, alliteration, repetition, and pace all help deliver meaning on a level distinctly different from and sometimes complementary with syntax and lexical choices.

Euphony or sound sense touches readers' collective senses. Question 3 states I would rather have a house:

a. in a sociable suburb,
b. alone in the deep woods.

The sounds of the two choices couldn't be more different. Choice *a* uses /s/ alliteration with an /s/ sound that give a definitive hissing, snake-like sound. Combined with the repetition of the /b/ stop sounds, the words carry a negative, spitting, end-stopped image that contradicts the meaning of "sociable." Choice *b* on the other hand includes relaxing nasal /n/ sounds combined with an /o/ followed by a drawn-out /i/ and schwa / { /. While the phrase also includes /d/, /p/, and /d/ phonemes, these stops are neutralized by their positioning around the softer sounds. Even the /s/ written graphemically as an "s" while looking like a hissing sound, is pronounced as a /z/ and joins the fricatives and nasals to create a neutral, laid-back image. From a purely euphonic standpoint, a reader is getting "noisy" clues as to which answer is more acceptable and *b* comes out on top. This clue, however, is strangely at odds with research data that show that psychologists portray the positive end on the sociability

continuum as inherently good [3, p. 271]; the sounds chosen for this question, then, seem to be sending a signal at odds with psychologists' positive view of sociability (and possibly at odds with intended results?).

The /s/ alliteration and repetition is repeated in question 7. "I make smart sarcastic remarks to people if I think they deserve it." The /t/ stops add an element of shortness and quickness. This particular question is unnecessarily confused by having "it" tacked on the end. The words "smart" and "sarcastic" both modify remarks and deliver a strong message. Haynes points out that, "Cohesion is a relation between meanings, not of grammatical units" [16, p. 33]. Most likely, then, the reader would be inclined to combine "it" and "remarks." However, the sentence construction places the word "remarks" in a direct object slot, so syntactically, "it" refers to "making remarks," not the remarks themselves. The writer could have helped readability had he/she included adverbs around the verb to help give the verb more impact. A reader will naturally be confused and most likely will connect the "smart, sarcastic" remarks with "I," and fleetingly see himself/herself as cranky, hissing, and altogether unpleasant. The writer has delivered a mixed-signal meaning to the reader through the sound choice combined with the odd structure of the text. Question 45 reads, what this world needs is:

a. more steady and "solid" citizens
b. more "idealists" with plans for a better world

The repetition and emphasis on the word "world" clearly signal *b* as the preferred choice. Choice *a* combines the hissing with a sarcastic tone attached to the world "solid," signaled by the quotation marks. The writer confuses the reader, however, by adding quotation marks around the word "idealists," most likely a conscious choice to balance out the look of the choices.

Pace and euphony figure heavily in question 82: "I have decidedly fewer friends than most people." The fricatives /f/ combined with the diphthong /iu/, the nasal /n/ and the /i/ all slow down the reading. "Fewer friends" comes off sounding like whining while "decidedly" with three /d/ stops gives an impression of definitiveness. Being definitively whiny probably is a bad idea and should be rejected. This question buttresses the view that friendliness is a good thing. Strangely, it does so in a negative way and thus produces mixed signals.

From Sounds to Words

In order to transact with the audience, a writer must attempt to symbolize thoughts or feelings through words. In most communication acts, verbs carry the action of the writer. A look at the test's choice of words symbolizing action says something about the writer's priorities.

Not unexpectedly, some form of "be" has the greatest number of occurrences of the test (for a total of 80 different uses of "to be"). "I am." "I was." "I will be." All

reveal some sense of an individual on a continuum, an individual moving in one time removed from any context. This view makes individuals constant in the sense they are the same anywhere, anytime. The test's use of "be" verbs most likely indicates that the writer believes a personality test reflects certain consistent, identifiable traits.

This indirect inference, however, raises problematic concerns. Psychologists (apart from Block [9] and others who share his viewpoints), analysts, rhetoricians, and psycholinguists all would contend that individuals always act in some context. They act or are acted upon. They interact socially. They talk to themselves. Each unique personality while possibly representative of a type takes on numerous personas depending on where it is and how it wishes to be perceived. From this perspective, the identifiable type becomes a conditional being defined in the context in which it both exists and acts. What is the "real" personality"? Can a personality test strip off the numerous masks and personas and social contexts to get at that personality? Simply stating "I am" on the test-giver's part when the "I" is supposed to represent the reader and the "am" is supposed to represent the reader's state of being implies a Kierkegaardian-like leap of faith, a belief that what you see is what you get, a concern raised by Goldberg [26], McCrae and Costa [5; 6], and Block [9]. Notwithstanding all these concerns, on a surface textual level, the use of "be" seems to point out that the writer believes that by stating conditional states of being he/she will arrive at the truth being sought.

The verb form with the next largest frequency is "have" (17 total). Having is close to being. Individuals are defined as much by the moods they have or behaviors they express as by what they are. At least that's what the test-givers seem to believe or they wouldn't have made "having" such an important component. In number of repetitions, "liking" (12 total) and "preferring" (8 total) come next. Combined (20 total) they represent almost as great an importance as "having." What individuals would like to have seems as important as what they do have.

"Finding" (with 10), "feeling" (with 9), and "thinking" (with 9) come next in terms of regularity. The assumption that verb regularity is consciously made on the part of the writer leads to the conclusion that what the verbs finding, feeling, and thinking symbolize is less important than what having and being symbolize.

The problem with the verb choices/symbols, of course, is that they always fit in some larger expression and context. No one says "feel" unless it's a command. Most people use "feel" in contexts such as: "I feel;" "I feel about;" "I feel good/awful;" "You can't tell me how to feel;" "I feel you're right." Nevertheless, verb choice does indicate what personality aspects are most important to the writer; the number of times a verb is repeated also would seem to indicate its relative importance.

The use of pronouns is also an excellent indicator of how we perceive ourselves. When a previous president referred to himself as "we," and Bob Dole referred to himself as "Bob Dole," (signaling a "he") both received negative feedback. It's

acceptable for the British queen to be a "we" but in our democratic environment the use of "we" makes a person stuffy and disconnected; it's not generally perceived as an endearing idiosyncratic sense of identity. When Bob Dole referred to himself as "Bob Dole," he distanced him from himself, as if somehow he could objectify what the entity Bob Dole is or has done. It's an interesting strategy but also perceived as a bit too far off the socially acceptable.

Analysis of this social component combined with pronoun usage in the test yields some interesting material. The only test question that uses the pronoun "you" (number 14), doesn't use the pronoun to address the reader: "You can almost always notice on people's faces when they are dishonest." At first glance it would seem perhaps the writer is attempting to establish a bit more personal rapport with the reader. Rather, the "you" is the universal "you" represented in the universal hesitator "you know." The qualifiers "almost always" allow the reader to step back from looking god-like. The syntax of the sentence is periodic, with the most negatively connotative word "dishonest" tacked on the very end after the neutral prompt "you" and after the positive ability to "notice." The sentence signals come off looking mixed.

In the rest of the test, the writer uses forty-eight third person pronouns to design the questions, nine of which use "it" constructions: "it" followed by "would be more interesting, . . . important, . . . good, . . . necessary." "It bothers me" (question 121) is the exception. The "it" structure is an odd variation on the "I" emphasis. Instead of stating, "I am interested," or "I find interesting," the writer selects "It is interesting."

Psycholinguists have begun some limited research that touches on the issue and could help guide this analysis. Psycholinguists are positing that extroverts (one of Jung's and the Myers-Brigg's types) tend to prefer writing that has plenty of examples. Extroverts "like to talk before they write" [25, p. 33]. Introverts, on the other hand, prefer more reflective writing. Horning also points out that research by Shafer indicates "a particular language background may give readers a set of expectations" [25, p. 34]. If Horning's and Shafer's lens is placed on the "it is" constructions, one can infer that introverted types most likely prefer this particular construction over the more conversational ("I find") construction. It stands to reason that the introverted test-taker would respond more favorably to reflectively-constructed choices as well. Question 11 states the following: It would be more interesting to be a. a construction engineer / b. a writer of plays. Most likely the introverted person would prefer "a writer of plays" since its construction is less conversational. Intuition dictates that an introvert would prefer an inner-directed activity like play-writing. However, this cognition has been reached through text and not context.

Discourse analysts, on the other hand, would reconstruct intent based on the signals presented in the discourse. The signals in question 11 involve different gestures and spatial features. Both signal a construction feature: engineering and writing. Both involve manipulating elements. Both involve a process beginning with a vision and resulting in output distinct from the creator yet defined through the creator's cognitive

processes. The difference rests in the processes involved. The structure of the test choices intimates these processes and ultimately indicates a "better choice." First, the "construction engineer" is a type of engineer, one devoted to constructing. The "writer of plays" is a writer who incidentally creates plays. The phrase "construction engineer" points to a complete entity with a defined purpose; the writer's purpose happens, incidentally, to be a playwright. The "construction engineer" intimates a clearer purpose and is a better choice.

Finally, rhetoricians' readability indexes would include calculating the number of syllables and words involved in the text. Question 11 is laborious and needlessly convoluted. By the time the reader reaches the answers, he/she's ready for something, anything, that's to the point (readable). "Construction engineer" is to the point and involves fewer words. "Writer of plays" has fewer syllables per word but is as convoluted as the question. The writer possibly could have questioned whether the readers have a clue as to what a playwright is. Perhaps that accounts for the odd structure. If so, a patronizing tone can be detected. Nevertheless, the signals in the question are mixed and the question has poor readability.

From Sound and Word to Lexical Cohesion

The discussion of discreet components like sound, pronoun usage, and verb choice naturally gravitates toward phrasing and whole sentences as indicators of meaning. From the perspective of the whole unit or test, in some ways the most important lens is that of lexical cohesion, or the way in which the writer pieces together the tapestry of his/her ideas.

In terms of constructions, twenty-seven of the questions have simple subject-verb constructions. Six of these use a modal construction with "would" plus a verb. Eighty-six test items have a subject-verb-direct object construction, seventeen make use of predicate complements, and forty-four utilize predicate adjectives; these structures help draw attention to adjectives and nouns that relate to whomever/whatever initiates/receives the action. The writer chooses to include only four passive constructions out of the 187 items. In two of these (questions 27 and 38), the individual(s) acting on the speaker are identified. In the third, number 55, "I have been let down by my friends," the persona is acted upon by friends. Most rhetoricians would agree that the passive construction distances the speaker from the action. In these cases the passive allows the reader (speaker) to be mentioned first and to have been acted upon. In three of the cases the present perfect verb tense is used, indicating a state of being that began in the past and continues into the present. The sense of phrasing, however, focuses on the past. The verb is confusing due to the extra "been" necessitated by the passive voice. In the fourth example, number 21, the writer switches to the present tense indicating a state that is always true.

In terms of test functionality, most psychologists might find a point of agreement with rhetoricians and linguists that a principal goal of personality testing is to gather

information. Further, a large input necessary to reach this aim includes generating readable writing that will ultimately achieve some measure of understanding between writer and reader. Readability, largely a rhetorical issue, falls in the domains of arrangement and style. Irmscher has developed a list of readability tests that can be applied to the IPAT [17, pp. 189-94]. One of Irmscher's suggestions is to keep related words and phrases in close proximity [17, p. 190]. On the IPAT the writer consistently separates a verb from the prepositional phrase or dependent clause that modifies that verb. Question 111 provides a good example: "When a bit of diplomacy and persuasion are needed to get people moving, I am generally the one asked to do it." In this sentence, the "when" clause doesn't even relate to the main verb "am." Rather, it relates to the infinitive verb form "to do." Visually and spatially one can see these related items are at the far ends of a very long, complex sentence.

Another Irmscher suggestion is to meet expectations set for the reader, in part by eliminating interruptions within any parts of a series. Two examples will show the IPAT writer's problems related to this point. First, question 128 states, "Which of the following should come next at the end of this row of letters: . . .?" Putting the phrase "at the end" wedged between "next" and "of this" jerks the reader back and forth from here to there to here. These mixed signals naturally cause confusion. Question 108 states, "To be cautious and expect little is better than to be happy at heart always expecting success." The writer managed awkwardly to maintain infinitive phrasing in "to be cautious," [to] expect little," and "to be happy." The sentence should have read something like "to expect success always" to finish off the choice of infinitive phrases. Most likely the writer realized how stiff and ridiculous the first three infinitive phrases sounded, so wisely decided to shift to a more relaxed phrasing. Unfortunately, the sentence ends up with a mixed tone and mixed phrasing, and generally reads badly.

Another Irmscher suggestion is to avoid circumlocutions. In addition to the questions discussed previously, question 139 is hounded by this problem: "If a good remark of mine is passed by, I: a. let it go; b. give people a chance to hear it again. The writer begins with a passive construction in the dependent clause that forms the main part of the question. The actor, presumably people, is omitted, and the writer makes "I" the subject. In choice *b*, the presumed actors, people, are placed in an indirect object slot followed by the word "chance" in the direct object slot. "It" refers back to "a good remark," not the fact that the remark has been passed by. The writer's zigzagging seriously confounds readability in this question. Question 83 reads, "I would hate to be where there wouldn't be a lot of people to talk to." The negative "wouldn't" leads this sentence into a structure akin to a double negative which always forces listener and reader alike to figure out just what is meant.

Another suggestion is to get rid of deadwood or unnecessary words. Question 71 is a good example of this problem at work: "I would prefer to have an office of my own, not sharing it with another person." The writer shifts from the infinitive "to have" to the verbal "sharing" and thus violates the parallel phrasing suggestion. The "it" is

confusing and the sentence is unnecessarily wordy since the second part of the question repeats what the first part stated.

Another suggestion is to "get rid of self-reflective and self-protective phrases" epitomized in structures such as "In my opinion, I think that perhaps. . . ." Question 106 reads, "I think I am better described as . . ." with phrasing that dilutes the message.

A particularly important suggestion is to avoid ambiguities. The test is over-burdened with this problem. At least forty-one of the questions exhibit some sort of ambiguity. Question 125 reads, "I can always change old habits without difficulty and without slipping back." A reader most likely would pause over "slipping back" and wonder what on earth he/she's slipping back into. One might also ask, can one change only habits that do not have difficulty, or can one change without difficulty old habits? Question 80 reads, "People treat me less reasonably than my good intentions deserve." The writer loses the connection between being treated reasonably and having good intentions. Question 164 reads, "I have sometimes been troubled by people's saying bad things about me behind my back, with no grounds at all." The "no grounds at all," a good example of a problematic dangling modifier, needs to be placed closer to "saying bad things." As it is, the phrase hangs mid-air and allows for all sorts of wacky interpretations.

In addition to suggestions concerning active verb choice, preferring verb to noun forms and action verbs to stative verb, and positive statements to negative ones, Irmscher suggests choosing familiar words over unfamiliar words. Ironically, words are the item that has caused the most debate among psychologists. Those like Goldberg who feel the adjective list isn't quite reaching the mark want to extend the list. Block would probably argue that the readers' vocabulary is too limited and full of misinterpreted word meanings to adequately assess personality. Question 46 reads, "I am always keenly aware of attempts at propaganda in things I read." "Propaganda" fits poorly. It is overblown in contrast to the other word choices. Also, the referent for "propaganda" is unclear. Does propaganda refer to attempts to convince the reader of contrary ideas? Attempts to brainstorm the reader? To make a political statement? The word would seem to be a time-based item, i. e., an item that may have had a more specific meaning/referent to a 1978 reader.

My discreet point analysis has been done this way to make it accessible to the reader. However, I would like to confirm that my view of textual analysis is based on a psycholinguistically- oriented model which involves an interaction with small chunks of the text and not necessarily its discreet components of the text [27, pp. 151-75].

The test fails in terms of several readability criteria. While the problem is reflected in text, it initiates with writer choice. The problem with the language and language manipulation is not a failing of the vehicle but, rather, rests with the writer who fails to incorporate purpose and intent into the items, or does so ineptly. Poor

readability naturally leads to poor communication resulting in poor understanding and test results.

Conclusion

From any theoretical perspective, text represents a transaction and a struggle to achieve meaning. If psychologists look at discreet test items as composites of some sort of universal symbols representing personality types, they have de-textualized, de-historicized, de-socialized, and largely de-personalized the tests. More importantly, if researchers believe that the words on tests can be taken out of text to achieve meaning, they fail to grasp the richness of those words in action. They also fail to see that the words and the structures attending discourse acts become part of a writer or reader's reality and not only a symbol or mask of a reality lying beneath or somehow within the words. Understanding someone's choice and use of words as well as the words themselves define the individual in motion.

A heuristic that utilizes rhetorical, discourse analysis, and psycholinguistic theories could help researchers view testing from different vantages. When researchers stumble over the problem of how to explain semantic meaning as it relates to personality, textual analysis could supply for them a possible, hopefully fruitful, answer.

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الامتحان كنص

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ملخص البحث. يفترض البحث أن المسائل النصية أو الطرق التي تكتب فيها الامتحانات تؤثر على نتائجها. ويصل البحث إلى نتائجه عن طريق تحليل نموذج نص من امتحان الشخصية (IPAT). ويجد البحث أن علماء النفس قد خلقوا منظومة تواصل غريبة موجودة في امتحانات الشخصية. وينتج عن هذا نص له خواص تجعله صعب القراءة وفيه الكثير من الغموض، ومليء بالمشكلات الخطابية مما يجعلنا نرى أن الامتحان قد كُتب بدون مرجعية نصية أو تاريخية أو اجتماعية.

ويخلص البحث إلى أن كاتبي الامتحان علماء نفس يودون أن يكتبوا امتحانات تهدف إلى تحديد أنواع الشخصية، ، في هذه الحالة عليهم أن يعرفوا علم الخطاب وتحليله، وأن يعرفوا علم اللغويات الاجتماعية، فإن نظروا إلى الامتحانات كنصوص سيكتبون امتحانات أفضل تعطي نتائج لها قيمة معرفية.