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A MODEL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE TEST: BASIS FOR SYLLABUS ENHANCEMENT

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Abstract

This descriptive study aimed at finding out the level of response of students in communicative test in terms of reliability index, items' mean difficulty, discrimination index, item fit, clarity of language, how the items were constructed, the options used, whether there were items functioning differently, if item characteristics match the ability of students, what the hierarchy of skill indicators is, what model test can be developed for students, and what syllabus can be designed out of the model.

Samples were 283 students from four universities in Davao City. It was found out that the reliability index of the communicative test is .81, items' mean difficulty is .419, discrimination indices ranged from .20-.62, item fit ranged from .56-1.44 to 0.93-1.07, language of the test is clear, construction of items observed principles of testing, options were parallel, parameter estimates were -0.303, 0.600, -0.613, and 0.316 for the four universities, that is, positively for students from University B; item characteristics matched the ability of students; hierarchy of skill indicators began with expressing gratitude appropriately, advances to inferring meaning through context, and giving meaning to unknown words; based on findings, the model test developed was communicative and was reliable, valid, practical, and fit to students' abilities; enhanced syllabus designed was competency-based.

Keywords: *communicative competence, test, syllabus*

Introduction

Universities need tests that measure the students' ability to speak, comprehend texts or write compositions. In fact, there are institutions which are in want of evaluation instruments to classify their students which can be done by item response analysis.

Here in the Philippines, the researcher has not come across the use of item response theory in the development of communicative competence tests nor studies of the same.

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On the other hand, in the University of Southeastern Philippines through its Guidance and Testing Office, used the item response analysis in its English Plus(Grammar) test where 40 percent of the questions were found unfit for students' abilities. Hence, the researcher designed a communicative test following the framework of Canale and Swain(1980) and subject it to item response analysis(Rasch, 1980).

Statement of the Problem

1. What is the level of response of the students in the test items in terms of:
    a. establishing reliability index
    b. discrimination index
    c. item difficulty
    d. item fit
    e. clarity of the language
    f. construction of stem
    g. options used
    h. differential item functioning?
2. Do the item characteristics match the ability of the freshmen students?
3. What is the hierarchy of skill indicators as components of communicative competence?
4. Based on the findings, what model communicative competence test can be developed for students?
5. Out of the model, what syllabus enhancement can be designed?

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Theory Base

This study is anchored on the Item Response Theory(IRT) of Rasch(1980) which is a modern test theory. This theory starts with a mathematical statement as to how response depends on level of ability or skill of the test takers(Lord, 1980).

Another theory on which this study is anchored is Canale and Swain's theory of communicative competence(1980).

Canale and Swain's model comprises an integrative view of communicative competence with four major components : (1) grammatical/linguistic competence, (2) sociolinguistic competence, (3) discourse competence, and (4) strategic competence.

Grammatical/linguistic competence refers to the degree to which the language user has mastered the linguistic code.

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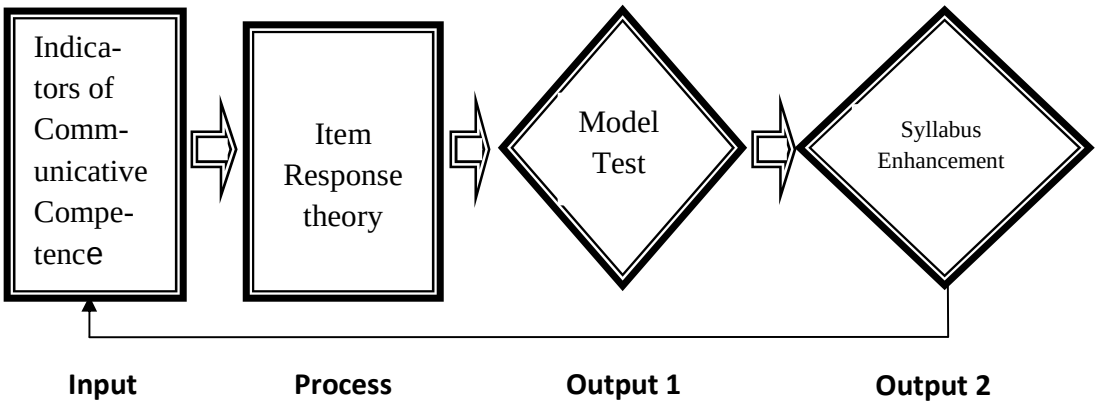
Sociolinguistic competence is the extent to which grammatical forms can be used or understood appropriately in various contexts to convey specific communicative functions.

Discourse competence is the ability to connect ideas to achieve cohesion and coherence.

Strategic competence, is the ability to use verbal and nonverbal communication strategies to avoid communication breakdown (Omaggio, 1986).

Conceptual Framework



Scope and Limitation of the Study

The study was conducted to the 283 Eng. 1 students from four higher education institutions(HEI) in Davao City.

Research Design

This study used a descriptive method of research. Pertinent data were obtained through the answer sheets of the students who took the test in Study and Thinking Skills.

Instruments

The study used a researcher-made communicative competence test consisting of 58 items subdivided into linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence. The test format followed that of Omaggio's(1983).

The interpretation of results used the Conquest software(2005).

The standard scores were computed into a logit score using the formula:

$$\frac{\text{score - mean score}}{\text{Standard deviation}}$$

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The range of values is shown below:

Table 1
Range of Values of Test Scores

Logit Range	Level	Description
<-.5	Beginner	Student can express gratitude appropriately,close a conversation appropriately, apply courtesy in letters, place reservations, give meaning to unknown words, use synonyms, **infer meaning** through context, identify relationship between interlocutors, answer one's query, identify pronouns, and **retrieve information.**
-.5-.5	Intermediate	Student can **retrieve information**, identify and use synonyms, initiate in discourse, paraphrase a clause, report a speech, sequence ideas using discourse markers, identify source of an excerpt, summarize paragraphs, **infer meaning**, ask for information, transform declarative sentences into interrogative.
>.5	Advanced	Student can identify purpose of notes, write a letter to inform, recall information, infer character traits, meaning and setting, identify parts of a conversation, give title to stories, **retrieve information**, identify purpose of sentences, **infer meaning** through context, respond in affirmative, give meaning to unknown words.

Participants

The participants in the study were the 283 freshmen enrolled in English 1 from the four higher education institutions in Davao City.

Procedure of the Study

The data were analyzed using the Rasch Simplistic Logit Model by CONQUEST Software(2005). This software was used to establish the reliability of the test, its construct validity, item discrimination, item difficulty, item bias, and item parametization. The Communicative Test followed the procedure below:

1. Development of the Communicative Competence Test

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2. Validation
3. Editing of the Test
4. Production of the Test
5. Pilot Testing
6. Analysis for Construct Validity, Reliability and Item Characteristics.
7. Revision of Test Items
8. Reproduction of the Test
9. Getting Permission to conduct the Study
10. Retrial of the Test
11. Analysis by ConQUEST Software(2005)
12. Interpretation of Data
13. Selection of Final Items for the Model Test

Data Treatment

Data on the students' responses were analyzed using the ConQuest Software(2005).

Statistical Design

This study employed descriptive statistics, while the analysis of the responses was performed using the ConQuest software(2005).

Results and Discussion

Level of Response of Students in Terms of Test Characteristics

Reliability Index

During the first trial,the reliability index given by Cronbach's Alpha which is equivalent to Richard-Kruderson -20, is 0.57 which is low for a 58-item test. After the analysis of each item where item flaws were revised based on the result of the analysis using Rasch Simplistic Logit Model, 14 of the items were discarded and 44 items were selected.

Analysis of the test items showed that the reliability index became .81 which is very good for a classroom test(Office of Educational Assessment, University of Washington, 2008).

Students' Level of Communicative Competence, Discrimination Index and Item Difficulty

Table 2 shows the distribution and percentage of students belonging to the beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels of communicative competence.

Table2
Distribution of Students and Their Level of Communicative Competence

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Universities									
Level of Communi-cative Competence	A		B		C		D		Ave-rage
	# of Respon-dents	%	# of Respon-dents	%	# of Res-pon-dents	%	# of Respo n-dents	%	
Beginner	4	6.56	1	1.25	16	27.59	0	0	8.85
Inter-mediate	49	80.33	33	41.25	37	63.79	41	48.81	58.55
Advanced	8	13.11	46	57.5	5	8.62	43	51.19	32.60
Total	61	100.0	80	100.0	58	100.0	84	100.0	100.0

Generally, the students' level of communicative competence is *Intermediate* with University A having the highest percentage(80.33) of students belonging to that level. It is followed by University C with 63.79 percent, University D with 48.81 percent and University B with 41.25 percent of its students.

University B got the highest percentage of students belonging to advanced level of communicative competence-- 57. 5 percent. It is followed by University D with 51.19 percent, University A with 13.11 percent, and University C with 8.62 percent.

In addition, 27.59 percent of the students of University C are in the beginner level. It is followed by University A and B with 6.56 and 1.25 percent respectively while no respondent from University D is in the beginner level of Communicative Competence.

During the tryout of the test, the discrimination indices ranged from -.09 to .55. Similarly, the item difficulty of the test items given by delta values ranged from -3.73 to 4.63.

However, after the retrial, the discrimination indices ranged from .20-.62. All these values are accepted as discrimination index.

Moreover, the item difficulty ranged from -2.40 to 2.14 logits. These values show that items are evenly distributed from easy to difficult.

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Table 3.1
Characteristics of Items Indicated by the Response of Students During Pilot Testing

Test Item #	Discrimination Index	Item Difficulty	Item Fit			% of Students Correct	Point Biserial
			MNSQ	CI	t-value		
1	.04	.92	1.04	-79-1.21	.4	24	.04
2	.09	-.02	1.04	.93-1.07	1.2	44	.09
3	.04	-.05	1.07	.93-1.07	1.8	44.80	-.04
4	.21	.47	1.00	.86-1.14	0-1	32.8	.21
5	.17	.59	1.01	.85-1.15	.2	30.40	.17
6	.13	.44	1.02	.87-1.13	.3	33.60	.13
7	.24	.09	.98	.92-1.08	-0.4	41.60	.24
8	.12	1.85	1.01	-57-1.43	.1	11.20	.12
9	.22	1.32	.99	.70-1.30	0.0	17.60	.22
10	.26	-1.15	.99	.84-1.16	-0.1	70.40	.26
11	.22	.29	1.00	.89-1.11	0	36.80	.22
12	.33	.02	.98	.92-1.08	-0.5	43.20	.33
13	.11	-3.73	.99	.08-1.92	.1	96.80	.11
14	.11	.40	1.03	.88.1.12	.5	34.40	.11
15	.19	.19	1.01	.91-1.09	.2	39.20	.19
16	.28	-.82	.98	-89-1.11	-.4	63.20	.28
17	-.01	4.63	1.02	0-00-2.95	.4	90.40	.19
18	.04	.47	1.04	.86-1.14	.6	32.80	.04
19	.33	-1.68	.97	.91-1.09	-.6	60	.33
20	.27	.05	.98	-92-1.08	-.5	42.40	.27
21	.30	-.75	.97	-90-1.10	-.7	61.60	.30
22	.34	-1.28	.97	.82-1.18	-.3	72.80	.34
23	.36	-.89	.98	.88-1.12	-.3	64.80	.36
24	.32	-.41	.98	.93-1.07	-.6	53.60	.32
25	.04	.36	1.06	-88.1.12	-9	35.20	.04
26	.36	.19	.97	.-91-1.09	-.7	39.20	.36
27	.06	3.20	1.01	.07-1.93	.2	3.20	.06
28	.19	-1.88	1.00	.71-1.29	0	82.40	.19
29	.05	1.01	1.03	.77-1.23	.3	22.40	.05
30	.43	-1.19	.95	.83-1.17	-.6	71.20	.43
31	.28	-1.59	.98	.76-1.24	-.1	78.40	.28
32	.04	-1.0	1.04	.86-1.14	.6	67.20	.04
33	.23	1.01	1.00	.77-1.23	0	22.40	.23
34	.25	-1.40	.98	.80-1.20	-.2	75.20	.25
35	.55	-1.32	.91	-81-1.19	-.9	73.60	.55
36	.29	-1.74	.97	-73-1.27	-.2	80.80	.29
37	.19	-1.08	1.00	-85-1.15	0	68.80	.19
38	.34	-1.08	.97	.85-1.15	-.04	68.80	.34
39	.38	-.82	.96	.89-1.11	-.8	63.20	.38
40	.26	1.63	1.04	.63-1.37	.3	13.60	-.03
41	.11	.02	1.03	.92-1.08	.8	43.20	.11
42	.09	2.97	1.00	.18-1.82	.1	4	.09
43	.25	.15	1.00	.91-1.09	.0	40	.25
44	.13	-.28	1.03	.94-1.06	-.9	50.40	.13
45	.23	-1.59	.99	.76-1.24	-.1	78.40	.23
46	.19	-.82	1.01	.89-1.11	.2	63.20	.19
47	.24	-1.45	.99	.79-1.21	-.1	76	.24
48	.10	1.77	1.02	.59-1.41	.1	12	.10
49	.21	.63	1.00	1.16	0	29.60	.21
50	.05	1.01	1.03	.77-1.23	.3	22.40	.05
51.	.28	-1.20	.97	.83-1.17	-.3	71.20	.28
52.	.02	-1.5	.99	-59-1.41	0	69.2	-.01
53.	.06	1.94	1.01	.55-1.45	.1	10.40	.06
54.	.09	2.61	1.02	.33-1.67	.2	5.60	.09
55	.05	1.50	1.03	.66-1.34	.2	15.20	.05
56	.02	.55	1.04	.85-1.15	.5	31.20	.02
57	.11	-3.15	.99	.33-1.67	.1	94.4	.11
58	-.02	-3.0	1.01	.38-1.67	.1	96.30	-.02

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Table 3.2
Characteristics of Final Items Indicated by the Response of Students During Final Testing

Test Item #	Discrimination Index	Item Difficulty	Item Fit			% of Students Correct	Point Biserial
			MNSQ	CI	t-value		
1	.27	.61	1.01	0.90-1.10	0.2	35.19	.27
2	.21	-1.77	1.01	0.78-1.22	0.1	83.26	.21
3	.34	.47	0.97	0.91-1.09	-0.7	38.2	.34
4	.34	.41	0.98	0.92-1.08	-0.4	39.48	.34
5	.23	.63	1.04	0.90-1.10	0.8	34.76	.23
6	.36	.49	0.96	0.91-1.09	-0.8	37.77	.36
7	.30	-1.22	0.97	0.85-1.15	-0.4	74.68	0.30
8	.25	.31	1.02	0.92-1.08	0.5	41.63	0.25
9	.25	.53	1.03	0.91-1.09	0.6	36.91	0.25
10	.23	.25	1.03	0.92-1.08	0.9	42.92	.23
11	.32	-.31	0.99	0.92-1.08	-0.2	55.79	0.32
12	.36	-2.02	0.93	0.74-1.26	-0.5	86.27	0.36
13	0.30	0.25	1.01	0.92-1.08	0.3	42.92	0.30
14	0.41	-0.46	0.95	0.92-1.08	-1.2	59.23	0.41
15	0.32	-0.25	1.00	0.93-1.07	-0.1	54.51	0.32
16	0.44	-0.53	0.92	0.91-1.09	-1.8	60.94	0.44
17	0.44	-1.01	0.93	0.87-1.13	-1.1	70.82	0.44
18	0.43	-0.86	0.93	0.89-1.11	-1.2	67.81	0.43
19	0.44	-0.25	0.93	0.93-1.07	-1.9	54.51	0.44
20	0.51	0.59	0.89	0.89-1.11	-2.6	35.62	0.51
21	0.40	-1.65	0.92	0.80-1.20	-0.8	81.55	0.40
22	0.20	1.60	1.01	0.79-1.21	0.2	17.60	0.20
23	0.62	-0.55	0.82	0.91-1.09	-4.3	61.37	0.62
24	0.54	-1.03	0.98	0.93-1.07	-2.1	71.24	0.54
25	0.25	-0.10	1.03	0.93-1.07	0.8	51.07	0.25
26	0.30	-0.63	1.01	0.91-1.09	0.1	63.09	0.30
27	0.36	-0.92	0.98	0.88-1.12	-0.3	69.10	0.36
28	0.25	-1.01	1.02	0.87-1.13	0.3	70.82	0.25
29	0.27	-0.94	1.01	0.88-1.12	0.2	69.53	0.27
30	0.48	-0.61	0.91	0.91-1.09	-2.0	62.66	0.48
31	0.36	-0.84	0.97	0.89-1.11	-0.6	67.38	0.36
32	0.29	0.75	1.01	0.89-1.11	0.2	32.19	0.29
33	0.39	-1.05	0.94	0.87-1.13	-0.8	71.67	0.39
34	0.30	0.59	0.99	0.90-1.10	-0.1	35.62	0.30
35	0.48	-1.47	0.90	0.82-1.18	-1.2	78.97	0.48
36	0.24	-1.62	1.01	0.80-1.20	0.1	81.12	0.24
37	0.24	-0.65	1.05	0.90-1.10	1.0	63.52	0.24
38	0.33	-1.05	0.98	0.87-1.13	-0.3	71.67	.033
39	0.42	0.53	0.94	0.91-1.09	-1.4	36.91	0.42
40	0.30	0.12	1.00	0.93-1.07	0.0	45.92	0.30
41	0.35	0.41	0.97	0.92-1.08	-0.7	39.48	0.35
42	0.54	-0.55	0.88	0.91-1.09	-2.8	61.37	0.54
43	0.26	-2.81	0.97	0.58-1.42	-0.1	93.13	0.26
44	0.24	-2.88	0.97	0.56-1.44	-0.1	93.56	0.24

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Item Fit

In addition, the item fit which defines if the test item measures the construct being identified, which is communicative competence shows that there are Mean Fit Square Values outside the confidence intervals and there are t-values outside -2.0 to 2.0 before the retrial.

However, after the retrial, the Mean Fit Square Values range from 0.56-1.44 to 0.93-1.07 which are within the confidence intervals which means that all the 44 items measure only one construct which is communicative competence.

Item Analysis(Clarity of language, options used)

Upon analyzing the items closely, clarity of language was rated 3 which means that the items observed principles on clear language to a *large extent*. The construction of stem was rated 3 by the experts which means that the items followed the principles of test construction and the options used were rated 3 which means that the options were parallel.

The item characteristic is .419 which matches the ability of the English 1 students.

The hierarchy of skill indicators as components of communicative competence began with expressing gratitude appropriately and advances giving meaning to unknown words.

Based on the findings, the model test developed for students was one which was communicative and is reliable, valid, fit to the students' abilities, and practical.

Out of the model test, the enhanced syllabus designed was competency-based. Hence, the course design includes the competence domain which is the expertise being developed; the competency continuum; the evidence requirements which are the performance indicators categorized to knowledge, skills, attitudes/values; task specification which are the students' activities in learning; assessment method which is the means to determine whether or not the objectives of a course have been achieved; output which is the product of the task; the teaching method which is the orderly presentation of the material; the topic which is the content of the material; the time frame which specifies the term such as preliminary, midterm, and final, references, readings for requirements, and grading system.

Differential Item Functioning

Gender

Considering the estimates for the gender differences in ability estimates, the actual parameter estimate for male students is .17 larger than its standard error estimate. The chi-square value of .04 at 1 degree of freedom is consistent with this finding. The test is not gender biased.

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Table 4
Ability Estimates for Gender Differences

TERM 2: (-)gender

VARIABLES		UNWEIGHTED FIT				WEIGHTED FIT		
gender	ESTIMATE	ERROR^	MNSQ	CI	T	MNSQ	CI	T
1 male	0.004	0.023	0.98 (0.66, 1.34)		-0.1	0.98 (0.66, 1.34)		-0.1
2 female	-0.004*	0.023	1.04 (0.79, 1.21)		0.4	1.03 (0.79, 1.21)		0.3

An asterisk next to a parameter estimate indicates that it is constrained
Separation Reliability Not Applicable
Chi-square test of parameter equality = 0.04, df = 1
^ Quick standard errors have been used

Looking closely at the interaction between the item and gender facets, item numbers 1, 2, 3, 8, 16, 19, 20, 24, 27, 29, 31, 38, and 42 (13 items)are relatively easier for males than females. Similarly, item numbers 12, 14, 15, 21, 26, 30, 33, 34, 35, 39, and 43 (11 items) are relatively easier for female than male students. All other items have the same ability. Furthermore, the significant chi-square (92.25, df=43) means that the test could not generally be considered as gender bias, because the number of items which exhibit DIF for both genders are almost the same. So, the mean score for the male students is not significantly higher than the female students.

School

Considering school as facet of the test to determine if the test items are functioning differently for students from different schools, Table 5 shows that University B performs better than Universities A, C and D respectively.

Table 5
Parameter Estimates Among Schools

TERM 2: (-)school

VARIABLES		UNWEIGHTED FIT				WEIGHTED FIT		
school	ESTIMATE	ERROR^	MNSQ	CI	T	MNSQ	CI	T
A	-0.303	0.031	1.00 (0.63, 1.37)		0.1	0.98 (0.63, 1.37)		-0.1
B	0.600	0.030	1.06 (0.67, 1.33)		0.4	1.04 (0.67, 1.33)		0.2
C	-0.613	0.034	1.01 (0.53, 1.47)		0.1	1.03 (0.53, 1.47)		0.1
D	0.316*	0.055	1.07 (0.67, 1.33)		0.5	1.07 (0.67, 1.33)		0.4

An asterisk next to a parameter estimate indicates that it is constrained
Separation Reliability = 0.997
Chi-square test of parameter equality = 813.44, df = 3, Sig Level = 0.000
^ Quick standard errors have been used

The parameter estimates of -0.303, 0.600, -0.613, and 0.316 for Universities A, B, C, and D respectively mean that the test items were functioning positively for students from University B.

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The actual parameter estimate for University B is more than 20 times larger than its standard error estimate so the difference between University B with other Universities is significant.

Similarly, the actual parameter estimate for University D is almost six times larger than its standard error and for University A it is almost 10 times larger.

These findings are consistent with the chi square value of 813.44 with 3 degrees of freedom.

Analyzing the interaction of the items and school facet, it is evident that there are items functioning differently for each school. However, these items are not consistently functioning differently for a specific university. This somehow affected the students' mean score.

Item Characteristics and Students' Ability

The items meet the characteristics of a good test because its reliability is .81 or very good for a classroom test, the discrimination indices are acceptable, the difficulty is slightly above the students' ability, the item fit is within confidence intervals, the language is clear, the construction of stem followed the principles of test construction, the options used are parallel, and the test is not gender-biased.

Fig. 2 is the Distribution of Students and Items on a Continuum of Competence which shows that the test items targeted the sample of the students fairly well in terms of difficulty levels. It can also be seen that there was a wide range of item difficulties covering the range of abilities of the students tested as evident by the wide distribution of the items across the logit scale. Similarly, comparing the mean difficulty of the items to the mean ability of the students (which is constrained at zero by default), result shows that the mean difficulty was .419, which is slightly above the mean ability.

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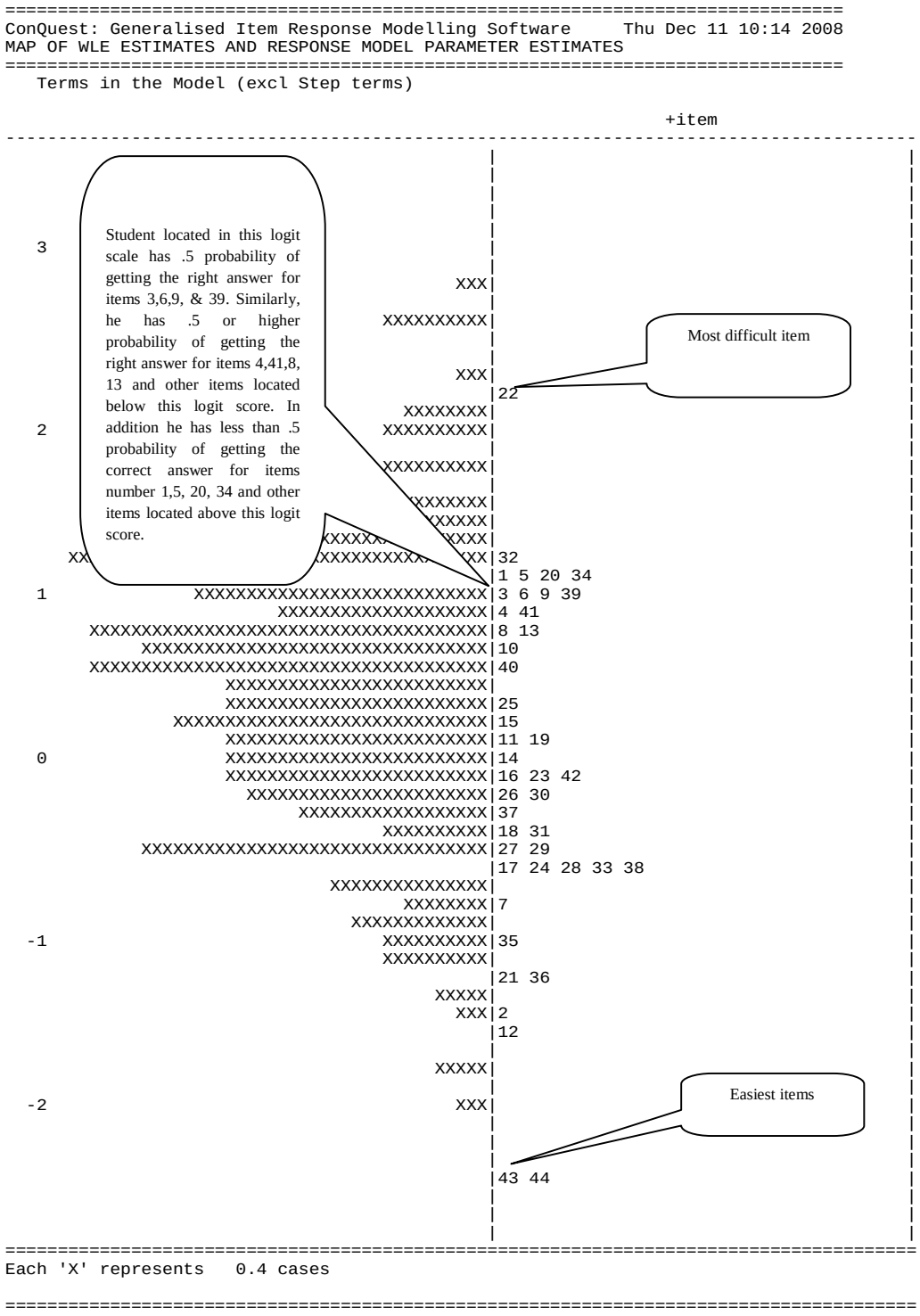

Fig. 2. Distribution of Students and Items on a Continuum of Competence

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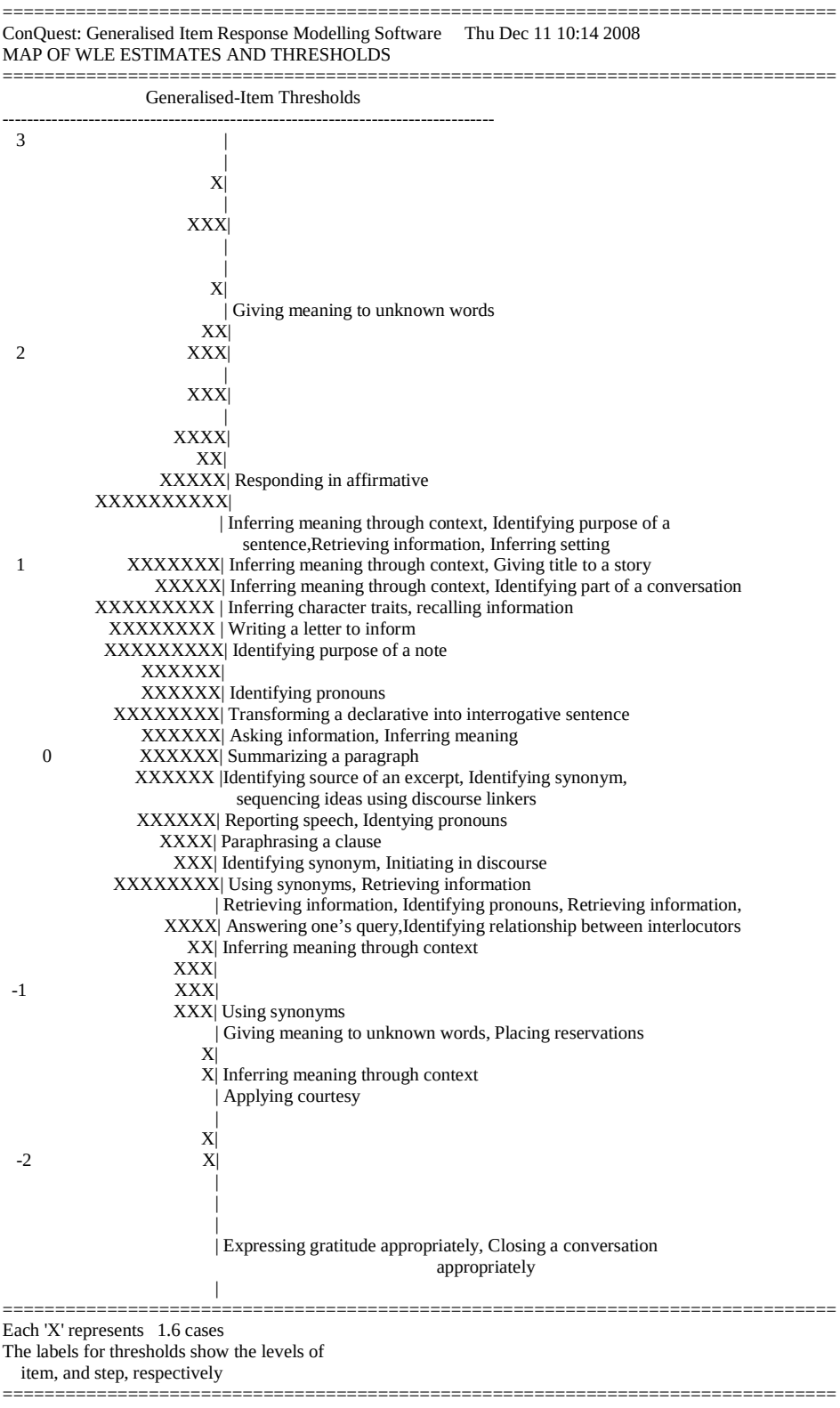

Fig. 3. Hierarchy of Skill Indicators based on Threshold Value of Items

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Hierarchy of Skill Indicators

From the map of competencies, the hierarchy was established as shown in Fig. 3. This continuum of competence was crosschecked with TESOL's *guide for levels of communicative competence*(2000).

The continuum of competence is shown in Table 6.

Table 6
Continuum of Competence

Level	Description
Beginner	Student can express gratitude appropriately,close a conversation appropriately, apply courtesy in letters, place reservations, give meaning to unknown words, use synonyms, **infer meaning** through context, identify relationship between interlocutors, answer one's query, identify pronouns, and **retrieve information.**
Intermediate	Student can **retrieve information**, identify and use synonyms, initiate in discourse, paraphrase a clause, report a speech, sequence ideas using discourse markers, identify source of an excerpt, summarize paragraphs, **infer meaning**, ask for information, transform declarative sentences into interrogative
Advanced	Student can identify purpose of notes, write a letter to inform, recall information, infer character traits, meaning and setting, identify parts of a conversation, give title to stories, **retrieve information**, identify purpose of sentences, **infer meaning** through context, respond in affirmative, give meaning to unknown words

The continuum signifies that the students are still in the beginning stage of sociolinguistic competence while the intermediate continuum is a combination of linguistic and discourse competence.

The advanced continuum was concentrated on the strategic competence such as writing a letter to inform, giving title to stories, responding in affirmative, and giving meaning to unknown words. Moreover, it is interesting to note that there are competencies that cut across all other competencies—retrieving information, inferring meaning, and giving meaning to unknown words.

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Clarity of Language

Clarity of language was rated 3 which means that the items observed principles on clear language to a large extent as suggested by Greenbaum(1991).

The test items observed clarity of language as suggested by Greenbaum(1991)as the subjects were not longer than the predicate, the modifiers were properly placed, parallelism was observed, and pronoun reference was clear.

The Model Communicative Competence Test

The model communicative competence test is a 44-item test which was originally a 58-item test. Its content was validated by experts and has a reliability of .81 while its construct validity was established using the Rasch Simple Logistic Model by ConQuest Software.

According to Harris (1977), a reading test should include at least 30 items while Alderson, Clapham, and Wall (1995) recommended 40 or 50 items.

Syllabus Enhancement

The result of the parametization became the basis for enhancing the existing syllabus. The continuum of competence was considered so as to start from the easiest indicator to the most advanced.

The components of the existing syllabus are course number, course title, course description, terminal/ general objectives, course credit, enabling objectives, topic/content, method, materials, output, evaluation, and time frame while the enhanced syllabus is a competency-based one which includes in its design the competence domain which is the expertise being developed; the competency continuum; the evidence requirements which are the performance indicators categorized to knowledge, skills, attitudes/values; task specification which are the students' activities in learning; assessment method which is the means to determine whether or not the objectives of a course have been achieved(Nunan, 1988); output which is the product of the task; the teaching method which is the orderly presentation of the material; the topic which is the content of the material and which could be changed anytime; and the time frame which specifies the term such a preliminary, midterm, and final. This format was suggested by Kern(1990).

The competence domain, the competency continuum, and the evidence requirements which are the performance indicators categorized to knowledge, skills, attitudes/values were seen to have a need for enhancement.

Games were included during the enhancement, it was decided that the syllabus would be a competency-based one.

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Conclusions

The model communicative competence test is reliable while the items' difficulty is a comprehensible input to the students. The test can discriminate low performing from high performing students. The items fit with the students' ability. The test used clear language and is valid. The options were good. There is presence of differential item functioning among the students of University B. The item characteristics match the ability of the students.

The students are beginners in sociolinguistic competence while they are advanced in strategic competence. The model test is reliable, valid, fit to students' ability, and practical.

In addition, the enhanced syllabus design is competency-based.

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