CHAPTER III

PREPARATION OF THE TEST-BATTERY

I. INTRODUCTION

In light of objectives laid down in the prior chapter, a test-battery is needed. The study of relevant existing tests outcome was that the tests cannot be used as it is. So, it was thought proper to devise new tests rather than directly adapting any old one in view of the following main reasons.

Firstly: It was found that situations included in existing relevant test-batteries were not familiar to our students. The batteries were, namely, (a) Brown-Carlson Listening Comprehension Test (BCLCT (24), (b) STEP Listening Comprehension Test (42) and (c) the tests compiled or adopted for sixth standard students in Australia by Donald Spearritt (123). Secondly, the contents of those tests pertained more to the foreign culture. Thirdly, it was noticed that the content and the language of other factors to be tested (via., memory, reasoning, attention, etc.) and the level of those tests were not suitable to Gujarati pupils.
Last, but not the least, important the author thinks on the basis of the review of relevant literature and other attempts to test listening comprehension that listening comprehension is something more than simple sensory process of audition, as described and defined in the first chapter. In view of this to begin with tests for the following six situations or purposes taking care of the definition and objectives noted earlier were specially devised in Gujarati:

1. Listening to different specific situations.
2. Listening for vocabulary.
3. Listening for span of Attention.
4. Listening for Memory.
5. Listening for Auditory Resistance.

II. SOME OTHER POINTS TO BE CONSIDERED WHILE CONSTRUCTING THE TEST

Before we go to the detailed description of the test two more points are worth discussing:

(a) The problem of dialectical element,

(b) The form of language used in the test.
(a) The Problem of Dialectical Element

As the test is to be constructed for whole of Gujarat State dialectical differences in vocabulary, pronunciation etc. may have an adverse effect on comprehension. So, it was thought fit to consult a linguistic expert (of Gujarati language) in the field. On such consultation valuable suggestions given by the linguistic expert* are summarised below:

(i) Some dialectical words were pointed out for change. They were:

(ii) More refined Sanskrit words were also pointed to be replaced by appropriate words. They were:

(iii) It was also pointed out by him that the test is an oral version of written form of language. (The oral performance differs from written one in juncture, repetitions, speed of delivery, longer pauses between two utterances etc. Here the test no doubt measures the comprehension level of written form put forth orally; yet it is a listening comprehension test.)

* Dr. P.B. Pandit, Head of the Linguistic Department, Delhi University.
(b) Why Written Form of Language?

The question now raised is why was spontaneous speech form not preferred?

As it has been noted earlier the language used in this test is written language read aloud. In fact, written language and spoken language differ in their presentation, syntax, use of words, repetitions, etc. Holliday and others ('62) write:

By comparison, spoken and written varieties of most modern languages are extremely close. (Yet) The spoken and written English (varieties of most modern languages) are by no means identical. They differ both in grammar and in lexis, as anyone by recording and transcribing conversation can find out.

Wilkinson (137) has raised a question about the legitimacy of using written language for listening comprehension. He has put forth very strong argument against the content of listening comprehension tests. He commented like this:

The Brown-Carlsen and the tests of large numbers of workers do not differ materially from reading tests. Since they also use written material. The fact that it is read aloud may not be of great importance. Spearett (1962) isolates a listening factor, but several of his listening tests are of written material spoken. The new studies in linguistics which have focussed our attention on the essential differences between the spoken and written languages, both in their
form and their action, are a product of the sixties. As the present writer has demonstrated elsewhere (Wilkinson, 1965) several of the batteries in Brown-Carlsen tests are essentially literary in operation. And yet, it would seem clear that a test of listening must essentially be based on the spoken language.

The point raised by Wilkinson may have importance elsewhere. It does not have that much importance in connection with the listening comprehension testing programme mainly for the following reasons:

1. There is much in common between listening and reading comprehension skills and are both concerned with receptive part of the language.

2. Linguists (62) mention varieties of language. But in testing situations such varieties - differences are minimised. The varieties are: (a) variety according to users. (Speaker chooses one variety and uses it all the time), (b) varieties according to use (each speaker has a range of variety and chooses between them at different times). The variety (a) is called dialect, variety (b) is called register. It can be said that roughly (about) 90 per cent speakers use a particular variety in a particular area then it is called a dialect. But, as register is not scientifically defined, we can roughly say that when 20, 30 or 40 per cent people use a particular variety of a language then it is called
register. Thus, registers refer to individual differences in using language varieties. It is further explained that every speaker has at his disposal a continuous scale of patterns and items, from which he selects for each situation type the appropriate stock of available harmonies in the appropriate key. He speaks, in other words, in many registers. An example of a lecturer will make the concept more clear. A lecturer uses one kind of registers in classroom, another kind of registers in common room, a third kind at home, so on and so forth. That is he keeps on shifting from one register to another according to situation. The linguistic differences may be slight; but they may be considerable, if the use of language in the new situation differ sharply from that of old. One should choose accordingly.

Thus, there are number of registers. Hence one cannot list the total range of such uses and also one cannot have absolute criterion to identify register. "To sing popular song in Queen's English is a linguistic error".

The 'style' refers to the relationship among the participants, i.e. colloquial (informal) and polite (formal) as it can be called. In this thesis, however, we are mainly concerned with register.

How these two concepts, viz., register and style...
affect the comprehension of pupils? It is implied in the foregoing discussion that all the people especially school children, are not familiar with all types of registers (may be written or spoken). Unfamiliar (or unknown) registers and styles used in the test may adversely affect the comprehension of the pupils. So a test constructor (for listening comprehension) should use familiar and common registers for all testees or eliminate them so as to make it understandable; which will again come nearer to spoken standard language. Such form of language, standard language is always depicted in literature, in writing. So, the language of such test will be much nearer to the written language - standard language.

3. Again, when written material is read aloud in front of pupils it will not be without registers that of speaking, i.e., without tone, intonation, stress, etc. The characteristics of spoken form are included. Thus, difference in the two are minimised.

4. The script of such test can be written accordingly (as it has been done in this research) with the characteristics of spoken form. Not only that as we find some sentences of conversations are included in various writings from actual spoken language. Thus, it can be minimized most. A written script with serious thoughts, unknown words and unfamiliar register is not usually put
forth before pupils.

5. Again, to ask the pupils to comprehend spontaneous speech confronts several problems:

(i) Spontaneous speech is always a speedy discourse and so is difficult for this age-group to follow it. (ii) The content of spontaneous speeches of adults is not always to the level of high school pupils. (iii) If spontaneous speech of pupils is recorded, it is difficult to find out the 'content' from it as it is usually a chit-chatting. (iv) If any planned or pre-discussed talk etc. is recorded sponteneity is withheld. This has been visualised by Wilkinson (137). He described various subtest (at the end of his article) which are not based on spoken language. In the same article he describes a test based on conversation between two friends, for which a topic was chosen and the discussion on it was recorded, which, in turn, were roughly scripted. Care was taken to remove certain inferences and obscurities; again while recording on tape, general line of the rough script was kept in mind and was not, however, read verbatim. He then observes: "The result had thus the feature of normal conversation". Can we accept such discourse as
spontaneous one? Here it seems that care might be taken to remove the barriers which listener comes across while writing the script. Thus, such oral script would resemble more to written language than spoken one.

Anyway, the present investigator has taken into the consideration all these issues and tried her best to evolve a listening comprehension test.

III. DESCRIPTION OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF EACH GROUP OF SUBTESTS

1. Listening to Different Situation Tests

(a) Selection of the Content of the Tests

Various situations which were included in the two tests BCLCT and STEP Listening - were first carefully studied for this purpose. Moreover, some story books and other literature for children in English, Gujarati and Hindi were scrutinized; topics there in pertaining to science, religion, stories, poems, geography, etc. satisfying the following criteria were selected:

1. The content of the topics should be now i.e. not known earlier or studied by pupils.

2. It should be interesting or providing natural motivation for hearing.
3. It should never be too easy to lose interest nor too hard to grasp; it should be within the understanding of capacity of the age groups under study.

4. It should not involve any social racial prejudices.

5. It should avoid as far as possible unnecessary personal involvement of listener of any sex.

6. It should not contain any topical matter or content which may become obsolete after a time.

7. It should be typical oral situation common to all pupils to be tested, and not unfamiliar situation.

After selecting suitable topics they were rewritten or shortened or lengthened to satisfy the above mentioned criterion. The number of various situations which were selected were three times more than what was finally needed.

All these selected pieces of literature were then referred to experienced teachers of eight class for the opinion about their suitability in the light of the prior criterion and in addition they were asked to bear in mind the following points:
(i) The difficulty level should be suitable to eighth standard.

(ii) There should be clarity of ideas.

(iii) The language should be clear and simple.

The consensus of teachers suggested modifications, which may be listed as follows:

(i) Some of the passages were needed to be shortened.

(ii) There were some unfamiliar and difficult words. It was suggested that they be dropped.

(iii) The test item on listening news was found difficult.

(iv) Situations like preparing tea or any eatable was thought to be unfamiliar especially for boys.

(v) Two talks viz. one on आर्चिटेक्चर and other on preparation and utility of the flannel cloth were found to be difficult to and hence be discarded as they were thought to be difficult.

(vi) The poem on "मैंलोग हूँ जो करते हूँ " was preferred to "मुझे रोयल " and " लॉक है ".
(b) Construction of Test Items

While incorporating all these valuable suggestions a varied number of test items were constructed, on the following thirteen subtests for the first of the main test:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Type of the subtest</th>
<th>No. of items</th>
<th>No. of questions asked</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Story</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15 (in each)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Short passages (general significance)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Talk (Boys' interest)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Talk (Girls' interest)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Talk (General)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Drama</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Poem</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Passages (Short) (Noting Details)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Anecdote</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Talks for following directions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Short passages (Inference)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Passage (Narration)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Sentences (Accuracy of Ideas)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The form of the question was multiple choice, with one correct answer and three distractors. This form was thought fit to be used in the test-battery for the following reasons:
(i) it reduces the percentage of guessing;
(ii) measures all types of mental processes supposed to be involved in listening comprehension;
(iii) it is widely used in almost all types of tests.

After constructing the items on all the subtests noted above, all the items were read, reviewed by researcher from the point of view of:

(i) appropriateness of the stem, as well as of questions based on the content,
(ii) homogeneity of the distractors,
(iii) unambiguity and correctness of the language of the stem, distractors etc., and
(iv) indefiniteness of statements or any other undue provision of a correct answer.

The written copy of the whole test was given to experts to review the items from the point of view noted above. Collection of the suggestion from different experts was the next step. After that a group discussion on the test was held, which helped mainly in correcting distractors, language of instruction and the stem questions.
As the test was to be taped, the reading of the tests by various persons was also tried to select a voice with the clarity and suitable speed, accent, tone, pitch, etc.

Next step was to present the test in live form by the investigator herself in two classes. Each class consisted of 45 to 50 students.

Reading session for these tests was of about two hours, and it took three days to present all the thirteen tests to the class. The instruction, the questions and the answers were read to pupils. The difficulties were solved if any with the help of blackboard whenever necessary.

While presenting the test before the class the investigator did following things:

(i) Timings of reading - the passage, the question, of the answers given by pupils and of instruction given for each subtest were noted. The timing was taken by the helper, and with the help of stop-watch.

(ii) The helper also noted ambiguous points, words or any difficulty realized by students.

(iii) The instruction was given to the students to point out any difficulty they felt at the end of the each test.
This whole process helped to:

(i) determine appropriate speed of reading the content of all the above mentioned tests,

(ii) determine appropriateness of pitch and volume of the voice,

(iii) have an idea of clarity of pronunciation and voice,

(iv) determine appropriate pauses while reading,

(v) get an idea of maximum time needed to present each sub-test,

(vi) decide whether oral presentation - the whole process of presentation and the content of the test is boring or interesting to pupils.

It was observed during oral presentation that:

(i) The selected topics and types of tests were interesting.

(ii) The speed should be slower than it was presented.

(iii) The administration of the test on tape will take more time than it was presented in live form.
(iv) The lessening of the speed will lengthen the test.

2. **Vocabulary Tests**

(a) **Selection of the Words, Idioms and Proverbs**

(i) Various tests were read viz., listening and reading, comprehension tests mentioned earlier in English and reading comprehension tests in Gujarati, silent reading comprehension tests, and vocabulary tests prepared by M.Ed. students were referred to.

(ii) Various text-books for eighth standards studied.

Twenty words for synonyms, twenty words for antonyms, thirteen idioms and sixteen proverbs, were selected.

(b) **Construction of Items**

After selection, test items were constructed. Review by teachers, colleagues and other experts gave useful suggestions regarding (i) difficulty level of words, (ii) new words.

Incorporating the suggestions the test was orally put forth before pupils. It was observed and suggested by helper and pupils that: (i) the words should be easier, (ii) ambiguous distractors should be removed, (iii) the
time gap for finding correct answers, reading distractors should be lesser than the former test.

3. **Attention Tests**

There are five tests in this section. Of the five, three of the attention tests were constructed on the line of those of Spearritts. They are:

(i) **Triplet Numbers with fifteen items.**

(ii) **Letter list which included three lists with ten items in each.**

(iii) **Five Letters Test: with fifteen items.**

Two more tests were newly constructed. It was felt in the beginning that the test "Five Letters" based on Gujarati alphabets will be too hard to solve. So the same mental processes were decided to be tested with the help of five digits (1, 2, 3, 4, 5). Both the tests were included in the battery.

(iv) **The Five Digit test with fifteen items.**

(v) **The other one added is Listening to phonetic variations. In Gujarati language broad and \( \Amb, \Aul \) narrow pronunciations work as phonemes. Attentive listener catches these sound variations and derives meanings accordingly: bearing in mind this, the test has been devised. They were given to experts. Suggestions were:
1. Five Letters Test, Letter List tests will be too difficult to solve.

2. Easier items, detailed instructions and number of items for practice should be more than those of other tests.

Incorporating the suggestions, especially that of practice examples the tests were put before the classes.

Oral presentation gave insight into the following matters:

(i) The preparation of the format of the answer sheet of the Letter List Test and the Listening to Phonetic Variations Test.

(ii) The preparation of instructions of all the five tests to be more explicit and short.

(iii) The test on Five Letters Test was found more difficult.

4. Memory Tests

Spearritt's study consisted of following types of memory tests:

(i) Memory for Words

(ii) Letter Span (Visual)

(iii) Letter Span (Auditory)
Out of these six tests, Letter Span (Visual) was dropped, as the mode of presentation of the test under construction was aural one. The test for Memory for Words' test, and 'Word Number Recall' test and 'Consequences' were made easier by decreasing the amount of text to memorize and changing the method of presentation. Each one had fifteen pairs in each 'Memory for Words' and 'Word Number Recall', and 'Consequences' included 23 items.

Two more tests were added with fifteen items in each. One was 'Memory for Sentences' (Immediate Recall) and the other one was 'Sentence Completion' (Late Memory/Remote one).

Experts opined to include as many items in the test, as no definite concept for the difficulty level of the pupils can be put forth.

After oral presentation to two classes it was found that:

(i) the amount of text to be memorized should still be decreased in all tests.

(ii) Word Pair Test was found difficult. So
5. **Auditory Resistance**

Auditory Resistance Tests are included in Spearritt's study. We find these types of tests in Karlin's study. Spearritt also constructed from the description of the original tests of Karlin. We find this factor included in Dr. K. G. Desai's Intelligence Test. In all five tests were constructed. The test on Delayed Spelling consisted of 20 words. The tests on Singing, Haphazard Speech, Illogical Grouping had 20 items. One more test is constructed viz. the test on "Correcting the word order". This has been devised from that of Dr. K. G. Desai's study.

Expert opinion was like that of Memory Tests.

It was realized during the oral presentation of the tests that:

(i) While reading the content of the tests pauses should be longer, intonation and pitch should be more distinct and pronunciations should be more clear,

(ii) the sentences were too long,

(iii) Some of the words used were not very familiar to the pupils and words with consonant cluster were found difficult
(iv) the lines of different songs were too long,
(v) Pupils found it difficult to grasp the words when the musical composition was not simple.

6. Reasoning Tests

Out of six tests of Reasoning, five tests are that of Spearritt. They are:

1. Letter Grouping (Non-sense Syllables)
2. Letter Series
3. Deductive and Inductive Reasoning (Solving Problems)
4. Matching Words
5. Arithmetical Reasoning

The test items were constructed. It was felt while constructing the items on the test "Letter Grouping" that it will be difficult for the eighth standard pupils to solve. So the items with meaningful words were constructed; it is the sixth test, namely, "Word Grouping" test.

The two tests "Letter Grouping" and "Word Grouping" had more than 30 items.
The items on problem solving were newly constructed. The items of all the reasoning tests were made easier.

The oral presentation gave the idea of:

(i) the difficulty level of each test; they were found difficult. So more easier items were to be constructed,

(ii) the problems to be solved, based on who is related to whom, finding directions of the places, were found difficult,

(iii) the rate of reading should be slower,

(iv) Letter Series Test should be shorter and
with mix/letters - vowels and consonants and the pronunciation of Letters more distinct,

(v) The length of the sentences of the Matching Words should be shorter,

(vi) the time gap to be kept between two questions (items); should be more than the other tests,

(vii) the nature of instruction should be more clear,
The practice examples should be increased to 3 or 4 representing various types of reasoning.

Thus, the final test-battery for the pre-tryout was prepared. The arrangement of the final test-battery for pre-tryout was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Name of the test</th>
<th>No. of questions</th>
<th>Type of the sub-test in order</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Story</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Listening to Different Situation (LDS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Poetry</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>LDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Letter Grouping</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Reasoning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Word Grouping</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Reasoning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Sentence Completion</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Memory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Triplet Numbers</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Attention Test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Sentence Completion (Immediate)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Memory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Narration</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>LDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Memory for Words</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>(Groups) Memory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Letter Series</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Reasoning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Letter List</td>
<td>3 Lists (10 syllables in each)</td>
<td>Memory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Consequences</td>
<td>15 Pairs</td>
<td>Memory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>General Significance</td>
<td>15 Pára</td>
<td>LDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Word Number Recall</td>
<td>14 Groups</td>
<td>Memory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sr. No.</td>
<td>Name of the test</td>
<td>No. of questions</td>
<td>Type of the sub-test</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Illogical Grouping</td>
<td>17 Sentences</td>
<td>Auditory Resistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>General Reasoning</td>
<td>33 Problems</td>
<td>Reasoning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Five Letters</td>
<td>17 Instruction</td>
<td>Attention Test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Anecdote</td>
<td>14 Questions</td>
<td>LDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Letter Span</td>
<td>22 From 3 to 9 Syllables</td>
<td>Memory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Listening to Note Details</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>LDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>Five Numbers</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Attention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>Singing</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Auditory Resistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>General Talk</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>LDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>Vocabulary Tests</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(a) Synonyms</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(b) Antonyms</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(c) Idioms</td>
<td>14</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(d) Proverbs</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>Girls' Talk</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>LDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>Drama</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>LDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.</td>
<td>Listening to Phonetic Variation</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>LDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.</td>
<td>Boys' Talk</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>LDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.</td>
<td>Listening for Inference</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>LDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.</td>
<td>Arithmetical Reasoning</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Reasoning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sr. No.</td>
<td>Name of the test</td>
<td>No. of questions</td>
<td>Type of the sub-test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31.</td>
<td>Correcting the order of the Sentence</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Auditory Resistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32.</td>
<td>Matching Words</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Reasoning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33.</td>
<td>Haphazard Speech</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Auditory Resistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34.</td>
<td>Story</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>LDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35.</td>
<td>Delayed Spelling</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Auditory Resistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36.</td>
<td>Listening for Accuracy of Ideas</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>LDS</td>
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<tr>
<td>37.</td>
<td>Sentence Writing</td>
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<td>Memory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38.</td>
<td>Follow Directions</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>LDS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The preliminary tryout based on these tests and the statistical calculations done on the basis of the data collected will be described in the next chapter.