Abstract

This paper evaluates certain guidelines for writing multiple-choice test items. The analysis of the responses of 5013 subjects to 630 items from 21 university classroom achievement tests suggests that an option should not differ in terms of heterogeneous content because such error has a slight but harmful effect on item discrimination. This also occurs with the "None of the above" option when it is the correct one. In contrast, results do not show the supposedly negative effects of a different-length option, the use of specific determiners, or the use of the "All of the above" option, which not only decreases difficulty but also improves discrimination when it is the correct option.