Test of Word Knowledge  
(TOWK)

**Publisher/Date:**  
- Pearson Assessment, 19500 Bulverde Road, San Antonio, TX 78259.  
  Published, 1992.

**Purpose:**  
- Individually-administered, norm-referenced measure of vocabulary development, probing for indications of semantic development and lexical knowledge, for students ages 5-17 years.

**Provides:**  
- There are two forms (levels) for the test: Level 1 spans ages 5-8 years, while Level 2 covers ages 8-17. Level 1 includes 4 subtests (2 expressive tasks and 2 receptive tasks) with a supplemental subtest (Synonyms). Level 2 also includes 4 subtests (again, 2 each of expressive and receptive development) and 4 supplementary subtests. Level 1 tasks are of a referential and relational nature, while Level 2 tasks address relational and meta-linguistic tasks.

**Standardization Issues:**  
- Norming was based on a sampling of 1,570 students from 26 states, balanced by gender in 1-year increments. Cell sizes by year included 130 students in age-groups 5-00 to 13-11 and 100 students at each year from 14-00 to 17-11.

**Reliability and Validity Issues:**  
- Internal-consistency reliability estimates were good for both levels (.84-.95). Interscorer-reliability estimates ranged from .90-.99, and test-retest stability over 1-4 week spans showed means for Receptive, Expressive, and Total scores as .89, .92, and .94, respectively. Factor-analytic studies supported both expressive and receptive factors on both levels of the test. Construct validity was based on analysis of intercorrelations between the subtests, yielding moderate correlations. Study of concurrent correlation with WISC-III and CELF-R yielded moderate correlations of .76 and .64, respectively.

**Additional Points:**  
- Demographic-representation in the norm sample may be outdated, as balance by gender, race, and parent education was based on 1980 US Census data. Northeast representation in the sample appeared underrepresented by about 10% and the North Central region was overrepresented by about 12%.
• Content validity study (assessing how well the test discriminated between identified and non-identified language-disabled individuals) yielded an accuracy-rate of only 67%; with more false-negatives than false-positives found (suggesting the possibility of under-identification). The authors do speculate that this may be due to the test only measuring semantics.

• Zeeman’s 1999 study of the test with a very limited number of Hearing Impaired students found Mean standard scores of 69.6 (TOWK Receptive) and 77.1 (TOWK Expressive). With the study’s hearing impaired students, the TOWK correlated very well (.85) with results of the EOWPVT, but very poorly with results obtained on the PPVT-R (.23). On the TOWK, the hearing impaired students typically scored lowest on the subtests of Conjunctions and Transitions Words (mean = 4.2) and Synonyms (mean = 4.3), and highest on Word Opposites (mean = 6.5) and Multiple Contexts (mean = 6.1).