



MODIFICATION OF TESTS IN ASSESSING LANGUAGE SKILLS

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Abstract

This article aims to analyze types of assessment and tests. Their appropriateness to the learner's skills and talents. Modification of tests according to the knowledge and interests of the learners.

Keywords: Assessment, tests, testing system, assessment principles, assessment profile.

Introduction

Assessment is one of the worthiest items in language learning and teaching. Ausubel (1968) suggested that teachers should teach according to the knowledge of the learners and assess appropriately. A lot of teachers and instructors assess their students differently according to assessment principles (validity, reliability, practicality, authenticity and washback), holistic and analytic scores, different feedbacks in summative and formative ways; or formal and informal. For many teachers assessing their learners is like visiting a new foreign country (Coombe, Folse & Hubley, 2007), because various learners have different styles of learning and each group can have different level students. Teachers being able to test in such kind of situations can show their talent of evaluating.

Assessment should be done for learning, for measuring learners' gained knowledge from the course or unit. According to this point Natriello (1987) a model of the evaluation process, which consists of these stages: identifying the purpose evaluation; creating appropriate tasks; establishing criteria and standards for students' performance; providing feedback and monitoring outcomes. Consequently, in this article there followed these stages.

Literature Review

Learner assessment profile should be mentioned on order to reach this goal. This project is conducted at a secondary school №23 in Jambay, Samarkand. We decided to work with 11th grade student of this school, who is Ergasheva Sadokat. We conducted needs analysis research with this language learner and observed her participation for several times during our practice in order to find out issues connected with language assessment.



This learner is 16 years old student and has been learning English for 8 years only from school classes. English lessons at school are conducted 3 hours a week per 45 minutes. In this turn, learners get marks for active participation and doing essential tasks and exercises. Marks are described as points: 5 points for excellent, 4 points for good, 3 points for satisfactory and 2 points for unsatisfactory participation, and completing class and home tasks. This participant always gets excellent results, but she wants to get additional tutorial classes because she has A2 level according to CEFR standard. She needs B2 level for her entrance exam into university but their course book English 11 is intended for B1 level.

As it is known, placement tests assess students' level of language ability which should be appropriate to the course, class or grade. Such kind of tests can determine the level at which a student can learn operatively (Coombe, Folse & Hubley, 2007). These tests are multiple choice ones, where are taken into account only language objectives with improving grammar and vocabulary. Even though the course book for 11th grade is destined for developing all macro skills, integrated grammar and vocabulary, existed assessment process don't correspond.

Established type of assessment for the 11th grade language learners assessed only profile learner's grammar and vocabulary skills which is not in appropriate level. These skills are tested based on 9 units within 6 sub-units in each which is overall 36 classes per term. This test gives 20 points in total which is 1 point for each correct answer and used as progress test for summative assessment during each term. According to Coombe, Folse & Hubley (2007), progress tests measure the process and development that students are doing during defined course or program goals and if students have achieved the objectives which are established in the curriculum can be included for summative assessment. But this kind of test can be used only for traditional assessment and determining learners' grammar and vocabulary skills, in other hand the reliability and validity are clear, because this test covers grammar and vocabulary parts from all units, but other macro skills like reading, writing, listening, and speaking remain almost without testing. They are assessed only in a formative way during the classes and considered as active participation in this program. Next in order, practicality of the test is determined operatively. The time is set, which is 20 minutes 1 minute for each question of the test. Scoring is organized in 5 pointed grade system which is: 5 for 17-20 points, 4 for 14-16 points, 3 for 11-13 points and 2 for 0-10 points.

Subsequently, this practical test is not essential to CEFR standard goals, when the curriculum of the 11th grade students is destined for preparing B1 level language learners according to CEFR standard. In other hand, suggested test can be used as for warming up activity, checking grammar and vocabulary skills or as progress exercise during the classes. In addition, it can be used for summative assessment only for testing grammar and vocabulary skills, but not other macro skills. Also, this test is available for both: extroverted and introverted language learners; and can be used for differentiated approach during the classes for lower level students, but is not essential for higher level learners. It is very easy for higher level students so this assessment can be considered like wasting time for them.

Noting about objectives, this test is provided only with language objectives of the units, which are based only on grammar and vocabulary, but there we cannot meet any content objectives which can improve learner's cultural approach within language assessment. The course book of the 11th grade students and



their curriculum is meant for learning and teaching English in order to develop B1 level, taking into account cultural issues as it mentioned above. There students can find out topics on 'Healthy lifestyle', 'Travelling', 'Historical places', 'Tourism in Uzbekistan and English speaking countries', 'Types of service in Uzbekistan and English speaking countries' and so on. These topics serve as a good basis for assessing all integrated skills and a helpful tool for developing learner's critical and analytical thinking abilities within assessment.

Methodology & Empirical Analysis

To analyze the test modification method of assessment is chosen. For modified version of the chosen progress test we propose multimodal progress assessment which includes all macro skills, integrated grammar and vocabulary skills. So, a big part of the test is organized based on multiple choice questions (grammar and listening), matching words for vocabulary and speaking and writing parts have separate rubrics which is described below. Overall points for this multimodal progress test is 100 points which has separate points for each skill.

Speaking	20 points
Listening	20 points
Reading	20 points
Writing	20 points
Vocabulary	10 points
Grammar	10 points

Total: 100 points

These points are scored from unsatisfactory to excellent grade according to determined points.

Excellent	86-100 pts
Good	71-85 pts
Satisfactory	56-70 pts
Unsatisfactory	0-55 pts

For practicality of this assessment 45 minutes is not enough due to timeline of school program. In this case, I suggest to provide this multimodal progress test with 3 optional classes (135minutes) twice a term.

For speaking test there can be organized several questions according to covered topics during the classes. In the test process the examiners come to assessee and choose one of the questions in order to speak about it. For preparation there can be given 1-3 minutes and for producing the speech 1-2 minutes. Suggested topics according to the text book are:

- 1) Study skills achievement;
- 2) Save the earth;



- 3) Keeping fit;
- 4) Tourism, travel;
- 5) Market economy.

According to Bennett (2009), assessment designers need to decide how to score performance according to accuracy and fluency. Some linguistics considered that it is essential to assess intonation too while producing speech, because it can determine some meanings. So, in my assessment rubrics for speaking I decided to take into account these factors.

Points	5	4	3	2	1
Grammatical formulation of speech	Without any grammatical mistakes	2-3 mistakes can be mentioned. Speaker did not pay attention to the auxiliaries.	More than 5 mistakes, not paying attention to the articles and auxiliaries.	Numerous mistakes, grammar rules are not used appropriately at all.	No grammatical formulation of speech is demonstrated
Speed of speech	Speech is perfect without any pauses.	Using several pauses, 2-3 times correcting themselves.	Many pauses while producing the speech, a lot of corrections and repetitions.	Numerous pauses.	The speech is not ready, it seems like combination of words.
Intonation	Correct using of rising and falling intonation.	Correct using of rising and falling intonation, but doing 2-3 mistakes which affect meaning of sentences.	Producing speech without paying attention to intonation, but some correct parts can be met.	Producing speech without paying attention to intonation, but some tries can be met.	Producing monotoneous speech.
Range of vocabulary	Using appropriate vocabulary. Producing formal speech.	Producing formal speech with some informal words and phrases.	Producing informal speech with some formal words and phrases.	Producing informal speech, but appropriate to the topic.	Producing informal speech and not essential to the topic.

The testing of reading seems deceptively straightforward comparing to oral ability. Teachers can quickly conduct reading test, but sometimes it may not be so effective Arthur (2016). Consequently, in this multimodal progress test assess reading test by multiple choice questions according to covered topics from the textbook.

Pre-activity for such kind of multiple choice questions is scanning. According to Arthur (2016), in scanning activity learners can quickly find specific words, phrases, idioms; various figures and percentages; specific names in a bibliography or a set of references. So, such kind of specifications is



very essential for multiple choice questions. In this multimodal progress test for reading also intended 20 points, 2 points for each right answer out of 10 questions.

Listening assessment also plays an important role for evaluating process. Listening is a receptive skill, so the assessment of listening skills can be combined by testing of reading (Arthur,2016). For listening test I propose note-taking while listening to the track, because this activity can be very helpful for completing multiple choice questions. For listening there is also intended 20 points.

Grammar skill is suggested to be tested directly according to Arthur's (2016) ideas, so in my multimodal progress test I also decided to assess grammar separately. For this skill there is chosen multiple choice questions , which can be also considered like gap filling one. Consequently, this grammar test includes a good sample of grammatical elements. For this grammar test is intended 10 points, 0,5 point for each true answer.

Testing vocabulary can be considered as an inclusion of a grammar section. My profile participant learnt vocabulary only in traditional way with translations. Essentially, I chose to test vocabulary by matching activity, which is a helpful technique for enhancing reading skills too. For this asse Testing writing skill can be done by assessing writing skills learners' essays. In testing writing in this school teachers assess their learners in traditional way only paying attention to the grammatical organization of essays, but in this assessment I propose rubrics for assessing these essays taking into account creative, imaginative, or even intelligent knowledge. As mentioned before there are a lot of topics, which can develop learners' critical and analytical thinking abilities in English. These topics are 'Healthy lifestyle', 'Travelling', 'Historical places', 'Tourism in Uzbekistan and English speaking countries', 'Types of service in Uzbekistan and English speaking countries' and so on. ssment is destined 10 points for each true answer.

RESULTS

Having carried out this modification in all skills, we got very good results in the process of learning the English language of the tested participant of our project.

CONCLUSIONS

Assessment plays crucial role in the process of teaching and learning the English language. Teachers as gate keepers and language designers (Kaiser, 2018) should be able to assess their learners appropriately and design activities, tests according to learner's range of knowledge. This test modification project can be able to respond all these requirements. Tasks and tests in this project are proposed and organized due to profile learner's needs and her knowledge.

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