ESCUELA SUPERIOR POLITÉCNICA AGROPECUARIA DE MANABÍ MANUEL FÉLIX LÓPEZ

LANGUAGE CENTER

THEME:

A FIXED FRAME FOR ASSESSING STUDENTS OBJECTIVELY AND SUBJECTIVELY IN PERCENTAGE SCALES IN THE LANGUAGE CENTER AT ESPAM MFL

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CALCETA, AUGUST, 2015

ABSTRACT

A fixed frame for assessing students objectively and subjectively under percentage scales is an interesting proposal focused on identifying the advantages of objective and subjective assessments, in order to establish a frame for ensuring the right way of evaluating students with the appropriate combination of objectivity and subjectivity in a test according to their level of knowledge. This proposal was aimed at standardize the way how teachers must structure their quizzes in the Language Center at ESPAM MFL.

INTRODUCTION

As far as we know assessment is somewhat important in all educational fields, it is the process of obtaining, organizing, and presenting varied information of what the student has learned, and how, through the use of different methods, strategies, techniques, context and periods of time during the teaching and learning process.

Some students may find this hard, others might find it easy depending on the subjects they are mostly inclined to, but the most important thing when assessing students is, the result relating scores or marks they could get at the end of a term. Assessment is not only used as a method for measuring the students' abilities and academic performance, it also helps teachers realize which of the activities or those methods they applied during the teaching-learning process were more effective and accurate and which ones were not at all relevant to keep on applying. Thus, language assessment is of vital importance to both students and teachers.

There are different ways of assessing students, but in this study we're really focused on Language Assessment, so that teachers are able to measure the English knowledge such as grammar and vocabulary, and skills such as listening, reading, writing, and speaking. Therefore it is essential to highlight some of the

pros and cons, advantages and disadvantages there might stem from this way of assessing.

- ✓ **FORMAL ASSESSMET:** tests, pop-quizzes, presentations.
- ✓ **INFORMAL ASSESSMENT:** Teacher makes questions to see if students have learned something, have them do a skit or role-play conversations.

Before developing tests or quizzes it is of great important to ask oneself three common questions.

Why? Why are you assessing students: are you trying to place them into different levels? Are you trying to do a diagnostic test to see what their strengths and weaknesses are? Do you want to know if they have learnt the material up through the midterm?

What? What are you trying to measure? What are you trying to find out?

How: How are you going to assess your students? What objectively and subjectively percentage scale are you going to use for assessing grammar, vocabulary, and the receptive skills? (reading for comprehension and listening for understanding)

General objective

- ➢ To establish a fixed frame for assessing students objectively and subjectively in percentage scales in order to measure the students' knowledge and abilities in the Language Center at "ESPAM MFL"

Specific Objectives.

To fulfill this main objective the following tasks will be carried out as it follows:

- ✓ Identify the advantages when developing objectively and subjectively language assessment tests.

✓ Propose a percentage scale for assessing students, both objectively and subjectively in the Language Center at ESPAM "MFL"

THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Assessment for learning supports practitioners and helps them focus on the learner and learning in individual classroom sessions. It also shows how one of the Assessments for Learning strategy's principal themes, quality feedback, can be used to help learners progress (Jones, 2005). Whether direct or indirect assessment, it is of vital importance to be aware about the differences when evaluating objectively or subjectively. For instance, the recognition of advantages and disadvantages becomes indispensable.

Direct assessment is closely associated to the objective evaluation, unlike the indirect assessment is associated to the subjective evaluation, for this reason, it is appropriate to differentiate, the pros and cons to reach the goal of assessing effectively.

OBJECTIVE ASSESSMENT

Indirect Assessment tries to assess the abilities that underline the skills we try to measure, and as usual it includes items where the students or test takers have to select a response instead of constructing their own one(s). One common question used in indirect assessment is multiple-choice questions or binary questions (True or False, in some cases it is also added the option it doesn't say)

Multiple- Choice questions is a form of assessment where respondents are asked to select to the best possible answer (s). If guessing a question there is usually a 25 percent chance of getting it correct on a 4 question choice question.

Finding the right answer from multiple choices can be automated using multiple choice question answering systems.

The multiple choice format could be used in educational testing, no matter if the teacher is up to apply it in placement tests, diagnostic, continuous or formative assessment to measure the student's knowledge and abilities through recognition of forms focused on grammar, vocabulary and the receptive skills listening and reading through comprehension.

Although E. L. Thorndike developed an early multiple choice test, Frederick J. Kelly was the first to use such items as part of a large scale assessment.

Nowadays multiple choice questions could be applied in many standardized tests, no matter what the specific purpose might be but to be aware when, why, and how to apply them. Therefore is of great importance for test makers or teachers to keep in mind some useful rules for writing multiple choice questions in order to avoid confusion when test takers are putting on trial their knowledge and abilities when learning a language, and in this case the second world's spoken language, English.

For developing multiple choice questions:

1. **Use plausible distractor (wrong-response options)**
   - Only list plausible distractors, even if the number of option for question changes.
   - Write the options so they are homogeneous in context.
   - Use answer given in previous open-ended exams to provide realistic.

2. **Use a question format**
   Experts encourage multiple-choice items to be prepared as questions (rather than incomplete statements)

INCOMPLETE STAMENT FORMAT:

The capital of California is in _____. ⟵⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯ **Less effective**

DIRECT QUESTION FORMAT:

In which of the following city is the capital of California?   **More effective**

3. **Emphasize Higher-Level Thinking**

• Use memory-plus application questions. These questions require students to recall principles, rules or facts in a real life context.

• The key to preparing memory-plus application questions is to place the concept in a life situation or context that requires the student to first recall the facts and then apply or transfer the application of those facts into a situation.

• Seek support from others who have experience writing higher-level thinking multiple-choice questions.

EXAMPLES:

A: Memory only example: (to assess vocabulary usage in context, or recycle words taught before)

Which description best characterizes transport?

a. Magazines

b. A Tram   **Less effective**

c. Lightning bolt

d. Clouds

e. Noodles

B: Memory only example:

Yesterday, Anne bought some magazines to read while she travels to work, suddenly she looked up the sky, there were some dark clouds, after a while it started raining, and she saw a lightning bolt. She was so afraid and got into a

restaurant where she saw her best friends was eating noodles, she greeted him and waited until they left the restaurant to take to the tram to go home.

What kind of transport did Anne use to get home?

a. Magazines
b. A tram
c. Lightning bolt
d. Clouds
e. Noodles

4. **Keep Options Lengths Similar**
   - Avoid making your correct answers the long or short answer

5. **Balance the placement of the correct answer**
   - Correct answers are usually the second or third option.

6. **Be Grammatically Correct**
   - Use simple, precise and unambiguous wording
   - Students will be more likely to select the correct answer by finding the grammatically correct option.

7. **Avoid clues to the correct answer**
   - Avoid answering one question in the test by giving the answer somewhere else in the test.
   - Have the test reviewed by someone who can find mistakes, clues, grammar and punctuation problems before you administer the exam to students.
   - Avoid extremes; never, always, only.
   - Avoid nonsense words and unreasonable statement.

8. **Avoid negative questions.**
   - 31 of 35 testing experts recommend avoiding negative questions.
   - Students may be able to find an incorrect answer without knowing the correct answer.

9. **Give clear instructions.**

10. **Avoid the "All above option"**
    - Students merely need to recognize two correct options to get the answer correct.

11. **Avoid the "None of above option"**
    - You will never know if the students know the correct answer.

12. **Don't use MC Questions when other item types are more appropriated.**
    - Limited distractors or assessing problems-solving and creativity.

ADVANTAGES:

To summarize, multiple choice tests have some advantages which include:
- ✓ easy to score,
- ✓ increase reliability,
- ✓ may lower test anxiety,
- ✓ requires little instruction, and
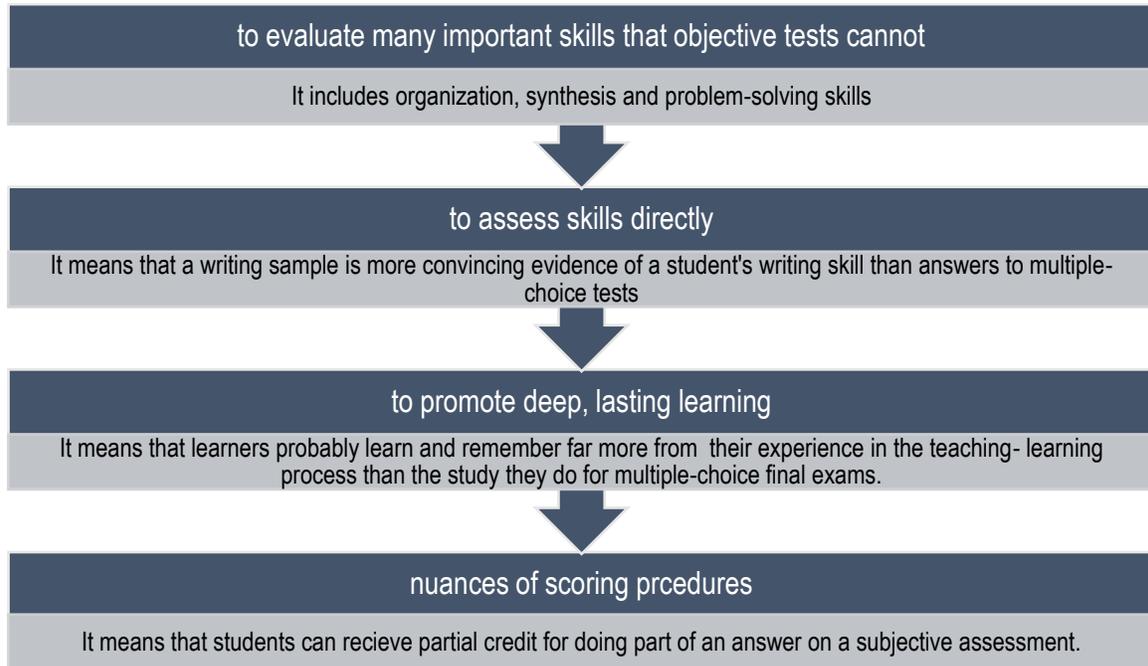- ✓ manageable for beginning learners who can't produce a lot.

SUBJECTIVE ASSESSMENT.

According to Nathan (2008) "subjective assessment" implies that an interpretation takes place- being based on or influenced by the personal tastes or opinions of the instructor, rather than on external facts or quantifiable evidence. For Suskie (2010) subjective assessments yield many possible answers of varying quality, require professional judgment to score and contrary to the objective one, many of

them yield quantitative results. This same author also states some advantages of assessing subjectively.

ADVANTAGES:

Subjective assessments allow:

| to evaluate many important skills that objective tests cannot |
| It includes organization, synthesis and problem-solving skills |

| to assess skills directly |
| It means that a writing sample is more convincing evidence of a student's writing skill than answers to multiple-choice tests |

| to promote deep, lasting learning |
| It means that learners probably learn and remember far more from their experience in the teaching- learning process than the study they do for multiple-choice final exams. |

| nuances of scoring prcedures |
| It means that students can recieve partial credit for doing part of an answer on a subjective assessment. |

Graph 1. Advantages of subjective assessments.

PERCENTAGE SCALES FOR OBJECTIVE AND SUBJECTIVE ASSESSMENTS.

As it was explained in the previous sections, evaluations should contain a greater degree of objectivity during the early stages of learning, that helps students to recognize the contents and increase the level of confidence for learning the new language. Based on that criterion, it is necessary to establish a percentage scale for assessing students both objectively and subjectively in order to reach better results. According to that, the quizzes must be divided into two parts when assessing (see table 01).

As the Language Center at ESPAM MFL, has eight modules, in which students are supposed to reach the level B1 according to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) the percentage scale has been divided according to the modules that represent the level of English that students have.

Table 01. Level of subjectivity and objectivity in assessments.

MODULE	LEVEL OF OBJECTIVITY	LEVEL OF SUBJECTIVITY
1	80%	20%
2	80%	20%
3	70%	30%
4	60%	40%
5	50%	50%
6	40%	60%
7	30%	70%
8	20%	80%

CONCLUSIONS

✓ Through the identification of advantages that subjective and objective assessments have, it was possible to understand that before making a quiz, teachers should make sure that the combination between the percentage of subjectivity and objectivity is appropriate to the students' knowledge based on the module they are.

✓ The percentage scale is inversely proportional from the lowest to the highest level, starting with a high level of objectivity in the lower modules of learning to ensure the efficiency in assessing students. Unlike what happens with the lower modules, students over the middle of the training, are supposed to produce more by applying a high level of subjectivity that will be increased gradually.

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