

# Analysis of Traditional Assessment in the EFL Teaching

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## ABSTRACT

The article seeks to compare traditional assessment procedures (such as multiple choice tests) with performance or alternative assessments. The descriptive analysis method was used to express the effectiveness of traditional assessment and its advantages, limitations as well. The author analyzes multiple choice tests that used to evaluate foreign language students from Physics and Math faculty at Nukus state pedagogical institute. Also, the article describes some assessment types. The authors analyze multiple choice tests and suggest some alternative assignments and employ other type of assessment in the teaching process to achieve effective results.

**KEYWORD:** English as a foreign language (EFL); alternative assessment; techniques; education; evaluation in teaching; multiple choice (MC) test; traditional assessment

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## INTRODUCTION

In classroom instruction assessment is considered as a critical component. Taras notes that assessment refers to the judgement of students' work and learning [7, p. 466-478]. Also, Rust describes that assessment as making a judgement, identifies the strength and weakness, the right and the wrong in some cases [5]. Assessment can help learners to make achievements in the learning process and it is an integral part of teaching process. Assessment is changing for many reasons. Changes in the skills and knowledge needed for success; in understanding of how students learn; and in relationship between assessment and instruction have necessitated the change in assessment strategies.

As every teacher know that students' achievements make a significant impact on the institution's reputation. MC test is a good way to know what students have learned in a short time. In this case, teachers can make sure of which level students have achieved during the semester and be aware of the language learners' current level individually.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

MC test can be time saving. However, it is required a lot of time to create MC items by the teacher. As Hughes points out that the result is a set of poor items that cannot possibly provide accurate assessment [3]. Thus, in selecting MC items, careful attention is demanded from the teacher and item analysis, item facility should be taken into consideration. There might be appeared some challenges when we use MC test, because students may help each other or copy from each other. In this case, evaluating might be unfair and difficult. We assume that Flaganan's method for MC items is

a bit challenging and takes much time to calculate all the test items results of every student. Perhaps, for this reason Oller called calculating I.D. a "formidable technical problem" [4, p. 256]. Moreover, it is quiet difficult to write successful MC items, because item distractors should be selected carefully and they should be strong enough. As Christine Houba stated that one important aspect affecting the difficulty of multiple-choice test items is the quality of distractors. Some "distractors," in fact, might not be distracting at all, and therefore serve no purpose. Thus, high quality MC items can provide advanced MC test for students. The skill of assessing in a right way is can be beneficial in teaching the foreign language effectively.

## METHODOLOGY

MC test involves items which consist of one or more introductory sentences followed by a list of more suggested responses that are mainly used by teachers, schools because they are economical, objective and easily scored [2]. Items require students to make a decision and find out which of the potential responses is true. They are easy to score. However, according to Simonson, guessing may increase the chance of success by 50% [6]. In short-answer test, items are written either as a direct question requiring the learner to fill in a word or phrase or as statements in which a space has been left blank for a brief written answer [6, p. 270]. In the following, we will analyze multiple choice tests that used to evaluate foreign language students at Physics and Math faculty at the institution. Item facility analysis:

17 students (n=17) took the test:

16 students selected the correct answer for item #1; I.F.=.1

17 students selected the correct answer for item #2; I.F.=.0

15 students selected the correct answer for item #3; I.F.=.8

13 students selected the correct answer for item #4; I.F.=.7

14 students selected the correct answer for item #5; I.F.=.8

12 students selected the correct answer for item #6; I.F.=.7

13 students selected the correct answer for item #7; I.F.=.7

10 students selected the correct answer for item #8; I.F.=.5

11 students selected the correct answer for item #9; I.F.=.6

8 students selected the correct answer for item #10; I.F.=.4

Difficult range: 0.15 to 0.39; Medium range: 0.40 to 0.56;

Easier range: 0.57 to 0.85.

### Item Distractor analysis

For item #1

16 students selected the correct answer B

1 student selected A

0 student selected C

For item #2

17 students selected the correct answer A

0 student selected B

0 student selected C

For item #3

15 students selected the correct answer B

1 student selected A

1 student selected C

For item #4

13 students selected the correct answer C

2 students selected A

2 student selected B

For item #5

14 students selected the correct answer B

1 student selected C

2 students selected A

For item #6

12 students selected the correct answer C

1 student selected A

4 students selected B

For item #7

13 students selected the correct answer B

3 students selected A

1 student selected C

For item #8

10 students selected the correct answer A

1 student selected B

6 students selected C

For item #9

11 students selected the correct answer B

5 student selected A

1 student selected C

For item #10

8 students selected the correct answer C

8 student selected B

1 student selected A

### Item Discrimination analysis

Items number: 1, 2, 3, 5, 7 are poor items and should be improved by revision

Items number: 4, 6, 9 are marginal items

Items number: 8, 10 are reasonably good items.

### RESULTS

The traditional assessment was used to assess foreign language learners' Grammar and vocabulary skills. This type of assessment can be useful in some cases, for example, it could be time saving and easier. The traditional assessment is mostly used to make it easier for students to learn by heart some factual information. Even nowadays, in our institution, in English as a foreign language/English as a specific purposes teaching, most teachers use it in mid-course assessment, especially to check students' vocabulary basic (in the form of Multiple choice tests that are content related, giving instructions orally, without sharing the rubric in a written form).

However, the traditional assessment fails to assess deeper forms of learning: main skills such as speaking, listening, writing and reading. For this reason, authentic assessment type is approved to use in evaluating students' knowledge, what they have learnt from the lessons or to check the ability to apply that knowledge. Also, this type of assessment can improve learner's multiple skills such as logical thinking, critical thinking, problems solving and independent study skills. Alternative assessment can be in the form of case study, portfolio, fishbowls, proposal and reports. After reading a list of alternative assessment strategies that was suggested by Queen's University Centre for Teaching and Learning Module on Assessment, and Berkeley Centre for Teaching and Learning's "Alternatives to Traditional Testing", I would plan my sample lesson (ESP) in the following way:

- To assess students' listening skills: Individual work. Students (SS) should listen to a track/podcast/dialogue between 2/3 people on topic Energy. They should find omitted words and fill in gaps with key words while they are listening. Teacher (T) checks SS' mistakes, and analyzes how well they have understood the topic, checking SS' listening skills.
- To evaluate SS' writing skills: Pair work. SS should write a personal letter consisting of 2/3 paragraphs to a friend about the creation of solar energy. That friend writes a reply to the letter. SS should use the key words on the topic Energy. After that, T checks SS' mistakes in their writing, and how well they organized the paragraphs, what essential words they could use (formal/informal). This activity can be done in both online/f2f classrooms.
- To check SS' speaking skills: Pair/group work. SS should prepare a poster presentation on the topic Energy. They should use the key words related to the topic, discuss the different types of energy that are used in our daily life, explain the harmful effects of bad habits, ways of creating energy from natural resources (air, solar, water, wind, chemical.). SS write a list of tools and mechanisms that can create energy. T checks SS' speaking, pronunciation, variety of vocabulary, nonverbal language while they present a poster ppt. After that, T compares the SS' poster presentations and gives SS a feedback.

- To know students' reading skills: Individual work. Students will read an article on the theme Energy production written by renewable energy websites. Teacher sets the time. Students scan or skim the article, learn new words on topic. Teacher asks from students to tell the meaning of the article, specific information, statements, and facts. After that, teacher asks Students' idea on the given statements to know whether they agree or not. Students will speak their mind and provide examples. Then, students should come to a conclusion. Teacher evaluates their reading skill according to students' level of understanding of the article.

**DISCUSSIONS**

In the following sample lesson, we tried to use the alternative assignments instead of using the traditional assessment: Topic: Energy

Task 1. Reading task. Work individually. Read the short extract "Energy Conversion" from a text. Underline the key words and learn the new words related to the topic. Then answer the following questions.

When you stand on a diving board high above a swimming pool, you have gravitational potential energy. That's because you have the potential to fall toward Earth due to gravity. What happens when you jump off the diving board? Your

Task 2. Match each definition with the correct term.

**Definitions**

- \_\_\_ 1. energy stored in an object because of its position or shape
- \_\_\_ 2. stored energy due to an object's shape
- \_\_\_ 3. use of force to move matter
- \_\_\_ 4. energy of moving matter
- \_\_\_ 5. stored energy due to an object's position
- \_\_\_ 6. ability to do work
- \_\_\_ 7. process in which energy changes from one type or form to another

Task 3. Determine if the following statements are true or false.

- \_\_\_ 1. Most forms of energy can also be classified as kinetic or potential energy.
- \_\_\_ 2. If the mass of an object doubles, its kinetic energy is only half as great.
- \_\_\_ 3. Kinetic energy and velocity have an inverse relationship.
- \_\_\_ 4. Clothes hanging motionless on a clothesline do not have any energy.
- \_\_\_ 5. Changing the shape of an elastic material gives it potential energy.
- \_\_\_ 6. If you double the weight of an object, its gravitational potential energy also doubles.
- \_\_\_ 7. The higher above the ground you are, the less gravitational potential energy you have.
- \_\_\_ 8. The energy of a child on a swing changes back and forth between kinetic and potential energy.
- \_\_\_ 9. Some of the kinetic energy of the child in question 8 is given off as heat.
- \_\_\_ 10. Energy conversions are always permanent changes in energy.

Task 4. Fill in the blank with the appropriate term.

- 1. When work is done, \_\_\_\_\_ is transferred from one object to another.
- 2. The two basic types of energy are kinetic energy and \_\_\_\_\_ energy.
- 3. Anything that is moving has \_\_\_\_\_ energy.
- 4. The amount of kinetic energy in an object depends on its mass and \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5. Gravitational potential energy depends on an object's height above the ground and its \_\_\_\_\_.
- 6. When energy changes form, the total amount of energy is always \_\_\_\_\_.
- 7. Stretching a rubber band gives it \_\_\_\_\_ potential energy.

Task 5. Critical writing. Answer the following question below. Use appropriate academic vocabulary and clear and complete sentences. Explain: Why does an object with kinetic energy always work?

gravitational potential energy changes to kinetic energy as you fall toward the water. However, you can regain your potential energy by getting out of the water and climbing back up to the diving board. This requires an input of kinetic energy. These changes in energy are examples of energy conversion, the process in which energy changes from one type or form to another. Energy conversion between potential and kinetic energy also occurs when you swing on a playground swing or jump on a trampoline. The law of conservation of energy applies to energy conversions. Energy is not used up when it changes form. However, some energy may be used to overcome friction, and this energy is usually given off as heat. For example, your kinetic energy at the bottom of a dive is the same as your potential energy when you were on the diving board, except for a small amount of heat resulting from friction with the air as you fell.

**Questions**

- 1. What is energy conversion?
- 2. Describe how kinetic and potential energy change as a diver climbs up to a diving board and then dives into the water below.
- 3. How does the law of conservation of energy apply to these energy conversions?

**Terms**

- a. energy
- b. kinetic energy
- c. energy conversion
- d. work
- e. gravitational potential energy
- f. elastic potential energy
- g. potential energy

## CONCLUSION

Thus, there are other types of alternative/authentic assessments and strategies to measure students' knowledge, and they can be used in various ways in the teaching process according to the content curriculum. It is for a fact that traditional assessment shouldn't be underestimated for a number of reasons. The increasing enrollment of students across all the levels of education, inadequate teaching and learning materials, insufficient time for teaching and learning, among others are some of the great challenges to the use of alternative assessment. Thus, it is important for teachers to use the form of assessment: traditional or alternative procedure that are useful to help in achieving their learning objectives.

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