

Developing Reading And Listening Test Papers To Investigate The Influence Of Item Types On The Performance Of Comprehension Skills Of ESL Learners

Jayasinghe. J.D.U.M.,¹ Upamalika. T.N.²

Department of English Language Teaching

Abstract

Assessment is considered as one of the indispensable pedagogical process in language teaching and learning, and it provides opportunities for teachers to recognize their objectives and to realize the extent to which the expected goals are achieved. This study attempts to throw light on the concept of item analysis as a crucial pedagogical practice for the improvement of the ESL teaching learning context. The objective of this study was to investigate the influence of the item types on the performance of reading and listening comprehension skills of ESL learners. In order to achieve the purpose of the study, two test papers for reading comprehension and listening comprehension were utilized. Before designing the test papers the participants of the study; 70 students from grade 7 in Gurukula Maha Vidyalaya, Kelaniya, were instructed to complete an essay writing activity which was based on the topic “My School” as to inquire the participants’ proficiency level of the target language. Through analyzing the essays, it was recognized that, the particular learner groups’ language proficiency level was A2 level (UTEL benchmark 03). Through applying the quantitative research method, the test scores were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The findings revealed many important assessment issues regarding ESL context, including the development of assessment specifications, reviewing and testing items, scoring of constructed responses, and the utilization of statistics to evaluate the assessment. Moreover, most of the students were not familiar with listening tests. Further, time constraints in the both tests and the test takers’ lack of vocabulary level and linguistic knowledge are certain limitations that were observed. The implications that are recommended for pedagogical assessment of ESL learners as found in this study are developing a test specification before designing the test items, reviewing and testing the selected items and utilizing statistics to analyze the test scores.

Keywords - language assessment, item analysis, statistics, test developing, test scores

¹miurangi.u.jayasinghe@gmail.com

²uniroshani5@gmail.com