

An Application of Michigan English Language Assessment Battery to Investigate the Relationship between Language Assessment System and Learners Performances

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ABSTRACT

The Michigan English Language Assessment Battery (MELAB) is used as a measure of communicative language ability within the framework of Bachman's model in this study. The MELAB evaluates advanced –level English language proficiency of learners. The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between educational facilities and their effects on learners performances in EFL classrooms. Our participants were all 53 advanced students who have passed 12 terms in the institute and now their levels range from 12-17 of Nima Foreign Language institute in Shiraz. we selected our participants from both genders (males and females).we chose upper-intermediate level of English in order to investigate the effects of educational facilities on learning four main skills of English.

Keywords: Michigan English Language Assessment Battery, TOEFL, Assessment systems, Learners performances.

1.INTRODUCTION

There are several studies internationally and locally regarding poor performance at high school; the results revealed that in many cases the level of academic performance in urban and rural areas is not the same. As you know poor performance at high schools is an international problem that has been linked to some extent to the lack of educational facilities .The school environment mightalso be the source of poor performance if learner Support materials are not adequate. The arguments concerning lack of facilities and resources in rural-based schools are always raised where there is serious under performance at schools. Such schools often serve disadvantaged learners who are from families that are not educationally supportive (Ralenala, 1993).

2.Problem

One of the general goals of application of MELAB to investigate the relationship between educational facilities and its relationship with learners performance in exams is to help our educational system in order to provide new assessment system in measuring student's proficiencies. To achieve the purpose of this study, the following research question is asked; Is there any relationship between application of different assessment systems and learners performances in learning foreign language in Language Institutes?

3.Purpose of the study

A. Educational Ministry in choosing appropriate facilities to assess specific skill

B .Foreign language teaching centers and institutes

4.REVIEW OF RESEARCH LITERATURE

Lack of assessment systems and their relationship with learner's performances are drawn out of studies about different dimensions of language learning and educational facilities. It has yet to be precisely defined. The scholarly literatures help administrations and institutes to provide more facilities for learners in order to learn language better than before. Many researchers have been done in this area one of which is an essay on factors which contribute poor performances of grade 12 learners by MokGaetsi Salome Rammala(2009)at Manoshi and Mokwatedi high schools. The study presented the effects of an unfavorable social environment both at home and at school. It also presented specific needs and requirements that learners should have in order to perform at a level that would allow them university entrance results. Another research on educational facilities and its relationship to students achievement has been done in Center for innovative school facilities .The study presented that lighting ,air quality and noise have considerable impacts on students performances. Another recent research has been done by L .o .odia and S. I tomo from wan (2007) on educational system in Nigeria problems and prospects in Anniversal Welfare Sustainable Community Development Center. The study presented that some public secondary schools are only known to be

functional during enrolment and examination period while most of the private schools lack visible structure and any equipment required for science practical and study but they enroll students with outrageous charges.

5.METHODOLOGY

According to the purpose of this study which is to investigate the concepts such as educational assessment, learners performance, relationship etc MELAB Questionnaire was used to find out learners performances towards learning skills according to different types of assessment systems applied in teaching language. It was distributed among the learners to be answered. we said nothing to the learners about the importance of their answers in our research and its results.

Table1: subjects characteristics

Level No	Number	Age range	Male	Female
Adv1	10	15 to 19	5	5
Adv 2	9	16 to 22	4	5
Adv3	8	16 to 23	4	4
Adv 4	9	16 to 19	5	4
Adv 5	7	15 to 21	3	4
Adv 6	10	16 to 24	4	6

According to the table there were 10 participants from level advance one,5 males and 5 females, whose age range was from 15 to 19. There were 9 participants from level advance two,4 males and 5 females whose age range was from 16 to 22. The other group of participants were from level advance three including 4 males and 4 females whose age ranged from 16 to 23. The fourth group from level advance 4 included 9 participants having 5 males and 4 females ranging from 16 to 19. The fifth group of participants were seven,3 males and 4 females ranging from 15 to 21 and the last group including 10 participants,4 males and 6 females ranging from 16 to 24. This research was implemented by a questionnaire presenting students responses towards acquiring four main skills and its relationship to their performances in final exams. The questionnaire was MELAB Learning Styles Self-Assessment Questionnaire. The questions of questionnaire included 4 choices A,B,C and D each of which standing for a specific kinds of skills including speaking, listening, reading and writing. Our participants were all 53 advanced students who have passed 12 terms in the institute and now their levels range from 12-17 of Nima Foreign Language institute in Shiraz. we selected our participants from both genders (males and females).we chose upper intermediate level of English in order to investigate the effects of educational facilities on learning four main skills of English.

6.ANALYSES

This research was done by comparing the students answers to the questions of questionnaire and their previous term scores on these four main skills of language learning. By comparing these two sets of scores, we concluded that there was significant relationship between using MELAB and assessing student's true scores in comparing with student's true scores on TOEFL.

7.FINDINGS

According to findings of our research and other similar researches educational assessment systems have important roles in learners performances especially in speaking and listening skills. we should use more accurate assessment systems for different types of skills. MELAB Is most useful in assessing listening and speaking abilities while TOEFL is most appropriate in assessing reading and writing skills.

8.Conclusions and implications

The findings of this research would be used in foreign language teaching centers.

The administrators can use more accurate assessment systems for estimating four main skills of language. Another place in which this research may be used is choosing appropriate measuring system to assess specific skill in high schools or universities. Speaking and writing skills require MELAB while reading and writing are best measured through using TOEFL.

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