Language Teaching and Language Testing: Integrating Teaching and Testing in English as a Second Language Classrooms

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Abstract

This paper examines Language Teaching and Language Testing: Integrating Teaching and Testing in English as a Second Language Classrooms. The paper discusses concept of language testing and purposes for language learning and language testing. This study reviews literature and gives a scholarly background to the study by reviewing some contributions made by various researchers and institutions on assessment in English Language instruction, standards in testing and ethics in language testing. An important part of this paper also explores practical classroom testing and assessment practice. The paper also highlights ways of integrating teaching and testing in English as a Second Language Classrooms. The major conclusion of the study is that while language testing has traditionally focused on sampling what students know (e.g., the rules of grammar or vocabulary in the language classroom), contemporary language teaching practice advocates assessing what students can do with the language and less on what they know. The paper then recommends that Classroom test should reinforce the learning that has taken place, not go out of their way to expose weakness. They can also help in deciding on changes for future teaching programmes where students do significantly worse in (parts of) the test than might have been expected.

Keywords: Language Teaching, Language Testing, Foreign Language, Assessment and Testing.


Introduction

Language is used in social interactions to accomplish purposeful tasks (e.g. interacting with another individual in a conversation, writing a text, finding information in a chart or a schedule). Performance is assessed by documenting the successful completion of the task or by using a rubric to assess various dimensions of carrying out the task (e.g. listening comprehension and language complexity in responses to questions in oral interview (Oldfield, Broadfoot, Sutherland, & Timmis, 2012). Language teachers are often faced with the responsibility of deciding how they intend to measure outcomes and consider what role assessment will play in instruction. Assessment is how to
identify the learners' needs, document their progress, and determine how the teachers are doing as teachers and planners (Jerrold, 2012). That being said, how to know the teachers are doing it right, how to know that the assessment tools are used measure what they intend them to. These are the questions that teachers must continually ask to get the best snapshot of the progress of the learners and the effectiveness of the programmes.

Traditionally, the most common way to measure achievement and proficiency in language learning has been the test. Even though, alternatives forms of assessment are growing in popularity, most teachers still use this old standby. And while many teachers may be gifted in classroom, even the best may need some help constructing reliable test items. Luecht (2013) discusses the role of progress testing in the classroom and the importance of matching testing to instruction. She viewed testing as a tool that can help teachers identify students’ strengths and weaknesses and evaluate the effectiveness of their programmes. In recent years much has been made of alternative forms of assessment. Whether the teachers want to include students' portfolios or web-based testing in curricula, the focus should always be on gathering information that reflects how well the students have learned what the teachers tried to teach them. Assessment is one of the most difficult and important parts of the teachers' job. Ideally, it should be seen as a means to guide the students on their road to learning, to know how they are progressing and to gauge the effectiveness of teachers’ methodology and materials.

**Concept of Language Testing**

A test is a sample of behaviour. Therefore, a language test would be a sample of language behaviour. According to Shohamy (2011), language testing or language assessment is a field of study under the umbrella of Applied Linguistics. Its main focus is the assessment of first, second or other languages in the school, college or university context, assessment of language use in the workplace, and assessment of language in immigration, citizenship, and asylum contexts. Language testing is the practice of evaluating the proficiency of an individual in using a particular language effectively (Birenbaum, DeLuca, Earl, Heritage, Klenowski, Looney & Wyatt-Smith, 2015). Language tests work best when they are designed and developed to measure specific language skills such as speaking, listening, writing proficiency, reading comprehension, the ability to translate texts, or the ability to interpret spoken language.

**Purposes for Language Learning and Language Testing**

Given the variety of foreign language classrooms, the diversity of student reasons for enrolling in language classes, the choices language instructors make in terms of textbooks and other instructional materials they wish to use in their teaching, and the relatively new tool of the Internet as an instructional resource, it goes without saying that the purposes of language testing are numerous. Sometimes, language teachers choose to test students via periodic quizzes and tests of achievement. At other times, instructors assess students' language proficiency (i.e., their global ability to use the foreign or second language), perhaps at the end of several years of language study (Oldfield, Broadfoot, Sutherland, & Timmis, 2012). At other times, language teachers use tests for placement and diagnostic reasons and other purposes. Shohamy (2011) wrote a wonderful book about the power that tests can exert in the lives of students. She offers a lot of case studies in her book about students who have been impacted by
the results of test scores. She reports that no matter what the teacher's purpose for the language test may be, students are sometimes devastated by the results of tests. And this is particularly true of so called 'high stakes' tests such as the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) that is required for international students who want to enter English-speaking colleges and universities in the United States, Canada, New Zealand, and other countries. So, tests can have a wash-back effect, which means that, they may result in instructional programmes or teaching practices changing to reflect the test contents because language teachers want their students to do well on high stakes tests for many different reasons. In some respects, standardized test can be expected to have an indirect effect on what language teachers teach and sometimes even how they teach the foreign language (Oldfield, Broadfoot, Sutherland, & Timmis, 2012). However, once this inevitability is accepted, foreign language teachers often advocate for an even more important outcome than passing the test. They often teach their students to become autonomous language learners, meaning, we want students to become independent learners, so they continue to learn the language long after they have completed formal language study. The familiar adage is ‘teach a person to fish and he can eat for a lifetime’, but if you give him a fish every time, he is hungry, he will not become independents. The same is true of foreign language learners. We have to help them to become autonomous language learners, and testing can play a role in this important teaching.

Assessment in English Language Instruction

The term assessment usually evokes images of an end-of-course paper and pencil test designed to tell both teachers and students how much material the students don't know or hasn't yet mastered. However, assessment is much more than tests. Assessment includes a broad range of activities and tasks that teachers use to evaluate student progress and growth on a daily basis. Assessment is how to identify the learners' needs, document their progress, and determine how the teachers are doing as teachers and planners (Jerrold, 2012). Language tests are simply instruments or procedures for gathering particular kinds of information, typically information having to do with students' language abilities. Tests may have variety of formats, lengths, item types, scoring criteria, and media. While language assessment is the process of using language tests to accomplish particular jobs in language classrooms and programmes. In language assessment, the teacher should first gather information in a systemic way with the help of language testing tools. For example, the teachers may use oral interview to gather information about students' speaking abilities, and then make interpretations based on that information or make interpretations about students' abilities to perform a range of real-world speaking tasks based on how well students perform in the oral interview (Birenbaum, DeLuca, Earl, Heritage, Klenowski, Looney & Wyatt-Smith, 2015). Based on these interpretations, make a decision or take action within the classroom or programme. The teachers may decide that students need more work on oral fluency and should therefore devote more class time to fluency-oriented activities. Language assessment is much more than simply giving a language test; it is the entire process of test use. Indeed, the ultimate goal of language assessment is to use tests to better inform us on the decisions we make and the actions we take in language education (Jerrold, 2012). Assessment refers to a variety of ways of collecting information on learner's language ability or achievement. Although testing and assessment are often used interchangeably, it is an umbrella term for all types of measures used to evaluate student progress. A test is a formal, systematic (usually
paper-and-pencil) procedure used to gather information about student’s behavior (Oldfield, Broadfoot, Sutherland, & Timmis, 2012).

**Standards in Testing**

One area of increasing concern in language testing has been that of standards. The word 'standards' has various meanings in the literature, as the Task Force on Language Testing Standards set up by the International Language Testing Association (ILTA) discovered (http://www.surrey.ac.uk/ELI/ilta/tfts_report.pdf). According to Luecht (2013) one common meaning used by respondents to the ILTA survey was that of procedures for ensuring quality, standards to be upheld or adhered to, as in 'codes of practice'. A second meaning was that of 'levels of proficiency' - 'what standard have you reached?' A related, third meaning was that contained in the phrase 'standardised test', which typically means a test whose difficulty level is known, which has been adequately piloted and analysed, the results of which can be compared with those of a norming population: standardised tests are typically norm-referenced tests. In the latter context 'standards' is equivalent to 'norms'.

In recent years, language testing has sought to establish standards in the first sense (codes of practice) and to investigate whether tests are developed following appropriate professional procedures. Phillips (2016) argues that the standardisation of procedures for test construction and validation is crucial to the comparability and exchangeability of test results across different education settings. Phillips (2011) describes widely accepted procedures for test development and report on a survey of the practice of British EFL examining boards. The results showed that current (in the early 1990s) practice was wanting. Practice and procedures among boards varied greatly, yet (unpublished) information was available which could have attested to the quality of examinations. Exam boards appeared not to feel obliged to follow or indeed to understand accepted procedures, nor did they appear to be accountable to the public for the quality of the tests they produced. Washburn, Herman and Stewart (2017) argue that testing bodies in the USA conduct and report reliability and validity studies because of a legal requirement to ensure that all tests meet technical standards. They conclude that British examination boards should be subject to similar pressures of litigation on the grounds that their tests are unreliable, invalid or biased. In the German context, Jerrold (2012) makes a plea for common standards in examining EFL, claiming that within schools there is little or no discussion of appropriate methods of testing or of procedures for ensuring the quality of language tests.

Possibly, as a result of such pressures and publications, things appear to be changing in Europe, an example of this being the publication of the Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE) Code of Practice, which is intended to ensure quality work in test development throughout Europe. 'In order to establish common levels of proficiency, tests must be comparable in terms of quality as well as level, and common standards need, therefore, to be applied to their production' (ALTE, 1998). To date, no mechanism exists for monitoring whether such standards are indeed being applied, but the mere existence of such a Code of Practice is a step forward in establishing the public accountability of test developers. Examples of how such standards are applied in practice are unfortunately rare, one exception being Jerrold (2012), which presents an account of the development of new school-leaving examinations in Hungary. Work on standards in the third sense, namely 'norms' for different test populations, was less commonly published in the last decade. American Educational Research Association (2014) discusses the problems and procedures of producing test norms for bilingual
school populations, challenging the usual 'a priori' procedure of classifying populations into mother tongue and second language groups. Employing a range of statistical measures, Oldfield, Broadfoot, Sutherland, and Timmis (2012) examine the appropriacy of the use of a nationally standardised test normed on native English speakers, when used with non-English speaking students. Although they conclude that such a use of the test might be defensible statistically, additional measures might, nevertheless, be necessary for a population different from the norming group.

The meaning of 'standards' as 'levels of proficiency' or 'levels certified by public examinations' has been an issue for some considerable time, but has received new impetus, both with recent developments in Central Europe and with the publication of the Council of Europe's Common European Framework (Council of Europe, 2001). Work in the 1980s by West and Carroll led to the development of the English Speaking Union's Framework (Luecht, 2013). It is now clear that the Common European Framework will become increasingly influential because of the growing need for international recognition of certificates in Europe, in order to guarantee educational and employment mobility. National language qualifications, be they provided by the state or by quasi-private organisations, presently, vary in their standards - both quality standards and standards as levels. Yet, international comparability of certificates has become an economic as well as an educational imperative, especially after the Bologna Declaration of 1999 (http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/socrates/erasmus/bologna.pdf), and the availability of a transparent, independent framework like the Common European framework is crucial to the attempt to establish a common scale of reference and comparison. Moreover, the Framework is not just a set of scales; it is also a compendium of what is known about language learning, language use and language proficiency. As an essential guide to syllabus construction, as well as to the development of test specifications and rating criteria, it is bound to be used for materials design and textbook production, as well as in teacher education.

Ethics in Language Testing

Whilst American Educational Research Association (2014) and others have argued that testers have long been concerned with matters of fairness (as expressed in their ongoing interest in validity and reliability), and that striving for fairness is an aspect of ethical behaviour, others have separated the issue of ethics from validity, as an essential part of the professionalising of language testing as a discipline (ILTA, 1997). Luecht (2013) argues that all testing involves making value judgements, and therefore, language testing is open to a critical discussion of whose values are being represented and served; this in turn leads to a consideration of ethical conduct. Washburn, Herman and Stewart (2017) have redefined the scope of validity to include what he calls consequential validity - the consequences of test score interpretation and use. Luecht (2013) argues that the notion of wash-back is too narrow and should be broadened to cover 'impact', defined as the effect of tests on society at large, not just on individuals or on the educational system. In this, she is expressing a concern that has grown in recent years with the political and related ethical issues which surround test use. Both Philip (2016) and Luecht (2013) survey the emerging literature on the topic of ethics, and highlight the need for the development of language testing standards. Both comment on a draft Code of Practice sponsored by the International Language Testing Association (ILTA, 1997), but where Luecht (2013) sees it as a possible way forward, he is more critical of what he calls its conservatism, and this inadequate acknowledgement of the force of current debates on the ethics of language testing. Philip
(2016) argues that, since tests often have a prescriptive or normative role, their social consequences are potentially far-reaching. He argues for a professional morality among language testers, both to protect the profession’s members, and to protect individuals from the misuse and abuse of tests. However, he also argues that the morality argument should not be taken too far, lest it lead to professional paralysis, or cynical manipulation of codes of practice. Washburn, Herman and Stewart (2017) point out that tests and examinations have always been used as instruments of social policy and control, with the gate-keeping function of tests often justifying their existence. Shohamy (2011) claims that language tests which contain content or employ methods which are not fair to all test-takers are not ethical, and discusses ways of reducing various sources of unfairness. She also argues that uses of tests which exercise control and manipulate stakeholders rather than providing information on proficiency levels are also unethical, and she advocates the development of ‘critical language testing’ (Shohamy, 2011). She urges testers to exercise vigilance to ensure that the tests they develop are fair and democratic, however that may be defined. Luecht (2013) also argues for an ethical approach to language testing and Washburn, Herman and Stewart (2017) claim that taking full account of the views and interests of various stakeholder groups can democratise the testing process, promote fairness and therefore enhance an ethical approach.

A number of case studies have been presented recently which illustrate the use and misuse of language tests. Philip (2016) describes two examples of the misuse of language tests: the use of the access test to regulate the flow of migrants into Australia, and the step test, allegedly designed to play a central role in the determining of asylum seekers' residential status. Other examples, such as the misuse of the General Training component of the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) test with applicants for immigration to New Zealand, and the use of the TOEFL test and other proficiency tests to measure achievement and growth in instructional programmes. It is to be hoped that the new concern for ethical conduct will result in more accounts of such misuse. Washburn, Herman and Stewart (2017) claim, on the basis of a case study in South Africa that unethical conduct is evident when second language students' academic writing is implicitly evaluated on linguistic grounds whilst ostensibly is being assessed for the examinees' understanding of an academic subject. They argue that criteria for assessment should be made explicit and public if testers are to behave ethically. Philip (2016) investigates test bias, arguing that statistical procedures used to detect bias such as Differential Item Functioning (DIF) are not neutral since they do not question whether the criterion used to make group comparisons is fair and value-free. However, in her own study she concludes that what may appear to be bias may actually be construct-relevant variance, in that, it indicates real differences in the ability being measured. One similar study was Washburn, Herman and Stewart (2017) who compared international students' performance on the UCLA (University of California, Los Angeles) English as a Second Language Placement Test, and discovered that a number of items were biased in favour of Spanish-speaking students and against Chinese-speaking students. The authors argue, however, that this 'bias' is relevant to the construct since Spanish is much closer to English typologically and therefore biased in favour of speakers of Spanish, who would be expected to find many aspects of English much easier to learn than speakers of Chinese would.

**Practical Classroom Testing and Assessment Practices**

It can be argued that good teaching is good teaching, no matter if one is teaching foreign language, mathematics, or music. It can also be argued that there are significant
differences in the teaching and testing methods that are appropriate for an academic discipline. It makes intuitive sense, however, to link instruction with testing/assessment no matter what the discipline. For testing and assessment to be valid (testing what is supposed to be tested) and reliable (getting consistent results), the instructor must make the connection between the way she/he teaches and the way she/he tests (Phillips, 2016). It is just common sense, but there are also pedagogically sound reasons for finding ways to connect one's teaching and testing. These reasons include key factors for the treatment of students: equity, fairness, and transparency. Is it equitable not to treat all students to the same L2 instructional programme? How fair is it for language teachers to emphasize communication in their teaching and then test students on the rules of grammar? And, in this day and age, should language instructors not be very open about both their instructional strategies and their testing strategies, so all students know the rules? The above questions highlight commonly accepted principles of pedagogy not only for language instructors but all instructors, particularly high school and college instructors who teach students who are capable of abstract reasoning and learning to become autonomous language learners. It goes without saying that language instructors want to teach students how to fish (i.e., acquire another language) when they are hungry, to use the old saying about teaching a hungry person to acquire food for themselves, instead of giving them a meal to take care of their immediate hunger.

Ways of Integrating Teaching and Testing in English as a Second Language’s Classrooms

In the past few decades, the emphasis on Communicative Language Teaching has continued to be encouraged by the language teaching profession worldwide. Perhaps one of the reasons for the popularity of this approach is that student often expect to be able to use the second or foreign language for functional purposes. Students often want to be able to use the language to leave or listen to a telephone message on an answering machine. Or, they want to be able to read and write e-mail messages to friends and acquaintances. So, if these are the types of communicative outcomes students want to achieve, it makes sense to provide classroom and other external opportunities for them to practice these tasks (Akintunde, 2023a). Textbooks and teacher-designed instructional strategies have increasingly been emphasizing Communicative Competence. Therefore, the instructional programmes in language classrooms worldwide tend to focus on these types of activities.

Teachers should align teaching approaches and content with related testing and assessment approaches (Akintunde, 2023b). In other words, teachers should integrate classroom language teaching and testing approaches. Let’s take a concrete example of how this might work in a language classroom. According to (Oldfield, Broadfoot, Sutherland, & Timmis, 2012) we can take the case of a hypothetical college classroom in which students are learning to listen, speak, read, and write English (or any other modern foreign language). Their instructor provides both direct instruction in which students are taught rules of grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation, some of the basic areas of most foreign language classes all over the globe. Let’s also assume that the instructor is seeking ways to increase opportunities to link her/his teaching programme to his/her testing programme for the students.

The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) has a popular set of Oral Proficiency Guidelines that instructors may use to evaluate their students' oral performances. ACTFL advocates the use of the Oral Proficiency interview (OPI),
a strategy in which an instructor can interact with students in an interview format to rate the students of a scale from Novice, Intermediate, Advance, to Superior proficiency. It is a relatively easy to use scale, but it requires some degree of basic training for effective use.

The interview lasts approximately 20-25 minutes of either face-to-face interaction or via the telephone and must contain the following parts:

a. Warm-Up (designed for psychological purposes to relax the student)

b. Level Check (designed to determine the proficiency level — Novice, etc.)

c. Probe (designed to see if the student can perform at a higher proficiency level)

d. Role Play (designed to provide a short context for interactive language use)

e. Wind-Down (designed to relax the student at the end of the interview)

According to (Birenbaum, DeLuca, Earl, Heritage, Klenowski, Looney & Wyatt-Smith, 2015) an instructor could include a short role-play situation such as the following to provide an opportunity for the student to engage in a bit of sustained conversation with the instructor. Two different sample role-play situations are presented below as concrete examples of situations that an instructor might include, depending, of course, on the student's level of language proficiency. The first one is simple and the second is more complex.

a. Role Play 1: Pretend that a friend has asked you to go to the movies and that you agree to go. Later, another friend asks you to go to a movie that you would much rather watch. Call the first friend and explain why you can't go with that friend and that maybe you can go another day.

b. Role Play 2: Pretend that you are in a band or musical singing group. Explain that you are going to miss rehearsal for the third time in two weeks. The director wants to talk to you about your absences. Explain the situation and convince the director not to dismiss you from the group.

These two role-plays are not equal in level of difficulty for a second language learner. The second one is more challenging for the student because it involves both narration and a higher functional in use of language to convince. Nevertheless, both role-plays provide opportunities for the language student to practice using language in context in a situation that is realistic, meaning, it could happen in real life. In other words, students are presented with an opportunity to use language to communicate with someone (e.g., their instructor or interviewer in the case of an OPI) in situations that reflect real world use of language. The goal is to determine if the student can handle a simulated real-life situation (Birenbaum, DeLuca, Earl, Heritage, Klenowski, Looney & Wyatt-Smith, 2015).

Perhaps the reader is able to see this type of role-playing as an example of a context-base communicative language task, particularly if it is used in conjunction with an oral proficiency interview. The link with instruction is that students would practice the interview strategies such as answering questions and role playing in the instructional part of the programme (i.e., the classroom) and then, have an opportunity to demonstrate their proficiency in a simulated interview with their instructor or another interviewer. Oldfield, Broadfoot, Sutherland, and Timmis (2012) called this type of testing to be a test worth taking. They argue that many classroom tests are problem-solving tasks that do not resemble the types of real-world tests that are taken once students complete their studies. Certainly, that cannot be said for assessments like the OPI because it includes many typical interview strategies required in real interviews for
jobs, business, personal relationships, and everyday conversations. The point is that the OPI links communicative teaching with communicative testing in a very transparent way.

Another way of integrating teaching and testing is the use of portfolios and scoring rubrics that are very popular in the field of composition instruction (Birenbaum, DeLuca, Earl, Heritage, Klenowski, Looney & Wyatt-Smith, 2015). Many first and second language instructors use portfolios, for example, to provide opportunities for students to show samples of their academic work and its development in a portfolio. In the language classroom, this technique is very valuable because students are empowered to make decisions about which samples of their work to include and also to write reflective comments about why they chose to include certain samples of their work and judgments about their own skill development over the course of the academic term. Rubrics, especially those developed in cooperatively between the instructor and the students, are a means of sharing the power invested in the instructor with the students. The above assessment provided an opportunity for both the instructor and students to work together in determining the criteria to be used in evaluating the language student’s essay. It also provided excellent opportunities for empowering the students (Shohamy, 2011) and developing their autonomy as language learners. In this way, second language learners participate actively in judging their own writing with input from the instructor. This way also demonstrates a strategy for linking language teaching and testing by softening the artificial, sometimes hard, boundaries that exist between teaching and testing in second language classes where teachers are proficient in the language and students are not. According to (Birenbaum, DeLuca, Earl, Heritage, Klenowski, Looney & Wyatt-Smith, 2015) a relatively novel way of linking teaching and testing in a language programme is to focus on what is called ‘Five Cs’: Communication, Communities, Cultures, Comparisons, and Connections. These are the priorities of the national foreign language standards (ILTA, 1997). They are a way of organizing language instruction around big ideas and concepts. They serve as a way of linking second language learning to the uses of foreign and second language study beyond the language classroom. While it is fairly clear what each of these terms means in language education, a brief explanation is, nevertheless, presented below to make the case for using the Five Cs as a way of linking the way ESL is taught to the way it is tested.

**Communication** - a common reason why students worldwide study foreign and second languages, that is, to learn to communicate. For example, many students these days want to communicate with their peers via e-mail and text messages. However, they may also need to learn to communicate for business or career purposes using a more formal variety of the foreign language.

**Communities** - real languages are used in real communities for people to be able to communicate with each other, even though the Internet and other technology has made global communication much more facile that it has ever been in history. For example, families communicate regularly with each other verbally and non-verbally on a regular basis. When exchange students have the opportunity to participate in family stay experiences, they seem to pick up so much more than the rules of pronunciation of a language or its vocabulary; they seem to develop proficiency in a naturalistic way.

**Cultures** - a concept that is very complex and has many different meanings, but in the context of the Five Cs, it refers mainly to the lifestyles, mores, beliefs, and habits of people who share not only a language (e.g., Spanish) but who also share deeper values. In languages like Spanish with more than twenty different countries where it is spoken and many different cultures within each country and English with its many variations
in countries as different as Australia, England, New Zealand, Nigeria, and the U.S.A, it is clear why this is a complex concept. Any yet, language instructors worldwide share the view that culture is intricately related to language and therefore cannot be avoided when a foreign language is taught.

**Comparisons** - related to culture, this concept means that language learners, almost without exception, tend to make comparisons between their L1 and their L2 during the language programme and even after completing language study; it is, therefore, perhaps useful for language instructors to help students make appropriate connection and avoid unhelpful ones in their language study. For example, many novice language learners make comments like, ‘but they way they in native speakers language pronounce certain sounds is strange’, or ‘they way their grammar works is weird’, etc. Most language instructors typically try to convince their students that making judgmental comparisons is sometimes not helpful when trying to develop proficiency in a language.

**Connections** - a concept that is related to learning theory in which it is often helpful for instructors to help students make connections with their prior knowledge, life experiences, and how they process information when they are trying to learn something new like a foreign language. For example, some language instructors help student to make connections between two aspects of the foreign language (e.g., preterito and imperfecto in Spanish or the complexities of spelling in English with such words a ‘through, though, and thought’). The ‘C’ means that the more students can learn to make good connections, the better their acquisition of the foreign language.

**Conclusion**

This article has taken the premise that foreign, or second language teaching and instructors must link testing in deliberate ways. It has been argued that there are many different ways that this goal can be accomplished in the field of language education. While language testing has traditionally focused on sampling what students know (e.g., the rules of grammar or vocabulary in the language classroom), contemporary language teaching practice advocates assessing what students can do with the language and less on what they know.

**Recommendations**

Language educators should motivate their students by including activities in their classrooms that have real world applications. This type of focus will help convince the students that they are making progress in trying to become proficient in their new language, even though, they may still be making numerous errors in pronunciation, grammar, or vocabulary usage. The test content and question types should be familiar to students and a high degree of success is usually expected since they know what is in the test. For example, at the end of a lesson on English prepositions, a language teacher can give test items in form of sentences of about twenty (20) with missing prepositions. Students can be asked to fill in the gaps with the appropriate preposition in each sentence. The results of such exercise will show which areas need revising with the class or individuals. Classroom test should reinforce the learning that has taken place, not go out of their way to expose weakness. They can also help in deciding on changes for future teaching programmes where students do significantly worse in (parts of) the test than might have been expected.
References


