

Evaluatyon of Teacher – made Tests for the 4th year of the Brebaratory stage in Baquba

Natiq T. abdul kareem(M.A)

*the directorate general of education in
Diala governorate*

Dalia hussein yahya(M.A)

college of basic education university of diala

1- Introduction

First of all, we have to agree that testing is a strategy in which teachers make use of the theoretical information and instructions , and actual situations for building up sound and typical tests and that testing (Mc Namara 2000: 73) can encourage good teaching and learning . The purpose behind tests, besides they are instruments of measurements , is to motivate learners towards the success and progress in teaching/learning process. Good tests are great opportunities to help learners towards positive attitudes , whereas bad tests discourage them to be fully participating members .

Despite the fact that improving the testing system is at hand, the challenge facing teachers, especially those who are new is enormous. Tests are not only a collection of test techniques but also principles which they should be applied .

Tests, as component parts of teaching process, should be accurate and in order to be accurate four requirements: validity reliability, practicality and beneficial backwash effect⁽¹⁾ should be available.

Teachers should keep in mind that tests are two – sided weapons , they can be beneficial or harmful .They (Hamash: et al., 1977: 1) can be damaging to the learners career or they can be very useful and very educative for them . If they are carefully planned , well – stated and correctly administered, they will be definitely educative and vice versa . If they are accurate the results will be accurate and dependable and if they are inaccurate, the results will be misleading . They should not only reflect the

⁽¹⁾ The effect of tests on teaching and learning is known as washback effect or backwash effect (Mousavi : 1997: 7).

learners ability of the language with the gaps that need to be filled, but also reflect the objectives and the aims of the syllabus . They may undermine or underpin the bases upon which a syllabus designed .

It is worthy mentioning that teachers should take into account that a good test is not to show the learners what they know but to help them to improve their knowledge, skills and performance, i.e , a test is not an opportunity for teachers to show off what they know . Weir (1993: 5) stresses this point when he mentions that it is all too easy to set tests which are inappropriate and beyond the abilities of learners . Successful teachers have to take this fact into consideration in designing their tests . When tests are graded fairly and consistently, that help learners learn and make them feel good about progress in language. Otherwise , test frustrate them and spoil their desire, lose their self - confidence and cause them feel bad about the progress in language. This point reveals a psychological factor in testing .

The psychological factor plays a vital role for both teachers and learners.

As for teachers, It is important that scoring should take place in a quiet, well – lit environment. Scorers should not be allowed to become too tired . (Hughes: 1989: 97).

As for learners, there is a wide spread feeling among them that battlefields are preferable for them than testhalls . This essential point requires a psychological remedy from teachers. Teachers need to be extremely careful in the selection of the items and give due attention to the legibility of printing , the lay –out of the question – sheets and the low – ability learners . In this field, it is preferable that teachers have to acquaint learners with the variety of techniques used in tests in order to enable them to do well in tests . Successful tests (Mousavi, 1997: 144) have to rest on a good testing environment which includes .

a _ familiarity of the place(not too far)

b – the time of testing (a test given early in the day or just after a heavy noon meal) .

c – physical conditions (noise, temperature, lighting , and seating arrangement).

From the above – mentioned statement, we can conclude that tests should be submitted to continuous evaluation and modification and no

activity should be slighted . Thus, teachers should not be stiffish in seeking means to develop their tests . Hamash et al., (1979: 5) state that teachers need to be educated and re- educated in the fundamental techniques of test construction and cope with continuous innovations of life.

2. The Terms “test” and “examination”

Some confusion exists over the distinction of the two terms ; test and examination .

Swannell __ (1992: 364 and 1130) mentions that examination is a detailed inspection, whereas a test is a minor examination.

Mousavi (1997: 142) explains that the distinction is made in terms of time allowed: a typical “examination” lasts two , three or more hours ; a typical “test” lasts one half to one hour, or the distinction may be hierarchical ; A university professor “examines” his / her students ; a primary school teacher “tests” his / her pupils . Finally , the distinction may depend on whether assessment is “subjective” or “objective”. In the first case, we have an “examination” and in the second, a “test” .

3. Types of Tests

Tests vary according to their source , design, content or scoring . According to their source , tests in our schools in Iraq are classified into teacher - made tests , public tests and centerized tests.

3.1 Teacher –made tests

Teacher – made tests are generally prepared , administered and scored by the teacher or teachers of the subject in a given school in order to check the progress of the learners in that subject. They are also called school tests or internal tests .

3.2 Public Examinations /Ministry Examinations

Public examinations (Baccalaureate) are constructed , administered and scored by the Ministry of Education . They are applied at the end of the primary , intermediate and preparatory stages . i.e , the sixth grade of the primary stage, the third grade of the intermediate stage and the third grade of the preparatory stage. They are also called external or formal tests.

3.3 Centerized Tests

Centerized tests were constructed by a team of supervisors or elite teachers nominated by the General Directorate of Education in each Iraqi governorate . This type was applied as final examination for all grades of study at the intermediate and preparatory stages except the third intermediate grade and the third preparatory grade. This type was applied in Iraq from the academic year 1996 – 1997 to the academic year 2002-2003 (the occupation of Iraq by the coalition forces on the 9th of April , 2003).

4. Distribution of the Marks

The distribution of the marks used in the monthly , mid – year and final examinations of Book – 6 – of NECI set is 30% of the final mark should be given to oral tests and 70% of the mark to the written ones (Hamash: 1985: 12) Each test should include oral as well as written tests and the pass – mark is 50.

Frankly speaking , written tests , as compared with oral ones, are more accurate and give a better picture of the learners' ability in language. Marks of oral tests may be influenced by such features as the learners' pleasantness , prettiness or the cut of the dress . The truth is that these are hard to exclude from one's judgement, but an effort has to be made. (Hughes : 1989: 113)

A test is evaluated according to a norm or a standard set by the syllabus designers in which each skill or activity is weighted in score. The Teacher's Guide and the official instructions provide the scoring weight per question .(Hamash et al., 1979: 102)

Table - 1 -

The Distribution of the Marks currently used in oral Tests of Book –6 – (NECI set)

	Activity	Mark
a.	Conversation	10
b.	Pronunciation	10
c.	Reading aloud	10
Total Marks		30

Table - 2 -

The Distribution of the Marks of the written Tests used in Book -6-

	Activity	Mark
a.	Structures ((including written pronunciation items))	15
b.	listening comprehension	10
c.	Guided composition	15
d.	Spelling and punctuation	10
e.	Vocabulary	10
f.	Reading comprehension	10
Total Marks		70

The teachers should not, at any circumstances, avoid or skip any of the activities mentioned above.

5. The Population and the Sample

This study is limited to the investigation of teachers – made tests at the secondary (or preparatory) schools in the centre of Baquba (The Directorate General of Education in Diala Governorate) during the academic years (2003 – 2004) and (2004-2005).

Consequently , twenty – five secondary schools constitute the target population.

Due to the lack of the archives of tests at the Directorate General of Education and the schools , the researchers were obliged to choose the sample intentionally on the average of about (25 %) . Therefore, the sample is six secondary schools for each year.

6. The Results of Evaluation

From the scruting of the samples of the question – sheets of (2003 – 2004) and (2004 – 2005) the following demerits have been found:

1. concerning the question – sheets of 2003 – 2004, there are (47) orthographic errors; (4) grammatical errors , and (43) errors in spelling and punctuation . As for (2004 – 2005) there are (39) orthographic errors ; (3) grammatical errors , and (36) errors in spelling and punctuation .
2. In the preparatory stage, time – allotment for the examination in English is two hours . In the academic years (2003 – 2004) and (2004 – 2005) , 33. 33% of samples exceed this limit and give the learners 2 ½ hours instead of (2) hours.
3. As It has been mentioned before that the final mark of the written test is 70% . 33. 33% of the sample of 2004 – 2005 has given 75% for the written tests .
4. As for vocabulary , 33 . 33 % of the sample of (2003 – 2004) provide no distractor, whereas 50% of the sample of (2004-2005) provide no distractor. This type of question can be developed by increasing the number of options.
5. Most of the teachers do not follow out the instructions of the distribution of the marks set by the syllabus designers .
 - As for vocabulary , 33. 33% of the sample of 2004 – 2005 give only (8) marks instead of (10) marks.

- Concerning pronunciation , 100% of the samples of (2003-2004) and (2004-2005) give (10) marks for this activity . This ten marks should go to pronunciation and punctuation .
 - Regarding the guided composition 16.66% of the sample of (2003-2004) give more than (15) marks , whereas 50% of the sample of (2004 – 2005) do the same for this activity .
 - The same thing can be said concerning the other activities.
6. As for the punctuation, it is completely slighted in both samples

7. Recommendations and suggestions

1. Great attention should be paid to the construction of tests. The question-sheets should be void from orthographic errors.
2. Teachers of English should followout the instructions set by the Ministry of Education precisely concerning the time-allotment and the distribution of marks.
3. Forming a supreme committee in the Directorate General of Education in Diala Governorate to analyze and evaluate the teacher-made tests and a subcommittee in every city for the same purpose.
4. Good tests should be appreciated and the teachers should be gifted.
5. Schools have to maintain the archives of testing.
6. The researchers suggest a study of the evaluation of centerized tests which were applied from the academic year(1996-1997) to the academic year(2002-2003).
- 7.They also suggest a comparative study between the teacher-made tests and the centerized ones.

Bibliography

- Hamash, k.I, Al-Jubouri, Adnan and Al – Hiti, Wai’I (1977) Testing Guide for primary and intermediate Teachers of Iraq. Baghdad: The Institute for the Development of English language Teaching in Iraq.
- _____ (1979) Testing Guide for Teachers of English in Iraq Baghdad: The Institute for the Development of English language Teaching in Iraq.

- Hamash, K.I, Radhi, Adnan and Ali , khudhayer. (1985) Teachers Guide Book -6 - (NECI) Erbil: Printing Press of Education , No (2).
- Hughes, Arthur (1989) Testing for Language Teachers. London: Cambridge University Press .

- McNamara, Tim (2000) Language Testing Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Mousavi, Seyyed Abbas (1997) : A dictionary of Language Testing . Iran: Rahnama Publication.
- Swannel, Julia (1992) The Oxford Modern English Dictionary . New york: Oxford University Press inc.
- Weir , Cyril , (1993) Understanding and Developing language Tests . Prentice Hall International (UK) Ltd .