

SPECIFIC FEATURES OF ADMINISTERING FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT TESTS AT NATIVE LANGUAGE CLASSES

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ABSTRACT

Methods of effectively administering formative assessment tests in different stages of native language classes are examined in this article. The importance of formative assessment tests in controlling the learning process on a regular basis, advancing students' level of knowledge and creative abilities and involving students in the process of learning has been clarified. Practical instructions on compiling and organizing formative assessment tests are presented.

Keywords: Testology, pedagogical tests, test types, preliminary tests, formative assessment tests, diagnostic tests, summative assessment tests, closed-answer tests and open-answer tests.

INTRODUCTION

During the years of independence significant changes have been made and far-reaching and radical reforms have been carried out in all spheres, including an educational system. The proclamation of The Law on Education and the National Program on Preparing Personnel set several requirements for higher and secondary specialized education. One of the main functions of the educational system is to properly organize and manage the process of educating the new rising generation and controlling their knowledge on a regular basis. However, it is important here to call attention to monitor students' learning process regularly, work on filling the educational vacuum and identify several weaknesses and strengths of education along with the process of assessment. Using pedagogical tests are considered the best tool for achieving all these above-mentioned goals. Testing methods are the most efficient method of objectively monitoring achievements and failures of the teaching process and test-takers' capabilities. Making use of tests regularly helps increase the efficiency of teaching process and serves as a valuable tool for a teacher to design his or her lessons.

The main part:

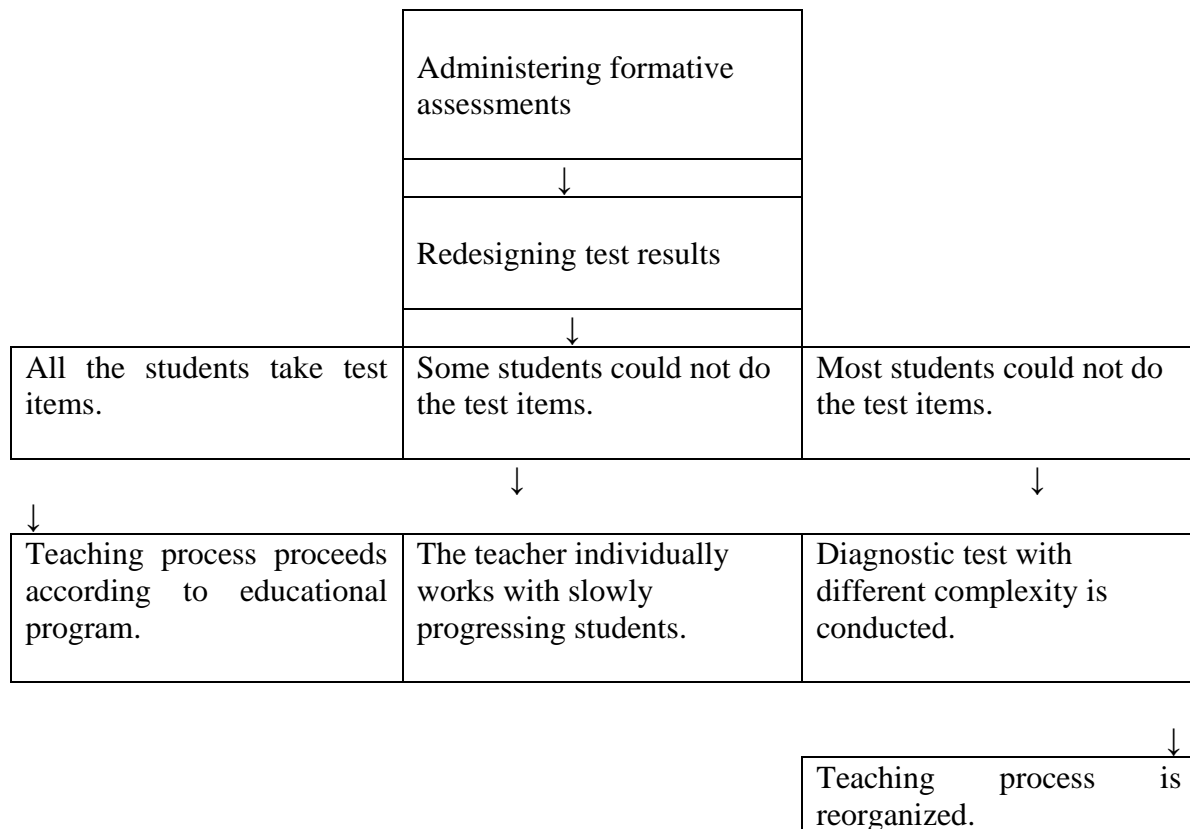
Pedagogic tests used in the educational process can be classified as follows:

- 1) preliminary assessment tests;
- 2) formative assessment tests;
- 3) diagnostic assessment tests;
- 4) summative assessment tests;

Preliminary assessment tests are directed to identify the mastery of a particular subject. A teacher normally uses such tests before a certain topic is learned. Preliminary assessment tests are conducted to determine to what extent a student has a general understanding on a topic or a task assigned. In the same manner teachers first need to gather information about their students before commencing the learning process. Those teachers who immediately provide instructions may not be aware of learners' background knowledge and the strengths and weaknesses of their students, which could have an effect on what is taught. This is called *Assessment for Learning*. From its name, we can see that *Assessment for Learning* or more widely known as *formative assessment* is used with the intention to form knowledge, skills and

competencies to develop further and reach expected results. Formative assessment tests are mainly designed for introducing approaches based on comparison in education. This kind of assessment is used in introducing a new topic and is called formative assessment tests. Applying formative assessment at lessons provide equal favourable conditions for both advanced and slowly progressing students. It also enables an advanced student to select the most necessary information needed for a test form and master a topic easily. Also, test results motivate him or her to study better and a lesson becomes an interesting activity for a student. Observing a slow progressing student’s test results a teacher determines his or her weaknesses and identifies what areas of a student’s skills should be improved in order to design the lesson plan. During a lesson a teacher’s main focus should be on slow students and developing far much easier ways of explaining a topic to them. Conducting the evaluation of a student’s achievement on a lesson regularly always helps a teacher positively. If the majority of students show bad results during formative assessments, then a teacher explains a topic once again, generalizes it and facilitates a class work assignment. If those who get bad marks comprise the smallest numbers according to test results, then a teacher continues a new topic, but he or she individually works with slowly progressing students.

Table 1: Stages of administering formative assessments



Formative assessments not only serve as the main function of observing how teaching process is being carried out by a teacher and correcting students’ mistakes, but also they turn learners’ creative abilities into an easy coping with a certain teaching activity.

A teacher suggests learners to take some tests and assesses their skills and knowledge according to the criteria of the curriculum. Here assessment criteria should be based on a scoring system. When test results are assessed by a scoring system, it becomes obvious in which part of the topic a learner is progressing slowly. Formative assessments are conducted using the open and

closed-answer tests. When doing a closed-answer tests a test taker selects the answer from the closed list (as a rule, he or she is suggested 2-10 variants). That is, a closed-answer test consists of a question and more than two answer variants. A learner selects the correct answer from these answer variants. In open-answer tests answers to questions are not provided, a test-taker should find answers or guess them. We would like to provide some examples for formative assessments on “Word combination” from a native language lesson designed for learners in 8th grade. The following assessment covers various concepts related to a topic of the word combination: structure of the word combination (main word, subordinate word), noun phrases and verb phrases, ways of combining words in word combinations (government, parataxis, agreement), identical and differentiating characteristics of word combinations with clauses, set expressions, free word combinations and compound words. 3 or 4 questions are compiled concerning each topic. Tests are not in the same order with the topics. On the contrary, they are provided in a mixed order. The obvious reason for this is to get learners to study a topic profoundly, not just touch upon it slightly and to be able to distinguish lexical and grammatical units from each other. Before administering assessments students or learners are acquainted with assessment criteria and test taking skills.

Instructions: Read the questions carefully. Fill in the gaps with necessary words in *Questions 1, 6, 9, 11 and 14*. For the rest of questions choose the best answers which correctly complete the sentences.

1. A word combination is phenomenon and a compound word is phenomenon.
2. Find a word combination which is formed with the determination of the form of one word by another word.
A) to meet one’s sister B) guard’s responsibilities
C) to observe surreptitiously D) city streets
3. Find the answer with a fixed combination.
A) blue paper B) to jump from a bridge
C) out of the blue D) to walk in the street
4. Which answer contains a compound word?
A) to sign a document B) moon light C) pleasant song D) snowy mountains
5. What units are formed as a result of the equal combination of words?
A) word combination B) word compound C) clause D) phrase
6. is a term used for combining a main word with a subordinate word with their intonation and meaning without taking into account of their affixes?
7. Find the answer which contains a noun phrase.
A) reading a book B) to talk about one’s future
C) the owner of the house D) he went
8. Which answer contains a word combination which is formed with a parataxis (the placing of clauses or phrases one after another, without words to indicate coordination or subordination)?
A) None of my friends stayed — they all left early B) progressing pupil
C) respect friends D) my sister
9. A subordinate word of the word combination with agreement includes a suffix of
10. Find the sentence formed without affixes of the genitive case.
A) Pheasants worked laboriously to reap a harvest.
B) Multi-storey buildings are being constructed in the city.
C) This year it will be hot in summer.

Д) Love for one's country starts from his threshold.

11. If the main word (dominant word) is expressed with a noun or substantivized word, it is called

12. Which answer has a word combination?

A) because of having been signed B) a big street C) to think over D) to go to school

13. Find the answer with a case agreement.

A) our house B) to write a letter

C) to pick something up D) to talk on the phone

14. A word which is defined in a word combination is called

15. Which answer has a unit which is called "a grammatical phenomenon"?

A) my friend's book B) to bring

C) He had his nose in the air D) a book

Assessment: 1 point for each correct answer.

If you have *points 15-14*, you mark is "Excellent", you have studied all the chapters profoundly.

If you have *points 11-13*, you mark is– "Good", you have studied the topic satisfactorily. You should analyze the questions you could not answer correctly. You should revise the area of topic in whose chapters you made more mistakes.

If you have *points 8-10*, you mark is – "Satisfactory", you have not studied the topic of "Word combination" sufficiently. Identify the areas which you need to revise from the answer table and restudy the topic.

If you have *points fewer than 8*, you mark is – "Not satisfactory". You have not studied the topic. You are recommended to study the academic material from the beginning. Consider the test again. Request your teacher for the areas which you didn't understand.

Table of subject-accordance

Titles of topic chapters	Accordance of questions with the subject
Nominal and predicative word combination	7, 11
Equal connection and subordinate connection	5, 14
Ways of combining a main word and a subordinate word in a word combination	2, 6, 8, 9, 10, 13
Word combination, compound word and a phrase	1, 3, 4, 12, 15

Formative assessment tests are essential to monitor how a lesson procedure is being conducted. On the basis of its results and feedbacks a teacher designs his or her next lesson plans. If most of the students show bad results from formative assessment tests, a teacher then will conduct a diagnostic assessment test. Diagnostic assessment – is an act of gathering information which helps teachers identify learners' strengths and weaknesses with regards to course content (i.e., skills and knowledge) and is tied directly to the course syllabus. Diagnostic assessments are often used before teaching commences. Using diagnostic assessments can support a teacher's decisions about the content that will be taught as well as the approach of assessing that content. The focus of diagnosis is most important. For example, if you teach how to speak English during an interview, then, you should assess student's abilities during a *spoken* interview. If the student writes a paragraph about themselves, then, you are measuring a different construct than the oral interview – although the 'topic' might be similar. Diagnostic assessments need to match what is expected to be taught in the course syllabus. Thus, they can provide valuable data about what should be given more attention and what students already know, thus helping teachers to use class time efficiently. Gathering information about students can help teachers to modify the way in which they teach, influence the decisions made and prevent from the

wrong focus and waste of time. At the same time, it is important that teachers are aware of what they need to look for when diagnosing and most importantly what to do with the data collected. Teachers should be able to communicate the results to students, administration and other stakeholders in the appropriate way, targeting improvement. Assessment *of Learning* – also known as summative assessment, is usually used at the end of a course of study. The intention is to summarise, to see if achievements are at the expected level. In this case, further learning is usually not considered. Knight and Yorke (2003) note that “because summative assessments tend to come at the end of learning sequence, it can be difficult to use them to give feedback to help learners to do better next time” (p. 16). In this case, the challenge for teachers can be developing an understanding of students that summative assessments such as midterms or final tests are not the end of the road but just the accomplishments of a certain phase. Students should be able to look at this assessment as a learning opportunity as well.

To conclude, pedagogical tests are an invaluable tool to organize teaching process properly and effectively, regularly monitor the quality of a lesson, provide the continuity of education, identify students’ weaknesses timely and make changes and improvement in lesson plan designs. This, in its turn, requires a teacher to possess higher teaching abilities and deep knowledge.

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