THE RESEARCH ON SCHOOL-BASED LISTENING TEST ASSESSMENT BASED ON COGNITIVE ABILITIES

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Abstract. Listening assessment is an important part of language assessment. Learners with different levels of cognitive abilities may perform differently in the listening test. The research is to analyze the factors of cognitive abilities affecting listening process. The results illustrate mastering enough language knowledge and some kinds of listening skills is helpful to the learners. The research can also provide some suggestions to teaching and learning.

Key words: Listening test; Self-assessment; Cognitive abilities

Introduction

The research is conducted among some freshmen. Listening is a weak part, so researchers should make the assessment among different-level students (Xiao & Luo, 2019). The learners are divided into different-level groups based on the score of the entrance examination. The 328 learners are from 4 classes in Level A and 4 classes in Level B. All the learners have English learning experience of over ten years, but most of them are good at reading and writing and lack of listening and speaking practice. The school-based listening test is a low-stakes test, and having the test, learners may be more relaxed. The research aims to analyze the features of the school-based listening test, to recognize the factors of cognitive abilities having
effect on the test performance and results. According to the analysis, the research is to provide some suggestions to teaching and learning.

1. Research Methods

The research is a kind of an empirical research. The 328 learners are divided into two groups, Group A and Group B, and they complete the test on U-Campus (APP) within the time limits.

1.1 Listening Test

The school-based listening test is a kind of low-stakes test, and the content is similar to the content of College English Test 4, which is a high-stakes test in China.

The content includes three parts: 3 News reports, 2 Long Dialogues and 2 Passages. Group A and Group B listen to news reports and long dialogues for one time, but Group B listen to passages for two times.

1.2 Self-assessment

Learners can self-assess what they can or cannot deal with (Bercher, 2012) and/or how much progress they have made (Broadfoot, 2007). After the test, learners should analyze the test performance and result to find out how they can get the correct answers and why they could not get the key points.

Learners can analyze the process of having the test from different aspects, such as psychology, pronunciation, phrase, numbers and so on. Especially, learners should present the process of inferring the answers.

2. Research Results

2.1 Test result

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>12.62</td>
<td>12.283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class</td>
<td>1A3</td>
<td>2A3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Score</td>
<td>12.72</td>
<td>11.55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Average Score of Two Groups
The total score is 28. Table 1 shows the scores of two groups and 8 classes. The result shows although Group B listen to the passages for two times, there is not a big gap between two groups.

2.2 Test content

The research also analyzes the content of test and concludes the features of questions set in the test. The self-assessments from learners show the factors of cognitive abilities affecting listening process.

There are just 4 options without question they can read before listening to the materials, which makes listening practice more difficult. News reports and long dialogues are easier than passages because of the length and content.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>News 1</th>
<th>News 2</th>
<th>News 3</th>
<th>Long Dialogue 1</th>
<th>Long Dialogue 2</th>
<th>Passage 1</th>
<th>Passage 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Detail</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<td>Method</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Test Content Analysis

Table 2 shows the questions are to test whether learners can get the exact details and catch the main idea. About 13% questions are to test the general ideas, which is more difficult because learners must understand most parts of listening material, then choose the correct answers. Most questions are about the details, especially the information the listening materials provide. Among the questions about details, the phrases with the similar meaning are always set as a test point.

There is an unexpected question, which is the last one but the answer to the question is mentioned in the middle of the materials. This situation does not always appear in the test and learners are confused about it so that most learners could not choose the correct answer.

2.3 Self-assessment
Learners can choose the correct answers or not for different reasons, and the cognitive abilities have effect on their listening and thinking.

2.3.1 Language knowledge is helpful to listening

Learners who have enough language can complete the listening exercises more smoothly. Having good pronunciation makes learners recognize the different words fast. Learners who can master enough knowledge about vocabulary, grammar and sentence structure can have a better understanding about the listening materials (Xiao & Luo, 2019). If the learners can read more books or watch more movies, they can infer the answer based on the tone of speaker.

2.3.2 Listening skills are helpful to learners

Mastering some listening skills is also helpful to learners. Taking some notes while listening, learners can choose the correct answer more easily. Some learners with good at short-memory can grasp the main idea and have a better understanding.

Having the technique of answering the questions is also helpful. The learners can predict the questions based on the options. Some learners can infer the answer without listening to the questions.

3. Discussion and Further Study

The research is conducted to provide some suggestions to teaching and learning successfully. However, there are also some limits. The learners are not from all the levels, especially some ones with low language levels. The test is a low-stakes one. If learners take a high-stakes test, they must have pressure and may have different results. For the further study, we may conduct more researches on the different fields, even on the strategies learners employ.
References:


