RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The Choice of This Study

Graduated students always face problems of communication with the users of English. So, how do they face these problems since they have reached the advanced level? For this reason, our sample was the 4th year students of English at Biskra University that we will check the procedures to test and graduate them in 2005 and the previous years.

Basing on the problematic, we have chosen as our method of research: the case study method. This choice was also due to two main issues: the first is the shortage of time that did not permit the use of another method like experimental one. And this raises the second issue that is the large number of students (testees). For the above reasons, we chose this method as the best one to deal with this topic.

The Sample

We have chosen the students of 4th year English as a sample for our thesis. They graduated in 2005, and they passed the baccalaureate exam in 2001. For their large number, we have chosen 200 students to ask a set of questions. However, there were only 57 who replied. Most of them are from Biskra or its suburbs. And sometimes there were students from neighbouring Wilayas like Khenchela, El Oued and Ouargla.

Data gathering tools

Our research tools were mainly questionnaires that were devoted to both members of testing process: testers (teachers of 4th year students) and the testees (4th year students).

1. Questionnaire for teachers

For this questionnaire, we designed a group of questions directed to the testers of English Department of Biskra University who are only 6 teachers for the 4th year. These questions were based on the theoretical features that we displayed in this thesis. They all replied on these questions appropriately. Their responses were analysed and discussed through a form of tables that were followed by comments for each. And at the end, there was a sum-up about all of this part.

2. Questionnaire for students

In this questionnaire, we asked advanced learners about their attitudes about the testing process that is being held with them in Biskra University. Of course, these questions were based on the theoretical features of testing English language learning. The answers were analysed in form of ratio feature. And we displayed brief comments for that. These sets of information were summed up at the end.

Other tools

We also base this study on the advanced learners' background in terms of their learning and testing since the middle schools using their exam papers. Not forgetting the **observation tool** for describing the situation of the English language learning at Algerian schools and universities, especially in Biskra.

The structure of this research

Our research starts with set of information, general and specific, distributed on the first two chapters respectively. Data gathered of the case are detailed in the last chapter's two elements.

Chapter one is under the title of *"Theoretical features of testing English language learning"*. It is devoted to the general set of information about what concerns the testing of English language – English. This chapter contains 5 main elements. The first element defines the concept of '*testing English language learning'* both its broader sense as well as its narrower sense. The second element is devoted to the approaches to testing foreign language learning which are/were pointed currently or previously. Third element is designed to the essential traits of any good test, so it is for recognising the best way to test. The fourth element is about designing a test: its forms, its types, its test items types and its evaluation. Finally, we discuss the different levels of testing foreign language learning. It is considered as the resource for the rest of the thesis.

Chapter two is titled *"Advanced learners background"*. This chapter is devoted to recognise the specific set of information about the chosen sample – advanced learners of English Department of Biskra University: 4th year. It is presented partly in their socio-cultural effect, then in their learning of English in Algerian schools, and mainly their testing as a part of it. So that this chapter is divided into two elements: socio-cultural background and learning one. We start with their socio-cultural one as Algerians, and we end with the view of Algerian society toward this foreign language.

In the second element, learning background, we deal with their history of learning English in the Algerian schools. We start with their first year of learning English starting from the second year at the middle school till the third year at high school. Then comes their streaming. Finally, we discuss, in details, their teaching and their testing in English Department of Biskra University from the first year till the third year – the year before their graduation. This chapter is an introduction to the study of the case.

Chapter three is under the title of *"Critical Analysis of Testing English Language Learning in English Department at Biskra University (case of 4th year students of English at Biskra University)".* It is also divided into two other parts: the first is *"Analysis of Questionnaire For The teachers Of 4th Year at Biskra University"* that is based on the answers we gathered through the questionnaires we held with the teachers of fourth year students (testers) at Biskra University. These answers were analysed with the help of the sample of papers of the exams questions. The analysis follows the features of the 1st chapter where each is asked about in the presented questionnaire to testers. It is also interpreted into form of tables that each is followed by a comment to be summed-up at the end of the chapter. This part is devoted to know the way to test these advanced learners at Biskra University basing on the common features of testing of such case, and to know their suggestions.

The second is *"Analysis of Questionnaire for the Students of 4th Year at Biskra University".* In this part, we analyse the answer we gathered through the questionnaire we held with the advanced learners of Biskra University. These answers were interpreted in form of percentage rate followed by comments. These latter are summed-up at the end of the part. So this last part is devoted to know the holders' view toward their testing as well as their suggestions.

Finally, we end –up our research with advantages and drawbacks of testing these advanced learners that were drawn from the two analyses. And to complete all, we suggested a group of solutions and recommendations that were nearly an agreement between the teachers and their students. These two last elements have no relation with the previous chapters.