

III.2. Analysis of Questionnaire for 4th year Students in Biskra University

III.2.1. Advanced learners background

We have noticed through the questionnaire the following notes about their learning background:

1. The type of baccalaureate, they hold:
 - a. 50%: were literal.
 - b. 48, 7%: were scientific.
 - c. 1,7%: were technical
2. Their choices of English was as follows:
 - a. 81%: personal (the majority were literal, then comes scientific).
 - b. 19%: imposed (most of them were technical and scientific, and then comes literal).
3. Their choice of English was for the following reasons:
 - a. 74%: To use it for everyday life: in all domains since it is it is an international means of communication with the rest of the world.
 - b. 48%: For it their personal appreciation.
 - c. 20%: For it is a dream to be future teacher.
 - d. 10%: For they got good marks in English in the Baccalaureate Exam.
 - e. 8%: To use it for research.
 - f. 8%: To facilitate getting a job.
 - g. 8%: They were influenced by their teachers of English at high school.
 - h. 6%: no other choice for some social variables.

III.2.2. The material to be tested according to Advanced learners their testing in Biskra university

4. The focus of the exam is on :
 - a. 87% consider achievement of program content.
 - b. 14% consider the language ability
 - c. 16% consider both of them

5. Skills they use well:
 - a. 44% consider reading.
 - b. 36% consider writing
 - c. 28% consider listening.
 - d. 13 % consider speaking.

6. Their ability to communicate in English:
 - a. 78% say no, because of:
 - ❖ The fear of mistake, anxiety and shame.
 - ❖ The absence of practising oral language.
 - ❖ Less importance is given to oral language by learners.
 - ❖ Their low level and lack in language mastery.
 - ❖ Not well-trained to speak fluently.
 - ❖ Linguistically incompetent.
 - ❖ The unfamiliarity with communication traits in classroom limitation of communication, but with peers.
 - ❖ No contact with native speakers of English.
 - ❖ The Algerian attitude to English hamper advanced learners to communicate.

- b. 14% say yes
- c. 6% say somehow.

III.2.3. Advanced learners' attitude toward essential traits of their testing in Biskra University

7. On the clarity and understanding of the test items in foreign language test at

Biskra university:

- a. 87%: Do find it so. Their reasons are as follows:
 - ❖ They are around the content of the foreign language program.
 - ❖ They are simple, direct to the point, and some need careful thinking.
 - ❖ Simplified and familiar to them.
 - ❖ Accurate, logical and meaningful.
- b. 7%: find it somehow. Their reasons are :
 - ❖ It is up to the students' understanding of the lecture.
 - ❖ It depends on the climate of the test and the teachers' method.
 - ❖ They do not fit students (low).
 - ❖ It depends on the type of test item.
- c. 6%: do not find it so. Their reasons are:
 - ❖ Test items are ambiguous.
 - ❖ Some advanced learners are of low level.

- ❖ They are not familiar with analysing and criticising in essay writing.

8. Variety and satisfaction of the test items:

a. 82%: find it so. For the following reason:

- ❖ They cover all the topics of the foreign language program.
- ❖ They give opportunity to select.
- ❖ They give chance to all students and are correspondent to their abilities.

b. 11%: do not find it so.

- ❖ The repetition of some questions about the same topic, and there is not enough choices. And that may lead to their failure.
- ❖ They do not fit their abilities.

c. 7%: find it somehow.

- ❖ They are sometimes various without considering the due time.
- ❖ When they are obligatory questions.

9. Practicality of English language test according to the advanced learners:

a. 53, 5%: find the exam climate unsuitable. For the following reasons:

- ❖ The due time is shortness.
- ❖ The large number of students in one classroom that lead to pressure and noise.
- ❖ It starts late to hold the exam.
- ❖ The lateness of exposing the exam timetable.

- ❖ The conditions of the class are bad: lack of tables and chairs, absence of air-conditioner.
 - ❖ Teachers who administer the exam are few to cover the large number of advanced learners at Biskra University who find it easy to cheat.
- b. 34,5%: find it suitable for the following reasons:
- ❖ It is comfortable and calm.
 - ❖ Teachers and the administration do the best to make it so.
 - ❖ The teachers cooperation to make the ambiguous questions clear.
 - ❖ The administration of the exam is good by the cooperation of the teachers who control the testing process.
 - ❖ Additional time is given when starting late.
- c. 10, 5%: consider it somehow. For the following reasons
- ❖ When exams are held in the afternoon.
 - ❖ It depends on the teachers who administer the exam.

III.2.4.Advanced learners' attitude toward their test design in Biskra University

10. The sufficiency of written form of exam to get their degrees:

- a. 86%: consider it insufficient, for:
- ❖ The absence of oral form of test.
 - ❖ They are exposed to oral aspects of language, tested in writing.
 - ❖ It does not reveal their real level.

- ❖ It cannot help to communicate.
 - ❖ Since the expected is to get a diploma to be a future teachers where they need to be fluent when speaking to their audience (their future students), but this is absent in the written test.
 - ❖ Marks may be a result of cheating of the advanced learners whereas in oral exams , there is no cheating.
 - ❖ It can evaluate well the learners who are able to write, but not to speak.
 - ❖ It is limited by time.
 - ❖ It hampers the real communication.
 - ❖ Its marking is not appropriate, for it does not reflect the four skills.
 - ❖ It is theoretical, no practice is revealed.
- b. 12% consider it sufficient, for:
- ❖ It is sufficient to express ones' ideas.
 - ❖ It helps to reveal ones' linguistic competence.
- c. 02% consider it somehow, for :
- ❖ It is important, but it needs an oral exam to better evaluate the learners' abilities.

11. additional oral tests

- ❖ 95% suggest the
- ❖ 5% do not support this.

12. The preferable test items for the advanced learners (4th year students of English at Biskra University):

a. 55,20% chose multiple choice of questions for:

- ❖ They give more chance to get good mark.
- ❖ They help to recognise their real levels of understanding of program content.
- ❖ They really test the knowledge of the program content.
- ❖ They are suitable for the due time.
- ❖ They are easy to answer.
- ❖ They lead to few mistakes.
- ❖ They help remembering the response.
- ❖ They fit the level of all students.
- ❖ They reduce anxiety about the mark.

b. 27%: chose essay for :

- ❖ It helps to know advanced learners styles.
- ❖ It helps to check ideas in writing.
- ❖ It helps to display their abilities freely.
- ❖ It helps to focus on one topic.
- ❖ It is the best way to evaluate the advanced learners' abilities.

c. 18,5%: chose transforming/paraphrasing for:

- ❖ They are easy to answer.
- ❖ They give chance to use one's own word freely.

d. 10,34% chose the true /false for:

- ❖ It does not need knowing every thing just general ideas, and some essential terms from the content of the program.
- ❖ It covers all the content of the program.
- ❖ It is precise and concise.
- ❖ They are clear.

III.2.5. Advanced learners' attitude toward its evaluation of their testing in Biskra university:

13. The objectivity of evaluation:

a. 48% consider it objective, for:

- ❖ There is a confidence in the teachers.
- ❖ It gives opportunities to know ones' deficiencies.

b. 38% consider it subjective, for:

- ❖ There is less consideration for the obstacles that hamper advanced learners at Biskra university to display their levels.
- ❖ It is only based on linguistic competence.
- ❖ The impact of the climate may lead to bad responses.
- ❖ Limited marks are used like 14/20.
- ❖ Cheating may mislead evaluators.

c. 12% consider it somehow:

- ❖ A tool to get marks and it depends on the advanced learners answer.
- ❖ They cannot see their papers after correction.

14. English language advanced learners attitude toward the scale used at Biskra university:

a. Their view to total scale is:

❖ 57% do not agree on the total scale for : They do not reflect their real levels.

❖ 43% consider it good.

b. The alternative scale:

❖ -59% suggest the percentage scale.

❖ 45% suggest category weights.

SUM-UP:

1. Advanced learners at Biskra University (4th) have chosen to study English to communicate with it, and to facilitate contacting with the rest of the world, and to be future teachers.
2. The majority of advanced learners at Biskra University agree on that they are tested in terms of their achievement of the language program and their language ability (skills) beyond the first one. They also display their inability to communicate in English for social, academic and psychological factors.
3. For the English language test of 4th year students at Biskra University, advanced learners find it as follows:
 - a. The majority of advanced learners find the test clear and understandable because it is around the program content, and because they are familiar with these test items.
 - b. The majority of advanced learners find the test items as various and satisfying for they give opportunity to the majority to select the appropriate question; however, their variety finds the problem of the due time.
 - c. The majority of advanced learners at Biskra university find the climate of the exam inappropriate because of the following:
 - ❖ The due time do not fit the long test items.
 - ❖ The large number of advanced learners in one classroom leads to noise, pressure and cheating.
 - ❖ The exam starts late.
 - ❖ The exposing of timetable is late.

- a. The bad conditions of the classroom: the limited number of chairs and tables that does not fit the number of students.
 - b. The absence of air conditioner.
 - c. Teachers who administer the exam are few to cover the large number of advanced learners
4. For the test design, the majority of advanced learners at Biskra university regard it as follows:
- a. They prefer the use of multiple choice questions for they fit their abilities, cover all the program content, is easy to answer, leads to few mistakes, is objective, and reduce anxiety about the mark, and is suitable for the due time.
 - b. They agree on the insufficiency of the written tests, and they regard that they need to be exposed to oral tests, for they were all the time exposed to oral aspects of language, it does not display their real communicative language ability, it does not fit their choice to learn English [to be good teachers] it also helps the widespread of cheating. And basically for it is based on writing and reading skills.
 - c. They agree on the relative objectivity of their evaluation. Basically for it is based on linguistic competence, and less importance is given to its practicality.
 - d. They prefer the use of percentage scale for it can give approximately their real level.

Conclusion

We cannot realise all the above solutions unless there is collaboration between learners, teachers and administration. They must also be approved by the government to improve the testing foreign language advanced learners at Biskra University, and all Algerian universities.

Advantages and Drawbacks of English Language Testing the case of 4th year Students at Biskra University

Finally, we can draw certain advantages and drawbacks that distinguish foreign language test of 4th year students of English at Biskra University:

1. The Advantages of English Language Test at Biskra University (case of 4th year English):

1. The communicative approach to testing foreign language learners is used with the advanced learners at Biskra University. Furthermore, there is a common point between the hope of advanced learners, and the objective of their teachers (testers) to practise its principles.
2. Both writing and reading skills are largely tested and evaluate in English department at Biskra University.
3. It takes the advanced learners' level as a major trait before designing to test them.
4. The testers select objective, understandable and clear test items to correspond the advanced learners' abilities which are based on the content of the program.
5. It is reliable for the above reasons.
6. It is content and concurrent valid for it corresponds the content of the program.
7. It is of three types of English language test: diagnostic, achievement and proficiency.

8. There is an excessive use of essay writing to assess writing skill in a more contextual way.
9. Evaluation includes all the parts of foreign language testing: teacher, learner and the program.

2. Drawbacks of English Language Test at Biskra University (case of 4th year English)

1. Communicative approach to testing foreign language test cannot be applied only on reading and writing; however, listening and speaking skills are totally absent. The reasons behind this are: it is official “governmental”.
2. Practicality is approximate in the case of 4th year students of English at Biskra University: first, the due time is short. Second, the large number of advanced learners in one classroom of the exam that lead to pressure, noise, cheating and waste of time to organise them. Third, the bad conditions in the classrooms for the increasing number of advanced learners.
3. The English language test at Biskra University is partly unreliable for they are limited to written tests only.
4. The English language tests at Biskra University are invalid in terms of predicting the advanced learners' communicative language ability.
5. The form of the test is written only. There is no oral test at all, even though they are exposed to oral aspects of language along the year through the presented lectures]. So, their evaluation is not complete.
6. The type of test items are subject to the due time, limited to three main types (MCQ, essay, sometimes through the open question' and true/false). So they are

all of indirect test items that can be either evaluated subjectively (essay) or objectively (MCQ & true/false).

7. Evaluation is due to teachers appreciations.
8. The interpretation of this evaluation is consistent: total scale.

Solutions and recommendations

Testing foreign language advanced learners at Biskra University needs a group of reforms that are a group of suggestions from both the teachers (testers) of 4th year students and their advanced learners (4th year students):

1. Both teachers and advanced learners agree on the use of oral tests to cover listening and speaking skills in order to reach the objective of the adopted communicative approach.
2. They also suggest the reformation of testing procedure by:
 - a. The interaction between spoken and written language in testing 4th year students.
 - b. The coordination between teachers and advanced learners in Additional courses in all modules to improve the oral language for holding oral test.
 - c. Dividing the sections into small groups in the training courses and the exams.
 - d. Training the advanced learners on the exams by oral/written additional tasks.
3. Coordination between testers on the appropriate way to test through providing better conditions and a good administration of testees, reorganising the testing procedures: setting, time....etc.
4. Reconsideration of test items types through finding suitable test items types.