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An Exploration into the Content Validity of Tests in the Teaching of Communicative English Course: Determinants and Consequences

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Abstract

The major objective of the study was to assess whether Hosanna and Wolaita Sodo University teachers of English language and literature do prepare tests that reflect the classroom instruction or not. Hence, the researchers of this study took two-semester English examination papers to assess the tests constructed by the teachers do possess or lack content validity. In order to check the existence of content validity, the writer cross checked the content area coverage of the test items (reading, vocabulary, grammar, speaking, listening and writing) from the course module against with the amount of questions constructed from each category in the tests. The content validity of tests is mainly analyzed by comparing the amount of questions under the expected and observed columns by using the chi-square method of data analysis. Both the amount of expected and observed amount of questions was computed by using the coverage size of each item in the teaching material. Thus, the amount of expected number of questions judged by the amount of the total periods allocated to each language items (sections) in the respective semesters in the course syllabus. In addition, the writers also used teachers' and students' questionnaire in order to have in-depth understanding concerning the awareness of teachers on the concept of content validity, their testing practice and the impact of teachers' testing practice upon the students' attitude towards studying and learning of the language aspects. Finally, from the findings it is possible to conclude that the freshman Communicative English language examinations (tests) of the two Universities have low content validity in order to measure students' achievement properly. Therefore, it was recommended that to construct tests with good content validity, teachers need to follow principles of test construction such as using table of specification, and they should be provided with supplementary training programs such as courses on evaluation and measurement, and language testing and assessment to create the necessary awareness on the issue understudy.

Article Info

Introduction

Education quality is one among many other burning issues that the government trying hard to implement in its education policy. According to ministry of education, the education development package has encompassed six components namely teacher development, improving civics and ethical education, ICT development, improving educational inputs, improving management capacity and improving teaching and learning. Especially in relation to improving teaching and learning, many sub-components can be mentioned: Such as the

methodology of teaching, effective classroom management, and quality of testing. Therefore, it is possible to state that testing is an integral part of teaching and learning.

Tests are an important part in the process of ensuring quality of education. Particularly when tests are constructed haphazardly it would hugely affect the quality of education. According to Thorndike (1997) tests are important tools through which teachers and policy makers can get the effectiveness of their teaching process. According to Gronlund (1982) stated that we can obtain the necessary information whether the educational objectives are achieved or not through effective testing. So when tests are constructed without keeping the principles of test construction, they would have power of transmitting wrong information regarding students' performance. It can not by any means inform whether students have got the understanding of a given course/ instructional process. The conclusion that we reach from the results of students based on the wrongly constructed tests will be misleading.

Quality of tests encompass, test validity, test reliability, test management etc. among this types of test quality elements, the research focused particularly on the content validity of Communicative English course tests. According to Hughes (1998) stated the meaning of content validity as, a test to have content validity if its content constitutes a representative sample of contents in the language taught in the language lessons. Thus, this research mainly focused on the content validity of Communicative English course tests constructed in two universities namely Wolaita Sodo and Hosanna University from 2006-2007 E.C.

Statement of the problem

Ensuring education quality particularly testing quality has been given due attention by government for it plays a pivotal role in effectively measuring students learning. Hence the major reason for the research team was to assess the content validity of communicative English course is because this course is offered to make students communicatively competent both in their use of the language and in the learning of other courses.

Though it is not empirical, students who have taken the course showed poor communicative competence. So one of the suspected causes might be the testing problem, therefore; it aroused the interest of researchers to study the content validity of Communicative English courses

tests. The other reason was the research gap that exists in this area. To the extent of researchers' assessment no research has been done concerning the content validity of communicative English courses at university level. So this research would help to fill the existing information gap.

Materials and Methods

Research questions

The following were research questions which were thoroughly discussed in the study:

1. Do tests of communicative English course have content Validity?
2. What is the awareness of English teachers concerning test construction process?
3. What are the practices of English language teachers in the construction of tests?
4. What are the consequences of testing of communicative courses on the communicative competence of students?

Research design

A descriptive research design was employed to effectively evaluate the content validity of communicative English tests. The main reason was to identify whether the major language skills were proportionally represented, underrepresented or not represented with respect to the instructional materials data was gathered through document analysis, questionnaire and interview.

Subjects of the study

The research was conducted in Wolaita Sodo and Hosanna Universities which are found in Wolaita and Hadiya zones respectively. Wolaita and Hadiya zones are among the thirteen zones found in the south nations, nationalities and people's regional state of Ethiopia.

Both universities were established in1999 and 2003 E.C. in the capital towns of the two zones namely Wolaita Sodo and Hosanna respectively. Hence, tests of communicative English course constructed by teachers from 2006-2007 E.C in Wolaita Sodo and Hosanna Universities were taken. Besides, Communicative English skills teachers who taught and students who took the course were also involved in the study.

Sampling procedure of the research Subjects

All tests of Communicative English skill which were constructed from 2006 and 2007 E.C were taken for analysis with respect to its course outline. Since the numbers of teachers who teach the course are around 45, 25% of them or around 11 teachers were selected for interview. Since in the 2006 E.C the number of student who have taken were 5000 (35000 and 15000 respectively), 10 % of them were involved, and at the same time in the 2007 E.C, around 6000 students were enrolled. Thus 10% of them were also involved for questionnaire.

Tools for data collection and analysis

Document analysis

As it is clearly indicated by Alderson (1996), the common way of analyzing the content validity of a test is to compare the content of the test with the content of the course materials taught. Therefore, in this study, the document analysis was used to see the match between the content areas of instruction in the classroom from the course material taught vis- a -vis the content sampling of the tests given to students. The comparison was done between the expected and the actually observed amount of tests by using chi-square test.

Questionnaire analysis

The questionnaire was used to gather both quantitative and qualitative data by integrating the open and close ended questions. It was targeted to assess about the students way of learning, test contents, and about their studying preference towards the major components/items of language.

For further reliability of the questionnaire, a pilot test was carried out by administering to small size of students before its actual distribution.

Interview analysis

In addition to document and questionnaire analysis, the information obtained from teachers through interview was analyzed descriptively based on qualitative method data of analysis.

Results and Discussions

In this section, the two semesters communicative English language tests which were administered from 2006 E.C-

2007 E.C (first-semesters) of both Wolaita Sodo and Wachemo Universities were analyzed. The reason why the researcher used only two semesters was to solve the existing problem in its infant stage after evaluating current situation it in the given time span.

The way test contents were analyzed with respect to the course content, was just by comparing the contents of the test with the content coverage of those language items (components) namely; *reading, vocabulary, grammar, speaking, listening and writing* in the course module based on the amount of credit hours allotted for each language items in a given semester. Hence, the writer divided the contents of the texts into six main language items (components) based on the classification of the course contents. In course curriculum, the sections were divided into six language components. Based on this, the writer used these language items as the major content areas to be compared between the tests and text course contents. The comparison is based on the amount of periods allocated for each language items in a given semester by the fact that the number of periods allocated for each language item can possibly show the extent of coverage and emphasis given for each language items by the curriculum designers (Table 1).

In order to analyze the content validity of communicative English tests of the stated semesters, in the Universities under consideration, the researchers used chi-square method to analyze the data and used six (n=6) as the number of population. Because the table contains six language items which are reading, writing, speaking, listening, vocabulary and grammar). Hence, the table value is 11.07 with degree of freedom five (5) for all tables to measure the content validity of the tests with respect to the course contents.

In addition, to have further understanding concerning the awareness of teachers about content validity of tests, their attitude towards validity of tests and their overall testing practice in their respective universities, the questionnaire and interview were administered by the writer. The questionnaire was administered for about 10% of the students of the stated university in order to understand the impact of content validity upon their attitude of studying and learning towards various kinds of language items. It was also administered for 50% of the instructors who teach communicative English in the stated Universities to the interview.

Finally, the data gathered through the questionnaires were analyzed by using percentage for closed ended ones

and qualitative for the open ended ones whereas interview was analyzed by using qualitative analysis.

Document analysis

The table 2, clearly witnesses the fact that grammar extremely dominated the testing practice. The expected amount of grammar from the total constructed number of questions should be 16. Because grammar takes 16% of the total course coverage and hence should account 16% from the total constructed amount of questions which are 16. For the reason that the amount of questions constructed for each language items (components) should be proportional to the amount of their coverage in the course material. In confirming this, Thorndike (1997) defined content validity as the proportion of test items allocated to each content area with regard to the instructional emphasis and importance of the language items in the classroom instruction.

Generally, the chi-square value of the above tests which is 87.62 when compared with the table value of 11.07 with the degree of freedom 5 shows that there is a great disproportion between the expected and observed amount of questions. Especially when we look at the representation of listening skill as compared to other language skills it was totally ignored in the tests. Therefore the tests have problem in adequately sampling and representing the language items. Hence they lack content validity.

As it is clearly indicated in the above table (Table 3), there is a great disproportion between the numbers of tests constructed by teachers as compared to expected amount of questions. It is possible to understand from the above table that the test is more of grammar dominated than skill oriented. Because, the present (coverage) of grammar in the exam is five times higher than what is logically expected to appear. Skills such as listening, speaking and writing have not got representation while reading took a small amount of representation. This shows that how much teachers are worshiping grammar as the better and the most appropriate means of effectively evaluating the student's language proficiency. In addition to that the table shows the fact that teachers do not consider teaching and testing language skills as the integral parts of teaching a language. And hence, the test greatly lacks content validity. Especially, when it is compared with the table of 11.07, the calculated value of chi-square 87.7 is much higher than the table value. In line with this, Hughes (1998:22) further confirmed that to say that a test has content validity it should constitute

a representative sample of the language skills, structures etc. However, practically observed fact is in contrary to Hughes's statement. Thus in the stated table, there is a great disproportion between the expected and observed amount of questions and this resulted in negative wash back on the students' way of learning. If the teacher concentrates in one part of the lesson and ignores the other, it is like informing to the students that the ignored part is less important than the concentrated part (Hughes 1998). So students perceive that the emphasized part is more important and integral than the items which did not appear. This can potentially divert the students' attention towards grammar oriented learning and undermine the use or advantage of skill oriented learning. This consequently leads to the degraded language teaching and learning.

When the content validity of the above table (Table 4) is compared against to the content of the text concerned, there is a great disparity between the expected and observed amount of questions. Only the reading and vocabulary part has got fair representation. When the calculated value of 21.24 compared with the table value of 11.07 with degree of freedom 5, clearly shows that there is a great significance of disproportion between the expected and observed amount of questions. This is mainly because the calculated value of the chi-square is much higher than the table value. Most importantly it shows that the grammar has taken the lion share of the overall test construction process. In other words, the grammar section extremely dominated the testing practices and whereas other skills such as speaking, listening and writing has been totally rejected from being tested.

Therefore, this shows that the existence of a great problem on the side of teachers to make tests a representative sample of what has been taught in the classroom. It also shows the fact that teachers are still practicing the most traditional way of testing in which the testing of grammatical rules and structures take a central position. This poses a negative wash back effect on the students' language learning process. In line with this, Hughes (1998) stated that, the test which doesn't represent the important parts of a classroom learning well, cannot be said accurate and has negative wash back on the students' learning.

When the above table 5 is observed, except the reading and vocabulary sections, the rest are disproportionately represented in the exam. As compared to the calculated value of 76.18 with the table value of 11.07 with degree

of freedom 5, a great difference is observed. As it is indicated in the table most of questions were concentrated from grammar sections and skills like speaking, listening and writing haven't been represented appropriately. But the vocabulary and reading sections have got relatively better representation in the tests. This clearly witnesses that teachers do not have the trend (experience) of using test blue print while preparing tests. This is because the test blue print shows that for which and what extent of the test items should be represented. It can also serve as a guideline to effectively assure contently valid test. (Bachman 1990, Hughes 989 and Harrison 1989) further stressed (agreed) on the view that content specification plays in retaining content validity. Besides, the above table shows that the feeble experience of teachers to make tests to be the reflection of items taught in the class.

Results of teachers' questionnaire analysis

As it is indicated in the above table (Table 6), there are a total of fifty two teachers in two Universities of which twenty six teachers included for questionnaire. Fifteen are from Wolaita Sodo University and eleven are drawn from Wachamo University. The numbers of selected teachers account 50% of the total number of teachers in the universities understudy.

Results of teachers' questionnaire analysis

As it can be seen from the table 7, the response of the first question indicates that majority of teachers seldom include the writing skill tests in their testing. Almost 75% of the teachers said that they sometimes include the writing skill tests. And only 25% of teachers said they include writing skill tests in the testing. However; this situation goes worse when compared to the results of document analysis. With regard to the testing of listening skill, majority (75%) of the teachers said they do not include listening skill in their test. In the open ended question they said that because of material shortage they could not include the listening skill. However, majority of teachers said they include grammar, vocabulary and reading aspects of language items. As to them it is easy to test these items with short period of time. The test management of these language items is easier than testing speaking or listening skills especially in terms of material and time need to execute. With regard to whether teachers use table of specification to construct tests or not, great majority of teachers said they do. This shows the fact that teachers' limited awareness regarding the importance of table of specification in constructing

contently valid or balanced test. As Gronlund 1990, and Hughes 1989:24 argued the step for the judgment of a test content validity as "A comparison of test specification and test content is the basis for judgments as to content validity." The best safeguard against this is to write full test specifications and to ensure that the test content is a fair reflection of these. So it is important to raise the awareness of teachers regarding how to prepare contently valid tests especially through the use of table of specification.

Results of the students' questionnaire analysis (Table 8)

In the table 9, as far as the first question which states about whether they have been taken the speaking skill test or not, more than 66% of the students said no and around 19% said that they sometimes take the speaking skill test. From the response of the students it is possible to understand that speaking skill test is the rarely given test item to students. This means that the students have no practice of being evaluated their speaking ability. This response is in harmony with the information obtained in the document analysis and other tools such as teachers' interview and questionnaire. With regard to the second question 58% of responded that they have never took test concerning listening skills. From the response of the students it is possible to understand that listening skill test is the hardly given test item to students. This means that the students have no practice of being evaluated their listening ability.

However it is understood that reading comprehension, vocabularies are the most tested items among the language components that are expected to be tested. The problem is that these items are over represented in the test contents. This contradicts the very idea of content validity that tests contents should be proportional to the course contents.

As it can be seen in the table 10, those who said that they have taken speaking skill test are only 20% of the respondents. And those who said they did not take are 65%. And regarding listening skill test majority of the respondent (75%) said they did not take the exam. Besides, only 30% of the respondents said that they have been assessed the writing skill part of the course. On the other hand, majority of the students for reading 74%, vocabulary 71% and for 68% said they have taken the exam. From the response it is possible to understand that the biased attention of teachers towards some part of the language items and ignoring the others. This implies the

clear violation of the concept of content validity. This in turn leads students to the wrong understanding, that is, the ignored part as unimportant language component to learn and study for their success.

The following which are represented from 3 to 0 are the degree of emphasis that you give to study the language components given in the table 11. So make a tick [   ] mark for the degree of attention that you give to study each of them.

Table.1 Shows the content coverage of the major language items of the communicative English course

ITEMS	COVERAGE IN PERCENTAGE AND NUMBER	
	College English (Wolaita Sodo University)	College English (Wachamo University)
READING	25% (19- periods)	19% (20-periods)
VOCABULARY	25% (14-periods)	14% (15-periods)
GRAMMAR	25% (17-periods)	14 % (15-periods)
SPEAKING	25% (24-periods)	20% (22-periods)
LISTENING	25% (14-periods)	14% (15-periods)
WRITING	25% (19-periods)	19% (20 periods)
TOTAL	100% (107-periods)	100% (107-periods)

Table.2 Results of chi-square analysis with regard to 2006 (semester-I) WSU

ITEMS	EXPECTED	OBSERVED	(O-E)2/E
READING	16	30	12.25
VOCABULARY	16	5	7.56
GRAMMER	16	43	45.5
SPEAKING	16	10	2.25
LISTENING	15	0	15
WRITING	16	7	5.06
TOTAL			$\sum[(O-E)2/E]=87.62$

Table.3 Results of chi-square analysis with regard to 2006 (semester-I) of Wachemo University

ITEMS	EXPECTED	OBSERVED	(O-E)2/E
READING	19	29	5.26
VOCABULARY	14	16	0.28
GRAMMER	14	41	52.07
SPEAKING	20	8	7.2
LISTENING	14	0	14
WRITING	19	6	8.89
TOTAL	100	100	$\sum[(O-E)2/E]=87.7$

Table.4 Results of chi-square analysis with regard to 2007 (semester-I) of Wolaita Sodo University

ITEMS	EXPECTED	OBSERVED	(O-E)2/E
READING	16	25	5.06
VOCABULARY	16	10	2.25
GRAMMER	16	26	6.25
SPEAKING	16	15	0.06
LISTENING	16	5	7.56
WRITING	16	15	0.06
TOTAL			$\sum[(O-E)2/E]=21.24$

Table.5 Results of chi-square analysis with regard to 2007 (semester-I) of Wachamo University

ITEMS	EXPECTED	OBSERVED	$(O-E)^2/E$
READING	16	32	16
VOCABULARY	16	7	5.06
GRAMMER	16	39	33.06
SPEAKING	16	9	3.06
LISTENING	15	0	15
WRITING	16	8	4
TOTAL			$\sum[(O-E)^2/E]=76.18$

Table.6 Shows Teachers' Biographic Information

Universities	Total no. Ofteachers	Total no. of selected teachers	% Sample	Academic Status		Teaching Experience		
				B.A/Ed	Masters	0-10	11-20	21>
Wolaita Sodo	30	15	50%	2	1	13	3	0
Wachamo	22	11	50%	3	2	6	3	2
Total	52	26	50%	5	3	19	6	2

B.Ed. = Bachelor of Education, B.A = Bachelor of Arts

Table.7 Illustrates the Response in Number and Percentage

No	ITEMS	Responses In Number And Percentage			TOTAL
		Yes	No	Sometimes	
1.	Do you include essay /writing skill tests/ that makes students to write something in your test?	6 (25%)	0 (25%)	20 (50%)	26 (100%)
2.	Do you evaluate the listening skills of your students?	3 (12.5%)	20 (75%)	3 (12.5%)	26 (100%)
3	Do you evaluate the speaking skills of your students?	7 (25%)	13 (25%)	6 (50%)	26 (100%)
4	Do you evaluate the reading ability of your students?	20 (75%)	0 (0%)	6 (25%)	26 (100%)
5	Do you evaluate the grammatical knowledge of your students?	20 (75%)	3 (25%)	3 (25%)	26 (100%)
6	Do you evaluate the vocabulary knowledge of your students?	20 (75%)	3 (12.5%)	3 (12.5%)	26 (100%)
7.	Do you think that all the lessons can be exploited in the test while testing?	13 (50%)	7 (27%)	6 (23%)	26 (100%)
.8	Do you think that your test content is proportional to the course?	20 (75%)	3 (12.5)	3 (12.5%)	26 (100%)
9	Do you use table of specification while preparing tests?	5 (19%)	21 (81%)	0 (0%)	26 (100%)

Table.8 The students' demographic information

Universities	SEX	Total no. of students		Number of Selected Students		Total no. of selected Students	% of Sample
		2006	2007	1st (2006)	1st (2007)		
Wolaita Sodo	M	1500	1650	150	165	315	10
	F	1000	1350	100	135	235	10
Wachamo	M	1100	1300	110	130	240	10
	F	600	1000	60	100	160	10
Total		4200	5300	420	530	950	

Table.9 Results of students' response of Wolaita Sodo University Freshman Students

No	Items	Responses in Number and Percentage			TOTAL
		Yes	No	Sometimes	
1	Have you taken the speaking skill test?	99 18%	347 63%	104 19%	550 100%
2	Have you taken the listening skill test?	55 10%	429 78%	66 12%	550 100%
3	Have you taken the writing skill test?	270 49%	121 22%	159 29%	550 100%
4	Have you taken the reading skill test?	357 65%	61 11%	132 24%	550 100%
5	Have you taken the tests that measure your vocabulary knowledge?	380 69%	55 10%	115 21%	550 100%
6	Have you taken tests that evaluate your grammatical knowledge?	374 68%	66 12%	110 20%	550 100%

Table.10 Students' Response of Wachamo University Freshman Students

No.	Items	Responses In Number and Percentage			Total
		Yes	No	Sometimes	
1	Have you taken the speaking skill test?	80 20%	260 65%	60 15%	400 100%
2	Have you taken the listening skill test?	52 13%	300 75%	48 12%	400 100%
3	Have you taken the writing skill test?	120 30%	168 42%	112 28%	400 100%
4	Have you taken the reading skill test?	296 74%	52 13%	52 13%	400 100%
5	Have you taken the tests that measure your vocabulary knowledge?	284 71%	68 17%	48 12%	400 100%
6	Have you taken tests that evaluate your grammatical knowledge?	272 68%	72 18%	56 14%	400 100%

Table.11 Shows the Attitude of Wolaita Sodo and Wachamo Universities Students towards Studying the Various Language Components

NO	Language Components		3	2	1	0	Total
1	The level of emphasis that you give to study speaking skill.	No.	76	238	598	38	950
		%	8	25	62	5	(100%)
2	The level of emphasis that you give to study listening skill.	No.	95	200	551	104	950
		%	10	21	58	11	(100%)
3	The level of emphasis that you give to study reading skill.	No.	304	437	124	86	950
		%	32	46	13	9	(100%)
4	The level of emphasis that you give to study writing skill.	No.	162	304	351	133	950
		%	17	32	37	14	(100%)
5	The level of emphasis that you give to study the vocabulary section.	No.	418	333	142	57	950
		%	44	35	15	6	(100%)
6	The level of emphasis that you give to study the grammar section.	No.	618	275	57	0	950
		%	65	29	6	0	(100%)

As it can be seen from the table 11, most students which are about 62% give (pay) low emphasis to study the speaking skill and a very minimum amount of students which are about 8% or 76 from the total 950 students give (pay) high emphasis to study the speaking skill. With regard to the students' attitude towards studying the listening skill, most students or more than half of the students give low emphasis for studying the listening skill and only 10% of the students in both Universities give high emphasis to the study this skill. This shows that the students have low emphasis to study the listening skill. As far as the study of the reading skill concerned, about 32% of the students give high emphasis and 46% give medium emphasis. This shows that more than 78% of the students in both Universities give high and medium emphasis to study the reading skill. This implies that from among skills, students give high emphasis for the reading skill. Concerning the study of writing skill, as it can clearly be observed in the above table, 17% and 32 % of the students give the high and medium level of emphasis respectively. This means the numbers of students, who give (pay) the high and medium level of emphasis for this skill are, below half or 50%. From this it is possible to deduce that more than half of the students give low or no emphasis for this skill. While, it is very clear to understand from the table that students give (pay) a paramount emphasis for both grammar and vocabulary. In more detailed explanation, vocabulary for example, has got high emphasis from 44% of the students and medium emphasis from 35% of the students. This shows the highest and the medium level

emphasis from the students respectively. This means that more than 79% of the students give the highest and the medium level emphasis to this language component (item). With regard to the level of emphasis given to the grammar aspect of the course, majority of students give high and medium level emphasis which are about 65and 29% respectively. From this it is possible to understand the fact that the high concentration of grammar items in the exam leads students to the high emphasis of students to this part. Therefore, from the above data it is possible to conclude that students give the highest emphasis to the study of grammar and vocabulary. And the lowest emphasis goes to the listening and speaking skills respectively.

Concerning the last open ended question, question number seven, (see the appendix-2) which asks about extra information (explanation) for their above response (the response of students in the table above question number seven), most students stated that they give low or no emphasis for speaking and listening skills respectively. As to them, speaking and listening skill don't appear in the exam and therefore they do not want to give much time to study (practice) them. Since those skills don't make them pass the exam and achieve good marks. Furthermore, they give the highest emphasis for the language items (components) such as grammar, vocabulary and reading respectively. As to their response, these (the stated) components always appear in the exam and enable them pass from grade to grade and achieve good result. Therefore, as to them, giving high

emphasis for grammar and vocabulary is worthier (valuable) than focusing on the skills. From the above response, it is possible to understand that the imbalanced or biased test preparation or in other words lack of content validity greatly influences (negatively affects) the students' attitude towards learning and studying to the contents of a subject or a course. If the teacher becomes partial to some portions (sections) of his favour, and ignores the other portion (section), the students too, ignore and become partial to some portions which frequently appear in the exam and neglect the other parts regardless of their usefulness.

Summary and Conclusions are as follows:

The writers of this study took two-semester English examination papers to assess the test constructed by the teachers do they possess or lack content validity. In order to check the existence of content validity in terms of content, the writer cross checked the content area coverage of the test items (reading, vocabulary, grammar, speaking, listening and writing) from the course module against with the amount of questions constructed from each category in the tests. The content validity of tests was mainly analyzed by comparing the amount of questions under the expected and observed columns by using the chi-square method analysis. Both the amount of expected and observed amount of questions was computed by using the coverage size of each item in the text book. Hence, the amount of expected number of questions judged by the amount of the total periods allocated to each language items (sections) in the respective semesters in the course syllabus. For example if speaking skill consists 24% of the total periods allocated in the course syllabus, the amount of expected number of questions in the tests must be equal or nearly equal to the extent of the coverage of the item in the text book. Because, this idea emanated from the fact that to assure content validity of tests, the tests should proportionally represent all important language aspects (items) based on the extent of emphasis given in course syllabus. In addition, the writer also used teachers' and students' questionnaire and interview in order to have depth understanding concerning the awareness of teachers on the concept of content validity, their testing practice and the impact of teachers' testing practice upon the students' attitude towards studying and learning of the language items.

Finally, from the findings it is possible to conclude that the freshman communicative English language examinations (tests) of the two Universities have low content validity in order to measure students' achievement properly. It also confirmed that majority of teachers have low level understanding of content validity. Moreover, it also greatly and negatively influenced the students' attitude of learning and studying into only the limited language items particularly to grammar and vocabulary sections just by ignoring other language skills (except reading). Thus, it greatly degraded the language proficiency of the students into the ground. In other words, this inappropriate and biased testing practice of teachers resulted in the biased and inappropriate learning and studying habit of the students. That is the development of the habit of grammar oriented studying practice by the students.

Recommendations

It was recommended that to construct tests with good content validity:

Teachers need to follow principles of test construction such as using table of specification, and

They should be provided with supplementary training programs such as courses on evaluation and measurement and language testing and assessment to create the necessary awareness on the issue.

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