
Research

Domain-Referenced Tests for Secondary and Tertiary Levels of Education

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Objectives

The research had the following objectives :

- (1) To develop unitary and integrative-skills standardized domain-referenced test items from the determined domains of English use via the sound modality and the graphic modality.
- (2) To study, analyse and determine the factors of communicative competence in using English of Thai students in the lower secondary, upper secondary and tertiary levels of education.
- (3) To determine the common levels of English proficiency of Thai students.

Procedures

The following steps were used in the research :

- (1) Analysed the objectives, syllabuses and tests to set the domain-referenced test specifications.
- (2) Developed and analysed the test items by a domain-referenced model of item analysis, improved to meet the standards and administered to the sample groups: 1,222 secondary students obtained by the multi-stage stratified random sampling method and 493 university students obtained by the stratified random sampling method.
- (3) Parametric statistics were used to analyse the student levels of English proficiency which were set at 5 levels from very weak requiring extensive remedial work to good--very good exempted from remedial work.
- (4) Pearson-Product-Moment Correlations and Exploratory Principal Component Analysis with Varimax Rotation were used to study about the factors of communicative competence.

Findings

Research findings revealed that the students had better proficiency in the sound modality and language components than in the graphic modality. They were especially weak in writing and in integrated skills of reading combined with writing. The study about the traits of communicative competence indicated that grammar, vocabulary and phonology shared common variances with the sound and graphic modalities indicating that they could be subsumed under the language modalities. It was also discovered that the number and traits of language learning factors differed among the levels with the lower secondary level having more sound modality factors while the tertiary level had more graphic modality factors. SSQ analysis revealed that sound modality shared greater variances with domain-referenced proficiency at the ratio of 1.8:1, and that both modalities had common variance with domain-referenced proficiency by approximately 50%.