

Exploration on a New Foreign Language Evaluation System for Military Academies Based on China's Standards of English

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Abstract—China English proficiency scale is the first English proficiency assessment standard covering the whole learning period in China. Its ability classification reflects the corresponding relationship between the English proficiency of students in each learning period and the ability described in the descriptive language, which is targeted and instructive for College English teaching. This paper reviews the status quo and existing problems of this evaluation at home and abroad, and then sorts out the theoretical framework of rating scale, finally some suggestions to reform the existing foreign language examination system are put forward.

Keywords—Foreign language evaluation; China's Standards of English; Foreign Language Competence Assessment System

I. INTRODUCTION

A scientific and reasonable assessment system for English teaching is necessary for the realization of the national development strategy in the new era and for the reform of foreign language education and teaching. It is beneficial to improve the systematization of English teaching and examination in military colleges, and to improve the overall effect of English teaching. It is conducive to promoting formative assessment research, promoting graded teaching, individualized teaching and the cultivation of students' autonomous learning ability.

In March 2018, the ministry of education published the China English proficiency scale (hereinafter referred to as the scale). The scale focuses on language use, draws on international experience and based on large-scale empirical studies. It divides the English ability of Chinese English learners into three stages: foundation, development and proficiency. Each stage consists of three levels, and innovatively develops standards for pragmatic competence, translation competence and interpretation competence. The scale provides standards for language teaching and testing. How to apply the scale to language teaching and testing in military colleges and how to build a new English teaching assessment system based on the scale is the focus of this study.

II. A REVIEW OF THE RESEARCH STATUS AT HOME AND ABROAD

A. Research Status of Standard-based Foreign Language Evaluation in Foreign Countries

Since the 1990s, when discussing education policy, people have often referred to “standards-based reform”, which also includes standards-based evaluation (Black, P.1998)[1]. In the United States, the new round of educational reform launched in 2001 calls for “not letting one child lag behind”. This reform encourages standards-based education reform, hopes to set high standards and measurable goals to improve the quality of education, and then triggers a boom in standards-based foreign language assessment research (Greenstein 2010)[2]. Australia's education also includes various standards, concerning students' learning, teachers' teaching abilities and teachers' professional qualifications (Greenstein 2010)[2]. The New Zealand Qualification Authority divides the criteria-based evaluation into two parts in the established qualification framework: competency-based assessment and achievement-based assessment. The former sets some criteria that students must meet if they want to prove that they have a certain level of ability, and students can get corresponding credits after they reach the criteria. The latter includes a series of standards that require gradual improvement. The achievement levels of students are described in numbers or letters. Discussions about standard-based evaluations have never stopped, and there are pros and cons. The relevant literature mainly concerns 1) Policy issues. Standard-based evaluation plays an important role in English-speaking countries and has been incorporated into the overall educational reform plan of the country. 2) Technical issues. The confidence of the general public in the evaluation system is very important, so the evaluation system should inform the public about the quality of school education and the learning environment. 3) The purpose of evaluation. Which is more important in the formative evaluation and summative evaluation? Generally speaking, a formative and diagnostic evaluation is the main method in the classroom teaching, and summative evaluation is the best method in the proficiency test, but in the final analysis, it must be able to promote learning. 4) Backwash effect on Teaching. People are increasingly emphasizing the use of evaluation to promote learning, which requires teachers to change their role of

teaching. Teaching should be student-centered, teachers and students are learning partnerships. 5) The reversal effect on student learning. Most studies have shown that standards-based evaluations have a positive effect on student learning and performance. 6) Reliability and validity of the evaluation. The reliability and validity of the evaluation is a common concern. The evaluation should conform to various predetermined goals, and these goals should be consistently achieved, especially with good backwash validity.

B. The Status Quo of China's Standard-based Foreign Language Evaluation

At each stage of foreign language teaching in China, there are corresponding curriculum standards. From the aspects of curriculum design, teaching methods and methods, teaching content, classroom teaching, evaluation and testing, teaching management, teacher development, etc., a standard system for ensuring the quality of education has been established. It has played a very good role in regulating foreign language teaching in China. Although the syllabus at each stage proposes to cultivate students' comprehensive ability to use foreign languages, due to the lack of supporting and diversified evaluation methods, there are still problems of "heavy knowledge, light skills" and exam-oriented education (Bai Lin, 2018)[3]. Second, emphasize the summative evaluation and ignore the formative evaluation. Unlike summative assessment, formative assessment emphasizes that both teachers and students participate in the formulation of learning objectives, the examination of learning outcomes and the selection of development objectives. It can not only provide timely and effective teaching feedback for teachers, but also point out clear learning objectives and methods for students. It can greatly promote the quality of foreign language teaching and the ability of students to learn independently. China still lacks a unified evaluation standard for foreign language classroom teaching (Deng Jie, 2017)[4].

III. THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE SCALE

A. Descriptors for each sub-item in China's Standards of English (CSE)

The scale (CSE) first holistically describes language competence. Then, according to the actual situation of language learners and users' competence level and the degree of social needs, it describes each competence in detail and respectively, including listening, speaking, reading, writing, translation, and language behavior. It is helpful to clarify the specific descriptions of these scales for our English learning. For the learner, it can help to formulate the learning objectives of the stage; for the teaching, it helps the teacher to divide the whole teaching into small stages with clear goals, and organize the teaching more effectively through the teaching methods suitable for each stage, and teach students according to their aptitude; It can provide a scientific, systematic and clear evaluation index system for English test development, which helps teachers to design evaluation methods and tools for learning outcomes, improve the quality of English proficiency test and evaluation, and better grasp and understand students' actual English proficiency.

B. Formative evaluation study

In the aspect of promoting examination reform, the scale provides guidance and basis for English examination in China in terms of examination conception, examination content, form and method, and helps and guides the organizers to formulate scientific and reasonable examination objectives and competence requirements. Our military academies have their special mission in personnel training. One of the research contents is how to construct the evaluation form and content, which is guided by the needs of professional development and foreign military exchanges and aims at improving the comprehensive application ability of military talents.

Formative evaluation sets up a bridge between teaching and learning. The relationship between evaluation and teaching can be summarized as three aspects: assessment of learning, assessment for learning and assessment as learning. Modern teaching requires the evaluation of learning to be the main focus, and teachers pay more attention to the students' daily learning and progress. How to construct a formative evaluation method suitable for the reform of English teaching in military academies can form a reciprocating circle between determining student' level, determining students' learning goals and determining what students need to do to achieve their goals. It is one of the research contents to effectively promote students' autonomous learning, to improve their ability by examinations, to promote the implementation of graded teaching and teaching according to their aptitude.

IV. EXPLORING THE EVALUATION SYSTEM SUITABLE FOR ENGLISH TEACHING IN OUR ACADEMY

A. Effectively Implementing Foreign Language Education and Teaching Reform

"China's Standards of English" fully reflects the requirements of English teaching in China, fully embodies the integrity of English learning, teaching and evaluation in China, and provides a set of foreign language proficiency standards suitable for the development of military academies for English syllabus and English teaching in military academies. In order to improve the effectiveness of English education, we will adopt graded teaching and teach students in accordance with appropriate teaching methods.

B. Effectively Promoting Formative Assessment Research

"China's Standards of English" advocates English teaching within the framework of formative assessment. Formative evaluation builds a bridge between teaching and learning. Formative evaluation is not just an evaluation. It is a teaching concept. It is not simply adding a few tests, it is a change of concept, and finally forms a formative evaluation concept under the guidance of the "student-centered" teaching philosophy.

C. Reform and improve the existing foreign language examination system in our university

"China's Standards of English" provides a multi-level description of foreign language ability, which serves as a reference standard to actively promote the reform of the

content and form of the existing foreign language test in our academy, and promote the further development of foreign language teaching and testing in a scientific and efficient direction. Specifically, it includes: making full use of the results of “CSE” research, providing guidance and help for the construction, content and methods of the foreign language examination in our academy; guide test organizers to develop scientific and reasonable test objectives and competency requirements; promote the comprehensive application ability of foreign language examination in our school to be more reasonable and comprehensive, and further promoting the comprehensive and coordinated development of foreign language teaching based on students’ listening, speaking, reading and writing abilities; formulate military English test that focuses on actual combat and meets the needs of combat training; promote the construction of foreign language question bank in our university, and guarantee the implementation of the mid-term, final and military English grade simulation examination.

V. CONCLUSION

The scale of language ability will play an important role in language teaching, learning and evaluation. Chinese English proficiency scale provides a unified standard for English teaching, learning and evaluation in China, and lays a foundation for the development of Chinese language evaluation. The newly revised syllabus and guidelines for language teaching at all levels in China contain the contents of formative assessment. It advocates the comprehensive evaluation system combining the summative evaluation and formative evaluation.

In the formative evaluation, it is suggested that the examination mechanism of “grade examination + school-based

evaluation” be implemented. From the examination point of view, the current CET-4 and CET-6, even if it covers the content of the syllabus, only reflects the students' knowledge and skills of general English and their level of use. To fully understand a military cadet's language competence, it is necessary to evaluate his military English application ability, including communication ability, thinking ability, creativity, independent work, or teamwork ability, which is beyond the written part of the test. Therefore, if we can combine the grade examination with the teacher's assessment of students, we can learn from each other and accurately appraise the students' comprehensive ability.

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