

STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS AND TEST SOLVING BEHAVIOR ON ONLINE FOREIGN LANGUAGE VOCABULARY TESTS

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Computer-based methods can result in a renewal of the assessment of students' word knowledge. The aims of this research were to develop online diagnostic tests for the assessment of English and German as foreign languages vocabulary, and to analyze (1) the effect of test structures, and (2) the effect of test solving behavior on student achievements. As for the method of vocabulary assessment, picture association was applied. This is a widely known and used method of learning words (*De Groot and Van Hell, 2005*). It can be used in the assessment of the vocabulary as well (*Dunn and Dunn, 1997*), but this is not wide-spread at all. It seems to be ideal in the assessment of the recognition of the words (*Laufer et al., 2004*). Two online diagnostic test triplets were developed for the assessment of English and German vocabulary of students. Both triplets covered the same basic vocabulary outlined in the national curriculum. Each test consisted of 18 tasks, and all tasks consisted of a picture and four words or phrases. Students had to decide whether each word or phrase was suited to the picture or not. Tasks were administered using the eDia online assessment platform. Before the tasks, an introductory screen showed the instructions and some task examples. The sample comprised altogether 220 6th graders, who were in the second or third year of their language studies. On the basis of the stored item responses and logging data of the testing process, we analyzed the results and the task-solving times on the tests. The results showed that the tests were of good reliability. In the analysis of the test structures, the achievements on the English tests proved to be higher than those on the parallel German tests (71–73% and 58–60%, respectively, $p < 0.001$). The differences between the three tests of the same triplet were not significant either in the case of English, or in the case of German. This means that similar contents in different languages resulted in different test difficulties, but similar test structures in the same language resulted in equivalent tests. Concerning the test solving behavior, average test-taking times were 6.5 minutes for the English, 7.9 minutes for the German tests. Correlations between test-taking times and times spent studying the instruction screen were significant for both languages (English: $r = 0.846$, German: $r = 0.875$, $p < 0.001$). But correlations between test-taking times, instruction studying times and test results were significant only for the German tests ($r = 0.219$, $r = 0.280$, respectively, $p < 0.01$). That is, students who spent more time studying the examples achieved better than those who tended to avoid reading the examples. Tests developed for the assessment of foreign language vocabulary proved to be effective tools. The online testing can be regarded as a new and motivating assessment method in this field.

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