The Challenges for ESP Learners: Alternative Assessment of Performance and Usefulness of Class Activities

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The most important knowledge teachers need to do good work is knowledge how students are experiencing learning and perceiving their teachers' actions.

Steven Brookfield

Abstract. Alternative assessment has been widely used in education at tertiary level. The key features of alternative assessment are active participation of learners in evaluation of their own performance and the development of reflective thinking. Success of alternative assessment depends on performance that demonstrates what learners can do with language in communicative classrooms. Active participation of learners in evaluating themselves and one another is part of alternative assessment which is normally presented in the form of reflections on one's performance. A recent Google search produced 89.100.000 hits for "alternative assessment (January 2006). It demonstrates the importance and relevance of this issue in teaching and learning a foreign language.

The research aimed at investigating the challenges of alternative assessment in linguistic development of learners in English for Specific Purposes. The study employed a students' questionnaire on utility of various activities, and learners' in-course and post-course written reflections on performance and linguistic development. Portfolios were used for alternative assessment of students' work throughout the academic year. The portfolio items included written materials such as summaries, tests, definitions of vocabulary items, essays, Power Point Presentations, etc. Impact of various activities on learning has been analyzed. Signed and anonymous responses that have been obtained from three streams of respondents are being compared. The findings have been processed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences software (SPSS).

The results have demonstrated that alternative assessment is a helpful means for learner linguistic development. Learners' likes or dislikes to various creative or routine activities are affected by success or failure in their performance. Students' reflections on usefulness of various tasks and quality of their performance in different activities help teachers develop ways of dealing with difficulties and promote linguistic development.

Key words: alternative assessment of performance, usefulness of class activities, learner reflections, portfolio.

Introduction

Lately alternative assessment has become important part of learning and teaching foreign languages. Methods of alternative assessment are based on learners' evaluation of their own learning and allow students to reflect on their linguistic development. The importance and relevance of alternative assessment is demonstrated by a multitude of publications in this area. Portfolio assessment as one of the ways of alternative assessment has become widely used in educational settings. The key features of portfolio are: an alternative to traditional testing, ways to self-assess one's knowledge and skills, active participation of learners in the evaluation and development of reflective thinking.

Learners' perception of usefulness of various class activities has not been sufficiently explored so far. There seems to be a discrepancy between teachers' and learners' views on usefulness – often currently unpopular activities among teachers perceived by learners as beneficial to learning.

The aim of the research: to investigate learners' perceptions of the usefulness of various class activities, to introduce alternative assessment of performance, and compare learners' reflections on their learning.

The methods used: a questionnaire on usefulness of class activities, statistical treatment of students' responses, and learners' written reflections on learning. Class activities included computer tasks, Power Point Presentations, summary writing, etc. Traditional testing of learner performance in class creative assignments, discussions, activities was replaced by alternative assessment. Student self-evaluation of performance has been submitted either in anonymous or signed form.

Literature review

Alternative assessment has been widely used in evaluating the effectiveness of education at tertiary level. The key features of alternative assessment are active participation of learners in evaluation of their own performance and the development of reflective thinking. Success of alternative assessment depends on performance tasks that demonstrate what learners can do with language in communicative classrooms. Evaluating oneself is important part of alternative assessment which is normally presented in the form of reflections on one's performance. Alternative assessment is

often understood as the utilization of non-traditional approaches in judging students' performance in various tasks such as essays, oral presentations, demonstrations, portfolios, etc.

Differences between the traditional and alternative assessment are highlighted in (Brown 2004: p13) and cited below:

"Traditional Assessment	Alternative Assessment
One-shot, standardized exams	Continuous long-term assessment
Timed, multiple-choice format	Untimed, free-response format
Decontextualized test item	Contextualized communicative tasks
Scores suffice for feedback	Individualized feedback and washback
Norm-referenced scores	Criterion-referenced scores
Focus on the "right" answer	Open-ended, creative answers
Summative	Formative
Oriented to product	Oriented to process
Non-interactive performance	Interactive performance
Fosters extrinsic motivation	Fosters intrinsic motivation".

It should be noted, however, that many forms of assessment fall in between the two, and some combine the best of both.

A Google search produced 89.100.000 hits for "alternative assessment" (January 2006). Portfolios have been used since the late 1980s as a means of alternative assessment for evaluating the effectiveness of learning. A Google search produced 26.500.000 hits for "portfolio assessment" (January 2006). It demonstrates the importance and relevance of these issues in teaching and learning a foreign language.

The portfolio, as an element of authentic assessment, has captured the interest of many instructors who want a more comprehensive way to assess their students' knowledge and skills, to have students actively participate in the evaluation process, and to simultaneously develop students' skills of reflective thinking. The key features of portfolio are: an alternative to traditional testing, comprehensive ways to assess students' knowledge and skills, authenticity of assessment, students' active participation in the evaluation process, simultaneous development of students' reflective thinking (Banta, online). A range of definitions of the portfolio has been developed, illustrating the growth and diversity of its use. For some teachers, the portfolio is part of an alternative assessment program, and it can either include a record of students' achievements or simply document their best work. For other teachers, the portfolio documents the students' learning process, and can be used as a means of promoting learner reflection. The definition of the portfolio can shift from product to process according to the context and design of its development (Nunes 2004: p327).

The European Language Portfolio was developed and piloted by the Modern Languages Division of the Council of Europe and was launched during the European Year of Languages 2001 as "a tool to support the development of plurilingualism and pluriculturalism". It is a document in which learners can record their language learning and cultural experiences (http://culture2.coe.int/portfolio). Portfolios can consist of a wide variety of materials, e.g. teacher notes, students' self-reflections, written summaries, reading logs, audiotapes of student talks, etc. Portfolios provide teachers with a wealth of information upon which to base instructional decisions and to evaluate student progress as well as promote students self-assessment and self-understanding (http://www.eduplace.com/rdg/res/literacy/assess6.html).

Portfolios display a variety of students' work produced under diverse conditions and collected during a specified period of time. Through reflections, students can develop metacognitive awareness of texts and situations and use strategies to deal with various tasks, and they may judge their own work and compare performance in different tasks (Johns 1993: p16).

Generally speaking, portfolios become an effective way to get students to take a second look and think about how they could improve future work. Portfolios involve students in developing and understanding criteria for good efforts and in applying the criteria to their own work (McCabe 2004: online). The key drawback of portfolios is that they place additional demands on teachers and students. Teachers need additional time for planning, developing strategies and materials, meeting with individual students and small groups, and reviewing and commenting on student work. Portfolios have been characterized by some teachers as a worthwhile burden with tangible results in instruction and student motivation.

Pros and cons of portfolios assessment are described by Epstein (online). The key pros are:

"allow the teacher to see the student as an individual, each with his or her own unique set of characteristics, needs, and strengths; transform the role of the teacher away from generating comparative rankings of achievement and toward improving student achievement through evaluative feedback and self-reflection; help teachers standardize and evaluate the skills and knowledge students acquire without limiting creativity in the classroom; help students be more accountable for the work they do in class and the skills and knowledge they acquire; involve students in the assessment process, thus giving them a more meaningful role in improving achievement; invite students to reflect upon their growth and performance as learners".

The key cons are:

"may be less reliable or fair than more quantitative or standardized evaluations such as test scores; can be time consuming for teachers and staff, especially if portfolios are done in addition to traditional testing and grading; teachers must develop their own individualized criteria, which can be initially difficult or unfamiliar; data from portfolio assessments can be difficult to analyze or aggregate, particularly over long periods of time".

Researchers nearly unanimously emphasize that one of the main benefits of portfolio assessment is the promotion of learner reflection. Without reflection, the portfolio remains a folder of the papers (Coombe & Barlow 2004: p18). The most common areas of student reflections: syllabus (7%), instruction (36%), learning (43%), and assessment (14%) (Nunes 2004: p331). The students' experiences using the portfolio framework were investigated by examining

learners' written reflections (Beckett & Slater 2005: p109). The data source for the study included various things such as learners' weekly portfolios of their research projects, end-of-term reflections, and interviews. It was found that fewer than one fifth of the 73 participants enjoyed project work; one quarter had mixed feelings, and 57% perceived it negatively. The high drop-out rate existed because some students found the course too difficult or believed ESL classes should be limited to the study of language and resented being asked to accomplish non-linguistic tasks. Learners did not see the value in the tasks.

It has been claimed that the challenges of assessment portfolios to language learners include lower comparability and reliability and difficulty ensuring standardized testing conditions. They also pose a scoring problem because criteria requires staff training and is more time consuming than scoring a single norm-referenced test (http://www.ericdigests. org/2001-3/large.htm).

Usefulness of various activities in English classes poses debates among interested parties. According to Nunan (1988), there is

> "the considerable extent of the mismatch between teacher and learner perceptions of the usefulness of different activities. Learners rated grammar exercises, pronunciation, and error correction more highly that their teachers did, who were more likely to feel comfortable with pair/ group work and communication tasks".

Interestingly, a study (Spratt 1999) was conducted to compare learners' preferred activities with teachers' perceptions of what those preferences were, and only a roughly 50% correlation was found. According to another researcher, "listening to tapes and course book dialogues was particularly disliked" (McDonough 2002: p407). Moreover,

> "the data show that many activities that are currently unpopular in the broadly communicative ethos of ELT – grammar exercises, reading aloud, translation, and so on – are in fact perceived by learners to be conductive to learning" (McDonough 2002: p409).

Respondents and research methods

The respondents were three streams of students who study English for Specific Purposes at the Faculty of Social Policy, Mykolas Romeris University. There were 96 participants altogether. The subjects were predominantly females and at intermediate level. The first sample refers to the year 2005 (34 students), the second one – to 2004 (26 students), and the third one – to 2006 (36 students). The size of respondent classes in each stream varied from 10 to 15 students in a class. Students were aged between 18 and 23 years old. The amount of time spent in L2 environment was 4 hours a week for 3 semesters, which amounted to 192 hours of instruction.

Research employed a questionnaire on students' assessment of usefulness of various activities in ESP classes (Appendix) and written learners' reflections on their performance in various activities. Some excerpts from students' reflections are reproduced in this paper. The main content areas of a designed and previously piloted questionnaire cover the key activities in ESP classes and contain 6 items. The questionnaire was piloted at various stages of its development on a sample of learners who were similar to the target sample, i.e. students of the same faculty. Based on the

feedback received from the pilot group we put together a final version of the questionnaire which is presented in the Appendix. The questionnaire was administered to three streams of respondents (9 groups of students altogether). Two streams submitted anonymous replies and one – signed ones. It was of interest to find out if anonymity had any influence on a level of significance that was computed for each activity. After the administration of the questionnaire, item analysis was conducted. There were no left out questions and this simplified the analysis. According to Z. Dornyei (2003: p68), no left out responses can serve as an indication that there was nothing wrong with the design of the questionnaire. The length of time to complete a questionnaire did not exceed 15 minutes. Questionnaire return rate was good – all sheets were returned.

Results and discussion

Learners' responses to a questionnaire on utility of various activities used in the ESP classroom throughout the academic year are summarized in Table 1. All columns display percentage of learners versus their expressed attitude to usefulness of each activity item in the survey. In this table, for the sake of clarity, positive responses "strongly agree" and "agree" were added up, and negative responses "strongly disagree" and "disagree" were added up, too. This procedure does not distort the data. On the contrary, it allows to show the data in a compact way. The first numbers in columns refer to the stream in 2005 (34 learners, signed responses), and the second numbers – to the stream in 2004 (26 learners, anonymous replies). A full questionnaire is presented in Appendix. For each question students were expected to rate the statements according to the scale by circling or writing the appropriate number: 1 – strongly disagree, 2 – disagree, 3 – not sure, 4 – agree, 5 – strongly agree. In the text, for the sake of brevity only numbers are written in brackets.

1st Question. Writing definitions of ESP vocabulary terms is beneficial for my linguistic development. (Answers: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5).

The first row of Table 1 demonstrates respondents' perceptions of whether learning definitions of ESP vocabulary benefits linguistic development. 70% of first stream students feel that vocabulary definitions are useful to learning. This result is close to obtained for the second stream (73%). There were very few negative responses (6% and 8%, respectively). About quarter of respondents are not sure about usefulness of this learning area (24% and 19%, respectively).

Table 1. Learners' perception of usefulness of various activities.

Type of activity	Agree	Not sure	Disagree
Vocabulary definitions	70%vs73%	24%vs 19%	6%vs8%
Summary writing	56%vs23%	29%vs46%	15%vs31%
Creative tasks	62%vs61%	26%vs8%	12%vs31%
Discussions	88%vs73%	12%vs19%	0vs8%
Power Point Presentations	47%vs38%	26%vs35%	27%vs27%
Vocabulary tests	79%vs77%	21%vs15%	0vs8%

2nd Question. Writing summaries of professional texts is useful for improving writing skills. (Answers:1, 2, 3, 4, 5).

The second row in Table 1 shows students' views on writing summaries of professional texts. There is no agreement between the first and the second stream. In the second stream, only 23% of students support this activity, while in the first stream 56% found it beneficial. Almost twice as many learners in the second stream (31%) rejected activity of summarizing as useful in comparison with 15% of the first investigated sample. The number of dubious students in the second stream is also noticeably higher.

3rd Question. Preparing creative tasks is useful for improving language skills. (Answers: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5).

Positive attitudes to creative ESP tasks do not differ significantly in both samples – 62% and 61%, respectively (the third row of Table 1). Negative attitudes differ substantially – 12% against 31%. Almost quarter of respondents (26%) are not sure about the benefits of creative tasks (in the second stream only 8%).

4th Question. Classroom discussions on various topics are useful for linguistic development. (Answers: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5).

Discussions are the most popular activities (the fourth row of Table 1). 88% of respondents against 73% support discussions, and only 12% (19% in the second stream) are not sure. There are a few respondents (8%) who disagree.

5th Question. Preparing Power Point Presentations and delivering them in front of the audience is beneficial for developing speaking skills. (Answers: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5).

Power Point Presentations seem to be the most difficult tasks for majority of students (the fifth row in Table 1). Slightly fewer than half of respondents (47%) feel presentations are useful (against 38%). About quarter are either unsure or do not support the idea of making presentations. The reason will be evident from students' reflections on various activities that are described below.

6th Question. Formal testing of ESP vocabulary is beneficial to learning. (Answers: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5).

Surprisingly, the majority of learners are positive about formal testing – 79% in the first stream and 77% in the second stream support it. About the fifth of respondents are not sure (21% and 15%, respectively). In the second stream, 8% disagree, but there are no opponents in the first sample. Respondents claim that formal testing mobilizes and stimulates learning and consolidation, while experienced teachers consider testing as an evil burden.

Statistical processing of the data

The obtained results have been processed statistically in order to determine how comparable the data are. Internal consistency reliability was met by satisfying two conditions: multi-item scales were used, and items measured the same target area (Dornyei 2003: p111). Internal consistency reliability was evaluated by computing Cronbach Alpha coefficient. Usually Cronbach Alpha coefficient is ranged between zero and +1. For well-developed scales containing a few items it ought to approach 0.80 (Dornyei 2003: p115). In our study, it was 0.85, which ensures internal consistency reliability.

Experimental data are analyzed using inferential statistics in order to be able to make inferences on research data. The findings were processed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Here is a short description of computation procedure.

The Means and Standard Deviations for three streams of participants have been computed, and the *t*-test in data analysis has been applied. The *t*-test is the most frequently used measure in the L2 research when comparing mean scores and standard deviations for two groups. The adjustment for group size was made by using the critical values for the *t*-test statistic (Table 7.5, Brown & Rodgers 2002: p207). Degrees of freedom *df* are determined by subtracting one from the number of participants in each group and then adding the two resulting numbers together. The data of statistical treatment of the obtained results are presented in Tables 2 and 3 below.

Table 2. Mean values and Standard Deviations (SD) for three streams: 1st stream (34 participants, 2005), 2nd stream (26 participants, 2004), and 3rd stream (36 participants, 2006). Degree of freedom for the 1st and 2nd streams is $df = 58$. Degree of freedom for the 1st and 3rd streams is $df = 60$.

Type of activity	Means and SDs (1st stream)	Means and SDs (2nd stream)	Means and SDs (3rd stream)
Vocabulary definitions	4.10 0.75	3.50 0.95	4.14 0.60
Summary writing	3.60 1.00	2.90 1.05	3.89 0.88
Creative tasks	4.15 1.11	3.50 1.33	3.72 0.84
Discussions	4.23 0.65	3.67 0.91	3.61 0.82
Power Point Presentations	3.26 0.96	2.96 1.09	4.11 0.69
Vocabulary tests	4.23 0.68	3.70 0.85	4.08 0.59

Table 3. Calculated *t*-coefficients versus critical values of *t*-coefficients (tabled) and two-tailed significance levels for each pair of streams of learners.

Type of activity	Calculated *t*-coefficient 1st vs 2nd stream	Tabled *t*-coefficient (Brown & Rodgers, 2002)	Two-tailed significance level	Calculated *t*-coefficient 1st vs 3rd stream	Tabled *t*-coefficient (Brown & Rodgers, 2002)	Two-tailed significance level
Vocabulary definitions	2.61	2.390	$p < 0.02$	0.14	1.671	$p < 0.10$
Summary writing	2.33	2.000	$p < 0.05$	1.283	1.671	$p < 0.10$
Creative tasks	2.03	2.000	$p < 0.05$	1.82	1.671	$p < 0.10$
Discussions	2.67	2.660	$p < 0.01$	3.52	2.660	$p < 0.01$
Power Point Presentations	1.13	1.67	$p < 0.10$	4.19	2.660	$p < 0.01$
Vocabulary tests	2.61	2.390	$p < 0.02$	1.0	1.671	$p < 0.10$

Mean values and Standard Deviations for three streams of learners are shown in Table 2. The statistical comparison was carried out between the 1st and 2nd and the 1st and 3rd streams. The findings are shown in Table 3. The 2nd, 3rd, and 4th rows show the results for the 1st and 2nd streams. Similarly, 5th, 6th and 7th rows show the results for the 1st versus 3rd streams. The second and fourth rows show calculated t-coefficients, and the third and fifth rows – the critical values for the given degree of freedom, and the fourth and sixth rows – two-tailed significance levels for each activity.

The research into differences between streams aimed to find out, firstly, which activities are favored by learners, and, secondly, whether signed replies (1st stream) and anonymous replies (2nd and 3rd streams) are statistically significant.

Comparing the data for the 1st and 2nd streams, it can be seen that students in the first stream (signed replied) demonstrated more favorable views on usefulness of classroom activities such as vocabulary definitions, summary writing, creative tasks, discussions, and even on vocabulary tests than the second stream (anonymous replies). However, the two-tailed significance levels are different for various activities. Discussions are the most favorable ($p < 0.01$), and summary writing and creative tasks are less favorable ($p < 0.05$). However, Power Point Presentations are the least favorable with $p < 0.10$. Comparing the data for the 1st and 3rd streams, the most popular are Power Point Presentations ($p < 0.01$) and discussions ($p < 0.01$). The significance level for other activities is rather high ($p < 0.10$), which indicates that there is no significant difference between the responses there.

Alternative assessment: learners' reflections on activities

As it has already been mentioned, the reflection on one's performance during academic year makes important contribution into alternative assessment. Post-course reflections are unbiased due to being irrelevant to evaluation of one's performance (mark) and can have a positive context in the lifelong learning. Here are some excerpts from learners' reflection pages. The language has not been corrected for the

sake of authenticity, and the real names of students have been changed in order to preserve anonymity.

Inga P. "Summarizing helped me to improve accuracy in expressing ideas, use appropriate professional vocabulary, and think about style and sentence structures".

Donata S. "Learning vocabulary has been very useful. I enjoy memorizing new words and using them. However it was sometimes difficult to find out the meanings of professional terms".

Edvinas S. "Creative tasks for me are unclear and sometimes strange. Even if I can find some information, it is hard to say what the key meaning is. Moreover, I want to say something interesting, but fail to do it".

Roberta G. "Portfolios are very good ways of learning a language and being able to choose what to contribute gives me a feeling of satisfaction with my learning. Computer tasks and tests helped me to consolidate what I was learning".

Aiste D. "Finding definitions for portfolios was very useful. I also made definitions myself when I couldn't find the suitable ones. Sometimes it was a bit hard, but also fun at the same time. Moreover, I like computer activities because we can produce something unusual, different from what we've done before and make our day special. Power Point Presentations help to present information in an interesting way and attract attention of other students, so I enjoy making PPPs and I have improved my skills of presenting, which will be of great benefit in my professional life".

Alina K. "Portfolios were very useful to me. I have improved my writing & reading skills, built up vocabulary; writing definitions and vocabulary tests helped me to remember new terminology. I learned to use different dictionaries, on paper and online. Computer tasks were the most interesting, entertaining and exciting. They helped me to improve my speaking & listening skills".

Juozas A. "The most boring and complicated was summary writing. I am not satisfied with my tests' results either, and I can only blame myself for this. I enjoyed learning something new – how to make a PowerPoint Presentation (PPP), search for information online effectively".

Giedre S. "Discussions are one of the most important and interesting tasks in English classes. It is the only way I can improve my speaking skills, express my own opinion & ideas

about the object of discussion, and find a solution. Creation of presentations has a lot of advantages. I can use visual aids to say what I want, and it is very exciting".

Rasa Z. "All activities in our English classes were good and very useful. I have improved my speaking, listening and writing skills. I am very pleased with my performance. Now I know how I learn best".

Rasa S. "I do not like making PPPs because it is not interesting. For me, it is a very difficult task. And I am afraid to talk in front of the audience. I did not like writing summaries, it was a new task, and I have never done it before. I improve my grammar and writing skills as a result of this training".

Fausta T. "Making PPPs was very beneficial to me. I learned not to have a fear of talking in front of the audience. I've just got rid of this feeling. I disliked writing all the summaries because I never knew what the main idea was. It is worth saying that there are lots of good points in writing summaries, e.g. improves one's vocabulary. My translation is getting better and better, I use more new words and interesting expressions, so my English doesn't sound poor. We also learned to work in a team or in pairs. Maybe we do not appreciate the importance of working together at the moment, but I believe it will be of great value in the future".

Jurgita Z. "PPP is a very pleasant task for those who are not delivering it. Preparation of PPP takes a lot of time. I have learned how to make a good presentation. It will be useful in the future. Learning definitions of vocabulary was the easiest task for me. I found them in the internet or dictionaries, and learning was enjoyable".

Milda G. "I am happy about English course because it was not boring. Different creative tasks helped to avoid routine and made our classes exciting. PPPs were the greatest tasks. It takes a lot of time to prepare, but it is a very nice feeling to see the outcome and get an excellent mark. Portfolio was a new thing for me. It was useful – I have improved my vocabulary by preparing various tasks. I think selecting items for portfolios was a demanding task, which sometimes took a lot of time, and I had to follow the criteria in order to do it properly".

Loreta B. "Computer tasks have been interesting. I like impromptu PPPs because they are creative, and it makes you concentrate and choose the right words. Testing gave the biggest benefit: I have expanded my knowledge of ESP vocabulary, and I will be able to use it in my job".

Summing up the contents of students' excerpts allows to get some insights into quality of language learning. Students' written reflections on utility of various assignments for learning purposes make teachers aware of learners' encountered difficulties, preferences, achievements or failures. Such awareness is a stimulus to a language practitioner to re-assess teaching methods and techniques and cater to the needs of an individual learner. Individualized approach allows teachers to gain learners' trust and foster their linguistic development by giving encouragement and praise. Reflections on learning outcomes lead to learners' perception of success which enables students to gain self-confidence, enhance self-esteem, and increase motivation.

Conclusions

Learners' reflections on the usefulness of various activities in English classes offer significant insights into learning outcomes. Anonymity of responses does not play a significant role: for one stream anonymous replies on usefulness are less favorable, and for another stream – more favorable than for signed responses.

Given the disparity of usefulness scores, it is apparent that only statistical processing provides further clarification. The computation of t-coefficients and significance levels allows to elucidate the uncertainty in usefulness scores that are displayed visually in Table 3. Usefulness is unquestionable for activities with $p < 0.01$, but it is questionable for activities with $p < 0.10$.

Students' reflections on language learning process and outcomes might be a valuable tool in language classes seeking to increase learners' motivation, enhance self-esteem, improve self-confidence and encourage to master language skills.

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Iššūkiai besimokantiems anglų kalbos specialiesiems tikslams: alternatyvusis mokymosi vertinimas bei veiklos rūšių auditorijoje nauda

Santrauka

Alternatyvusis užsienio kalbos mokymosi vertinimas aukštojoje mokykloje pastaraisiais metais įgauna vis didesnę reikšmę. Jo taikymas siejamas su komunikacinių ir bendradarbiavimo metodų taikymu, su besimokančiojo aktyvumu klasėje ir su refleksijos elemento įvedimu į mokymo procesą. Aktyvus dalyvavimas mokymosi procese leidžia daryti prielaidą, jog besimokantysis nuolat vertina save, lygindamas save su kitais mokymosi proceso dalyviais, taip pat vertina kitus, mąstydamas apie tai, ką jis/ ji pasiekė per tam tikrą mokymosi laiką.
Alternatyviojo vertinimo plėtotė pasiekė savo apogėjų su studento aplanko (portfolio) metodo įvedimu į kalbos studijas prieš 20 metų. Aplanko metodas daugeliui dėstytojų yra vertinimo programos dalis bei alternatyviojo vertinimo galimybė, atspindinti studento pasiekimus per ilgesnį laiką, taip pat mąstymo ugdymo galimybė, įgalinanti studentą aktyviai modeliuoti savo mokymosi procesą. Šiuo metu Google'o portalas pateikia net 11300000 nuorodų į alternatyvųjį vertinimą.
Alternatyvusis vertinimas atskleidžia kalbos mokymo stipriąsias ir silpnąsias puses iš visai netikėtų pusių. Studentai, analizuodami mokymo procesą savo kalbos aplanke, nurodo, jog kai kurios veiklos rūšys jiems nėra motyvuotos ir dėl to nepriimtinos. Buvo pastebėta, jog dažnai nesutampa studentų ir dėstytojų kalbinių veiklos rūšių vertinimas.
Straipsnio autorės pritaikė studento aplanko metodą ir alternatyvųjį vertinimą tam, kad patikrintų veiklos rūšių efektyvumą mokant(-is) anglų kalbos specialiesiems tikslams. Tyrimo objektu buvo pasirinktos šešios veiklos rūšys, sudarančios kalbos mokymo esmę. Trys Mykolo Romerio universiteto studentų srautai (9 grupės) apžvelgė savo pasiekimus ir juos įvertino semestro pabaigoje kalbos aplankuose. Gauti anketos atsakymai buvo apdoroti naudojant SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) programinį paketą. Nustatyta, jog nukrypimai tarp trijų vertintojų srautų buvo statistiškai reikšmingi. Lyginant pirmo ir antro srauto duomenis gauta, jog pirmojo srauto nuomonė apie veiklos rūšis buvo apskritai aukštesnė nei antrojo. Studentų nuomonės, pateikiamos citatomis iš jų aplankų, patvirtina skaičiavimais grįstus rezultatus. Veiklos rūšys, kurių koeficientas pateiktose lentelėse yra $p < 0,01$, yra neabejotinai naudingiausios, o ta veikla, kurios koeficientas $p < 0,10$, reikalauja platesnės analizės ir nuostatų peržiūrėjimo jų naudingumo atžvilgiu.

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APPENDIX

Questionnaire: Students' Perception of the Usefulness of Class Activities.

Rate the following statements according to the scale by writing the appropriate number:
1 – strongly disagree, 2 – disagree, 3 – not sure, 4 – agree, 5 – strongly agree.

1) Writing definitions of professional vocabulary terms is beneficial for linguistic development.

2) Writing summaries of professional texts is useful for improving writing skills.

3) Preparing creative tasks is useful for improving language skills.

4) Classroom discussions on various topics are useful for linguistic development.

5) Preparing PowerPoint Presentations and delivering them in front of the audience is beneficial for developing speaking skills.

6) Formal testing of ESP vocabulary is beneficial to learning.