

Predictive Validity of the Intensive Course to Language Skills

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Abstract: *Through the coefficient of correlation, we can measure the degree or extent of the correlation between two variables. On the basis of the coefficient of correlation we can also determine whether the correlation is positive or negative and also its degree or extent. In order to prove the existence of correlation between IC to language skill courses, the correlation coefficient was examined by the Pearson product at the significant level of .05. the computation of the predictive validity of IC to the listening course is 0,8837459 (high and positive) ; the computation of the predictive validity of IC to speaking is 0,73469 (moderate and significant). The computation of the predictive validity of IC to reading is 0,60041(moderate and significant); the computation of the predictive validity of IC to writing is 0,70172(moderate, significant). The coefficient of the IC to listening is high; the others are moderate.*

Key words: *predictive validity, IC course, language skills*

Introduction

Background of the Study

The Intensive Course in the department of English language teaching is interesting. It assumes 24 credits and is given at the first semester. It involves regular classes and practicum classes. In the regular classes the lecturer interact normally with the students whereas in the practicum classes the students do written exercises in the workbook under supervision of the lecturer. The practicum classes work with the compact disk available in the multi-media laboratory.

The purpose of the IC classes is in general to prepare the students to take the second semester classes. That is why there a few items such as grammar, reading, listening, and listening. It may be referred to as a leveling process especially those students low competence. By the end of the course, the students are expected to be more or less equal in competence and ready to take the second semester students. For this purpose they are doing with the exercises in the “Up Beat” that is graded into preliminary, pre-intermediate, and intermediate, published by Pearson-Longman. The instructional materials in the book are the reference for a series of test: midterm test, review test, end-of-book test, and final test. The question is whether the IC classes and tests really prepare the students for the second semester courses, or whether the IC classes may predict the final test of the second semester in language skills.

Statement of the Problem

The problem may be formulated in the following way: to what extent is the predictive validity of the IC scores at the first semester in 2011 upon the scores of the language skills at the second semester in 2012? This statement is elaborated as follows:

1. To what extent is the predictive validity of the IC listening score upon the listening I score?
2. To what extent is the predictive validity of the IC speaking score upon the speaking I score?
3. To what extent is the predictive validity of the IC reading score upon the listening I score?
4. To what extent is the predictive validity of the IC writing score upon the listening I score?

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to explore the predictive validity of the 24-credit Intensive Course at the first semester upon the scores of the language skills at the second semester. This may be elaborated in the following way. This study is intended reveal:

1. The degree of the predictive validity of the IC listening score upon the listening I score.
2. The degree of the predictive validity of the IC speaking score upon the speaking I score.
3. The degree of the predictive validity of the IC reading score upon the reading I score.
4. The degree of the predictive validity of the IC writing score upon the writing I score.

Significance of the Study

The results of the study will provide some information about the degree of the predictive validity of the 24-credit IC tests. A high, significant coefficient will satisfy the test constructors whereas a non-significant low coefficient will be a warning that the test will have to be revised.

Review of literature

In this section, two important subtopics are reviewed. They are language skills and validity. The subtopic of language involved listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Language Skills

Listening

There are important aspects of listening. They are the top-down and bottom-up aspects. The top-down listening process activates the schematic knowledge and contextual knowledge. The schematic

knowledge consists of two types of prior knowledge (Carrell and Eisterhold, 1983) in Celce-Muria and Olstain, 2000: 102-103). They are background information and formal schemata. The formal schemata consist of discourse organization. Contextual knowledge refers to understanding of the specific listening situation, participants, setting and topic. A good listener pays attention to what has been said and predict what might be said.

The second aspect in listening is the bottom-up process. This process consists of prior knowledge of the language system. The phonological system, for example, will enable the listener to segment the acoustic signals as sound that form as words, phrases, and clauses. This knowledge or process is assumed to be automatic or native speakers of skilled L2 speakers. Knowledge of vocabulary enables the listeners to recognize words within words within. Knowledge of grammar, words, phrases, and clauses make up cohesive and coherent instance of texts.

Speaking

It is assumed that in speaking, the speaker has his own purpose whether he wants to communicate ideas, feelings, attitudes or information to the interlocutor. He also wants to be understood and to make it sure that what he says is properly interpreted. To produce spoken discourse, the speaker uses his grammatical competence to make grammatically acceptable utterances. He also chooses lexical item, arranges them acceptably and pronounces them intelligibly. They all contribute to linguistic realization of utterances.

Reading

There are three approaches to reading. They are the bottom-up, top-down, and interactive approaches. In the bottom-up approach, reading is viewed as a series of stages that start from sensory to comprehension (Hudson, 1998:46). In the top-down approach, reading is viewed as changing interpretations. The reader activates his prior knowledge and reading experience. He also makes use of writing convention and considers his reading purpose. This top-down approach is often called as knowledge-driven or concept driven. The interactive approach assumes that reading involves skill interaction to interpret the text as Weber (1984) in Grabe (1988: 58) has noted:

The interactive models, attempting to be more comprehensive, rigorous and coherent, give emphasis to the interpretation between the graphic display in the text, various levels of linguistic knowledge and processes, and various cognitive activities.

This idea clarifies that reading is the interaction between the language of the text and the reader's language proficiency and knowledge of the world.

Writing

A writer produces words to make up a text. Communication happens when the text is read and comprehended. This communicative aspect particularly emphasizes the reader-based approach to writing. A new writer will find it difficult to decide how much to write and how to revise in consideration of the reader. Writing helps self-discovery what is important for the development of an educated person. Writing is also a problem-solving process. The writer makes plans, considers the context and revises his own draft.

Validity

Evaluation is very important in teachers' daily instructional activities. By administering an evaluation, for example, teachers will know the students' mastery of the instructional materials. One of the properties of a good test is validity, as Gronlund (1981: 65) argues:

When one selecting or constructing an evaluation instrument, the most important question to ask is to what extent the results serve the particular uses for which they are intended. This is the essence of validity.

There are different kinds of validity. The first is content validity. It is the extent to which a test measures representatively the materials or tasks (Gronlund p.68). For this purpose, subject matter or instructional materials should be identified. The subject matter or instructional materials should be the important ones. A table of specification is, therefore, required to plan the test to consist of important items. It is needed to acquire adequate sampling of objectives and items, as stated by (Gronlund, p. 132) that "the key element in content validity is the adequacy of sampling.

The second one is criterion validity. It refers to the extent to which the test performance is related to other measures. It involves concurrent and predictive validity because these two types of validity involve comparison of scores to an external criterion. The difference between these two is the time, i.e., the present performance is the concurrent validity while the predictive validity is related to some future performance.

There are reasons behind concurrent validity (Gronlund p. 133). It may be intended to check the results of newly constructed test against to test known to be valid or to substitute another test.

Another type is predictive validity. It is the extent to which the results of a test are related to the results of another measure in the future. The purpose of this strategy is to predict future performance. To be acceptably predictive, a low test score would indicate low future performance. A predictor test cannot be valid unless there is significant correlation with the criterion. The criterion indicates the degree of validity.

The other type is construct validity that may be defined as the degree of how test performance can be interpreted in terms of a psychological construct (Gronlund, 1981: 82). A construct is a psychological quality assumed to exist to explain some aspects of behavior.

Methods

This study was conducted with the purpose of analyzing the results of the 2011 IC test (at the end of semester 1) and the 2012 final test scores (at the end of semester 2) to establish the predictive validity of the 2011 IC test (There was one semester in between).

Design

This study was an observational research. It described the observation on the degree or the extent of the predictive validity of 2011 IC and the second semester scores of language skills. For this purpose a correlation strategy was adopted.

Instrument

The research instrument was the writer himself as a researcher. He used the excel program in computing the test scores to find out the level of predictive validity.

Data

The data was the 24-credit IC scores at the first semester in 2011 and the scores of the language skill scores at the second semester in 2012. The researcher obtained the data from the IC center and the scores of the language skill tests from the academic center of the university.

Analysis

The correlation analysis is used to analyze the scores. The predictor is the IC scores and the predicted scores come from the listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The results are tabulated as follows.

Table 3

Degrees	Positive	Negative
Absence of correlation	Zero	0
Perfect correlation	+ 1	-1
High degree	+ 0.75 to + 1	- 0.75 to -1
Moderate degree	+ 0.25 to + 0.75	- 0.25 to - 0.75
Low degree	0 to 0.25	0 to - 0.25

Results

In order to prove the existence of correlation between IC and language skill courses, the correlation coefficient was examined by the Pearson product at the significant level of .05.

Table 4

IC towards Listening	IC towards speaking	IC towards reading	IC towards writing
0,883745	0,73469	0,60041	0,70172

Based on the table above, the computation of the predictive validity of IC and the listening course is 0,8837459 (high and positive) ; the computation of the predictive validity of IC and speaking is 0,73469 (moderate and significant) the computation of the predictive validity of reading is 0,60041(moderate and significant) the computation of the predictive validity of writing is 0,70172(moderate, significant). The coefficient of the IC and listening is high; the others are moderate.

There are possible factors about the strength and positive correlation coefficient. One reason is possibly the high number of credits of the IC courses, i.e., 24 credits, the highest number whereas other courses are given two or three credits. This high number of credits may have been as a big burden but at the same time familiarized the students with the items in the books.

Another factor is the attendance requirement that the students had to attend the IC course for at least seventy-five person. This regulation would motivate the students in attending the course. A failure with this regulation would lay the same tiresome burden.

In addition, the appropriate level of difficulty of vocabulary could have facilitated the strength and direction of the coefficient of the IC scores towards the four language skill scores. It is simply quite understandable that there are strong and positive coefficients.

Conclusion

The IC course had been given in 24 credits. The finding of the study is highly correlated to the four language skills. It may that this high number of credits (high number of frequency and a lot of materials) that led to the satisfactory results of the final test scores of IC and the four language skills. For this purpose, there should be a further study about this correlation. Now the IC is given in 14 credits. It is a good opportunity to conduct a study to explore changes, if any.

References

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