

English Language Testing: An Evaluation of the West African School Certificate English Language Objective Test.

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Abstract:

This thesis evaluates the West African School Certificate English Language Objective Test, using the 1982, 1983 and 1984 tests as data. The tests were administered on three groups of subjects made up of fifth formers as the experimental group, first formers and first year undergraduates as control groups.

The tests' content was analysed within the framework of Systemic Grammar to ascertain its comprehensiveness and adequacy. The tests were then evaluated from the perspective of the syllabus, the relevant linguistic models and the objective technique.

A statistical analysis of subjects' scores, using the Mann-Whitney U-test and Kruskal-Wallis test, was undertaken followed by a comparison of the performance of the undergraduate group in the tests with their performance in a set essay.

The research leads to four major findings. Firstly the West African School Certificate English Language objective test does not cover all the necessary grammatical categories. Secondly, the content of the test reflects the content of the syllabus but not its specifications. Thirdly, the objective technique is suitable for testing the recognition of form and meaning but not necessarily the ability to use the English Language. Fourthly, the subjects' scores indicate that the tests are of a moderate level of difficulty. It concludes that the test is only of average validity though an extremely high validity is expected. It therefore recommends that the test should be improved.

Keywords: English Language Testing

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