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Testing and evaluating

Theoretically, as has become clear through empirical studies in language testing, there has been a shift from using assessment as a way to keep students in their place to using assessment as a way to help students find their place in school and in the world community of language users. In this popular tendency of treating language tests, language tests have been considered extremely helpful for both students and teachers, and even for administrators. We point out the importance of language testing by demonstrating that properly made tests can 1. help create positive attitudes towards instruction by giving students a sense of accomplishment and a feeling that the teacher's evaluation of them matches what he has taught them; 2. help students learn the language by requiring them to study hard, emphasizing course objectives, and showing them where they need to improve; 3. help teachers and administrators by confirming progress that has been made and showing how they can best redirect their future efforts.

Therefore, being competent in language testing, particularly in oral language testing under review in this thesis, is claimed to be crucial for language teachers to properly develop language tests.

To sum up, the adequate approach, in my viewpoint, to assessing learners' production of spoken language is to measure the extent to which they are able to successfully convey and achieve the intended purposes of a particular test task. In other words, learners' performance on an oral test task should be examined in terms of communicative effectiveness or success of meaning negotiation. However, this assessment way, if a real success, is greatly related to the communicative stress under which test tasks are designed.