

Мох Юлія Андріївна

Кандидат педагогічних наук

Національний технічний університет «Харківський політехнічний інститут»

Радченко Олена Іванівна

Харківський національний університет імені В.Н. Каразіна

ASSESSMENT – INTEGRAL PART OF ACQUIRING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Assessment is an integral part of acquiring a foreign language. In other words, far from being a final step, a judgement passed (often by someone else) on something the learner has finished doing, should occur throughout the learning process. Errors play an essential part in the process: the idea that a good learner never makes mistakes is completely wrong. A good learner is a learner who can tell what he or she does not know how to do at any given moment, and who uses this assessment to progress, to identify what remains to be learnt. So assessing yourself is not so much a matter of spotting your mistakes and correcting them as of regularly monitoring what you have learnt or acquired. Nor is assessment an activity that takes place beyond the learner's control: it is up to learners to monitor their work constantly.

For these reasons, assessment is not a responsibility you can leave to someone else. The kind of assessment that is essential for learning and acquisition is necessarily personal and individual. This is why it is often called self-assessment: it has to be carried out by the person who is doing the learning. When learners assess the results of their own work, they are in no sense cheating, because they are the only people who have the information essential for analyzing the results correctly.

Self-assessment needs to be regular so that you can change course if you find there is a mismatch between what you thought you were doing and what you find you are doing. It allows you constantly to redefine and clarify your objectives as you proceed with your work.

As we have seen, any kind of acquisition implies self-assessment. Besides self-assessment, which is internal and personal, there may be other types of assessment. One of the most common is certification, such as a judgement passed at a given moment by an institution unconnected with the learner. Certification is usually the result of an examination. If your objective is to pass an examination, you need to take into account the contents of the examination in selecting your working purposes, then focus your own assessment on how far you are succeeding in meeting the examination requirements.

However, you must not think that self-assessment is simply a matter of setting yourself an examination of the kind which institutions and teachers are responsible for organizing. There are bound to be considerable differences, because the learner wants to know how well he is learning, not simply what he has acquired. How can one assess one's own working methods and results? Firstly, by employing the widest possible range of techniques and criteria. There is no one single test that can assess pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, communicative practices, comprehension, expression, writing, speaking, etc.

Secondly, you have to be able to distinguish between a number of different points. What exactly are you going to assess? Is it the way certain rules of structure are applied, such as how to construct a grammatical sentence using "do"? Or is it the way in which certain rules of use are applied in various communicative situations? Choosing what you are going to assess is not something that is done in a vacuum: you have to do it on the basis of the objectives you have chosen. It is therefore important to assess you are using the language in the way which is appropriate to the situation, to your objectives and to the social relationship in question.

On the whole, for learning purposes self-assessment is more beneficial.