

GRETA

ELT 2000: THINKING BACK, LOOKING FORWARD

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GRETA
ASOCIACIÓN DE PROFESORES DE INGLÉS DE ANDALUCÍA

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Consejería de Educación y Ciencia de la Junta de Andalucía
Departamento de Filología Inglesa de la Universidad de Granada

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Dp. Legal: 1.359/2001-GR.

ISBN: 84-931056-2-7

Imprime: Gráficas Alhambra

Diseño y maquetación: Pablo Fernando Pérez Lampkin

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Elizabeth stands out as apparently having while class observations indicated that she had been making steady progress. However, the apparent decline in her proficiency in English is based on dramatic drops in the Reading and the Listening Tests - **the Lottery Tests** - which I consider to be unreliable, the Listening Test because of the evidence over two years, and the Reading because I consider the Test inappropriate for younger, less mature students, like Elizabeth. I would also say that her performance in the **Speaking** test improved much more than was reflected in the marks due to the faulty design and poor execution of the test. The apparent lack of progress in the **Writing** test may have been due partly to the high level of difficulty of the second part of the test and partly to her growing **sense of security** in that she didn't feel the need to copy in the end-of-course test. Elizabeth's rate of progress may also have been affected by conflicts she had with fellow students that led to her changing group during the year.

Conclusions

The Literature on classroom research dissuades teachers strongly from devising their own tests, recommending the use of existing tests on the grounds that they are more **objective**. However, a good test must obviously test what is taught and preferably in a way that corresponds to the methodology of the classroom. If these conditions are met, tests can have a beneficial **washback effect** on teaching.

The Cambridge PET exam is of course a carefully thought out exam and meticulously carried out. However, it did **not provide an appropriate test** for my students for many reasons. The fact that I selected only certain sections of the exam may have led to distortions in the results. But it would not be **practical** to use the whole of the exam to test progress, given the limited time available and in view of its approach which differs from my teaching approach. The Reading and especially the Listening Test proved to be a bit of a **lottery**. The sentence transfer exercise is a very unnatural one in a communicative teaching framework, depending very much on particular **exam techniques**. The Speaking Test had nothing to do with Cambridge and was thoroughly flawed.

There seems to be no other solution than to tackle the question of preparing a test that would be objective, reliable, valid, in line with my teaching methodology, and appropriate for the ages and interests of the students being tested.

TRANSLATING SELECTIVIDAD SCORES INTO A MEANINGFUL LANGUAGE

Bryan Robinson

University of Granada

How can we translate Selectividad scores into something meaningful? We compare students' scores in Selectividad and Secondary School with those achieved in the Faculty of Translation & Interpreting entry test, a well-known placement test, and actual performance in translation. Our results show that Selectividad leaves a lot to be desired.

Background

Nobody questioned the decision to use a specific entry test for first degree studies in Translation and Interpreting when the new course was officially approved by the Spanish central government in 1992. Nobody took the time to ask whether the test was really necessary, despite the fact that published research in the area was conspicuous by its absence: the concept of aptitude for translation had not been defined, nor had a satisfactory test instrument design been empirically proven. Nobody ventured even a suggestion as to how a test of aptitude for translation might be 'better' than *selectividad*, 'better' than the *media global* average of secondary school grades, 'better' than a commercially produced test.

As part of a large-scale correlational study (Robinson 2000), we set out to justify the use of a specific entry test of aptitude for Translation studies. We did this by contrasting the results obtained from our own tests, a battery of reading skills sub-tests in Language A Spanish (LA) and Language B English (LB), with *selectividad* scores; with the *media global*, with General English proficiency as measured by the Oxford *Placement Test I* and II (OPT) (Allan 1990 & 1992); and with the two subjects *Traducción general B-A* and *Traducción general A-B* (Table 1).

Looking Back, Thinking Forward

Today, in September 2000, we are both 'Looking Back' and 'Thinking Forward'. The title of this conference encapsulates the most poignant realities of the university entry to Translation studies here in Andalusia. Nobody questioned the decision to use an entry test in 1992, and nobody questioned

1. Es muy significativo que esta manifestación haya tenido lugar en Madrid.
2. Pedro Barato opina que los socialistas perderán las próximas elecciones.
3. Los servicios informativos de TVE siempre se muestran parciales.
4. Si no fuera por el voto del campo el PSOE nunca habría llegado a gobernar.
5. En opinión del autor de este artículo el campo seguirá apoyando al Gobierno a pesar de lo hecho.
6. Las consecuencias más importantes de la manifestación se verán especialmente en Andalucía

Table 5 True/False/don't know

232

- Lee el texto y señala a cuál de los párrafos podría corresponder cada una de las siguientes frases como título. Subraya la letra en la hoja de respuestas.

-"El acontecimiento".
-"La actitud del gobierno hacia el campo".
-"El papel del Telediario".
-"Las próximas elecciones".

Table 4 Matching exercise

- V (Verdadero), F (Falso) o ? (el texto no informa sobre este punto), y subraya la letra o el símbolo correspondiente en la hoja de respuestas

OPT
Trad A-B
Trad B-A

... más apropiada y subraya la letra en la hoja de respuestas.

... el autor de este texto, la conclusión de Pedro Barato es ...

-A correcta.
-B incompleta.
-C electoralista.
-D suficiente.
-E superflua.

All applicants
Candidates
accepted
Candidates
rejected

Table 9

| Sel | Media LB | OPT | Trad A-B | Trad B-A |
|------|----------|--------|----------|----------|
| 1.00 | | | | |
| 0.46 | 1.00 | | | |
| 0.12 | 0.08 | 1.00 | | |
| 0.05 | 0.03 | 0.45 | 1.00 | |
| 0.06 | 0.19 | 0.14 | 0.25 | 1.00 |
| 0.00 | (0.13) | (0.07) | 0.29 | 0.21 |
| | | | | 1.00 |

- Elige la opción n...

Table 8 Cohort B

7. En opinión d...

| Correlation coefficient | Media de selectividad | Media de la media global |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| 0.72 | 6.88 | 7.25 |
| 0.46 | 7.92 | 8.12 |
| 0.56 | 6.51 | 6.94 |

Cohort B Selectividad versus media global

Sel
Media
LB