ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES FOR MEASURING ORAL COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH AGRO-TERM TEACHING

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Abstract: *This paper examines innovative assessment strategies tailored to agro-terminology instruction, focusing on performance-based assessment, rubric-guided evaluation, discourse analysis, and competency indicators. The study emphasizes the integration of formative and summative approaches, the alignment of assessment with learning outcomes, and the use of technology-enhanced tools for real-time feedback.*

Key words: *Oral competence assessment; agro-terminology; performance-based evaluation; rubrics; discourse analysis; competency indicators; agricultural ESP; formative assessment; summative assessment; psycholinguistic principles*

INTRODUCTION

Assessment in the context of agricultural ESP is no longer limited to multiple-choice tests or written examinations. Developing oral competence requires comprehensive methods that capture the dynamic interaction of vocabulary, grammar, discourse organization, and pragmatic understanding. The teaching of agro-terminology demands a specialized approach, as learners must be able to retrieve technical vocabulary accurately while maintaining fluency and coherence in professional discourse. Effective assessment strategies not only measure student performance but also provide diagnostic information to guide instruction and enhance learning outcomes. Performance-based assessment is a cornerstone of oral competence evaluation. This approach requires learners to perform tasks that closely resemble real-life professional situations. For example, students may deliver presentations on sustainable crop management, participate in role-plays simulating farm advisory consultations, or engage in problem-solving discussions regarding pest control strategies. These tasks allow teachers to observe learners' ability to integrate terminology accurately within meaningful communicative acts. Performance-based assessment captures multiple dimensions of competence, including lexical precision, syntactic complexity, discourse cohesion, and pragmatic appropriateness. Unlike traditional testing, this method provides a holistic view of a student's communicative ability.

Rubrics are essential tools for standardizing performance-based evaluation. A well-designed rubric specifies criteria across multiple levels of achievement, offering clear

descriptors for accuracy, fluency, lexical usage, and pragmatic skill. For agro-terminology, rubrics can distinguish between novice, intermediate, and proficient levels, considering factors such as correct use of technical terms, coherence of explanations, and ability to respond appropriately to interlocutor questions. The rubric-based approach promotes transparency and fairness in assessment, allowing students to understand expectations and self-monitor their progress. It also provides instructors with a reliable framework for comparing performance across diverse learners. Discourse analysis offers an additional lens for evaluating oral competence. By examining the structure, cohesion, and rhetorical strategies employed by learners, teachers can assess how effectively terminology is integrated into coherent professional narratives. For instance, analysis may focus on how students explain irrigation techniques, describe soil properties, or justify crop rotation decisions. Discourse markers, cohesive devices, and logical sequencing are indicators of both language proficiency and domain knowledge integration. This method highlights not only what terms are used but also how they function within communicative contexts, emphasizing the importance of functional competence in professional communication.

Competency indicators provide a structured way to map oral skills to specific learning outcomes. Indicators can be quantitative, such as the number of correctly used terms per minute, or qualitative, such as the appropriateness of language in negotiation scenarios. For example, in a simulation of a farm advisory session, indicators may include clarity of explanation, ability to address client concerns, and integration of sustainable farming concepts. Competency indicators allow for targeted feedback, helping learners identify specific areas for improvement and supporting data-driven pedagogical decisions.

Formative assessment plays a pivotal role in developing oral competence. Frequent, low-stakes evaluation provides students with immediate feedback, enabling them to adjust performance and deepen understanding. Techniques such as peer assessment, self-assessment, and teacher observation foster reflective practice and encourage learners to take ownership of their language development. When formative assessment focuses on agro-terminology, students gain awareness of their lexical gaps, mispronunciations, and structural inaccuracies, which they can correct through guided practice. This iterative process reinforces learning and enhances the probability of achieving fluency in oral communication. Summative assessment evaluates overall competence after a defined instructional period. While formative methods provide ongoing feedback, summative evaluation offers an aggregate measure of achievement. Combining performance-based tasks, rubric scores, and discourse analysis results produces a comprehensive profile of student ability. In agricultural ESP, summative assessment can involve final presentations, oral exams, or integrated project reports, all of which require the strategic deployment of

agro-terminology. Summative results inform curriculum effectiveness and guide modifications for future cohorts.

Technology-enhanced assessment has increasingly become integral to modern ESP programs. Digital tools such as audio and video recording, automated speech analysis software, and online interactive platforms allow instructors to capture performance data, track progress over time, and provide precise feedback. For instance, speech recognition systems can measure pronunciation accuracy, while analytic tools can quantify lexical diversity and term frequency in student utterances. The integration of artificial intelligence facilitates personalized assessment, identifying individual challenges and tailoring interventions accordingly. Aligning assessment with instructional objectives ensures that evaluation supports learning. For agro-terminology, assessment tasks must reflect the communicative functions that students are expected to master. This alignment guarantees that learners are evaluated on meaningful competencies rather than isolated vocabulary knowledge. Moreover, assessment design should consider the cognitive load associated with technical language use. Tasks that are overly complex may obscure genuine language ability, while tasks that are authentic and scaffolded facilitate accurate measurement of competence. Finally, affective factors such as anxiety, motivation, and confidence must be considered in assessment design. Oral tasks often evoke performance stress, which can interfere with fluency and lexical retrieval. Creating a supportive environment, providing clear instructions, and gradually increasing task complexity reduce the negative impact of anxiety. Encouraging reflective practice through self- and peer-assessment enhances motivation and engagement, which in turn positively affects performance and learning outcomes.

In conclusion, assessment of oral competence in agricultural ESP requires an integrated strategy that combines performance-based tasks, rubric-guided evaluation, discourse analysis, competency indicators, and technology-enhanced feedback. Psycholinguistic principles guide the design of assessment methods, ensuring that terminology acquisition translates into fluent, accurate, and contextually appropriate oral communication. By systematically evaluating performance and providing actionable feedback, educators can support learners' development of professional discourse skills, strengthen domain-specific lexical networks, and foster confident participation in agricultural communication contexts.

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