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Developing Multicriteria Rating Scale for Assessment of Communicative Competence in LSP Oral Presentation²

Extended summary

This research develops a multicriteria rating scale for the assessment of oral presentations in the language for specific purposes (LSP) in order to make the assessment process easier, more objective, and reliable, and to help teachers assess their students in the real time conditions in the classroom more easily, precisely, and in a time-saving manner. For this purpose, the prevailing contemporary theoretical models of communicative competence and language for specific purposes ability were explored and five different models of multicriteria rating scales were generated. The total of 19 criteria with the corresponding descriptors were created in the research, based on the distinct characteristics of oral communication and public speaking activities. Subsequently, they were the subject of evaluation by 103 foreign language teachers who teach LSP in higher education institutions and voca-

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2 This research paper is part of a larger project conducted for the purpose of completion of the doctoral dissertation by Vesna Petrović, *Evaluacija i unapređivanje kriterijuma za ocenjivanje usmene prezentacije na engleskom jeziku struke* [Evaluation and improvement of criteria for assessment of oral presentation in English for specific purposes] and defended at the University in Belgrade in 2022 (supervised by prof. dr Ana S. Jovanović).

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tional secondary schools in Serbia and Croatia. The teachers were asked to evaluate on the Likert scale the proposed criteria by choosing a grade from 1 to 5, depending on how much they believe that each of the offered criteria impacts the students' achievement during their oral presentation. Our goal was to determine whether teachers equally value the criteria for evaluating oral presentations when they assess students or they give preference to certain criteria over others. An online survey was used as a data-collection method. The answers were analysed by using the quantitative analysis which showed that teachers do not favour any of the offered criteria but instead think that they should be valued roughly equally while assessing student achievement in oral presentations. Given that the 19 criteria represent a large number of parameters that teachers should evaluate when assessing students, which can burden them and cause confusion, for research purposes we created five different models of scales for assessing oral presentations that contain different combinations of the proposed criteria with descriptors and subjected them to a multicriteria decision-making analysis in order to get an appropriate scale model suitable for evaluating oral presentations in a foreign language for specific purposes. The models include the following scales: 1) strategic competence scale, 2) language knowledge scale, 3) content and structure of presentation scale, 4) specific purpose communicative competence scale, and 5) intuitive model of the researcher scale. The results of the multicriteria analysis show that the Specific Purpose Communicative Competence Scale is the optimal model recommended for evaluating learners' oral performance in the context of the LSP classroom. The ready-made rating scale for the LSP oral presentation assessment, whose validity and reliability are based on theoretically and empirically investigated grounds, represents the main contribution of the research. In addition, as the multi-criteria analysis of these models showed their order from the most optimal to the least optimal one, and that this does not suggest the exclusion of any of the formed models, we believe that it would be useful for future research to assess oral presentations using all models, and compare the outcomes of such assessment. The research also offers various possibilities for further investigations that would relate to testing the validity of an individual scale in practice by comparing it with other assessment instruments. The limitations of this research refer to the use of a survey as a research instrument for data collection, which always carries with it a risk and leaves the possibility that respondents are not sufficiently motivated to answer the questions.

Keywords: language for specific purposes (LSP), assessment, rating scale, oral presentation, multicriteria decision-making analysis

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