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## QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS IN LANGUAGE: TESTING AND ASSESSMENT

### КАЧЕСТВЕННЫЕ И КОЛИЧЕСТВЕННЫЕ МЕТОДЫ В ИССЛЕДОВАНИИ ЯЗЫКА (НА ПРИМЕРЕ ИСПОЛЬЗОВАНИЯ ТЕСТИРОВАНИЯ И ОЦЕНКИ)

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#### ABSTRACT

QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH, ADVANTAGES, DISADVANTAGES, TESTING AND ASSESSMENT

*Our report deals with the advantages and disadvantages of using researchers qualitative and quantitative research methods and approaches for their studies of language testing and assessment. It is presented an overview of some of the strengths of using high-quality language research methods, namely, revealing a deeper understanding in the development and interpretation of assessment and testing, studying the behavior, perception, feelings and understanding of testees. Thus, having examined the essence of these two research paradigms, the quantitative paradigm prevails in the context of the study of language testing and assessment.*

Qualitative and quantitative research approaches and methods are usually found to be utilised rather frequently in different disciplines of education such as sociology, psychology,

#### Аннотация

КАЧЕСТВЕННОЕ И КОЛИЧЕСТВЕННОЕ ИССЛЕДОВАНИЕ, ТЕСТИРОВАНИЕ, ОЦЕНКА

*В нашем докладе рассматриваются преимущества и недостатки использования исследователями различных дисциплин качественных и количественных методов и подходов в исследованиях языкового тестирования и оценки. В нем дается обзор некоторых сильных сторон использования качественных методов исследования языка, а именно, выявление более глубокого понимания при разработке и интерпретации оценки и тестирования, изучение поведения, восприятия, чувств и понимания тестируемых.*

history, and so on. Whereas, the interpretive researchers oppose the positive belief of reality; and argue that, instead, the reality is socially constructed by the humans. They were also introduced in the research world though it was subsequent to research methods and approaches.

For the first half of the twentieth century, the positive model was dominant in social and educational research by giving importance of using standardised tests and systematic observation, experiment, survey data, and statistical analysis. In other words, the quantitative research method was quite powerful

But some period of time later there was a shift of research methods from quantitative to qualitative, and the superiority of quantitative research was not as powerful as before. The growth of qualitative research was also from the unhappiness with the process of generating knowledge within the positive research. Alongside the research methods and approaches, ethical considerations were also introduced in the research world though it was subsequent to research methods and approaches.

In a general sense, a test is something that demonstrates one's competence-incompetence, ability-inability; and that shows someone's position in the scale consisting of variables such as fail, pass, average, satisfactory, good, and excellent. An academic test also helps taking an important decision of whether or not a student will be allowed to move up to the next step. It can check the progress of a student and suggest whether a student needs more help or not, and allow us to compare the performance between students. The test, furthermore, acts as an important tool of public policy – such as the national examinations are held in the same standard across the country to ensure that only the top performers can get admission to the next level of education.

The university admission test (a high stake test) is a tool of this kind. In language testing, the testers are concerned with the extent to which a test can produce scores that reflect a candidate's ability accurately in a specific area, for example, reading, writing a critical essay, vocabulary knowledge, or spoken interaction with peers. Like all other educational assessments, language testing is a complex social phenomenon. But it is a significant aspect in education which affects people's lives in the society such as – promotion, employment, citizenship, immigration or asylum depends upon passing a language test. Another consequential factor of language testing in education is that it dictates what is to be taught. So, the discussion so far indicates that the language tests play an important role in many people's lives.

Defining qualitative research is significant as it is the central focus of this section – but there is a challenge to define this term clearly since it does not have its theory or paradigm nor an obvious set of methods or practices that are merely of its own. This term also involves a vast array of methods and approaches within the different subjects of research. Hence, the writers have provided the definition of qualitative research distinctively. So, the qualitative research is basically associated with multiple aspects. Qualitative research appears to be an

overarching concept under which a variety of issues may be placed, and it has positive and negative perspectives.

There are some benefits of using qualitative research approaches and methods. Firstly, qualitative research approach produces the detailed description of participants' feelings, opinions, and experiences; and interprets the meanings of their actions.

Secondly, there are some who argue that qualitative research approach understands the human experience in specific settings. Berg and Lune [1], for example, mentioned that qualitative research is an interdisciplinary field which encompasses a wider range of epistemological viewpoints, research methods, and interpretive techniques of understanding human experiences.

Thirdly, the qualitative research admits the researchers to discover the participants' inner experience, and to figure out how meanings are shaped through and in culture. Such as, in terms of assessing written assignments, "satisfactory", "good", or "60 marks out of 100" are used by the assessors, an investigation might be made in order to understand the meaning of "satisfactory" or "good" or to elicit the features of content or text displayed in the student scripts. So, the studies using qualitative approach can help us understand the markers' working assumption about what is to be assessed, and the meaning of the grade.

Lastly, qualitative research design (interactive approach) has a flexible structure as the design can be constructed and reconstructed to a greater extent (Maxwell, 2012). Thus, the thorough and appropriate analyses of an issue can be produced by utilising qualitative research methods, and therefore the participants have sufficient freedom to determine what is consistent for them. As a result, the complex issues can be understood easily.

For example, researchers acknowledged that, because of the nature of classroom dynamics, learners' behavior may be affected by the numerous factors outside of research focus. In this respect, the qualitative research approach is required to capture these dynamics. As the nature of language assessment practices is also complex, there is a suggestion by Blaikie N. [2] to employ the qualitative research methodology. Thus, the qualitative research can contribute to the understanding of the complex features of language assessment.

Beyond the above advantages, some limitations are obvious. There are some opinions that qualitative research approaches sometimes leave out contextual sensitivities, and focus more on meanings and experiences. Phenomenological approach, for instance, attempts to uncover, interpret and understand the participants' experience.

The study intended to critically look at the strengths and weaknesses of two crucial research paradigms in education – qualitative and quantitative – on the ground of language testing and assessment. It can be argued that the study has met the purpose as it is concerned with the critical demonstration of benefits and shortfalls of using each research methods and approaches, and of ethical considerations. The benefits of using qualitative research in language testing and assessment research are achieving deeper insight into designing, administering and

interpreting language assessment; easy to understand the candidate behaviour, interviewer behaviour, and cross-cultural influences on behaviour during the speaking tests, meaning of the score or grade, and the complex features of language assessment. Limitations, however, are: Small sample size sometimes makes the results unreliable; and policy makers may not ask for qualitative research. On the other hand, the study has figured out the advantages of using quantitative research in the context of language testing and assessment research, such as a larger size of sample and variables that make the testing research trust worthy. The disadvantages, nevertheless, are: Quantitative research leaves out the meanings and effects of a particular system – such as, a testing system is not concerned with the detailed picture of variables. Moreover, the study has found that the dominant method in the language testing and assessment research is quantitative due to basically its rate of use by the researchers around the world.

## REFERENCE

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