STANDARDIZATION OF AN ORAL PROGRESSIVE ENGLISH EXAM FOR EFL STUDENTS: ITS IMPACT AND LEARNERS PERCEPTIONS

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STANDARDIZATION OF AN ORAL PROGRESSIVE ENGLISH EXAM

Why?

Speaking

- Summative assessments not standardized.

Solution

New Oral Exam

- Standardized + follow CEFR's international standards.

General purpose of the study

Describe

- LEARNERS' perceptions on having their speaking skills evaluated with an oral exam:
  - Succinct.
  - Follows a specific order.
  - Promotes managing interaction scenarios through analytical thinking.

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- 21 days.
- *Qualitative information.*
- *Quantitative data.*

General aspects of the study

- Questionnaire based on *"Attitudes and Perceptions of the Students and Instructors towards Testing Speaking Communicatively"* – Turkey, Paker & Höl, 2012.

- Ent Questionnaire N = 67
- Ext Questionnaire N = 66

Qualitative information

- Ent exam (current oral exam) + Ext exam (new verbal assessment scheme)

- Scores analyzed with Student's t-test. (Student's t-test N = 65)

Quantitative data

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Methodology behind Qualitative Information

1st C.Q.	2nd C.Q.
What is the *impact* in EFL students of Pre-Intermediate level at an Ecuadorian state university on having their speaking skill evaluated with a standardized oral exam?	What are the *perceptions* of EFL students of Pre-Intermediate level at an Ecuadorian state university on having their speaking skill evaluated with a standardized oral exam?

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Methodology behind Qualitative Information

1st S.Q.	2nd S.Q.	3rd S.Q.
What is the *level of approval* that using this format of oral exam will have on these learners?	What are the *main advantages and disadvantages* of using this format of oral exam that these learners perceived?	What *specific recommendations* will these learners make on this format of oral exam?

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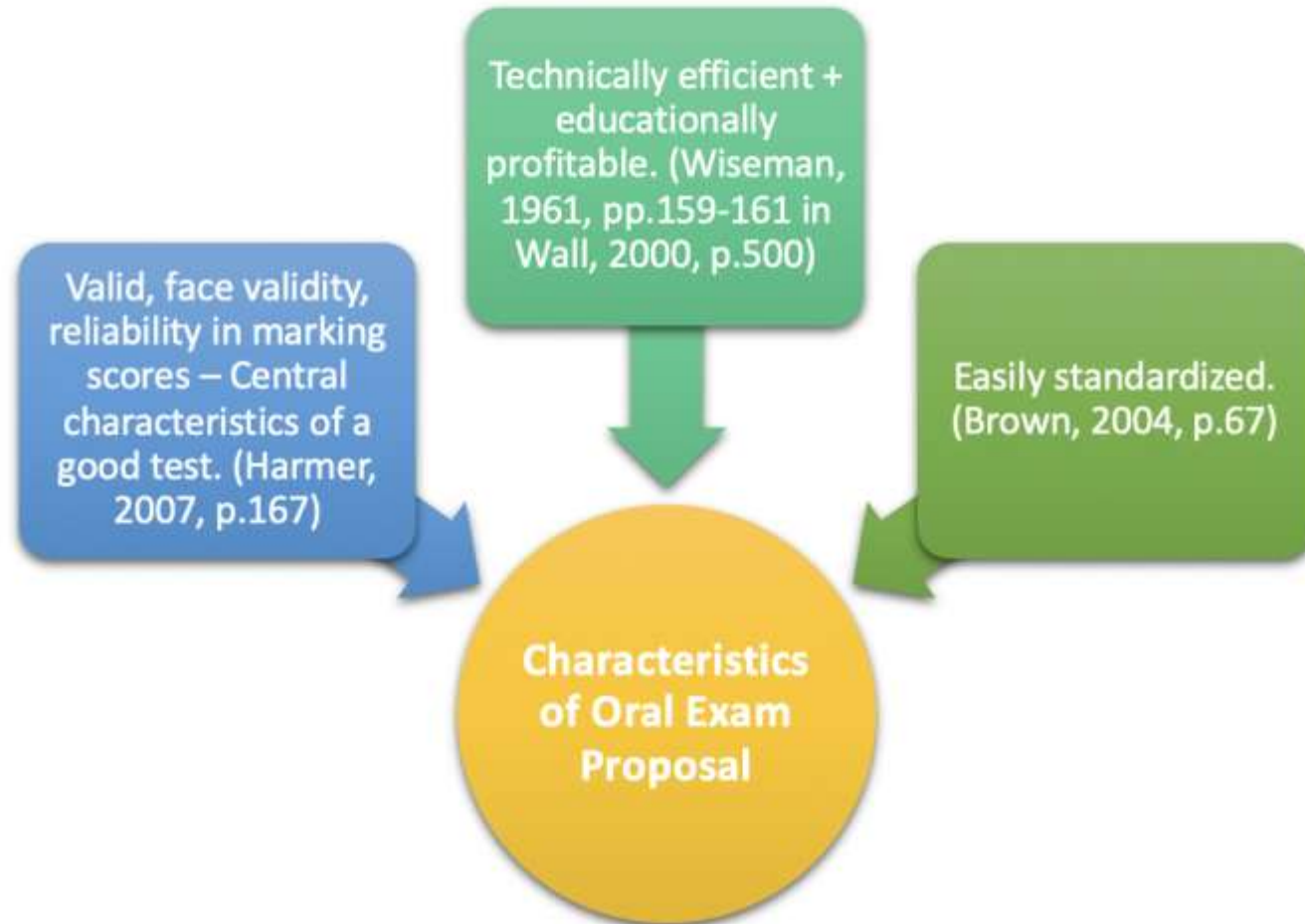# STANDARDIZATION OF AN ORAL PROGRESSIVE ENGLISH EXAM

Methodology behind Quantitative Data

Quantitative data to reject *null* hypothesis.

There is no difference in the development of the speaking skill of undergraduates with B1 (Pre-Intermediate) English proficiency level at an Ecuadorian state university, once the training for this oral exam proposal has concluded.
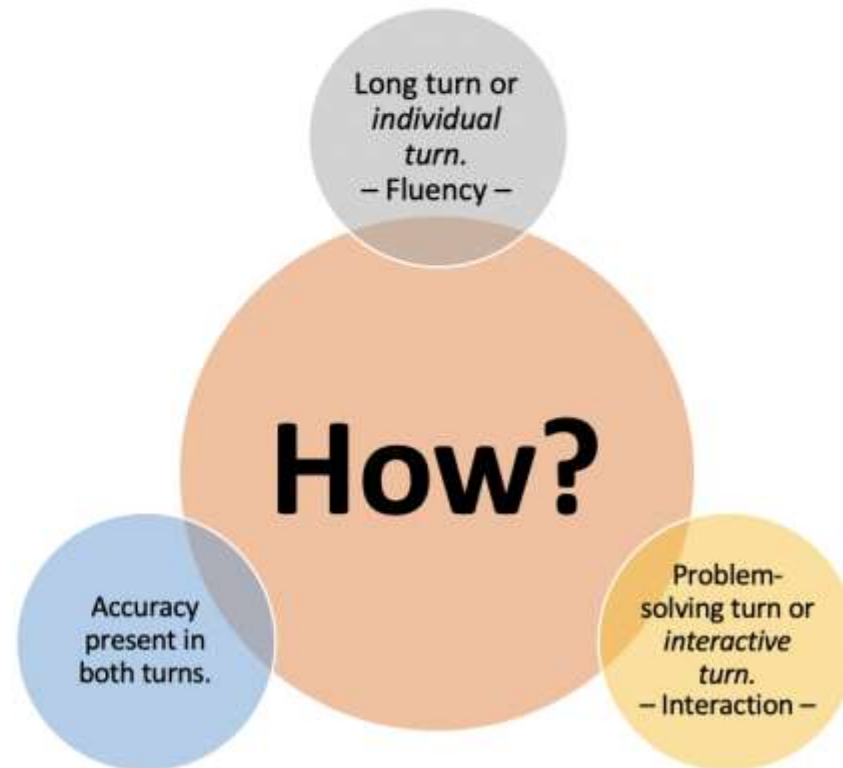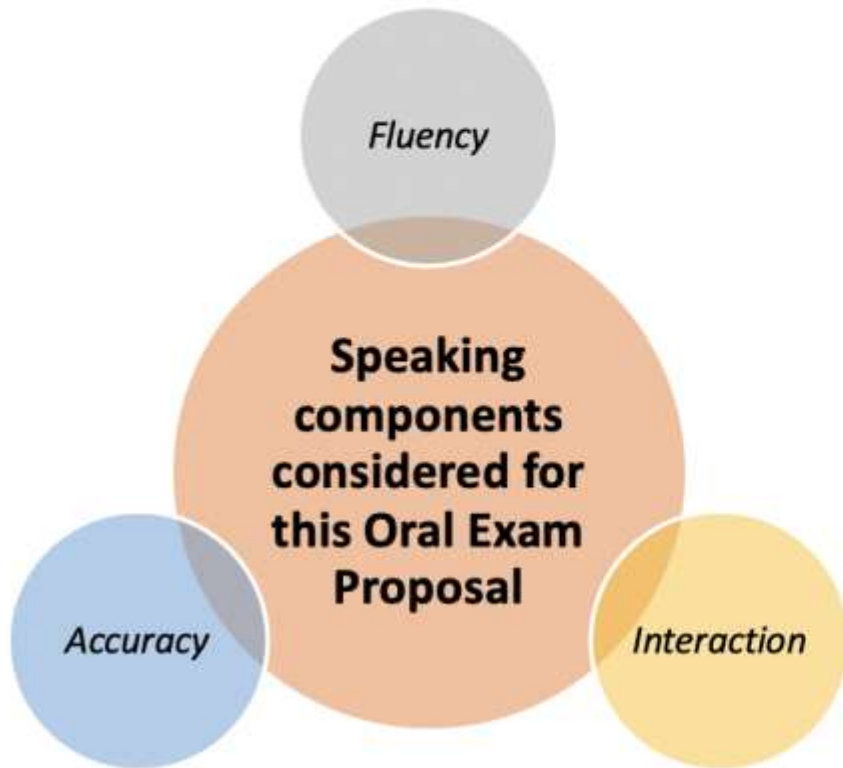
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Valid, face validity, reliability in marking scores – Central characteristics of a good test. (Harmer, 2007, p.167)

Technically efficient + educationally profitable. (Wiseman, 1961, pp.159-161 in Wall, 2000, p.500)

Easily standardized. (Brown, 2004, p.67)

Characteristics of Oral Exam Proposal

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Fluency

Speaking components considered for this Oral Exam Proposal

Accuracy

Interaction

Long turn or *individual* turn.
– Fluency –

How?

Accuracy present in both turns.

Problem-solving turn or *interactive* turn.
– Interaction –

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Fluency as Speaking Competence

- "English for communication". (Abbaspour, 2016, p.144)
- *Transactional Discourse.* (Richards, 2016 in Leon & Maldonado, 2017, p.28)

Fluency as Communicative Competence

- Various competences that "reflect the use of linguistic system and the functional aspects of communication". (Canale and Swain (1980) in Abbaspour, 2016, p.146)
- *Interactional Discourse.* (Richards, 2016 in Leon & Maldonado, 2017, p.28)

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Interaction graded through use of **critical thinking skills**; what an **ideal critical thinker** does.

What is *Critical Thinking*?

What are the *skills* of Critical Thinking?

What is an *ideal critical thinker*?
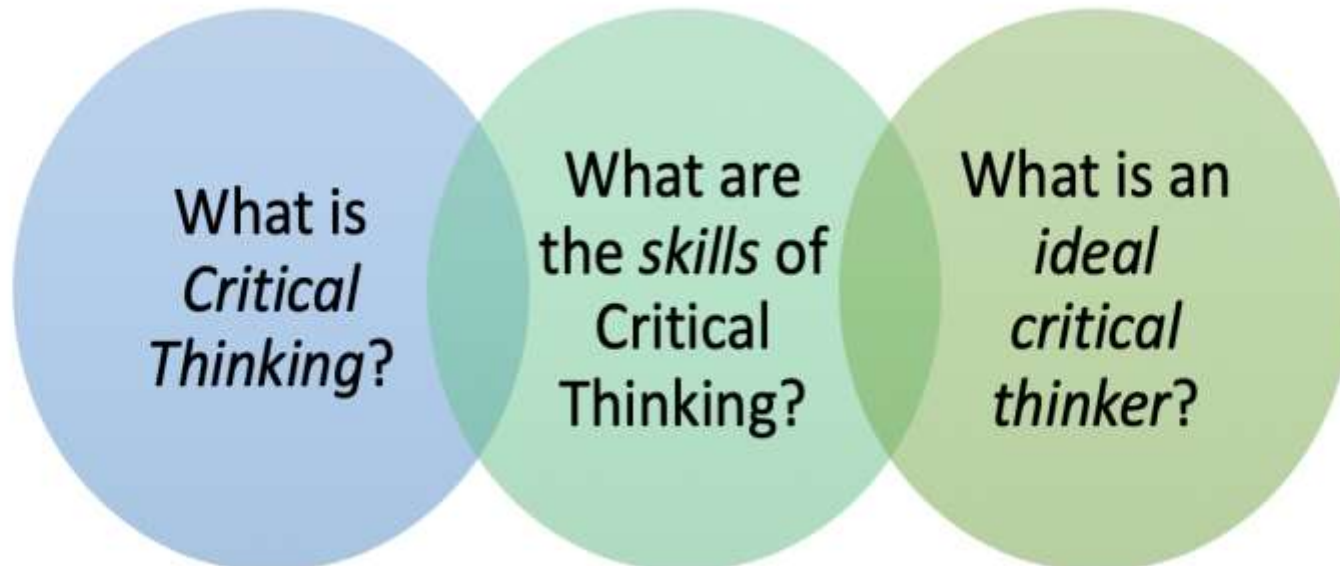
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Oral Exam Proposal Layout

Using "a variety of language and skills to complete a task successfully". (Harmer, 2007, p.168)

"Do something with language". (Harmer, 2007, p.168)

• Integrative testing

• Direct test items

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Individual Turn – *Presentation task*. (Burgess and Head, 2005, p.100)

Unit 2

1) What social networks do you have: Twitter, Facebook, Instagram? What is your opinion about them? Why do you use them? How often do you use them?

2) Do you think that: "It is better to talk face to face with a person that you have a problem with instead of talking about it over the phone."? Why? / Why not?

3) How much time do you spend online? What sites do you use most? Why?

4) Do you think that: "Children in the future are more likely to learn how to write a language in a computer than on a piece of paper."? Why? / Why not?

5) Do you think that: "Printed newspapers and books will definitely disappear in the future."? Why? / Why not?

6) Do you think that: "You will probably move to another country in the next ten years."? Why? / Why not?

7) Do you think that: "The use of mobile phones in hospitals should be banned / prohibited if doctors use them while taking care of patients."? Why? / Why not?

8) Do you think that: "Studying at ESPOL is so difficult because the teachers tend to send too much homework.?" Why? / Why not?

9) Do you think that: "Real relationships can start from online relationships.?" Why? / Why not?

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Interactive Turn – *Negotiation task*. (Burgess and Head, 2005, p.102)

Unit 2

You have to do **a really important university project for tomorrow. Today, you are getting together for doing that right** after this exam. Decide **which of these usual distractions you will not stand** and **why** so that you can finish the project on time. Indicate **how you will avoid those distractions**.

Reading information that is related to the project, but not important

Chatting with other people through WHATSAPP

Deciding what to eat for lunch and for dinner

Watching music videos by YOUTUBE
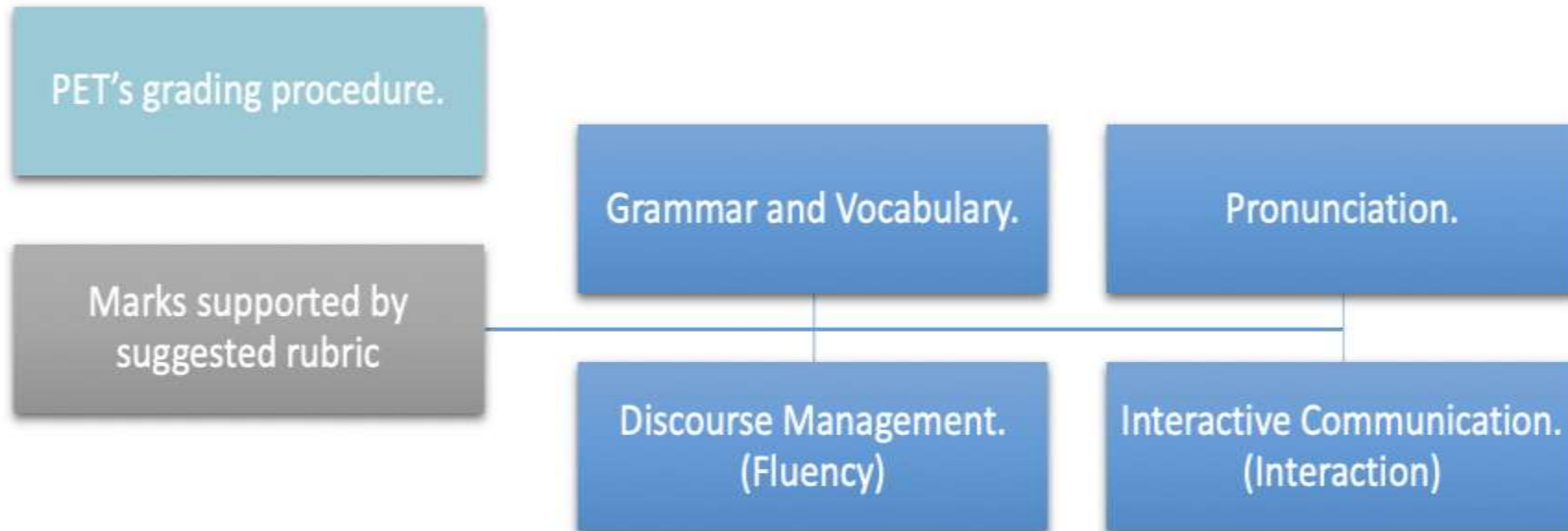
University Project

Catching up with each other

Deciding who will do which part of the project based on likes and dislikes

Checking social networks like FACEBOOK and INSTAGRAM

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Oral Exam Proposal Management

PET's grading procedure.

Grammar and Vocabulary.

Pronunciation.

Marks supported by suggested rubric

Discourse Management. (Fluency)

Interactive Communication. (Interaction)

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Rubric for Oral Exam Proposal

APPENDIX 6 – Analytic Rubric for Oral Exam Proposal

Intermediate B - Oral Exam Rubric

4. Students must take the oral exam in pairs or groups.
5. The tasks must include at least one activity where the students interact with each other without intervention by the examiner.
6. The tasks must assess the following learning outcomes:
   ❖ Students can enter unprepared into conversations on topics that are familiar, of personal interest or relevant to their everyday life. They can give simple reasons and explanations for their opinions and plans.
   ❖ Students can narrate their own personal experiences, and describe reactions and feelings with some prior preparation. (production)

Note: The topics that are chosen for the mid-term and final oral exams respectively should be based on what has been taught in that half of the course and the overall learning outcomes.

	0	0.5	1	1.5	2	2.5
Grammar and Vocabulary	The student does not appropriately use structures or vocabulary items and makes many impeding errors.	The student appropriately uses structures and vocabulary with some non-impeding errors, but the language is significantly more basic than the level of the course.	Errors with basic language items are common. The student attempts to use a limited range of structures and vocabulary from the course, but makes some impeding errors.	Errors with basic language items are regular. The student appropriately uses a limited range of structures and vocabulary from the course with some non-impeding errors.	Errors with basic language items are sporadic. The student attempts to use a wide range of structures and vocabulary from the course, but makes a few impeding errors.	Errors with basic language items are rare. The student appropriately uses a range of structures and vocabulary from the course with some non-impeding errors.
Fluency	The student cannot form more than one phrase or sentence without long periods of hesitation.	The student can form a small number of phrases or sentences after repeated periods of hesitation.	The student can form sentences together and react to most questions, but hesitation often impedes conversation.	The student can form several sentences together and react to most questions, but occasionally hesitates for an unnatural length of time.	The student can form several sentences together and react to most questions, but commonly hesitates for a conventional length of time.	The student can form several sentences together and react to questions without any excessive hesitation.
Pronunciation	The student cannot be understood at all.	The student can be barely understood.	The student can sometimes be understood and sometimes not.	The speech sounds very unnatural. The student can be understood on the whole, but certain words are difficult to understand.	The speech sounds slightly unnatural. The student can be understood without serious effort and hardly any words are difficult to understand.	The student can be easily understood and shows fairly natural speech (intonation, stress and linking).
Interactive communication	The student cannot interact with his/her partner.	The student can respond, but cannot initiate interaction.	The student uses English to solve communication problems. The student can respond and rarely initiates, but does not develop interaction.	The student uses English to solve communication problems. The student can respond and occasionally initiates, but does not develop interaction.	The student uses English to solve communication problems. The student can respond, regularly initiates and attempts to develop interaction.	The student uses English to solve communication problems. The student can respond, spontaneously initiates and naturally develops interaction.

Four Sub-skills Criteria: To provide clear and useful feedback after oral exam tasks.

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67 Students

Two groups

Oral Exam

Present Format (First Term)

Analytic Rubric

Survey

Structured Questionnaire

First Data

Stage 1:

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Intervention

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65 Students

Two groups

Oral Exam

Standardized Format

(Second Term)

Switch classes

Proposed Rubric

Survey

Structured Questionnaire

Second Data

Stage 2

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Advantages

Q2: I was informed about the procedure of the test

Q3: I was very comfortable before the test

Q5: I was prepared in class (through strategies and activities) for the speaking test

Q8: I was encouraged and motivated by the teacher during the test

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Disadvantages

- **Q1:** I was more anxious and nervous compared to before doing the speaking test

- **Q4:** I did not have any idea about the assessment scale (rubric).)

- **Q6:** I had difficulty in expressing myself clearly and in an adequate way during the test

- **Q7:** I was anxious and nervous during the speaking test

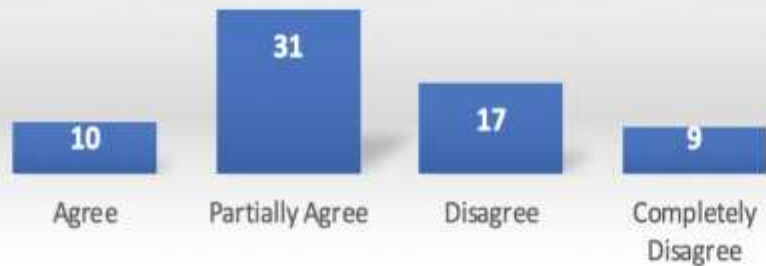- **Q9:** The tasks/activities in the test were types I had never encountered before

Approval

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Q12: I felt more comfortable doing this new oral exam rather than previous ones

ENTRY QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS
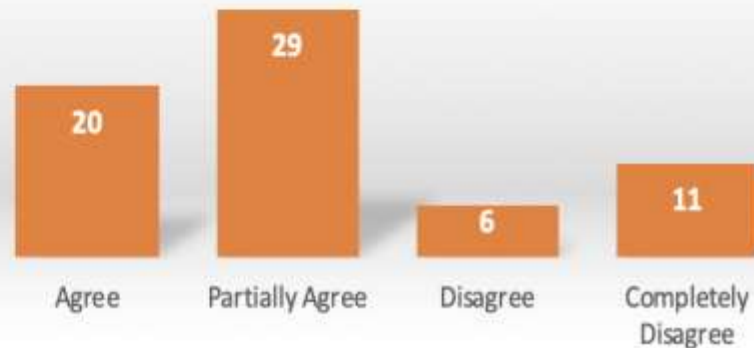
Agree	Partially Agree	Disagree	Completely Disagree
10	31	17	9

EXIT QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

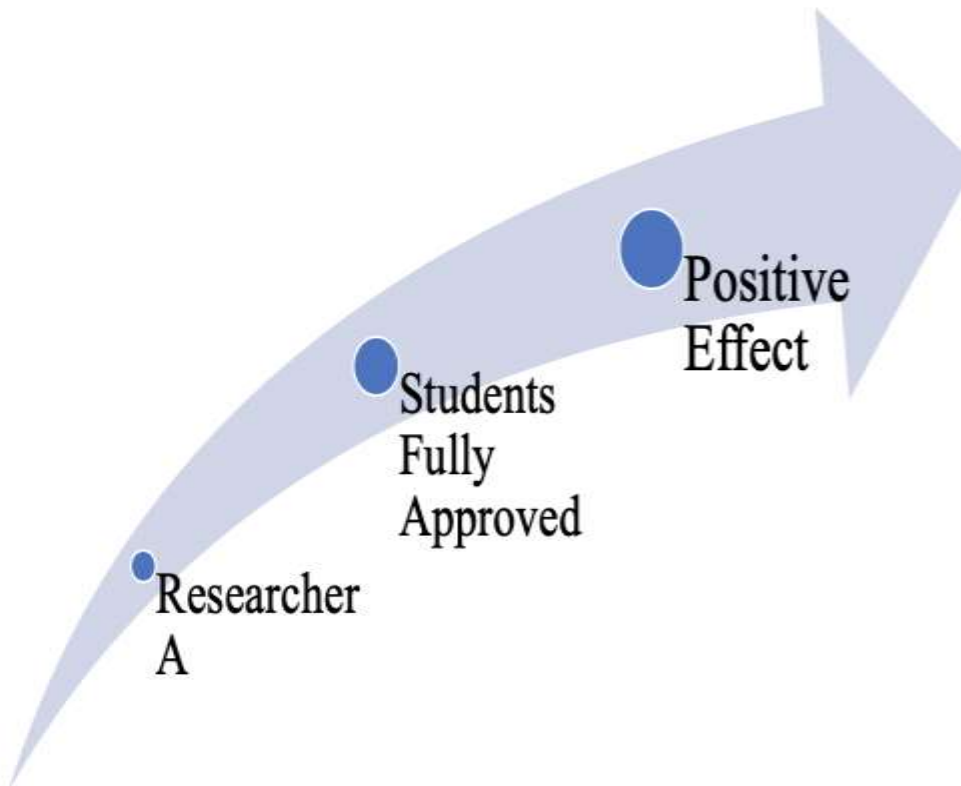| Agree	Partially Agree	Disagree	Completely Disagree
20	29	6	11

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Table 4.4 Values of the required measures for calculating the value of t for Group "A"

MEASURES	VALUES	
	ENTRY	EXIT
Arithmetic Media	5,77	9,03
Standard Deviation	1,83	
Standard Error	0,31	
N	35	

$$t = \frac{\overline{X_1} - \overline{X_2}}{O_{dif}}$$

$$t = \frac{5,77 - 9,03}{0,31}$$

$$t = -10,52$$

Step 4: The analysis of the value of t is carried out.

Positive Effect

Students Fully Approved

Researcher A

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Table 4.6 Values of the required measures for calculating the value of t for Group "B"

MEASURE	VALUE	
	ENTRY	EXIT
Arithmetic Media	9,27	5,39
Standard Deviation	2,64	
Standard Error	0,49	
N	30	

$$t = \frac{\overline{X_1} - \overline{X_2}}{0_{dif}}$$

$$t = \frac{9,27 - 5,39}{0,49}$$

$$t = 7,91$$
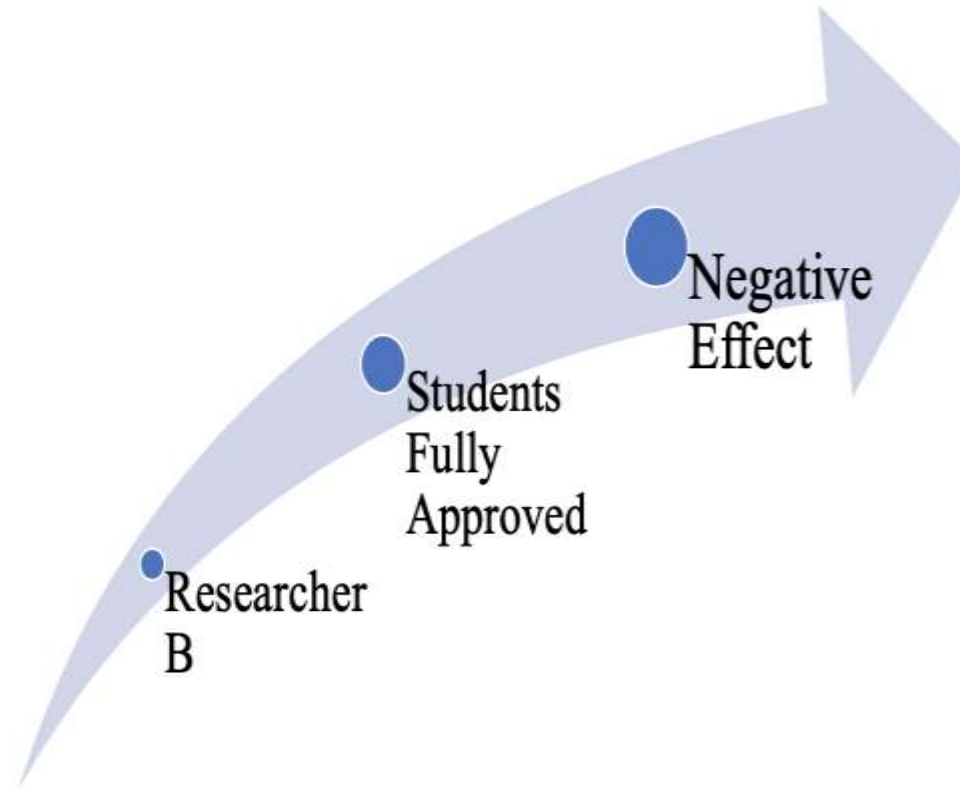
Negative Effect

Students Fully Approved

Researcher B

Step 4: The analysis of the value of t is carried out.
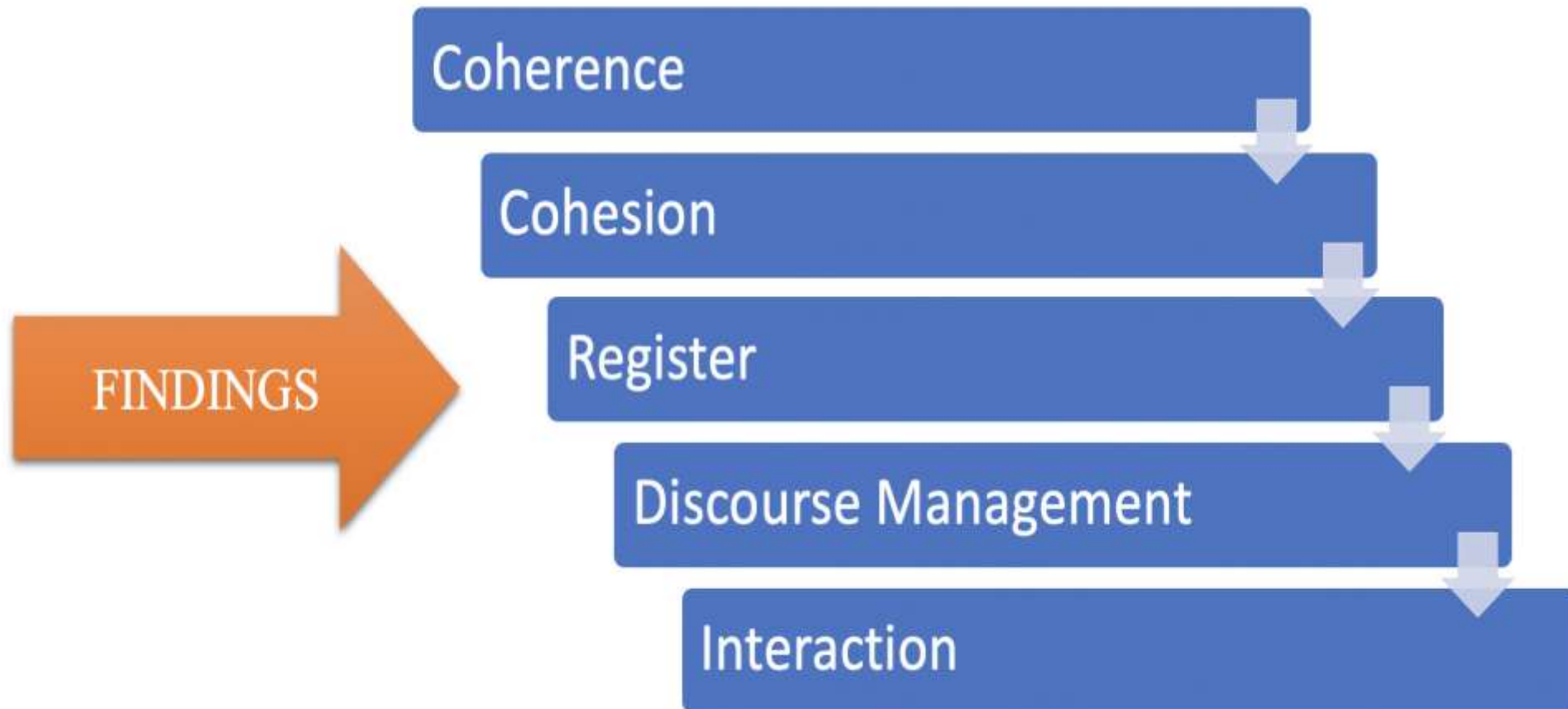
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CONCLUSIONS

FCQ: IMPACT
- Definitely positive
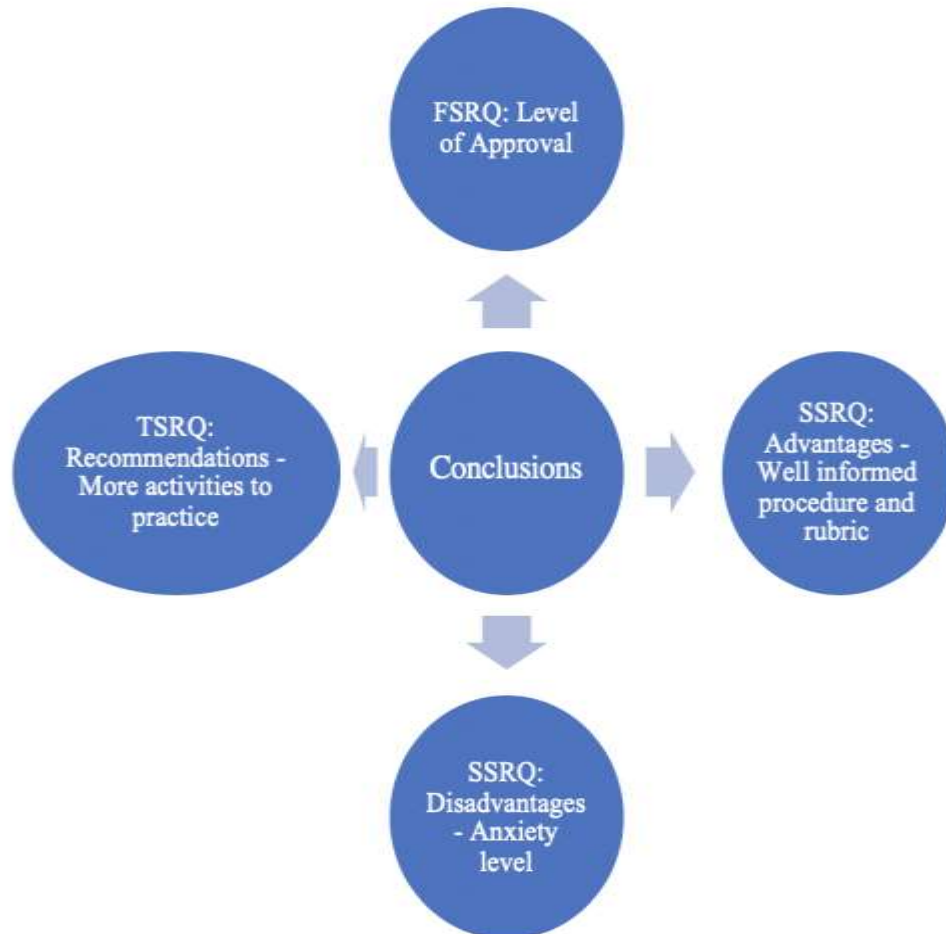- Grades increase + or -
- Confident enough

SCQ: Perceptions
- Students felt more comfortable
- Level of anxiety

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