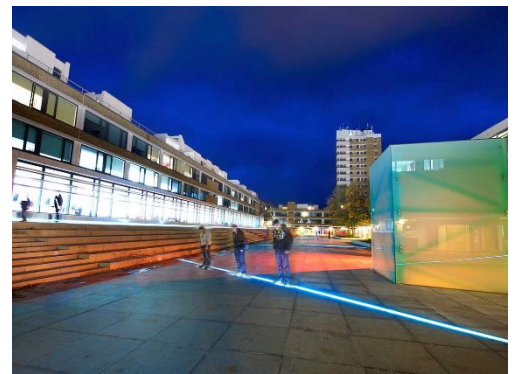


Language Assessment Literacy Symposium 2016

Enhancing Language Assessment Literacy: Sharing, Broadening, Innovating

16-17 September 2016, Lancaster University (United Kingdom)



**Department of Linguistics and English Language
Lancaster University
2016**

Acknowledgements

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	2
Foreword	4
Conference Overview	5
Paper Abstracts: Plenary Sessions	8
Paper Abstracts: Parallel sessions	11
Poster Abstracts	20
Workshops	24

Foreword

2016 represents the **10th anniversary of the MA in Language Testing**; a unique online Masters programme delivered by Lancaster University. Over the past 10 years, we have trained – and learned from – students based all over the globe. Many of these students were in professional positions as language test developers and examiners at the beginning of the MA, and have since extended their responsibilities to implementing exam reforms, performing validation research, and training others in the principles and practice of language assessment.

At the same time, the last decade has seen increased attention in the field on language assessment literacy: how best to enhance the knowledge, skills and practices of language testing professionals. Although there have been some core recommendations from different scholars concerning the fundamental elements of professional training in language assessment (e.g., Brindley, 2001; Brown & Bailey, 2008; Davies, 2008; Fulcher, 2012; Taylor, 2013), practices naturally differ across contexts and training modalities. There is a need to share knowledge about different training approaches, and to explore practices within the academy and within the workplace. There has also been a call for language testers to develop a deep and critical understanding of language assessment and the broad discipline of Applied Linguistics with which it interfaces. Language testing training should not be narrow, but should engage with state-of-the-art developments, both theoretical and methodological, in other sub-fields of Applied Linguistics if it is to stay relevant and useful.

To celebrate this anniversary, we therefore decided to hold a two-day symposium designed to explore Language Assessment Literacy. This symposium was designed to address the themes of “sharing” and “broadening” on consecutive days, with the aim of mapping out innovations for Language Assessment Literacy across different contexts. The first day – “sharing” – will see a series of papers on the topic of training language assessment professionals. Two invited speakers – **Professor Glenn Fulcher** (University of Leicester, UK) and **Dr Meg Malone** (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages [ACTFL] & Georgetown University, USA) – will address the key theme of enhancing language assessment literacy, and the remaining papers and posters will report on language assessment literacy issues across multiple international contexts. The second day – “broadening” – will see a series of parallel workshops in related sub-fields which represent particular research strengths of the Department of Linguistics and English Language at Lancaster. These workshops – taught by specialists in those areas – will present theories and techniques which provide novel and stimulating perspectives on language assessment practice. Workshops will include:

- Corpus linguistics for language assessment (Dr Vaclav Brezina & Dr Dana Gablasova)
- Critical discourse analysis for language assessment (Dr Johann Unger)
- Ethnographic approaches for language assessment (Prof Uta Papen)
- Psycholinguistic approaches for language assessment (Dr Tineke Brunfaut, Dr Marije Michel & Dr Patrick Rebuschat)

Conference Overview

DAY 1 – Friday 16th September (AM)

Location: Management School Building – Lecture Theatres 2 and 3

9.00 Registration (Management School)

9.30 Welcome and introduction to the symposium

10.00 **Plenary 1:** Operationalising language assessment literacy – *Glenn Fulcher (Lecture Theatre 3)*

11.00 *Coffee & tea break (Management School)*

Parallel paper sessions

Lecture Theatre 3

11.30 Language assessment literacy for language teachers: Online professional development through virtual learning teams – *Thom Kiddle*

12.00 Sign language assessment: Training teachers in schools for the deaf across Europe – *Tobias Haug & Wolfgang Mann*

12.30 Using authentic multimedia to contextualize test validity concepts – *Paula Winke*

Lecture Theatre 2

Contextualizing assessment literacy – *Dina Tsagari, Tony Green, Karin Vogt, Ildiko Csepes, & Nicos Sifakis*

Co-creating test specifications: a fast track to enhancing language assessment literacy? – *Stéphanie Gaillard, Jan Van Maele, Fred Davidson, & Lut Baten*

Fostering language assessment literacy through teacher involvement in high-stakes test development – *Kathrin Eberharter, Benjamin Kremmel, Franz Holzknrecht, & Eva Konrad*

13.00 **Lunch & Poster session (Management School)**

- A model to evaluate assessment literacy in Mexican higher education – *Ricardo de la Garza Cano*
- Beyond the band descriptors: Broadening the assessment literacy of examiners and interlocutors – *Sheryl Cooke*
- Investigation of teacher hiring policy and language assessment literacy development – *Jiyoon Lee*
- Developing assessment literacy through engagement with assessment practices – *Tania Horak, Dan Waller, & Elena Gandini*
- Towards a comprehensive, empirical model of language assessment literacy – Pilot results from a validation study – *Benjamin Kremmel & Luke Harding*

DAY 1 – Friday 16th September (PM)

Location: Management School Building – Lecture Theatres 2 and 3

Parallel paper sessions

Lecture Theatre 3

14.30 An investigation on the assessment literacy of Brazilian English language pre-school teachers – *Juliana Reichert Assunção Tonelli & Gladys Quevedo-Camargo*

15.00 Assessment Literacy in the Ivy League: Facts and Challenges – *Mary Jo Di Biase-Lubrano*

15.30 Singing from the same hymn sheet? What language assessment literacy means to language teachers – *Vivien Berry, Sonia Munro, & Susan Sheehan*

16:00 *Coffee & tea break (Management School)*

16:30 **Plenary 2:** Expanding understanding of language assessment literacy: Including students – *Meg Malone (Lecture Theatre 3)*

17:30 Closing and Group Photograph

19:00 *Dinner (Barker House Farm)*

Lecture Theatre 2

Developing assessment literacy in the Russian Federation: ProSET and beyond – *Carolyn Westbrook*

Discovering Mongolian teachers' epistemological perspectives of language assessment for creation of an in-service training – *David L. Chiesa & Sara T. Cushing*

Delivering language assessment literacy in the United Arab Emirates and Vietnam – *Gwendydd Caudwell & Judith Fairbairn*

DAY 2 – Saturday 17th September

Location: various

9.00 **Parallel workshops:**

Corpus linguistics for language assessment – Old Engineering Hannaford Lab - coffee break: Management School LT2/3

Critical discourse analysis for language assessment – Management School Lab A001 - coffee break: Management School LT 2/3

Ethnographic approaches for language assessment – Charles Carter A19 - coffee break: Charles Carter

Psycholinguistic approaches for language assessment – Ash House PC Hub zones 1-2-3 - coffee break: CETAD building

10.30 *Coffee & tea break*

11.00 **Parallel workshops:**

Corpus linguistics for language assessment – Old Engineering Hannaford Lab - coffee break: Management School LT2/3

Critical discourse analysis for language assessment – Management School Lab A001 - coffee break: Management School LT 2/3

Ethnographic approaches for language assessment – Charles Carter A19 - coffee break: Charles Carter

Psycholinguistic approaches for language assessment – Ash House PC Hub zones 1-2-3 - coffee break: CETAD building

12.30 Closing reflections and Q&A – panellists: *Jo Lewkowicz, Spiros Papageorgiou, Dina Tsagari, Paula Winke* (**Management School Lecture Theatre 3**)

13.00 *Lunch (Management School)*

Paper Abstracts: Plenary Sessions

Friday 16th September

10.00-11.00

Lecture Theatre 3

Plenary 1

Operationalising language assessment literacy

Glenn Fulcher, University of Leicester

The term “assessment literacy” was coined by Stiggins (1991) to refer to the level of teachers’ engagement with testing and assessment issues to evaluate, select and use appropriate instruments and techniques for specific purposes and contexts. Language Assessment Literacy (LAL) more specifically has increasingly been researched in recent years as language tests have been adopted internationally for high stakes purposes such as immigration, the evaluation of educational systems, and employment screening. The current working definition of LAL is provided by Fulcher (2012), which has led to further research into discovering the components of LAL that might be required for different stakeholder groups (Taylor, 2013; Harding & Kremmel, 2016). What has not been addressed, however, is how LAL is operationalised in learning contexts for teachers who are required to assess learners. I argue that assessment practitioners are what the ancient Greeks would have termed *demioergoi* – craftspeople who build assessments on the basis of theory and research. Developing LAL requires a “deliberate pedagogy” that combines an apprenticeship model with deep understanding. I will also illustrate LAL operationalisation through activities designed to engage teachers with the principles and practice of assessment through blended learning.

Biodata

Glenn Fulcher is Professor of Applied Linguistics and Language Assessment and Head of the School of Education, University of Leicester. He has served as President of the International Language Testing Association, and edited the Sage journal *Language Testing* from 2007 to 2016; he is currently the Podcast editor for the journal. His books include *Practical Language Testing*, and *Language Testing and Assessment: An Advanced Resource Book*. His most recent monograph, *Re-examining Language Testing: A Philosophical and Social Inquiry*, was awarded the 2016 SAGE/ILTA Book Award, together with his edited volume *The Routledge Handbook of Language Testing*. Further information can be found on his website, which is the primary electronic resource for research and teaching in language assessment: <http://languagetesting.info>.

Friday 16th September
16.30-17.30
Lecture Theatre 3

Plenary 2

Expanding understanding of language assessment literacy: Including students

Meg Malone, American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) & Georgetown University, USA

This paper explores the concept of language assessment literacy (Inbar Lourie, 2012; Taylor, 2009; Malone, 2008) and its applications for learning languages other than English in English-speaking contexts. Language assessment literacy refers to the knowledge, skills and understanding that users of language assessments have when interpreting the results of assessments and applying these results to inform students about their learning progress (or lack thereof) and to change, maintain or improve language teaching and learning. Although recent research focuses on the language learning classroom (Fulcher, 2012), the importance of language teachers in the assessment process (Hill and McNamara, 2012) and teacher beliefs about assessments and their uses (Cheng and Sun, 2015; Malone and Montee, 2014; Rea-Dickens, 2003), only limited research (Butler, 2016; Masters et al, 2010) has explored students' understanding of assessment, assessment results and their own performances relative to general, course and their own learning goals. Moreover, much of the current research on student understanding of language assessment literacy focuses on student self-assessment.

Language assessment literacy is a difficult endeavor, specifically when applied in the learning of non-majority languages (world or foreign languages). Developing language assessment literacy involves both understanding how languages are learned and the fundamental principles of languages assessment. In describing such concepts to teachers, language testers may overemphasize the technical aspects of assessment and underplay the concrete, immediate impact for teachers (Malone, 2012). If such communication is difficult for instructors and other education professionals, then language assessment literacy efforts for students represent still more complexity for the field.

This paper explores the challenges and opportunities inherent in extending the reach of language assessment literacy beyond test developers and teachers to the realm of student knowledge, skills and understanding. First, the paper suggests methodologies for exploring student understanding of language assessment, including interviews, self-assessments and surveys. Second, the paper investigates how to analyze such studies to maximize the usefulness of the results and the generalizability of both the methods and results. Third, the paper examines how language assessment literacy efforts with students of language can be applied beyond the language learning classroom but to help both language teachers and language test developers understand not only what they believe students need and want to know about language assessment but also what language teachers and test developers need to understand about students in pursuing such efforts. Finally, the paper presents a construct for an interconnected approach to informing all

stakeholders in language assessment literacy efforts that increase the likelihood that all stakeholders will become active and engaged participants in language teaching and learning.

Biodata

Meg Malone is Director of the Center for Assessment, Research and Development at the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) and also serves as Director of Georgetown University's Assessment and Evaluation Language Resource Center. Prior to this she was Associate Vice President at the Center for Applied Linguistics in Washington DC where she was responsible for World Languages and International Programs. Meg has published widely on the assessment of foreign languages and is the co-author of a book *Assessing language learners in US Schools* (2014). She has extensive experience in test development and program evaluation. For the past five Meg was Secretary of the International Language Testing Association.

Paper Abstracts: Parallel sessions

Friday 16th September

11.30-12.00

Lecture Theatre 3

Language assessment literacy for language teachers: online professional development through virtual learning teams

Thom Kiddle, Norwich Institute for Language Education, United Kingdom

This presentation focuses on the approach to teacher language assessment literacy designed by the speaker as part of the NILE Online suite of professional development programmes for language teachers, shortlisted for a British Council ELTon in 2015. Since enrolling on the MALTD at Lancaster in 2009, I have had a keen interest and professional engagement with the two fields of online training and education, and language assessment. On joining NILE, Norwich Institute for Language Education in 2011, I was given the opportunity to develop a suite of online teacher education programmes, designing a bespoke platform with innovative tools and resources from the ground up, with the support of a dedicated technical team. The centrepiece of this presentation is the Testing and Assessment course in the NILE Online portfolio; the topic areas it covers; the learning outcomes; the unique pedagogical and technical tools employed to enable engagement, interaction, co-constructed learning, and assessment; and the feedback from the cohorts of teachers from more than 15 different countries who have already taken the course.

Friday 16th September

11.30-12.00

Lecture Theatre 2

Contextualizing language assessment literacy

Dina Tsagari, University of Cyprus, Cyprus

Tony Green, University of Bedfordshire, United Kingdom

Karin Vogt, University of Education Heidelberg, Germany

Ildiko Csepes, University of Debrecen, Hungary

Nicos Sifakis, Hellenic Open University, Greece

Numerous references to “new” literacies have been added to the discourse of various academic and public domains in recent years. Among them the term “language assessment literacy” (LAL) is used in the field of language testing and assessment to refer to the skills, knowledge, methods and techniques needed by various stakeholders in different capacities to design and carry out effective assessment tasks and to make informed decisions based on assessment data (e.g. Hasselgreen, et al. 2004; Inbar-Lourie, 2008; 2013; Fulcher, 2012; Taylor, 2009; 2013). Language teachers, in particular, are at the focus of the LAL debate, in view of their significant responsibilities as both internal assessors and consumers of external assessment data, with research studies focusing on the knowledge base teachers require to fulfill their roles and on how

to best obtain it (e.g., Brindley, 2001; Malone, 2013). However, research has shown that in many educational systems across Europe, English Language Teachers (ELTs) are not well prepared to create quality assessment materials and procedures (Csepes, 2013; Vogt and Tsagari, 2014; Tsagari, 2013). This is at least partly because they do not seem to be sufficiently trained in the area of Language Testing and Assessment (LTA). There is therefore an urgent need to develop an efficient, relevant and sustainable LTA training infrastructure for ELTs to help them develop relevant assessment literacy, which can eventually be of benefit to other language teachers as well.

This paper will present the aims of a three-year long project entitled ‘Teachers’ Assessment Literacy Enhancement (TALE)’ involving a network of five experts from different European countries joining forces to create such infrastructure. More specifically, the paper will focus on the first phase of the project which involves a needs analysis which was achieved through extensive consultation with two important groups of stakeholders in LTA: ELTs and their students, to ensure that the training course designed for the purposes of the project would meet teachers’ needs. This study adopted an exploratory method design based on quantitative data collected via a questionnaire designed to measure how teachers and their students perceive assessment, the types of assessment used, the impact of these assessments and suggestions for improvement. The survey was conducted among 820 EFL teachers and 1789 students in the various European contexts identified in this project. It is the first time that a study focused on LAL has considered learners as an important group of stakeholders. Descriptive statistics, correlations, and structural equation modeling was used to analyze the collected data to examine the trends identified per country and also interrelationships between the needs of ELTs and their students in the various contexts involved in this project. The findings will provide nuanced in-depth understanding of the assessment needs of ELTs and their students which contribute to the identification of assessment priorities and the development of assessment training strategies that are contextually situated.

Friday 16th September

12.00-12.30

Lecture Theatre 3

Sign language assessment: training teachers in schools for the deaf across Europe

Tobias Haug, Ph.D., University of Applied Sciences of Special Needs Education (HfH) & Sign Language Assessment Services, Switzerland

Wolfgang Mann, University of Roehampton, United Kingdom

Sign language test research is a fairly young area, which only started in the 1990s. It is nested within the fields of sign language linguistics, deaf education, and applied linguistics. Early research focused on the development of assessments for research purposes with only partial interest in their potential use in practice. Consequently, there has been limited discussion about the training of practitioners who plan to administer such tests within an educational or clinical

context. However, the last decade has seen growing interest in sign language assessment (Haug & Hintermair, 2003; Mann & Prinz, 2006) and an increase in the number of tests being developed or adapted to measure deaf test takers' sign language development. With this change in perception towards sign language assessment comes the need to consider the training required by practitioners to administering these tests effectively.

Addressing this gap, we developed a 1-2 day training course for teachers of the deaf and other practitioners working with deaf children. This course focuses on three main areas: the need for sign language assessments, the process of test development (based on McNamara's concept of testing cycle [2000]), and a discussion of issues pertaining to the assessment of signing populations and how this affects a test's psychometrics. Additional topics include the use of new technologies (e.g., web-based testing, computer-adaptive testing, automatic sign recognition and generation) and particular challenges of sign language assessment (e.g., the lack of frequency lists). This course has been delivered over the last 10 years to practitioners and clinicians working in schools for the deaf in Germany, United Kingdom, and Switzerland.

In our presentation, we discuss aspects related to the course format, feedback from participants, assessment of sign language in different groups of learners. In addition, we take a critical look at the future of sign language assessments.

Friday 16th September

12.00-12.30

Lecture Theatre 2

Co-creating test specifications: a fast track to enhancing language assessment literacy?

Stéphanie Gaillard, Groupe ESC Troyes, France

Jan Van Maele, KU Leuven, Belgium

Fred Davidson, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, USA

Lut Baten, KU Leuven, Belgium

This presentation explores how guided peer-development of test-specifications (Davidson & Lynch, 2002; Davidson, 2012) presents a concrete, accessible, and fast route for enhancing language assessment literacy among foreign language lecturers in Cuba. Recent political evolutions in the country have raised the demand for the assessment and certification of English language proficiency in particular. These calls have revealed an urgent need for local capacity building in a country where language testing still has to be recognized as a professional field in its own right (Van Maele, Rodríguez González, Díaz Moreno, van Splunder & Baten, 2015). To address this need, the authors recently delivered a weeklong workshop for 30 teachers from Universidad de Oriente, Santiago de Cuba with the support of an ILTA Workshop Award and the IUC-UO project of the Flemish Interuniversity Council.

In this presentation the authors discuss findings with respect to the process, the reception, and the effectiveness of the training. Supportive evidence was collected through daily feedback

questionnaires, recordings of group exercises, and the produced test-specs. Although participants were enthusiastic about this novel approach, they also appeared to encounter difficulties to which they responded with a range of coping strategies. It was also observed that, despite irregular attendance, knowledge was distributed within teams, allowing for adequate realization of the workshop objectives at team level.

This workshop provides additional support for using test-specs as a pivotal theme in language assessment literacy training. Contributing factors are the fact that test-specs engage all learners - including novices - in concrete tasks; that these tasks naturally lead to a discussion of the core issues of a validation argument; and that the produced output is of immediate use in language assessment practice. Finally, the authors assess the workshop's impact as the Cuban teachers continue to receive counseling on test-specs and item writing.

Friday 16th September

12.30-13.00

Lecture Theatre 3

Using authentic multimedia to contextualize test validity concepts

Paula Winke, Michigan State University, USA

Assessment literacy is important because with rich knowledge about assessment, language teaching professionals can better assess the performances of their students. As a teacher of assessment literacy, one thing I try to do is contextualize assessment concepts by drawing upon popular testing issues that are brought up in the news and on social media. In this talk, I present descriptions of how four different testing concepts (construct validity, consequential validity, differential item functioning, and standard error of measurement) can be illustrated by sharing and discussing media coverage from the radio, news videos, and newspapers. For example, in my assessment course, I discuss with my students the notion of a test's construct validity through articles on the new format of the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), which has been reported on extensively, especially by the New York Times. I illustrate the issues of consequential validity by having the students read about the narrowing of the curriculum at public schools across the United States that is occurring in response to the results of federally mandated school tests. We discuss differential item functioning in relation to the English language component that is part of the U.S. Naturalization test, an issue that has been covered by National Public Radio. And after teaching students how to calculate the standard error of measurement, I illustrate its importance and usefulness by showing news videos and sharing articles that debate whether 3rd grade reading-test scores should be used to determine whether 3rd grade students should be required by law to repeat 3rd grade. Thus, I will show how language testing instructors can draw upon authentic material (media coverage) of larger assessment issues to illustrate and discuss the same, related issues in language testing. By doing so, language testing instructors make language-testing issues more tangible, real, and pressing.

Friday 16th September

12.30-13.00

Lecture Theatre 2

Fostering language assessment literacy through teacher involvement in high-stakes test development

Kathrin Eberharter, Benjamin Kremmel, Franz Holzknicht and Eva Konrad, University of Innsbruck, Austria

Involving teachers in the development of high-stakes language tests certainly holds advantages for an exam: teachers' classroom expertise can add to the validity of the test and can give credibility to an exam through a sense of ownership of a main stakeholder group. However, it also offers considerable potential for professional development and fostering language assessment literacy (LAL) among key players in the educational system. This is even more important when this involvement concerns a major exam reform, such as setting up a national standardized school-leaving exam, which offers a great opportunity for professional teacher development through item writer training, scale development sessions, rater training, and centralized marking sessions.

This presentation will share insights from training a large cohort of language teachers to become item writers for a state-wide language exam in a European country. It will first report on the teachers' roles, tasks and trainings in the test development project. It will then present the results of a study that retrospectively surveyed how being involved in the project has contributed to the participating teachers' development of LAL. Based on an expansion of Fulcher's (2012) questionnaire, teachers who were trained and acted as item writers responded to an online survey (N=56). The survey was designed to capture a) the teachers' reasons for their initial and ongoing involvement, b) their attitudes towards teacher involvement in the development of such tests and c) which dimensions of LAL were enhanced through their participation. The results show which assessment skills and knowledge the teachers were able to develop from participating in the exam-reform project and how relevant they considered these to be for classroom practice.

Friday 16th September

14.30-15.00

Lecture Theatre 3

An investigation on the assessment literacy of Brazilian English language pre-school teachers

Juliana Reichert Assunção Tonelli, State University of Londrina, Brazil

Gladys Quevedo-Camargo, University of Brasília, Brazil

The teaching and learning of English as an additional language to children have been subjects of research in several parts of the world as well as in Brazil. Although optional in Brazilian elementary schools, teaching English to children is already part of the curriculum in most private and in some public schools, depending on local initiatives. The increase in the number of students in the early grades of Elementary Education learning (an)other language(s) generates a demand

for language teachers. However, there are few (English) Language and Literature undergraduate courses that provide minimal education so that pre-service teachers can work with children. This presentation tackles an important issue when considering the teaching of languages to young learners: how well (or not) teachers (-to-be) are prepared to deal with assessment in this context. The aim of this presentation is to report an investigation on the degree of assessment literacy of a group of undergraduate and graduate teachers, participants in a university teaching project, who taught English to children aged between 6 and 12 years old in a school located in a university campus. The epistemological bases employed were the assessment literacy framework by Stiggins (2004) and data collection was conducted by using a focus group (Krueger, 1997). The transcriptions were analyzed by mapping the participants' discourse polyphony (Bakhtin, 1997) to understand how assessment literate they were or claimed to be.

Friday 16th September

14.30-15.00

Lecture Theatre 2

Developing assessment literacy in the Russian Federation: ProSET and beyond

Carolyn Westbrook, Southampton Solent University, United Kingdom

In recent years, there has been a considerable increase in the number of programmes designed to develop assessment literacy among pre- and in-service teachers of foreign languages. This has been seen as a 'fitting focus for teachers' professional development programs' (Popham, 2009: 4) since many initial teacher training courses have no or very little educational measurement component. In some cases, this increased interest has been accompanied by a change in the national system of assessment in a country, as is the case with the Russian Federation. Since the introduction in 2009 of the Russian Unified State Exam (ЕГЭ or EGE), a high-stakes school graduation exam and university entrance exam, teachers and teacher trainers have felt the need to have an understanding of assessment literacy to help them prepare their students for this important exam.

To this end, the 2-year, EU Tempus project ProSET, a transnational project including 4 EU universities, 11 Russian Federation universities, and Cambridge University Press in Moscow was implemented. This paper will present the project, aimed at developing assessment literacy among university lecturers and school teachers in the Russian Federation and will outline the outcomes achieved as part of the project. I will also present the results of a small follow-on study to examine to what extent work has continued since the project end to further develop assessment literacy in the Russian Federation. The methodology will involve a questionnaire survey of the universities involved in the project and an analysis of the follow-on activities they have carried out as well as the extent which the course developed as part of the project have become a constituent part of teacher training programmes.

Friday 16th September

15.00-15.30

Lecture Theatre 3

Assessment Literacy in the Ivy League: Facts and Challenges

Mary Jo Di Biase-Lubrano, Yale University, USA

Language testing is an integral part of teaching and learning, yet most language educators and graduate students do not receive adequate training for developing tests and/or using test scores for decision-making purposes (Taylor 2009:22). Most language instructors have advanced degrees in the literature of the language of instruction but lack formal training in language testing. This is an even more alarming reality when we consider not only the research and advances in theories of language learning but also the need for test scores to predict communicative ability in our globalized world and not just to reflect knowledge of specific language features. Although many instructors have embraced innovative teaching practices including the use of technology in the classroom, they still resort to testing grammar and vocabulary through discrete item types in assessment of learning which take up to 40% of instruction time. However, with regular assessment literacy workshops, many instructors are open to revising their testing practices based on fundamental measurement principles and an increased awareness of concepts of test validity.

This paper intends to show how a recently created position of Language Testing Specialist at the Yale University Center for Language Study, provides support and assistance in matters relating to proficiency and classroom-based assessment for language faculty and graduate students wanting to revise their testing practices. Through individual and departmental consultations and plenary workshops, this position provides not only language faculty with professional development but also informs teaching and testing practices to benefit student learning (Scarino 2013:310). Qualitative evidence collected through instructors' survey responses and personal communications have provided useful feedback on which workshop testing topics and issues have made a meaningful difference in teaching and testing practices, which still present challenges and which will need future attention.

Friday 16th September

15.00-15.30

Lecture Theatre 2

Discovering Mongolian teachers' epistemological perspectives of language assessment for creation of an in-service training

David L. Chiesa and Sara T. Cushing, Georgia State University, USA

In many developing countries around the world, teacher development programs for language teachers do not explicitly include language assessment as part of the curriculum. The scope of second language teacher education has thus focused primarily on classroom teaching skills and pedagogic issues in conjunction with knowledge about language and language learning (Freeman, 2006). The centrality of assessment in teachers' professional practices is argued as not only

important but also essential, because assessment is always situated in specific institutional and policy contexts (Ofra Inbar-Lourie, 2013) that can play a role in a language teachers' practice and professional identity. Recently, Scarino (2013) believes there is a need to expand our understanding of language assessment literacy for teachers and include the assessment perceptions the instructors themselves bring to the teaching and assessment encounter.

In order to address Scarino's (2013) call to action with language teachers from the developing world, this survey study investigates the epistemological perspectives of 50 Mongolian university English teachers by asking three questions: 1) what implicit knowledge of language assessment do Mongolian university English teachers have; 2) what knowledge of language assessment do Mongolian university teachers of English believe is important (or not) for language educators to possess; and 3) what procedural knowledge of language assessment do Mongolian language teachers possess? These three questions were the guiding framework for the research project in which a survey instrument was developed, piloted, and delivered on the Internet (via. the U.S. Embassy in Ulaanbaatar using Georgia State University's Qualtrics online survey software) to elicit the assessment training needs of Mongolian teachers. The results were utilized to inform the design of a two-week, 45-hour, in-service workshop in Ulaanbaatar on assessment knowledge, skills, and principles. The results also reveal newly derived empirical content for assessment literacy within to frame in-service trainings for the EFL context.

Friday 16th September

15.30-16.00

Lecture Theatre 3

Singing from the same hymn sheet? What language assessment literacy means to language teachers.

Vivien Berry, British Council, United Kingdom

Sonia Munro, University of Huddersfield, United Kingdom

Susan Sheehan, University of Huddersfield, United Kingdom

This presentation focuses on a project which investigated language assessment literacy practices in the classroom. The project sought to bring teachers more directly into the assessment literacy debate and provide them with training materials which meet their stated needs. With the exception of a case study following three Chinese University teachers (Xu 2015), no teachers have been asked directly about their attitudes to assessment or their specific training needs.

Teachers' attitudes and beliefs are frequently cited as exerting a powerful role in shaping their decisions, judgments and behaviour (see for example: Borg, 2006; Kagan, 1992). Therefore, exploring teachers' current levels of assessment literacy may help teacher educators to better understand the factors which promote or prevent effective assessment, and thus contribute to more targeted teacher education. However, an investigation into what is happening in classes may be of little value without exploring why it is happening.

The first part of the project was based on interviews and observations. The interviews drew on Davies' (2008) components of assessment literacy which he defined as Skills, Knowledge and Principles. In the interviews, teachers were asked to estimate their understanding of the components of the assessment process and asked to indicate how much they would like to learn about each individual component. Observations were conducted which focussed on teacher assessment practices. Post-observation interviews were conducted with the teachers. The observations and interviews were conducted at the international study centre of a British university. Focus group discussions were held at teaching centres attached to a major international organisation overseas. These served to confirm the earlier findings. The project culminated in the creation of a set of on-line training materials. The presentation will describe the project, its findings and conclude with a discussion of the training materials.

Friday 16th September

15.30-16.00

Lecture Theatre 2

Delivering language assessment literacy in the United Arab Emirates and Vietnam

Gwendydd Caudwell and Judith Fairbairn, British Council, United Kingdom

This paper reports on two experiences working with country curriculum developers and teachers in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Vietnam. The British Council was tasked with improving the language assessment literacy of education professionals who would then cascade their knowledge to other English language teachers across their countries with the objective to improve assessments produced within their respective countries. The training focused on language testing theory and its practical application within their contexts.

Both training programmes involved a blended learning approach of face-to-face and online training. The training in the UAE took place in mid-2014 and involved three one-week face-to-face trainings over the course of three months, with email training support provided between sessions. In late 2015, a similar request for English language assessment literacy training for teachers came from Vietnam. The training took place in early 2016 and was for one week and then moved onto a web-based training website with weekly lessons, quizzes and activities. The two different approaches were not without their challenges and many learning points were collected.

This paper will describe the two approaches and include practical information on what to consider when structuring and delivering a face-to-face and web-based training course. Areas covered will include the importance of conducting a comprehensive needs analysis prior to designing a training programme which takes into consideration the level of English and assessment literacy of the participants, as well as a discussion on our experience with balancing the needs of different stakeholder groups.

Poster Abstracts

Friday 16th September

13.00-14:30

Management school

A model to evaluate assessment literacy in Mexican Higher Education

Ricardo de la Garza Cano, University of Southampton, United Kingdom

The importance of assessment knowledge for language teachers in higher education has increased dramatically due to accountability examinations and the crucial factor for learning a second language. In fact, teachers should assess what they are teaching in different methods that students can understand and self-evaluate their progress. Assessment does not only mean to evaluate students' outcomes, but also it includes the whole process of designing materials, administering, analysing, and interpreting the test takers' results. Moreover, it deals with the elaboration and selection of items and tasks to specific group of participants. Nevertheless, not solely teachers are responsible for assessment but also learners need to comprehend the feedback provided by teachers and the amount of assessment needs to be comprehensible for the learners in order to let the learners be aware of their progress and how to improve their mistakes (Frederiksen & Collins, 1989; Stiggins, 2002). This poster presentation describes a comprehensive model of the competences that Mexican Teachers of English in Universities need to know in order to successfully achieve this goal. This research aims at analysing the assessment competences of English teachers with the intention to identify, scrutinise and evaluate different teachers' needs to have better professional development courses. This is an on-going research study divided in three stages. The first one is the administration of a questionnaire that analyses the teachers' knowledge of assessment with the purpose to identify lack of knowledge in Mexican teachers of English. The second stage is the elaboration of an assessment course to provide teachers with the crucial aspects of language testing and assessment. The third part is to observe a variety of teachers to identify the methods of assessment for learning and the methods of delivering feedback. This research has a large number of implications not only for assessment purposes but also for the improvement of teaching quality in Mexico.

Developing assessment literacy through engagement with assessment practices

Tania Horak, Dan Waller and Elena Gandini, University of Central Lancashire, United Kingdom

Non-specialist everyday testing practitioners may not be able to engage with testing theory and key concepts sufficiently due to use of extensive metalanguage and specialist terminology in the field of assessment. In order to overcome this, we will aim to forefront practice backed up by accessible terminology in producing our revised writing criteria and associated materials for the written paper of TELL (an EAP-oriented exam produced at UCLan). In this instance, by forefronting practice we mean facilitating teachers unpacking the theory through direct practical application as opposed to theory-fronted training. We believe this would be an effective approach

due to Prabhu's (1990) concept of 'plausibility,' i.e. teachers will act on what they see will work in their classrooms. Our project aims to produce empirically-based and theoretically underpinned marking criteria which maximize accessibility and usability for all users as well as enhancing positive washback. We feel it is important to consider teachers at this early stage of our project since teacher factors are instrumental in promoting any potential positive washback from exams (Watanabe 2004). While washback is generally seen as the effect on students' learning prior to assessment, we believe it can also be a powerful tool in teacher learning (CPD). Our target would be EAP teachers of students whose end-point of their studies is the TELL exam, typically international pre-sessional/foundation students. We hope to thus promote academic assessment literacy by actively highlighting to teachers the connection between models of writing, the TELL marking criteria and assessment practices (such as holistic v. analytic marking), in order for them to better teach good writing practices, and achieve our goal of positive washback from TELL.

Towards a comprehensive, empirical model of language assessment literacy – Pilot results from a validation study

Benjamin Kremmel, University of Nottingham, United Kingdom & University of Innsbruck, Austria

Luke Harding, Lancaster University, United Kingdom

Several scholars have suggested different models and components of language assessment literacy (LAL) for teachers, testing practitioners, and other stakeholders (Brindley, 2001; Inbar-Lourie, 2008; Fulcher, 2012; Taylor, 2013). With the exception of Fulcher (2012), however, these models have been developed through a method of abstracting from theoretical concepts to arrive at prescribed sets of components. As such, these models remain theoretical in nature, and represent the perspectives of language assessment researchers rather than stakeholders themselves. The present study aims to address this issue by developing a comprehensive understanding of LAL needs across stakeholder groups through the use of an empirically-validated survey instrument which will provide evidence of (a) the distinguishability of hypothetically different dimensions of language assessment literacy, and (b) the needs, lacks and wants of different stakeholder groups with respect to identified dimensions.

The poster will report on findings from the piloting of the language assessment literacy questionnaire, which was administered to respondents from a range of different stakeholder groups to gauge their perceptions of the LAL needs of their peers. The poster will describe the results of the expert review and pretesting stages, and present emerging results of respondents' views of their peers' LAL requirements. The poster will also illustrate how the model of empirically-based LAL factors compares to theoretical LAL models, such as that proposed by Taylor (2013).

Investigation of teacher hiring policy and language assessment literacy development

Jiyoon Lee, University of Maryland Baltimore County, USA

This research study explored the foreign language teacher preparation and hiring policies in Finland, South Korea, and the U.S. to understand whether there exists any relationship between the policies and teachers' language assessment literacy (LAL) development. Finland and South Korea were selected for their students' impressive performance on international tests (e.g., the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA)) but with drastically different approaches to education. The U.S. was included for the recent new mandates and reforms in teacher preparation institutions (e.g., edTPA).

LAL can be defined as education stakeholders' understanding of assessment practices and knowledge about language in relation to instruction (Inbar-Lourie, 2008; Malone, 2013; Popham, 2011; Stiggins, 1997). The significance of teachers' assessment literacy is well documented in Fulcher (2012). While presenting circumstances that demand teachers' deeper understanding of assessment, he argued teachers are in need of practical and direct information they can rely on to develop their assessment literacy.

Taking Davies (2008)' framework of LAL, this study examined whether those three countries' teacher preparation and hiring policies specify three basic elements of LAL; skills, knowledge, and principles. It also investigated whether they provide ways to promote teachers' LAL in relation to those elements. It also studied whether teacher preparation institutions provide curricula that can support teachers' LAL development concerning those elements.

The preliminary findings revealed that all three countries' teacher education policies emphasized the significance of teachers' knowledge of reliable and valid assessment. The importance of acquiring skills, knowledge, and principles of language and assessment were stated in general; however, the gaps between the policies, actual teacher preparation curricula, and teacher-certification processes were identified. This research study suggests more rigorous course work on assessment and its role in instruction. More practical experience related to assessment for pre- and in-service teachers is also recommended.

Beyond the Band Descriptors: Broadening the Assessment Literacy of Examiners and Interlocutors

Sheryl Cooke, British Council, China

The range of stakeholders who contribute to test validity is diverse (Fulcher, 2012; O'Loughlin, 2013; Inbar-Lourie, 2013; Taylor, 2013). One stakeholder group, however, is often neglected with regards to Language Assessment Literacy (LAL) training: raters and interlocutors – the examiners performing the key tasks of Oral Proficiency Interview delivery and the rating of speaking and writing. They receive rigorous, but narrow, training on applying rating criteria and performing the interlocutor role but, perhaps because they are so well versed in the mechanics of a particular test,

they are easily overlooked when it comes to LAL training. Are they simply the foot soldiers of language testing or would they – and test validity – benefit from broader LAL within this group?

This presentation shares the findings of a small-scale qualitative study of a cohort of full-time examiners for a high-stakes international test who participated in a one-day intensive LAL workshop. An assessment knowledge test was administered prior to the training session to understand what the group already knew about assessment outside of their immediate working knowledge as an examiner; the test included questions on language assessment principles and theory, item analysis and broader test use issues. After the training, a follow-up test was administered to evaluate whether there was any immediate improvement of LAL. To further understand the impact of the LAL training on their performance as examiners, other qualitative tools were used: participants were asked to reflect on their practice in an individual weekly diary, a survey was administered a month after the workshop, and a focus group to elicit collective reflection on any changes in behaviour followed. The qualitative analysis of the data and recommendations based on the results provide insight into LAL from a front-line practitioner perspective in the context of large-scale language testing in China.

Workshops

Saturday 17th September

9.00-12.15

Location: Old Engineering (Hannaford lab)

Corpus linguistics for language assessment

Dr Vaclav Brezina and Dr Dana Gablasova, Lancaster University

In this workshop, we will discuss how corpora and corpus methods can be applied in language testing. The first part of the workshop will provide a theoretical introduction to the principles that underlie the use of corpus techniques and different types of corpora. We will then focus on how corpus evidence can be used at different stages of test development and validation. In the second, practical part of the workshop, which will take place in a computer lab, we will introduce a range of foundational corpus techniques including concordancing and collocational analysis. The participants will have an opportunity to work with existing corpora as well as to create their own corpora in their field of interest.

Saturday 17th September

9.00-12.15

Location: Management School Lab A001

Critical discourse analysis for language assessment

Dr Johann Unger, Lancaster University

In this workshop participants will be invited to consider the relationship between language assessment as a social phenomenon and politics in the broadest sense, from state-level policies to classroom-level practices. While the role of politics in language assessment has been discussed extensively by a number of scholars, it has not necessarily been subjected to systematic and theoretically rigorous analysis. Participants will be introduced to (or reminded of) the key principles of critical discourse studies (CDS) as an interdisciplinary endeavour, and the methodologies typically associated with one specific form of CDS, the discourse-historical approach. There will follow an opportunity to explore how these could be applied to a range of assessment-related contexts, including the language of test instructions and items, government language policies related to immigration, and media discourse on language assessment. In advance of the workshop, participants are invited to think about examples of language assessment contexts they feel are ideologically fraught or ethically problematic, and should come prepared to briefly describe one or two of these to the other participants.

Saturday 17th September

9.00-12.15

Location: Charles Carter A19

Ethnographic approaches for language assessment

Literacy studies and ethnography: implications for language assessments

Professor Uta Papen, Lancaster University

This workshop will be divided into three parts. Responding to the symposium's theme of 'broadening', in the first part I will introduce the subfield of linguistics that I work in: literacy studies. Together we will look at the basic concepts and aims of literacy studies and what these imply for language assessment. You will see that as literacy researchers we understand language in ways that challenge and put into question the relevance of assessments. I will draw on my own research on health literacy to illustrate this.

In the second part of the workshop, we will take a closer look at ethnography, an approach used within literacy studies and other areas of applied linguistics. We will seek to understand the basic premises of ethnography and what these might mean for language testing research and practice. Ethnographic research methods are being used by a minority of testing researchers and you will briefly describe some of this research. This includes studies that examine test taking situations and test takers' behaviour, research that seeks to identify authentic assessment criteria and, finally, work on how test scores are being interpreted and used by university admissions tutors. In this part I will also briefly share with you my experiences of a recent project to teach English literacy to young deaf people in India. How to measure or test learning in this project was a key challenge.

Based on what we learned in parts 1 and 2 of the workshop about ethnography, in the third part of the morning, I will invite you to discuss the potential role of ethnography in your own work. This will include thinking about how an ethnographic approach could possibly inform your practice as a tester, when developing assessments or when examining their relevance and use. As part of this, we will be talking about the challenges of bringing the qualitative and highly contextual approach of ethnography into the field of language and educational testing which is dominated by quantitative approaches and 'scientific' paradigms.

Saturday 17th September

9.00-12.15

Location: Ash House PC Hub zone 1-2-3

Psycholinguistic approaches for language assessment

Dr Tineke Brunfaut, Dr Marije Michel and Dr Patrick Rebuschat, Lancaster University

In this workshop we will introduce several psycholinguistic methods and tools that have been used or have potential for use in language assessment research. These include verbal protocols, eye-tracking, keystroke logging, working memory tests, and individual differences questionnaires. We will point you to recent work in language assessment that has relied on these methods and we will discuss the type of questions that may be answered by means of these methods. During four hands-on activities you will have the chance to try out some of the tools (e.g., eye-tracking, keystroke logging, working memory tests, and individual difference questionnaires) yourself.

*Share your experience and
pictures at the symposium*



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