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Papers in Language Testing and Assessment
An international journal of the Association for Language Testing and Assessment of Australia and New Zealand.

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Special Issue, Part 1: Assessing Language in Higher Education

Guest Editor: Kathryn Hill

CONTENTS

Introduction

Kathryn Hill, Latrobe University, University of Melbourne ............................................................. ii

Information for contributors .............................................................................................................. iii

Articles

The use of semi-scripted speech in a listening placement test for university students
Martyn Clark, University of Maryland ................................................................................................ 1

Development of a test of speaking proficiency in multiple languages
India Plough, Residential College in the Arts and Humanities, Michigan State University ...................... 27

Determining aspects of text difficulty for the Sign Language of the Netherlands (NGT) Functional Assessment instrument
Annieck van den Broek-Laven, E. Boers-Visker & B. van den Bogaerde, Hogeschool Utrecht, University of Applied Sciences ......................................................................................... 53

The role of word recognition skill in academic success across disciplines in an ELF university setting
Michael Harrington, University of Queensland, Australia & Thomas Roche, Southern Cross University College, Australia ........................................................................................................... 76
Introduction

Towards the end of 2013 we sent out a call for expressions of interest, in the form of abstract proposals, for contributions to a special issue on ‘Assessing Language in Higher Education’. The number and quality of submissions received has resulted in the decision to publish the special issue in two parts, with Part 2 scheduled to appear early in 2015. Contributions represent a diverse range of educational contexts and include papers on pre-entry testing, post-entry diagnostic & placement, in-course assessment and exit-level assessment.

The four papers appearing here in Part 1 involve assessment of the Sign Language of the Netherlands (NGT) (van den Broek-Laven, Boers-Visker & van den Bogaerde) and a range of foreign languages (Plough) as well as ESL (Clark), and EFL (Harrington & Roche) and span the Netherlands and Oman as well as the USA.

The studies described in Part 1 are innovative in a number of respects. In particular, Van den Broek-Laven, et al investigate whether specific features of signed text can be used to predict text difficulty and Clark investigates the feasibility of using semi-scripted speech in a listening placement test. The sensitivity of assessment procedures to local contexts is a theme which runs across the two parts. Plough, for example, describes a project to replace external assessment procedures for exit-level assessment of “commonly and less commonly taught languages” using an ‘inclusive design’ while Harrington and Roche consider the predictive validity of a timed Yes/No vocabulary in an English-as-a-Lingua-Franca setting.

The authors are to be congratulated for their excellent contributions. However, it is also important to acknowledge the work of the reviewers, who have played a critical role in the production of this special issue.

Part 2 of the special issue on ‘Assessing Language in Higher Education’ includes papers on pre-entry testing, post-entry diagnostic & placement, in-course assessment and exit-level assessment and accreditation in Egypt, China, USA, Pacific and Columbia.

Kathryn Hill

Guest Editor

La Trobe University, University of Melbourne
Information for contributors

*Papers in Language Testing and Assessment* is a peer reviewed international journal which publishes research, commentary and review articles of interest to its readership. It is published annually or biannually and is freely available online at ALTAANZ (http://www.altaanz.org/), and at the Language Testing Research Centre (http://ltrc.unimelb.edu.au/).

Submissions can be made at any time throughout the year and should be sent to the Editorial Assistant at plta.editor@gmail.com as an email attachment. Correspondence on editorial matters should be addressed to the Editor at plta.editor@gmail.com.

*Papers in Language Testing and Assessment* accepts original research papers (max. 7,000-8,000 words), essays/discussion papers on theory (max. 5,000 words), book reviews (1,000-2,000 words) and test reviews (1,000-2,000 words).

Manuscripts should be prepared according to the following guidelines:

- Articles should be no more than 8,000 words in length, including notes and tables but excluding references and appendices.
- Articles should be preceded by an abstract of no more than 200 words and by up to 5 key words.
- Sections of articles should be headed, but not numbered.
- Referencing should conform to APA 6th style as set out in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 6th Edition*. Examples of APA 6th referencing can be found at https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/.
- Single quotation marks should be used for short quotations. Double quotation marks should be used within single quotation marks to indicate quoted material in the original source.
- Quotations of more than four lines should be indented and separated from the main text by a blank line above and below.
- Tables should be numbered consecutively, and figures should be numbered in another consecutive series.
- Each table and figure should have a brief explanatory title.
- Table titles should be placed above the table, and figure titles should be placed below the figure.