



APPL924

Language Testing and Evaluation

S1 Day 2018

Dept of Linguistics

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

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Credit points

4

Prerequisites

Admission to MAppLing or PGDipAppLing or MAppLingTESOL or
MTransInterMAppLingTESOL

Corequisites

Co-badged status

APPL924 External

Unit description

This unit explains key concepts and issues in language testing and provides students with principles and techniques for designing and evaluating language tests and assessment tasks. Functions of language tests, models of language proficiency, and assessment of language skills and components are discussed in this unit. The unit also focuses on other issues such as the reliability and validity of language tests in social contexts.

Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates>

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

- Identify a range of purposes for assessment in language learning programs
- Appraise issues and challenges in assessing language skills and components
- Identify and use relevant language testing and assessment resources
- Demonstrate familiarity with current issues and debates concerning the nature of

language proficiency and how it is assessed

Identify key features of quality assessment and apply them to language tests and assessment tasks in use to evaluate their usefulness

Define and describe key terms and concepts in language testing and assessment

Evaluate test usefulness using available frameworks

General Assessment Information

Note: How to apply for a late submission of an assignment

All requests for special consideration, including extensions, must be submitted via [ASK.mq.edu.au](https://ask.mq.edu.au) and provide suitable supporting documentation

Late Assignment Submission

- Late submissions without an extension will receive a penalty of 5% of the total mark available for the assignment per day
- Late submission of an assignment without an extension will not be permitted after marks have been released to the rest of the class.
- Extensions will only be given in special circumstances, and can be requested by completing the Special Consideration request at ask.mq.edu.au and providing the requisite supporting documentation.
- For more information on Special Consideration, see the university website <https://students.mq.edu.au/study/my-study-program/special-consideration>
- Assignments submitted after the deadline, regardless of the reason, will be marked and returned at a date determined by the unit convenor.
- Extensions cannot continue beyond the start of the following semester, and students should be aware that long extensions may impact graduation dates.

| <u>Assessment Name</u> | <u>Weight</u> | <u>Due Date/Time</u> |
|---|---------------|--|
| Assignment 1 (Annotated Bibliography) | 25% | Sunday March 25th at 23:55 Sydney Time |
| Assignment 2 (Essay: Use the AB and write a review paper on the chosen topic) | 30% | Sunday April 22nd at 23:55 Sydney Time |
| Assignment 3 (Test review & evaluation) | 40% | Sunday June 24th at 23:55 Sydney Time |
| Active participation (classroom and online discussion and presentations) | 5% | All through the semester |

Assessment Tasks

| Name | Weighting | Hurdle | Due |
|-------------------------------|-----------|--------|----------|
| <u>Annotated Bibliography</u> | 25% | No | 25/03/18 |
| <u>Review Paper</u> | 30% | No | 22/04/18 |
| <u>Test Review</u> | 40% | No | 24/06/18 |
| <u>Active participation</u> | 5% | No | 26/06/18 |

Annotated Bibliography

Due: **25/03/18**

Weighting: **25%**

Choose one of the four communication skills (listening, reading, speaking, writing), and prepare an Annotated Bibliography on the challenges of testing the skill. The challenge may be related to different aspects of assessing the skill from the construct definition (how the skill is defined), using appropriate test materials, setting criteria for assessment (e.g. rating scales) to the scoring and interpretation of performance. You may choose to focus on one of these themes or a combination of them, but please be advised that the main focus of the assignment is on “challenges” as perceived by test developers or test score users.

For more information about this assignment see the assignment information and submission in iLearn.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Appraise issues and challenges in assessing language skills and components
- Identify and use relevant language testing and assessment resources
- Demonstrate familiarity with current issues and debates concerning the nature of language proficiency and how it is assessed
- Define and describe key terms and concepts in language testing and assessment

Review Paper

Due: **22/04/18**

Weighting: **30%**

This assignment requires you to change your AB (Assignment 1) into a review paper. Use your AB (the introduction, the annotations and reflections, and the conclusion) and write an essay to discuss and highlight the major problems and challenges of assessing the communication skill you have chosen. The AB should provide you with enough content to write the review paper, however, you may want to do further research and add more content if necessary to enhance your review paper. Attend to the comments you received on your AB to improve your second

assignment. The structure of the review paper will follow an introduction, body and conclusion as elaborated below.

For more information about this assignment see the assignment information and submission in iLearn.

On successful completion you will be able to:

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Test Review

Due: **24/06/18**

Weighting: **40%**

Goals: The goals of this assignment are to provide you with an opportunity to:

- demonstrate your understanding of the relationship between theory and practice in language testing
- evaluate a language test relevant to your own professional context

This is an extension of Assignment 2 and involves an evaluative commentary on a language test of your choice. You may wish to look at a well-known public language proficiency test (such as the IELTS, TOEFL, or Pearson) or you may want to examine a test that is used in the context in which you work.

You may choose to evaluate either the whole test or a single component of it, such as the reading or the speaking module. If you choose to evaluate a large-scale test you will probably find that the latter option is more manageable. Use the six categories in Bachman and Palmer (1996, Chapter 2) of test usefulness framework (authenticity, reliability, validity, practicality, interactiveness, and impact) as a way of organizing your evaluation of the test or its component. You may choose to include all the six features or you may choose some of them depending on the scope and focus of your evaluation.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Identify a range of purposes for assessment in language learning programs
- Demonstrate familiarity with current issues and debates concerning the nature of language proficiency and how it is assessed

- Identify key features of quality assessment and apply them to language tests and assessment tasks in use to evaluate their usefulness
- Evaluate test usefulness using available frameworks

Active participation

Due: **26/06/18**

Weighting: **5%**

Both internal (on-campus) and external (distance) students should take part in teaching and learning activities throughout the semester. For internal students, active participation includes classroom attendance, and participation in face-to-face in-class, and online discussion and classroom presentations.

For external students, active participation includes postings in “Forum” in iLearn and discussion of different topics related to the unit, and a group presentation. Each student should have at least 3 postings in iLearn related to the topics of the unit. Only those postings are counted for active participation that is initiated by the student and is not a response to an initiated one. You are encouraged to post a brief report of the papers you find and read on each of the unit topics. Group presentations are another part of active participation. Students who share similar areas of interest (for example, interested in the same communication skill) can form a group to further discuss their topic and prepare a group presentation to be posted in iLearn.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Demonstrate familiarity with current issues and debates concerning the nature of language proficiency and how it is assessed
- Define and describe key terms and concepts in language testing and assessment

Delivery and Resources

This unit is offered both face-to-face and online. The face-to-face mode will include weekly lectures and on-campus students must attend classes. Online mode covers the same topics as listed in the unit schedule and distance students must access and read unit materials and perform learning activities from folders in iLearn. Both internal, on-campus, and external students are encouraged to participate in online discussion of the topics and post their reflections in general “Forum”. They are also urged to use “Glossary” to post concise definition of key terms and concepts related to language testing and assessment.

Unit Schedule

| Week | Topic | Lecturer | Readings | |
|------|-------|----------|----------|------------|
| Date | | | Required | Additional |
| | | | | |

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|--|--|-------------|---|---|
| 1 | Introduction to the unit (Review of the unit outline & assessment tasks) + Participants' backgrounds & interests | Mehdi Riazi | -- | -- |
| 26/ 02/18 | | | | |
| 2 | Teaching and Testing (Backwash effect) | Mehdi Riazi | Hughes (2008) Chapter 1 | -- |
| 05/ 03/18 | | | | |
| 3 | Why testing? Purposes of language tests | Mehdi Riazi | Hughes (2008) Chapters 3 (pp. 11-19) | Bachman (1990) Chapter 3 (pp. 54-72) |
| 12/ 03/18 | | | | |
| 4 | Quality features of language tests: Test usefulness framework | Mehdi Riazi | Hughes (2008) Chapters 4 & 5 | Bachman & Palmer (1996) Chapter 2 |
| 19/ 03/18 | | | | |
| 5 | Principles of good practice in test development | Mehdi Riazi | EALTA Principles of good practice+ ETS Guidelines for best test development | Assignment 1 is due on Sunday March 26th at 23:55 Sydney time |
| 26/ 03/18 | | | | |
| 6 | What to test & how to test? Designing a language test: Stages in test construction + Test specifications | Mehdi Riazi | Hughes (2008) Chapter 7 | *Davidson (2013) |
| 02/ 04/18 | | | | |
| 7 | Interpreting test scores: Norm-referenced vs. Criterion-referenced tests | Mehdi Riazi | Hughes (2008) Chapters 3 (pp. 19-25) | Bachman (1990) Chapter 3 (pp. 72-80) |
| 09/ 04/18 | | | | |
| Mid-term Break (16-29 April) Assignment 2 is due on Sunday April 23rd at 23:55 Sydney Time | | | | |

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|--------------|--|---------------|---|---|
| 8 | Task-based Language Assessment (TBLA) | Stephen Moore | <i>Language Testing</i> (2002). The special issue on TBLA | *Brindley (2013) |
| 30/ 04/18 | | | | |
| 9 | Language testing and assessment in social contexts | Stephen Moore | McNamara (2000) Chapter 7 Hamp-Lyons (2000) | McNamara & Roever (2006) Chapter 2 |
| 07/ 05/18 | | | | |
| 10 | Language testing and assessment in social contexts | Stephen Moore | McNamara (2000) Chapter 7 Hamp-Lyons (2000) | McNamara & Roever (2006) Chapter 2 |
| 14/ 05/18 | | | | |
| 11 | Assessing Listening & Reading | Mehdi Riazi | Hughes (2008) Chapters 11 & 12 | *Koda (2013) *Brindley (1998) *Ockey (2013) |
| 21/ 05/18 | | | | |
| 12 | Assessing Speaking | Mehdi Riazi | Hughes (2008) Chapter 10 | *Ginther (2013) |
| 28/ 05/18 | | | | |
| 13 | Assessing Writing | Mehdi Riazi | Hughes (2008) Chapter 9 | *Weigle (2002) Chapter 5 *Weigle (2013) Assignment 3 due on Sunday June 25th at 23:55 Sydney Time |
| 04/ 06/18 | | | | |

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central) (<https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central>). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

- [Academic Appeals Policy](#)
- [Academic Integrity Policy](#)
- [Academic Progression Policy](#)
- [Assessment Policy](#)

- [Fitness to Practice Procedure](#)
- [Grade Appeal Policy](#)
- [Complaint Management Procedure for Students and Members of the Public](#)
- [Special Consideration Policy](#) (**Note:** *The Special Consideration Policy is effective from 4 December 2017 and replaces the Disruption to Studies Policy.*)

Undergraduate students seeking more policy resources can visit the [Student Policy Gateway](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/student-policy-gateway) (<https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/student-policy-gateway>). It is your one-stop-shop for the key policies you need to know about throughout your undergraduate student journey.

If you would like to see all the policies relevant to Learning and Teaching visit [Policy Central](http://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central) (<http://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central>).

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: <https://students.mq.edu.au/study/getting-started/student-conduct>

Results

Results shown in *iLearn*, or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in [eStudent](#). For more information visit ask.mq.edu.au.

Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

Learning Skills

Learning Skills (mq.edu.au/learningskills) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to improve your marks and take control of your study.

- [Workshops](#)
- [StudyWise](#)
- [Academic Integrity Module for Students](#)
- [Ask a Learning Adviser](#)

Student Services and Support

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the [Disability Service](#) who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

Student Enquiries

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at ask.mq.edu.au

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/information_technology/help/.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use of IT Resources Policy](#). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

Graduate Capabilities

PG - Capable of Professional and Personal Judgment and Initiative

Our postgraduates will demonstrate a high standard of discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgment. They will have the ability to make informed choices and decisions that reflect both the nature of their professional work and their personal perspectives.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Identify a range of purposes for assessment in language learning programs
- Appraise issues and challenges in assessing language skills and components
- Demonstrate familiarity with current issues and debates concerning the nature of language proficiency and how it is assessed
- Identify key features of quality assessment and apply them to language tests and assessment tasks in use to evaluate their usefulness
- Evaluate test usefulness using available frameworks

Assessment tasks

- Review Paper
- Test Review

PG - Discipline Knowledge and Skills

Our postgraduates will be able to demonstrate a significantly enhanced depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content knowledge in their chosen fields.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Identify a range of purposes for assessment in language learning programs
- Appraise issues and challenges in assessing language skills and components
- Identify and use relevant language testing and assessment resources
- Demonstrate familiarity with current issues and debates concerning the nature of

language proficiency and how it is assessed

- Identify key features of quality assessment and apply them to language tests and assessment tasks in use to evaluate their usefulness
- Define and describe key terms and concepts in language testing and assessment

Assessment tasks

- Annotated Bibliography
- Review Paper
- Test Review

PG - Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

Our postgraduates will be capable of utilising and reflecting on prior knowledge and experience, of applying higher level critical thinking skills, and of integrating and synthesising learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments. A characteristic of this form of thinking is the generation of new, professionally oriented knowledge through personal or group-based critique of practice and theory.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Appraise issues and challenges in assessing language skills and components
- Identify and use relevant language testing and assessment resources
- Demonstrate familiarity with current issues and debates concerning the nature of language proficiency and how it is assessed
- Identify key features of quality assessment and apply them to language tests and assessment tasks in use to evaluate their usefulness
- Evaluate test usefulness using available frameworks

Assessment tasks

- Annotated Bibliography
- Review Paper
- Test Review

PG - Research and Problem Solving Capability

Our postgraduates will be capable of systematic enquiry; able to use research skills to create new knowledge that can be applied to real world issues, or contribute to a field of study or practice to enhance society. They will be capable of creative questioning, problem finding and problem solving.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Appraise issues and challenges in assessing language skills and components
- Identify key features of quality assessment and apply them to language tests and assessment tasks in use to evaluate their usefulness
- Evaluate test usefulness using available frameworks

Assessment tasks

- Annotated Bibliography
- Review Paper
- Test Review

PG - Effective Communication

Our postgraduates will be able to communicate effectively and convey their views to different social, cultural, and professional audiences. They will be able to use a variety of technologically supported media to communicate with empathy using a range of written, spoken or visual formats.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Demonstrate familiarity with current issues and debates concerning the nature of language proficiency and how it is assessed
- Define and describe key terms and concepts in language testing and assessment
- Evaluate test usefulness using available frameworks

Assessment tasks

- Annotated Bibliography
- Review Paper
- Test Review

PG - Engaged and Responsible, Active and Ethical Citizens

Our postgraduates will be ethically aware and capable of confident transformative action in relation to their professional responsibilities and the wider community. They will have a sense of connectedness with others and country and have a sense of mutual obligation. They will be able to appreciate the impact of their professional roles for social justice and inclusion related to national and global issues

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Identify key features of quality assessment and apply them to language tests and

assessment tasks in use to evaluate their usefulness

- Evaluate test usefulness using available frameworks

Assessment task

- Test Review