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An international journal of the Association for Language Testing
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Special Issue, Part 1: Assessing Language in Higher Education

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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

Latrobe 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.