



Language Assessment Matters

Issue #18 – September 2024

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MESSAGE FROM OUR CO-PRESIDENTS

Catch up on all the latest news in the Co-Presidents' welcome message.

GET TO KNOW OUR COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Read our updated bios to find out what brings us to ALTAANZ; the different hats we wear; and what spins our wheels about language assessment!

ALTAANZ FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF PD IN OUR COMMUNITY

Check out the ALTAANZ-funded professional development events held in our community. Reports are in from Australia's Northern Territory, and from Auckland, New Zealand.

- NT: Language Teachers & Japan Foundation meet at desert crossroads – *Mparntwe* (Alice Springs)
- NZ: Resource development initiative to boost writing literacy in secondary schools

UPDATES & DIARY DATES

- SiLA update – September issue imminent; Special issue pending
- ALTAANZ Student reps – Conference warm-up events and a meeting to share funding application tips
- Nominations call closes 31 October – Penny McKay Memorial Award

CONFERENCES & OUR AGM

The countdown to the joint conference begins! The [ALAA/ALANZ/ALTAANZ 2024 Conference](#) is coming up on 25–27 November in **LAUNCESTON**, Tasmania, with pre-

conference workshops on Sunday 24 November.

The conference **PROGRAM IS NOW LIVE**. Explore the full schedule, including keynote presentations, concurrent sessions, and social events at the [conference program page](#). [Registration](#) is open. We hope to see you there!

OUR AGM will be held hybrid-style at the conference in Tasmania: 1:10pm - 2:10pm AEDT Tuesday, 26 November, 2024, with the option to join via Zoom if you can't be there in person.

1 OCT: 2024 PAUL BOURKE AWARD LECTURE

Canberra-based ALTAANZ members can [register](#) to hear from our own **Denise Angelo** who will be presenting on Indigenous language landscapes: Why a fuller understanding of Indigenous peoples' language contexts is important. It will be an in-person only event.

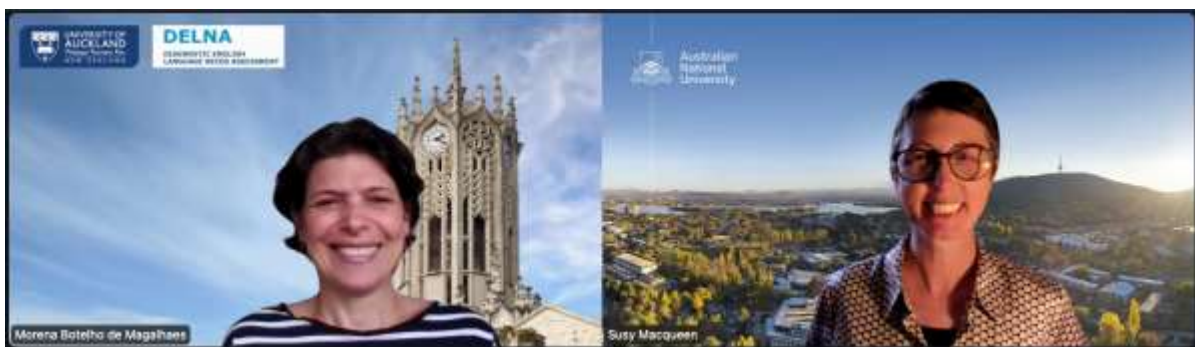
Tuesday 1st October 2024, 6:30pm - 8:00pm, followed by light refreshments
Lecture Theatre 1, Hedley Bull Building, Garran Rd, Australian National University, Canberra

LCNAU COLLOQUIUM IN SYDNEY: Registrations are now open for the [Languages and Cultures Network for Australian Universities \(LCNAU\) Eighth Biennial Colloquium](#) hosted by the [University of Sydney's School of Languages and Cultures](#) on 27–29 November 2024. The colloquium features keynotes from a host of experts from Australia and beyond.

NEXT YEAR: Planning for the **ALTAANZ ONLINE CONFERENCE FOR 2025** is underway. The theme and dates are currently being finalised, so watch this space for further details and updates.

PRESIDENTS' WELCOME

Message from Co-Presidents



ALTAANZ Co-Presidents Morena Botelho de Magalhaes and Susy Macqueen

SPRING GREETINGS to all ALTAANZ members in Australia, Aotearoa New Zealand and seasonal greetings elsewhere!

Professional Development Funding

We are really excited to report that our **2023 Fundraiser** has now **supported four local professional development activities** across our region. Each of the funded

activities received \$AU500 to support a professional development activity that focuses on language assessment. Funded events were all school-based assessment development activities for language teachers working in diverse learning contexts: **Dharug language** in the Sydney area, **Japanese language** in the Northern Territory and **English language** in New Zealand (two activities).

It is testimony to the breadth of our membership that we received applications across different language learning contexts in Australia and New Zealand. Reports on the professional development activities will be circulated starting with the reports in this edition from the Japanese language teachers' workshop in Australia, and the development of English literacy resources in New Zealand.

ALAA/ALANZ/ALTAANZ Conference 2024

We look forward to seeing many of you at the [ALAA/ALANZ/ALTAANZ 2024 Conference](#) in Launceston, Tasmania, 25-27 November. Registrations are open and the plenary line-up is impressive, including the **ALTAANZ-sponsored speaker, Associate Professor Noriko Iwashita** who will be speaking on the topic: *Studies on interaction for a just society: A case of assessment*. Our student representatives are working together with other association representatives on a student event, as well as creating opportunities for student presenters to prepare their papers.

ALTAANZ AGM

The ALTAANZ AGM will also take place during the joint conference at 1:10pm - 2:10pm AEDT Tuesday, 26 November, 2024. The AGM will be hybrid, with online participants joining conference attendees via Zoom. The meeting agenda and the Zoom link for the meeting will be circulated to ALTAANZ members by email. Elections for office bearers are held at the AGM. This year the positions that are up for election are:

- President/s
- Editor/s of SiLA
- New Zealand Student Representative/s
- Australian Student Representative/s
- New Zealand Teacher Representative/s
- Australian Teacher Representative/s

If you are interested in serving in the Executive Committee or would like to nominate someone, please get in touch with ALTAANZ (email: altaanz@gmail.com).

We are also starting to get ready for our standalone conference in 2025. A Conference Committee has been formed, led by Ute Knoch at the University of Melbourne. Given the success of our 2023 online conference, and the opportunity online events afford for members who do not have access to conference funding, we have decided to run the conference online again. Look out for opportunities to lead or join local in-person meetings during the conference.

With best wishes,

Susy & Morena

ALTAANZ Co-Presidents

COMMITTEE BIOS | GET TO KNOW US

Who are we? ... And what brings us here?**ALTAANZ Committee Executive team: Featuring Zoom smiles and spring flowers****Susy Macqueen, Co-President**

I am now in my fourth year as Co-President of ALTAANZ, with my wonderful colleague, Morena Botelho de Magalhães. I work at the Australian National University in Canberra, where I teach courses in *Language, Assessment & Policy*, *Second Language Acquisition*, *Teaching Languages and Research Methods*. My first teaching job was in a secondary school in Rockhampton, Queensland, and I subsequently taught English language to learners of many different ages in various world contexts. After doing a PhD on feedback and formulaic language in second language writing, I spent some years at the Language Testing Research Centre in Melbourne. I'm interested in all aspects of language testing and assessment, from classroom-based assessment to high-stakes standardized testing, but I'm especially interested in assessment that intersects language and content, such as Language Assessment for Professional Purposes (LAPP) and assessment in English-medium education.

Morena Botelho de Magalhães, Co-President

I come from an EFL/ ESOL teaching background and currently manage the University of Auckland's post-entry language assessment programme, DELNA (Diagnostic English Language Needs Assessment). My interest in language assessment started when I was finishing my undergraduate studies in Brazil and joined the rating teams in charge of marking the writing component of my university's entrance examination and Brazil's national secondary school examinations. A language testing and assessment course taught by John Read and Rosemary Erlam is the culprit for my working at DELNA and my involvement with ALTAANZ. I joined the Association as a PhD student and served as Secretary before taking on the co-presidency with Susy Macqueen. Our second term as Co-Presidents is coming to an end, and I have immense gratitude for my colleagues' generosity and hard work during this time.

Ute Knoch, Vice-President

I am the Director of the Language Testing Research Centre (LTRC) at the University of Melbourne and was involved in setting up ALTAANZ when I was the founding Co-president of the Association from 2015-2016. Since then, I have served as Vice-President from 2012-2014, and Co-President from 2010-2011. I am interested in various aspects of language assessment, including validity and validation, rater-mediated assessment, assessing languages for academic and professional purposes, and how language assessment and policy-making relate. I am looking forward to contributing to ALTAANZ in the coming years.

John Read, SiLA (ex PLTA) Co-Editor

A third-generation Kiwi, I retired as an emeritus professor in 2019 after a lengthy academic career at the University of Auckland and before that at Victoria University of Wellington. I have specialised in language testing and assessment, with particular interests in vocabulary assessment and the testing of English for academic and professional purposes. My authored books are *Assessing Vocabulary* (Cambridge 2000) and *Assessing English Proficiency for University Study* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015). I have also edited *Post-admission Language Assessment of University Students* (Springer, 2016) and co-edited *Assessing Academic Literacy in a Multilingual Society: Transition and Transformation* (Multilingual Matters, 2021). From 2002 to 2006 I was co-editor of *Language Testing* and served as President of the International Language Testing Association (ILTA) in 2011 and 2012. Although I was a founding member of ALTAANZ, being Co-Editor of SiLA was my first opportunity to serve on the executive committee.



Jason Fan, SiLA (ex PLTA) Co-Editor

I am the Deputy Director and Principal Research Fellow at the Language Testing Research Centre (LTRC), University of Melbourne, Australia. I also currently serve as the Vice President of the Asian Association for Language Assessment (AALA). ALTAANZ is a vibrant community, and I have been a member for several years. Since 2020, I have had the pleasure co-editing the ALTAANZ journal *Studies in Language Assessment* (formerly *Papers in Language Testing and Assessment*, or PLTA) with John Read. It's always exciting to connect with colleagues through ALTAANZ and to learn from their rich experiences and diverse expertise.

Julie Luxton, Teacher Representative (Aotearoa NZ)

I am currently working as a Professional Learning and Development (PLD) Facilitator for Evaluation Associates Ltd, based in Tauranga Moana, Aotearoa New Zealand, having previously worked for the Universities of Waikato and Canterbury in a similar role. I have facilitated PLD in English Language (ESOL), secondary literacy, Te Kotahitanga (culturally responsive practice to raise Māori achievement), National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) English and home-



school partnerships. I am passionate about supporting teachers in all learning areas to meet the literacy, language, cultural and learning needs of Aotearoa New Zealand's increasingly diverse student population using a teaching-as-inquiry approach. Having lived and worked in Fiji and Tonga, where my first child was born, I feel a special connection to the Pacific Islands and recent PLD work has included a focus on raising Pasifika achievement in the regions.

My teaching background is in secondary education (Years 7-13) as a teacher, literacy co-ordinator, academic dean and middle leader in English, English Language, Social Studies and Languages. I have a particular interest in formative and summative assessment and am currently the New Zealand Qualifications Authority National Moderator for English Language, as well as an IELTS examiner. I have been an active member of TESOLANZ for many years and currently have a PLD project management role on the Executive.

Somewhat sedentary in nature, in my spare time I enjoy reading, watching good movies and docos, gardening and a modicum of walking.

Catherine Hudson, Teacher Representative (Australia)

I am an EAL/D teacher specialist, teacher trainer and researcher. I have been a co-writer of and/consultant on a number of EAL/D proficiency frameworks for schools. My published research covers assessment issues related to the inclusion of Indigenous EAL/D learners in education policy and EAL/D proficiency frameworks. My current research at the Australian National University has a focus on the social and political dimensions of the second language proficiency assessment of young learners, on teacher voices in validation, and on aspects of evaluation processes. I have a particular interest in how advocacy for English language learners might benefit from the cross-fertilisation of expertise between members of the ALTAANZ community who specialise in the second language assessment of young English language learners and those of post-school learners.

Stephen Walker, Teacher Representative (Australia)

I finally came to language assessment after twenty years of language teaching, English language teacher training, curriculum design, program management and item writing undertaken in a cornucopia of exotic locations. It was however, an absolute and unexpected delight to discover that there was a whole new exciting world of language assessment to throw myself into and start a new career all over again. How lucky is that!

I work as the Academic Manager responsible for English language assessment development at the University of Queensland's English language centre, so all my work is directly focussed on designing, developing, trialling and validating language assessment. My interests include exploring how constructs of academic English language proficiency can be defined, and then operationalised in valid assessments which take account of the cognitive processes and contextual demands of academic language use. I am also interested in computer adaptive and multi-stage adaptive testing and the role played by statistical approaches such as Rasch and other IRT measurement models when developing assessment items and managing rater effects during rater mediated assessment tasks.

Denise Angelo, Teacher Representative (Australia)

My background is as a linguist, language teacher and primary teacher. I first came across the field of language assessment through the work of my (now) colleague and fellow ALTAANZ Teacher Representative, Catherine Hudson. Cath was running a workshop in Cairns in far north Queensland for a ground-breaking school-based ESL assessment project, adapting the original ESL Bandscales (1994 NLLIA) for students with Indigenous language backgrounds. I was studying in Cairns to become a primary classroom teacher at the time and somehow I got an invite. I currently work as a researcher at the Australian National University with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language researchers around Australia on their traditional and contact language, and language pedagogy, curriculum and assessment design and policy. With the other ALTAANZ Teacher Representatives, Catherine Hudson and Julie Luxton, I worked as guest editor on the 2023 special issue of *Studies in Language Assessment* (SiLA), 'Including the excluded: Young language learners and fair assessment in school and early childhood'.

Viola Lan Wei, Secretary

I am currently working at DELNA (Diagnostic English Language Needs Assessment), the University of Auckland, as an Academic Language Adviser. In my role, I meet with students who are identified as those who need support for their academic English skills. Prior to joining DELNA, I completed my PhD in Applied Linguistics at the University of Auckland under the supervision of Associate Professor Rosemary Erlam. My PhD focused on the assessment of second language learners' implicit and explicit English language knowledge, and how their age and language aptitude influence these two types of language knowledge. I am interested in research on achieving better assessment of second language learners' implicit and explicit knowledge, taking into consideration a range of learners' individual difference factors. The other research area that I have been working on is teacher cognition and teacher education.



Sharon Yahalom, Communications Officer

I am a senior lecturer in the Communication in Health Professions Education Unit (COHPE) in the Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences at Monash University. I work with nursing students to provide assistance and development of their language and clinical communication skills. I have a PhD in Applied Linguistics (Language Testing and Healthcare Communication), from The University of Melbourne. My first ALTAANZ Committee position was as post-graduate student officer back in 2014, and I currently share the Communications Officer role with the wonderful Rachel Rogan. My research interests include nursing students' experiences at clinical placement, language and communication in nursing, English for Specific Purposes, and language testing and assessment.

Ivy Chen, Treasurer

I am a Research Fellow at the Language Testing Research Centre (LTRC), University of Melbourne and have been involved with ALTAANZ since my PhD candidate days, serving as the Australian student representative. Among other activities, I have been the Reviews Editor of Studies in Language Assessment (SiLA) since 2020 and am currently serving as Treasurer on the ALTAANZ Committee. I have lectured in applied linguistics and ESL at the tertiary level and have experience teaching ESL/EFL and test preparation in Australia, Taiwan, and the US.

My first encounter with language testing as a child was negative, and something that spurred my interest in the field. I still remember that feeling of indignation when I realised that I'd been penalised for a grammatically and semantically correct response that had not fulfilled a criterium that had never been conveyed to me. My other research interests include SLA and corpus linguistics more generally, and vocabulary and individual differences more specifically.

Tiancheng (Will) Zhang, Student Representative (New Zealand)

I am getting ready to graduate this month with a PhD from the Faculty of Education and Social Work at the University of Auckland (UoA). My thesis looked at using a statistical tool called cognitive diagnostic assessment to understand and improve the Diagnostic English Language Needs Assessment (DELNA) listening assessment task, and my primary research areas include language assessment and educational statistics. From 2021 to date, I have served as the ALTAANZ student representative, and I am currently working as a Rater and Research Assistant for the DELNA programme at UoA. I have also received the DELNA PhD Scholarship and the Duolingo Doctoral Dissertation Research Award.



Rena Gao, Student Representative (Australia)

Rena is a third year PhD candidate at The University of Melbourne, supervised by Prof. Carsten Roever and Dr. Jeyhan Lau, and her research aims to propose effective evaluation metrics and evaluation framework in dialogue to assess the interactive ability and to predict the ability of interactional competence for second language speakers. This study fills the previous gap in dialogue evaluation that fails to capture the nature of interaction and engagement in human conversations, and it helps large-scale language assessment to achieve a feasible method in auto scoring of speaking assessments. She received

Duolingo's Doctoral Dissertation Award in 2022 for a computational linguistics study and a Melbourne Data Science Doctoral fellowship in 2023. Her study won the best student paper award at the 2023 ALTAANZ conference.

Annemiek Huisman, Administrative Officer

I am a research assistant at the Language Testing Research Centre (LTRC) at the University of Melbourne and have been ALTAANZ's administration officer and SiLA's (previously PLTA) editorial assistant since 2015. I hold a Master in Second Language Acquisition from the University of Amsterdam and have experience teaching Dutch as a second language in various sectors both in the Netherlands and Australia. In my role at the LTRC I am responsible for administering the Diagnostic English Language Assessment (DELA) and the Foreign Language Placement Tests. I am also involved with test development and LTRC's various research projects.



Rachel Rogan, Communications Co-Officer

Back when Oasis first formed, I was working as an English language tutor at the University of Auckland's Summer School programme while studying towards an MA in English literature. Now that Oasis might be about to reform, I am back at the UoA administering the DELNA language assessment programme and I am investigating the humanizing of test taking: how do students feel about our language assessment, and what can we do to promote their positive interaction with it? I am very lucky to be working with an inspiring group of colleagues both at the UoA and amongst the ALTAANZ

community. A newbie on the ALTAANZ Committee, I am most ably assisted by my Co-Communications Officer: the esteemed Sharon Yahalom (thanks for showing me the ropes, Sharon!). This semester I am studying language assessment formally for the first time and I'm on a 200-day streak on Duolingo. Woohoo! When not at work, chances are, I am playing tennis.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUNDING REPORT

Mparntwe — Alice Springs hosts meeting for Japanese Language teachers

By Kevin 'Darcy' Fitzgerald, President, Language Teachers Association of NT (LTANT)

In many ways Alice Springs serves as the crossroad of the centre of Australia. Known as *Mparntwe* in the local Arrernte language, for tens of thousands of years, people have come to this desert oasis. As both the local and colonial name suggest, *Mparntwe* (watering hole), or Alice Springs, has long been a source of water for weary travellers.

With this history in mind, the meeting of Japanese teachers in this central Australian town seems less peculiar. This meeting was brought together through the strong partnership between the Language Teachers' Association of the Northern Territory (LTANT) and the Japan Foundation, with support from **ALTAANZ**.

The Japan Foundation made the long journey to Alice Springs to facilitate LTANT's annual Japanese Language Professional Development Day. The event on 24th of May demonstrated the Japan Foundation's commitment to providing quality Japanese language professional learning to all Japanese teachers, wherever they may be. The in-person attendees in Alice Springs were joined by online participants in Darwin. All in all, 85% of Japanese teachers in the Northern Territory were able to join through this hybrid model.

Japan Foundation presented on a mixture of topics. Teachers were introduced to a range of new and exciting language resources, there was a session on 'What's New in Japan' and an enquiry of Japanese text comprehension. Of interest to ALTAANZ readers was the session on methods of assessing Japanese.

Senior Language Consultant **Joji Ikezu** presented this session. Mr. Ikezu has undertaken 10 postings throughout the world, visiting over 35 countries to deliver professional development for the Japan Foundation.

Mr. Ikezu began by inviting participants to reflect on the essentials of assessment: reliability, validity, authenticity and impact. These essentials guided the rest of the session as participants were challenged to consider each components efficacy against common 'tried and tested' assessment tasks. Mr. Ikezu also invited participants to shift towards 'additive' assessment methods, rather than traditional 'subtractive' tasks.

Another key contention of Mr. Ikezu's presentation was his commentary on generative AI developments. Mr. Ikezu compiled nine authentic Japanese sample text produced by Japanese language learners. He demonstrated that when these were placed through two AI programs (Chat GPT and Perplexity), an alarming discrepancy was apparent. The two AI models had very different interpretations of the sample texts' performance against the same criteria, with some very obvious errors of judgement. Whilst Mr. Ikezu promoted the use of generative AI as a supplementary assessment tool, he warned teachers against using it as a substitute.

With the rapid development of generative AI programs and the potential they serve to significantly assist teacher workloads, it is important to be reminded not to rely on them



solely. However, a valid point was made in the resulting discussion that these tools are inherently 'self-learning' and that our use of them for assessment purposes improves the efficacy of AI as an assessment tool overtime.

This fantastic opportunity for Japanese language teachers was made possible through the collaboration of LTANT, Japan Foundation and **ALTAANZ**. The impact of this is a more uniformed and best practice approach to Japanese language assessment in the Northern Territory. It has also given voice to an often-neglected region of our country – Central Australia.

< **Participants discussing the strengths and weaknesses of a sample assessment task**



Mr. Ikezu's presentation

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUNDING REPORT

Resource development initiative aims to boost writing literacy in NZ secondary schools

By Siân Waite – Head of EAL Department, Literacy Coordinator, Rosmini College & Kathryn Teeboon – Literacy Coordinator and Head of ELL, Northcote College

The New Zealand Writing Literacy Corequisite is one of two qualifications needed to achieve the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) in New Zealand, and must be achieved if students are to achieve any of the three NCEA levels. This is an extremely high-stakes assessment that has an enormous impact on students' futures. Without this assessment, students will not achieve their secondary school qualifications, impacting future job prospects and further study opportunities. For more information about this, please go to [this link](#), which breaks down the Big Ideas and Significant Learning that underpin this assessment.

The [assessment report](#) from the 2023 Writing Literacy Co-Requisite stated that "difficulties evidenced by students include using writing conventions accurately and editing and proofreading". There is a significant need for resources to help students and teachers prepare for the literacy co-requisite as evidenced by national results for New Zealand schools. National Results of the Writing Co-Requisite show that only 56% of students entered into the June 2023 Co-Requisite achieved.

In June 2024, Kathryn Teeboon from Northcote College in Auckland and Siân Waite from Rosmini College in Auckland met for a day at Northcote College to create a resource to assist students to construct better sentences. This initiative was undertaken to enhance the readiness of students sitting the Writing Literacy Co-Requisite and aimed to improve students' understanding and mastery of sentence construction. This resource is designed to be used across curriculum subjects by subject specialist teachers because a whole-school approach to literacy is required in order to thoroughly prepare students for this high-stakes assessment. This resource uses a variety of New Zealand contexts and writing conventions to allow teachers to upskill in this area. Importantly, there is no cost for school and teachers to be able to use this resource. Many of the current available resources have a cost aspect, which can be prohibitive for some schools and students.

The resource has been distributed free across New Zealand, posted on the NZ Secondary ESOL Teachers Facebook page, the CAA/Literacy Network Facebook page and also distributed to the Literacy Teachers of Aotearoa - Unite! mailing list. This resource is aimed at all subject teachers and students, not just ESL teachers. **ALTAANZ MEMBERS** who would like to access the resource can request it by email from Siân Waite, e-mail: swaite@rosmini.school.nz.

This resource contains activities for students on sentence-level features, covering sentence purposes, sentence fragments, run-on sentences, and more. There is also an explanatory note for each of the sentence-level features, explaining why this sentence-level feature is important for students to know, what the issue is, and examples and advice on how to correct the issue. The Writing Literacy Co-Requisite requires a strong grasp of sentence-level features, including, but not limited to, syntax, grammar, punctuation and the use of various sentence types to convey meaning effectively. By developing a targeted resource, we aim to provide teachers with the tools necessary to

address these components in a structured and impactful manner. The resource includes specific explanations as to the text conventions used, these explanations will be written in such a way that teachers unfamiliar with the jargon will be able to access it and teach it.

Recognising sentence fragments

Why is this important for you to know?

The reader cannot mind-read. You must make your ideas clear by completing your sentences as this helps the reader understand exactly what you mean. An incomplete sentence makes your reader confused, but they can't ask you to explain. A complete sentence must have at least a subject and a verb. The shortest complete sentence in English is *I do*.

A sentence fragment is a sentence which is an incomplete thought/idea. This problem can make your writing lose its intended meaning or clarity, which will confuse your reader.

There are three different types of sentence fragment:

1. It is missing a subject.

Example: *Beat New Zealand in the World Cup. (Who beat us?)*

2. It is missing a verb or has the wrong verb form.

Example: *Auckland's weather. (What did the weather do?)*

3. It is an incomplete thought that is missing information.

Example: *Because we are South Islanders. (What happened because they were South Islanders?)*

An example of the explanatory notes for one of the sentence-level features covered

There are also activities to complete for students, including combining sentences, rewriting sentences, writing sentences, and identification of errors.

NOTES TO TEACHERS:

This is not an English- or ESOL-specific subject resource. It can, and should, be used in any subject context. We recommend adapting these resources for your context before printing them for in-classroom use to minimise distractions from devices.

We have tried to make this resource neurodiverse friendly by doing the following:

- We have used the font, Lexend Deca, to make it easier to read.
- The font is the same all the way through, using bold and italics to emphasise examples rather than different colours.
- We have used a consistent format throughout so students and teachers know what to expect.
- We strongly recommend the use of Google ReadWrite and Speech-to-Text as another accessibility tool.
- We have aimed to use literal examples.
- We have aimed to keep all explanations clear and direct.
- This resource is broken down into chunks.
- The writing checklist helps students to remember what they need to do.

Notes on the cover page of the resource

ALTAANZ STUDENT EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

Student work-in-progress event

In the lead-up to The Applied Linguistics ALAA/ALANZ/ALTAANZ Conference 2024, student representatives from ALAA and ALTAANZ will host an online works-in-progress event for postgraduate students in October. The event will provide an opportunity for HDR students to present their current research, and we invite proposals from students in the broad fields of applied linguistics, language testing and assessment, linguistics, and translation studies. This event is particularly relevant for students who will be presenting at The Applied Linguistics ALAA/ALANZ/ALTAANZ Conference 2024 and would like an opportunity to **REHEARSE THEIR PRESENTATION**, but proposals from all students are welcome, including those who are not participating in the conference.

The online event aims to foster exchanges between HDR students in these fields and provide a relaxed environment for students to gain experience in presenting their research. It will be held on 14th October 2024, and we invite proposals by 22nd September via <https://forms.office.com/r/0r80vkqnVC>. Presentations will be 10 minutes (followed by 5 minutes of discussion). For any questions, please email tiancheng.zhang@auckland.ac.nz

Student activities at the ALAA/ALANZ/ALTAANZ Conference

ALAA/ALANZ/ALTAANZ student representatives are planning to hold the student activities on the evening of November 24th, after the pre-conference workshop. The specific details of the student activities are still being finalized, but we plan to include some icebreaker games to help everyone get to know each other. After that, we will have group discussions about the challenges faced in completing a PhD thesis. We may invite some non-student members to provide advice to the student members, and those interested will be invited to join a dinner together.

How to apply for research awards and scholarships as a PhD Candidate

On July 30, 2024, ALTAANZ Student representatives organized a webinar titled "Applying for Research Awards and Scholarships as a PhD Candidate" for student members. Host **Rena Gao** introduced ALTAANZ and the membership process. **Shengkai Yin** discussed applying for the British Council Assessment Research Award and TOEFL/ILTA Student Travel Grant, while **Tiancheng (Will) Zhang** shared insights on applying for the Duolingo English Test (DET) Dissertation Research Awards in Language Assessment. The session concluded with a Q&A and an overview of upcoming ALTAANZ events. The webinar aimed to support



student members and promote ALTAANZ's future activities, including its conference later this year.

SPEAKER BIOS:

Shengkai Yin is a joint PhD candidate at Shanghai Jiao Tong University and the University of Melbourne. His research interests include language assessment, rating scale development and validation, speaking assessment, classroom-based assessment, and critical thinking ability. He is the recipient of the Duolingo English Test (DET) Dissertation Research Award in Language Assessment in 2022, the British Council Assessment Research Award in 2023, and the TOEFL/ILTA Student Travel Grant in 2024.

Tiancheng (Will) Zhang is a recent PhD graduate from the Faculty of Education and Social Work at the University of Auckland. His research interests include language assessment and educational measurement. He received the Duolingo English Test (DET) Dissertation Research Award in Language Assessment in 2023 and the DELNA PhD Scholarship in 2021 and 2023.

HOST INFO:

Rena Gao is a PhD candidate at The University of Melbourne. Her research aims to propose effective automated evaluation metrics from natural language processing in second language dialogues to assess interactional competence. She is the recipient of the Duolingo English Test (DET) Dissertation Research Award in Language Assessment in 2022, the Melbourne Data Science Centre Doctoral Fellowship in 2023, and Best student paper at the ALTAANZ conference in 2023.

SILA UPDATE

Regular and special issues imminent

Studies in Language Assessment (SiLA) will publish a **REGULAR ISSUE** in **September 2024**, featuring seven or eight research articles and one book review. Additionally, a **SPECIAL ISSUE** is scheduled for publication in **December 2024**. Guest-edited by **Matthew Poehner** and **Ofra Inbar-Lourie**, this special issue will include five research articles and one book review, focusing on the theme "Rethinking classroom language assessment in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic."

PENNY MCKAY MEMORIAL AWARD

Penny McKay Memorial Award for an outstanding doctoral thesis on language education

Applications close: 31 October 2024

ABOUT PENNY MCKAY

As a teacher, consultant, researcher, keynote speaker and professional activist, Penny McKay was a leader in language education in Australia and internationally. Working collaboratively with educators and researchers in schools, she pioneered an approach to assessing learners' development in English as an additional language. Penny was

committed to four fundamental principles: First, assessment frameworks should be tied to empirical, classroom-based observations of English language learners of different ages and backgrounds; second, those frameworks should respect and respond to classroom teachers' understandings of and insights into their learners; third, assessment frameworks must be informed by theory as it continually develops, and finally, assessment frameworks must be designed to support learners' language development and to inform teachers in their teaching. Penny died prematurely in 2009 from ovarian cancer. She is greatly mourned by Australian and overseas language educators.

ABOUT THE AWARD

The Penny McKay Memorial Award is for an outstanding doctoral thesis which benefits the teaching and learning of second/additional languages in Australian schools and pre-schools, including Indigenous languages, community languages, foreign languages, Standard Australian English as an additional language or variety, and English as a foreign language. The Award is jointly administered by the [Applied Linguistics Association of Australia \(ALAA\)](#), the Australian Council of TESOL Associations (ACTA) and the [Association for Language Testing and Assessment of Australia and New Zealand \(ALTAANZ\)](#). The Award consists of \$500, a certificate and free conference registration at one of the host organisations' conferences to present a featured paper on the winner's research. The winner will be formally announced at the AGM of each Association and be introduced as the winner at their preferred conference in the year following their award. The winner's name and a 300 word summary of their thesis will be published in each Association's journal (ALAA – [The Australian Review of Applied Linguistics](#); ACTA – [TESOL in Context](#); ALTAANZ – [Language Assessment Matters](#)).

ELIGIBILITY FOR THE AWARD

The Award is awarded annually for a doctoral thesis submitted at an Australian university in the preceding academic year. To be eligible for consideration, the thesis should be focussed on aspects of school-based second/additional language education in Australia, such as language development, curriculum, teaching or assessment. (This requirement includes pre-school settings.) The applicant must be a verified member of ALAA or their State/Territory ACTA affiliate or ALTAANZ.

APPLICATIONS

The closing date for this year's applications is **31 OCTOBER 2024**. Please send all submissions to the Chair of the selection panel, secretary@tesol.edu.au by the deadline.

Further details are available on the [ALTAANZ Website](#). Enquiries about the 2024 Award may be directed to the Panel Chair, secretary@tesol.edu.au.

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