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English

Linguaskill 

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# Consequential Validity of Linguaskill

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Consequential validity, also referred to as test impact, washback or social consequences, refers to the potential consequences of the use of test scores on stakeholders. For example, the way a language test, particularly a high-stakes test, is designed is likely to exert influence on how candidates learn a language, how instructors teach the language in the classroom, and people's understanding of what language ability is. Whether we admit it or not, both the test developer and the test users share the responsibility to ensure that a test is used appropriately, that the test scores are interpreted correctly, and that the use of the test has a positive impact on the various stakeholders including teachers, employers, course admission officers, and so forth.

One important claim about consequential validity concerns the interpretability of the test scores. This is because for a test to be used appropriately, the meanings of the test scores must be clearly understood by the test users. The Linguaskill test results are aligned to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), an internationally accepted framework that describes language proficiency. The CEFR is also empirically validated in relation to the Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE) 'Can Do' statements that outline the range of communication tasks that a language learner can perform in a specific situation. The ALTE 'Can do' statements with reference to the CEFR make the interpretation of Linguaskill test scores straightforward, allowing test users to make informed decisions on candidates' test performances.

A relevant impact study was conducted in 2014 with approximately 1000 Egyptian university students who took BULATS, the predecessor of Linguaskill (Khalifa, et al 2014). The study found that the test had a very positive impact on these students. A majority of them felt that BULATS certification had helped them get closer to their future career goals (96%), increased their employability in the job market (91%), and had created new employment opportunities for them (89%). In addition, taking BULATS increased their motivation to study English.


Another study by Ismail, et al (2020) has been carried out to gauge how the current graduating batch from the STEM fields in a public university in Malaysia, namely University Putra Malaysia (UPM) would fare in the Linguaskill test. The results of the first phase of the study (2020) involving 197 students show that a high percentage of participants (75-87%) agreed or strongly agree that: the duration of the test is appropriate, the test is user-friendly and they had a good experience of taking the test. Generally, the participants also believe that the test is able to correctly measure their overall English language proficiency.

Second phase of the study (delayed due to pandemic) is investigating: the participants' perceptions of the test, effect of the test on students' motivation, confidence and other affective variables. This study also aims to investigate whether Linguaskill results would influence employers when considering job applications, and if the results of the test have any bearing on the successful candidates' job offers in terms of remuneration, job scope and other variables.

As consequential validity is an ongoing process, further updates will be provided.

Ismail, L., Samad, A., Razali, A. & Noordin, N. (2020). *Impact of Linguaskill on STEM Undergraduate Students' Employability Potential* (Funded Research Programme Report Series). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Assessment.

Khalifa, H., Khabbazbashi, N., Abdelsalam, S. & Elmahdy Said, M. (2014) An investigation into the impact of a workplace English language programme in Egypt. *Cambridge English Research Notes: Issue 58, pp 20–27*



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Cambridge Assessment English  
The Triangle Building  
Shaftesbury Road  
Cambridge  
CB2 8EA  
United Kingdom


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