

Co-Constructing with Stakeholders: The Performance Descriptors for an English Productive Skills Test

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In support of Taiwan's Bilingual Education policy, development of a standardized test which aims to assess and track college students' oral and written abilities expected in the English Medium Instruction (EMI) context is underway. A set of descriptors that describe performance at three different levels, corresponding largely to CEFR A2-B2, has already been drafted for the test. In validating these descriptors and in justifying their intended usefulness, it is essential to explore the views held by teachers and students in relation to the descriptors in various dimensions, including how closely the described performance meets the demands of EMI learning contexts and how well students can perform in terms of the descriptors.

This study employs a mixed-methods sequential explanatory design. Quantitative data comprise approximately 600 college students' and 30 English for Academic Purposes (EAP)/EMI teachers' responses to a survey based on the performance descriptors. Then, interviews with a small number of students and teachers are conducted. In addition to descriptive statistics, inferential statistical analyses are conducted to detect whether various background factors affect how respondents perceive students' EMI readiness. The study yields the following implications: 1. Co-constructing the validation of the performance descriptors with stakeholders will usefully inform the test development and ensure appropriate use of the test; 2. Understanding how EMI readiness is perceived among stakeholders will build common ground in defining EMI readiness; 3. Identifying students' difficulties in terms of the English language skills expected in an EMI context will be able to facilitate the improvement of EAP courses.

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