

25 years of language assessment in Vietnam: Looking back and looking forward

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Project 2020

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Introduction: The role of assessment in Project 2020

- ▶ One of the seven components of the overall mission of Project 2020
- ▶ First time mentioned in details in a governmental document.
- ▶ Paragraph 7, Section II, Article 1 of Decision 1400 / QD-TTg:
 - *Innovation of testing and assessment methods in language education;*
 - *Construction of test item banks to support the assessment of foreign language proficiency of learners;*
 - *Strengthened application of information technology in foreign language education;*
 - *Improved efficiency and effectiveness of proficiency testing and quality assurance of foreign language education.*

A quick overview of language assessment in Vietnam

Pre-scientific stage: First half of 1990s

- ▶ Explosion of student number → increased needs for entrance test papers in all subjects
- ▶ Solution: sets of “pre-constructed subject test papers” (bộ đề thi) by subject experts chosen by Ministry of Higher and Vocational Education released to the public
- ▶ Higher education institutions required to draw from these sets then mix and match to “construct” their own version
- ▶ Efficiency, reliability and fairness achieved?
- ▶ Encouragement of rote learning? Narrowing down of curriculum? Teaching to the tests?

A quick overview of language assessment in Vietnam

Pre-scientific stage: First half of 1990s

tuổi trẻ
online

CHÍNH TRỊ - XÃ HỘI | THỂ GIỚI | PHÁP LUẬT | KINH TẾ | SỐNG KHỎE | GIÁO DỤC | ITUYỂN SINH | TI

☘ Khe nước đẹp huyền bí xứ Nghệ

Từ bộ đề thi ngọt ngào...

15/10/2012 10:30 GMT+7



TTCT - Cuộc bàn thảo về giáo dục gần đây của nhiều chuyên gia, nhà giáo, trí thức... đọng lại trong dư luận xã hội nỗi buồn về sự “lạc lối” của giáo dục nước nhà. Trong đó, đầu bảng là kiểu dạy và học chỉ để đi thi, lấy bằng mà “bộ đề thi” (giai đoạn 1988-1997) là một ví dụ.



A quick overview of language assessment in Vietnam

Standardization-as-reliability stage: 1996 to 2007

- ▶ Growing disappointment with the “pre-constructed subject test papers”
- ▶ Growing awareness of efforts at exam reform in 1974 in the South of Vietnam
- ▶ In 1996, for the first time in unified Vietnam, a university entrance examination using the MCQ format and technology such as the optical mark reader (OMR) took place in the University of Da Lat. This was seen as an experiment to test the feasibility of MCQ testing.
- ▶ *(From Trắc nghiệm và Ứng dụng, Lâm Quang Thiệp, NXB ĐHQG 2008, p. 185)*

Kỳ thi thí điểm với 7.200 TS tham gia vào tháng 7 năm 1996 đã diễn ra suôn sẻ. Những người chuẩn bị kỳ thi rất hồi hộp vì e ngại số TS chọn đề thi TNKQ sẽ không đông, nhưng một thành công khá bất ngờ là hơn 70% đã chọn ĐTN. Lúc đó, với tư cách Vụ trưởng Vụ Đại học, tác giả tập sách này đã vào Đại học Đà Lạt trong mấy ngày thi để chỉ đạo. Chúng tôi gặp nhiều TS đã chọn TNKQ để phỏng vấn xem vì sao các em chọn **trắc nghiệm**,



A quick overview of language assessment in Vietnam

Standardization-as-reliability stage: 1996 to 2007

- ▶ In 2002, a new university entrance exam policy was promulgated, called “the three common exam” policy.
 - ▶ Same exam papers
 - ▶ Same exam dates
 - ▶ Exam results used by all universities for admission selection
- ▶ The MCQ format (and other objective test formats) is used in most subjects. For English, objective test formats are used predominantly.



A quick overview of language assessment in Vietnam

Standardization-as-reliability stage: 1996 to 2007

BỘ GIÁO DỤC VÀ ĐÀO TẠO

ĐỀ THI TUYỂN SINH ĐẠI HỌC NĂM 2014

ĐỀ CHÍNH THỨC
(Đề thi có 6 trang)

Môn: TIẾNG ANH; Khối D

Thời gian làm bài: 90 phút, không kể thời gian phát đề

Mã đề thi 137

Họ, tên thí sinh:

Số báo danh:

ĐỀ THI GỒM 80 CÂU (TỪ QUESTION 1 ĐẾN QUESTION 80)

Mark the letter A, B, C, or D on your answer sheet to indicate the word that differs from the other three in the position of the primary stress in each of the following questions.

- Question 1: A. sovereignty B. advantage C. enrichment D. edition
Question 2: A. considerate B. continental C. territorial D. economic
Question 3: A. index B. commit C. preview D. open
Question 4: A. specify B. illustrate C. interact D. fertilize
Question 5: A. habitat B. attendance C. candidate D. wilderness

Mark the letter A, B, C, or D on your answer sheet to indicate the correct answer to each of the following questions.

- Question 6: The carefully nurtured gardens with a wide _____ of flowers and fruit trees have added elegance to this place and made it a major tourist attraction.
A. variety B. amount C. species D. number
- Question 7: Visitors to the local museum are mostly attracted by _____ rocking chair.
A. an old wooden European beautiful B. a beautiful old European wooden
C. an old beautiful wooden European D. a wooden old beautiful European
- Question 8: _____ my mother's encouragement, I wouldn't have made such a daring decision.
A. Until B. In spite C. But for D. Providing
- Question 9: The cinema is no longer as popular as it was in the 1930's and 1940's, but it is still an important _____ of entertainment.
A. status B. source C. origin D. prospect
- Question 10: They got lost in the forest, and _____ made matters worse was that night began to fall.
A. that B. what C. which D. it
- Question 11: Students are encouraged to develop critical thinking _____ accepting opinions without questioning them.
A. in addition B. for instance C. instead of D. because of
- Question 12: The bank has more than 100 branches, _____ in a major urban area.
A. the location of which B. each locating C. each located D. and are located

Read the following passage and mark the letter A, B, C, or D on your answer sheet to indicate the word or phrase that best fits each of the numbered blanks from 41 to 50.

Postsecondary institutions and private schools are corporations under U.S. law. They are approved to operate as non-profit, for-profit, or public corporations (41) _____ education and training. Increasingly, state authorities are requiring approved educational providers to apply (42) _____ and receive accreditation as a condition of final and continued approval.

As corporate entities, U.S. institutions are internally self-governing and are (43) _____ to make property, facilities, equipment, and utilities transactions; make their own personnel decisions; decide whom to admit to study and to graduate; (44) _____ their own funds from outside sources; enter into contracts and compete for grants; and do most of the other things that corporations do. Institutions compete (45) _____ one another for students, research funding, faculty, and other benefits. Public institutions may compete within the same state or territory for budget appropriations. It is the corporate nature of institutions and the competition within the system that (46) _____ Americans to refer to the concept of the educational or academic marketplace - an important distinctive element of the way U.S. education is organized.

Some institutions are governed (47) _____ under multi-campus arrangements. These include most local public schools (governed by school districts) and many state community college and university systems. Whether single- or multi-campus, institutional corporations (48) _____ by boards of citizens, both alumni and non-alumni, who are ultimately responsible for all operations. They appoint senior (49) _____, such as principals, headmasters, presidents, and deans; and approve the actions taken (50) _____ their name.

From A Diverse Educational System: Structure, standards, and challenges. InfoUSA (CD version)

- Question 41: A. provided B. provision C. provide D. providing
Question 42: A. with B. to C. for D. on
Question 43: A. capable B. able C. probable D. possible
Question 44: A. rise B. raise C. call D. lend
Question 45: A. with B. to C. for D. at
Question 46: A. lets B. causes C. prevents D. makes
Question 47: A. collection B. collective C. collect D. collectively
Question 48: A. controlled B. are controlling C. are controlled D. being controlled
Question 49: A. trainees B. judges C. assistants D. leaders
Question 50: A. on B. in C. above D. at

Mark the letter A, B, C, or D on your answer sheet to indicate the sentence that is CLOSEST in meaning to the sentence given in each of the following questions.

- Question 51: "Believe me. It's no use reading that book," Janet told her boyfriend.
A. Janet tried to convince her boyfriend that the book was not worth reading.
B. Janet opposed her boyfriend's idea that reading the book was not useful.
C. Janet managed to persuade her boyfriend that reading the book was worthwhile.
D. Janet suggested to her boyfriend that reading the book was useful.

A quick overview of language assessment in Vietnam

Standardization-as-validation stage: 2008 till now

- ▶ Project 2020 started in 2008 as an ambitious project whose sole objective is to enhance English language education in Vietnam so that by 2020 most Vietnamese will have acquired a good functional level of English.
- ▶ Language assessment is a major component of this project. The biggest achievement of this component is the emergence of the first ever standardized English test: V-STEP.
- ▶ V-STEP is closely linked to the CEFR, covering all 4 skills, using a variety of item formats which resembles as much as possible real communication activities.
- ▶ Items were developed based on a carefully prepared specifications; training of item writers were provided; internal validation conducted before making the test live.
- ▶ Right now V-STEP is being used as the exit test of English proficiency for VNU students and is recognized by a number of other universities in the country.

A quick overview of language assessment in Vietnam

Standardization-as-validation stage: 2008 till now

ĐỊNH DẠNG ĐỀ THI

ĐỊNH DẠNG VSTEP	NGHE	ĐỌC	VIẾT	NÓI
THỜI GIAN	40 phút	60 phút	60 phút	12 phút
SỐ CÂU HỎI	3 phần: 35 câu hỏi đa lựa chọn	4 bài đọc: 40 câu hỏi đa lựa chọn	2 bài viết	3 phần: Tương tác xã hội Thảo luận giải pháp Phát triển chủ đề
NHIỆM VỤ	Thí sinh nghe các đoạn trao đổi ngắn, hướng dẫn, thông báo, các đoạn hội thoại và các bài nói chuyện, bài giảng, sau đó trả lời câu hỏi đa lựa chọn (MCQ).	Thí sinh đọc 4 văn bản về các vấn đề khác nhau, với tổng số từ dao động từ 1900-2050 từ. Thí sinh trả lời các câu hỏi đa lựa chọn sau mỗi bài đọc.	Bài 1: Viết một bức thư có độ dài khoảng 120 từ. Bài 2: Thí sinh viết một bài luận khoảng 250 từ về một chủ đề cho sẵn.	Phần 1: Tương tác xã hội Phần 2: Thảo luận giải pháp Phần 3: Phát triển chủ đề
MỤC ĐÍCH	Kiểm tra các tiểu kỹ năng Nghe khác nhau, có độ khó từ bậc 3 đến bậc 5: nghe thông tin chi tiết, nghe hiểu thông tin chính, nghe hiểu ý kiến, mục đích của người nói và suy ra từ thông tin trong bài.	Kiểm tra các tiểu kỹ năng Đọc khác nhau, có độ khó từ bậc 3 đến bậc 5: đọc hiểu thông tin chi tiết, đọc hiểu ý chính, đọc hiểu ý kiến, thái độ của tác giả, suy ra từ thông tin trong bài và đoán nghĩa của từ trong văn cảnh.	Kiểm tra kỹ năng Viết tương tác và Viết sản sinh.	Kiểm tra các kỹ năng Nói khác nhau: tương tác, thảo luận và trình bày một vấn đề.

V-STEP levels
3-5
description

A quick overview of language assessment in Vietnam

Standardization-as-validation stage: 2008 till now

Listening: Flight announcements

Directions: In this part, you will hear EIGHT short announcements or instructions. There is one question for each announcement or instruction. For each question, choose the right answer A, B, C or D. Then, on the answer sheet, find the number of the question and fill in the space that corresponds to the letter of the answer that you have chosen.

Now, let's listen to an example. On the recording, you will hear:

Woman: Hello. This is the travel agency returning your call. You left a message about the holiday you've booked, asking which meals are included in the cost during your stay at Sunny Hotel. Lunch and dinner are free but if you wish to have breakfast in the hotel, you will need to pay an extra amount of money, depending on what you order. Let me know if I can help you with any other information. Goodbye.

On the test book, you will read:

Which meal is NOT included in the price of the holiday?

- A. Breakfast
- B. Lunch
- C. Dinner
- D. All

The correct answer is A. Breakfast. Now, let's begin with the first question.

1. How many languages are taught at Hanoi International Language School?

- A. 1
- B. 2
- C. 3
- D. 4

A quick overview of language assessment in Vietnam

Standardization-as-validation stage: 2008 till now

Listening: Longer talks or lectures

In this part, you will hear THREE talks or lectures. The talks or lectures will not be repeated. There are five questions for each talk or lecture. For each question, choose the right answer A, B, C or D.

Questions 21 to 25. Listen to a presentation about summer job searching.

21. What factor deserves initial consideration when a summer job search is launched?

- A. Sort of jobs within the field
- B. Flexible working hours
- C. Employees' hobbies
- D. Commitment to the job

22. Why does the speaker mention photography?

- A. To highlight the importance of hobbies in job searching
- B. To illuminate a job search process
- C. To prove the role of local area in job searching
- D. To suggest looking for a job on the internet

23. What principle does a person necessarily stick to when looking for the second job?

- A. Value the second job over the current one
- B. Ask for the current employer's permission
- C. Make all the contact out of company time
- D. Have interviews scheduled during official working hours

A quick overview of language assessment in Vietnam

Standardization-as-validation stage: 2008 till now

PASSAGE 1- Questions 1-10

Reading: Working day

Line Ever wondered what it feels like to have a different job? Here, four people with very different careers reveal the trade secrets of their working day.

Luc

5 **My day typically starts with a business person going to the airport, and nearly always ends with a drunk.** I don't mind drunk people. Sometimes I think they're the better version of themselves: more relaxed, happier, honest. Only once have I feared for my life. A guy ran out at a traffic light and so I sped up before his brother could run, too. He seemed embarrassed and made me drop him at a car park. When we
10 arrived, the first guy was waiting with a boulder, which went through the windscreen, narrowly missing my head. But the worst people are the ones who call me "Driver!"

Harry

15 I not only provide appearance for my client, I also do damage control. We've had clients involved in lawsuits, divorces or drugs. One mistakenly took a gun to an airport. On the red carpet – at the Academy Awards or the Golden Globes – I'm the person making my client look good. The other day at an Oprah Winfrey event, the carpet wasn't put down properly and my clients almost went flying – I had to catch them. They can make some strange requests, too. At a black-tie gala at the White House, two clients hated the dinner and insisted that we **circle** around Washington DC
20 to find a KFC open at 1a.m. I had to go in wearing a gown and order so they could eat it in the car.

Jennifer

I could teach you to do a basic brain operation in two weeks. But what takes time and experience is doing it without wrecking the brain of the patients - learning your limitations takes years.

TASK 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

You received an email from your English friend, Jane. She asked you for some information about one of your friends. Read part of her email below.

I've just got an email from your friend, An. She said she's going to take a course in London this summer. She asked if she could stay with my family until she could find an apartment. Can you tell me a bit about her (things like her personality, hobbies and interests, and her current work or study if possible)? I want to see if she will fit in with my family.

Write an email responding to Jane.

You should write at least 120 words. You do not need to include your name or addresses.

Your response will be evaluated in terms of Task Fulfillment, Organization, Vocabulary and Grammar.

TASK 2

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task.

Read the following text from a book about tourism.

Tourism has become one of the fastest growing industries in the world. Millions of people today are travelling farther and farther throughout the year. Some people argue that the development of tourism has had negative effects on local communities; others think that its influences are positive.

Write an essay to an educated reader to discuss the effects of tourism on local communities. Include reasons and any relevant examples to support your answer.

You should write at least 250 words. Your response will be evaluated in terms of Task Fulfillment, Organization, Vocabulary and Grammar.

Speaking

Part 1: Social Interaction (3')

Let's talk about your free time activities.

- What do you often do in your free time?
- Do you watch TV? If no, why not? If yes, which TV channel do you like best? Why?
- Do you read books? If no, why not? If yes, what kinds of books do you like best? Why?

Let's talk about your neighborhood.

- Can you tell me something about your neighborhood?
- What do you like most about it?
- Do you plan to live there for a long time? Why/why not?

Part 2: Solution Discussion (4')

Situation: A group of people is planning a trip from Danang to Hanoi. Three means of transport are suggested: by train, by plane, and by coach. Which means of transport do you think is the best choice?

Part 3: Topic Development (5')

Topic: Reading habit should be encouraged among teenagers.



- *What is the difference between the kinds of books read by your parents' generation and those read by your generation?*
- *Do you think that governments should support free books for all people?*
- *In what way can parents help children develop their interest in reading?*

Looking back: Achievements and drawbacks

Bachman and Palmer's (1996) framework of "usefulness" of foreign language proficiency tests

"Usefulness" =

Reliability (consistency of scores) +
Construct validity (appropriate interpretation of scores) +
Authenticity (correspondence between test tasks and target language use) +

Interactiveness (engagement of test takers' various competences in performing test tasks) +
Impact/washback (positive influence on teaching and learning) +
Practicality (efficiency and feasibility)

Achievements and drawbacks

Achievements:

- Reliability and fairness (“bo de thi”, objective testing, normal distribution of test scores)
- Practicality (efficiency in scoring, re-using items in item banks)
- Emerging awareness of construct validity in test construction → CEFR and the emergence of VSTEP

Drawbacks:

- Test tasks lack authenticity and contextualization
- Low level of interactiveness
- Predominant use of MCQ in high-stakes tests have negative effect on learning

Looking forward: Issues to ponder upon

Pluralism:

- One national English language test, a few centrally recognized tests, or a myriad of language tests to choose from?
- Recognition of international English tests: which one and why?

Contextualization:

- How to have good items which authentic language (written for native speakers by native speakers) while at the same time reflect local views about local topics and interests?

Occupational tests:

- Yes or No?
- If yes, how many occupations and which ones? Why?

Conclusion: Cooperation in the midst of competition is the way to go!

- ▶ Cooperation is badly needed, especially at this stage of development.
- ▶ But language assessment as an industry is fiercely competitive. Competition is already here and here to stay.
- ▶ We need to be creative to be cooperative in the face of competition, in order to find a model which allows this to happen. This conference may provide a good model.

References

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