



EAP Listening Assessment

Discrete skill vs. integrated skills

Validity and reliability

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Introduction

- Integrated skills vs. discrete skills
- Academic listening taxonomy
- The Academic Lecture
- Assessment of lecture comprehension – IELTS, TOEFL ibt, Pearson Academic
- TEEP
- Face validity vs. construct validity
- Exam as exam?
- Conclusions?
- Questions



Integrated skills vs. Discrete skills

- Communicative trend in EFL away from Listening in isolation
- EAP courses based in integrated skills
- Demands from stakeholders –
EAP vs. IELTS



Academic listening taxonomy I

- Ability to identify purpose and scope of lecture
- Ability to identify topic of lecture and follow topic development
- Ability to identify relationships among units within discourse (e.g. major ideas, generalisations, hypotheses, supporting ideas, examples)
- Ability to identify role of discourse markers in signalling structure of a lecture (e.g. conjunctions, adverbs, gambits, routines)
- Ability to infer relationships (cause and effect, conclusion)
- Ability to recognise key lexical items related to subject/topic
- Ability to deduce meanings of words from context
- Ability to recognise markers of cohesion
- Ability to recognise function of intonation to signal information structure (e.g. pitch, volume, pace, key)

Academic listening taxonomy 2

- Ability to detect attitude of speaker towards subject matter
- Ability to follow different modes of lecturing: spoken, audio, audio-visual
- Ability to follow lecture despite differences in accent and

Q1 – What commonly taught listening skill is not listed here?

conversational, read, unplanned

- Familiarity with different registers: written versus colloquial
- Ability to recognise relevant matter: jokes, digressions, meanderings
- Ability to recognise function of non-verbal cues as markers of emphasis and attitude
- Knowledge of classroom conventions
- Ability to recognise instructional/learner tasks (e.g. warnings, suggestions, recommendations, advice, instructions)



Listening Processing

- Two stage model commonly accepted
- Bottom-up
- Top-down
- ...but both interrelated and consisting of co-dependent micro-skills – e.g. recognition of rhetorical structure may inform prediction and assist construction of lexical schema at phrase level



The Academic Lecture I

- Rhetorical structure of lecture discourse (classical, problem-centred, sequential, comparative, thesis, cause-and-effect) – mostly genre dependent
- Phasal structure of discourse - sentential level and up(not dependent on genre) (Young, 1994)
- Meta-talk to indicate overall structure (including evaluative function markers *I mean, for example, in fact*)
- Use of micro-level discourse markers (*okay, and, so, now*)
- False starts, redundancies, repeats
- Thematic redundancies to indicate structure and to control pace of information flow
- Use of asides to indicate importance/intention of speaker
- Rhetorical questions



The Academic Lecture 2

- Active verbs
- Use of personal pronouns and *it*
- Empathy (*we, let's*) as compensation for lack of direct interaction and to counter affect
- Checking
- Short phrases punctuated by pause fillers – idea units (Hansen and Jensen, 1994) of 11 words, single intonation contour followed by pause
- Use of extended pauses to allow information ordering for speaker/listener
- Contractions
- Not lexically dense (low verb frequency, low syllable/minute count, limited use of tenses)



Testing lecture comprehension - IELTS

- IELTS section 4 – short monologue, general academic content
- Fully scripted
- Questions can be read before listening
- Tasks - summary completion (short answer) – all ‘local’ comprehension – specific information questions
- Face Validity? Construct Validity?



Testing lecture comprehension - TOEFL

- Short monologue
- Partially scripted
- Visual stimulus
- Questions not seen until after
- Note-taking encouraged
- Tasks – all MCQ but range from specific information to inference, intention and attitude. Also ‘meta-talk’ discourse markers using repeats of key phrases
- Face Validity? Construct Validity?

What can be inferred about the professor when he says this:



- He is impressed by the novel's originality.
- He is concerned that students may find the novel difficult to read.
- He is bored by the novel's descriptions of ordinary events.
- He is eager to write a book about a less familiar subject.



Testing lecture comprehension – Pearson Academic

- (very) Short monologues
- Unscripted podcasts – some actual lectures, single sentences/paragraphs
- Questions not seen before listening
- Oral summary, written summary, listen-repeat
- Psychometric testing – reaction times graded – some tasks gated
- Face Validity? Construct Validity?



Testing lecture comprehension - TEEP

- Extended monologue
- Partially scripted
- Thematically related to the entire exam
- Questions seen before listening
- Tasks – lecture summary completion - all short answer – including detailed comprehension, intention, and inference.
- Face Validity? Construct Validity?

Face validity vs. construct validity

- Face validity for marketing purposes
- Little construct validity

Q2 – If we teach skills explicitly, for students to consciously apply these skills, is it not valid to assess them explicitly?

construct validity

- Authentic text use – but construct does not reflect TLU
- TOEFL contains explicit questions on meta-discourse – is this valid?



Exam as exam – valid?

- Explicit examination of skills knowledge in exam context
- Not dependent on ability to understand the subject content
- Students are still processing the information and applying the skills in real time
- Not a test of language?

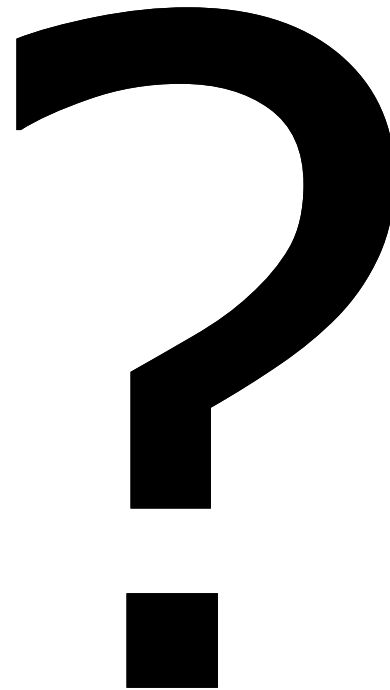


Conclusions?

- Processing interdependent – integrated skills must be employed in assessment
- Major standardised tests inauthentic but have face validity
- Meta-linguistic assessment of skills outside the construct lacks face and construct validity
- Teaching skills explicitly for students to consciously apply them – why not assess them the same way?



Questions





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...please contact

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