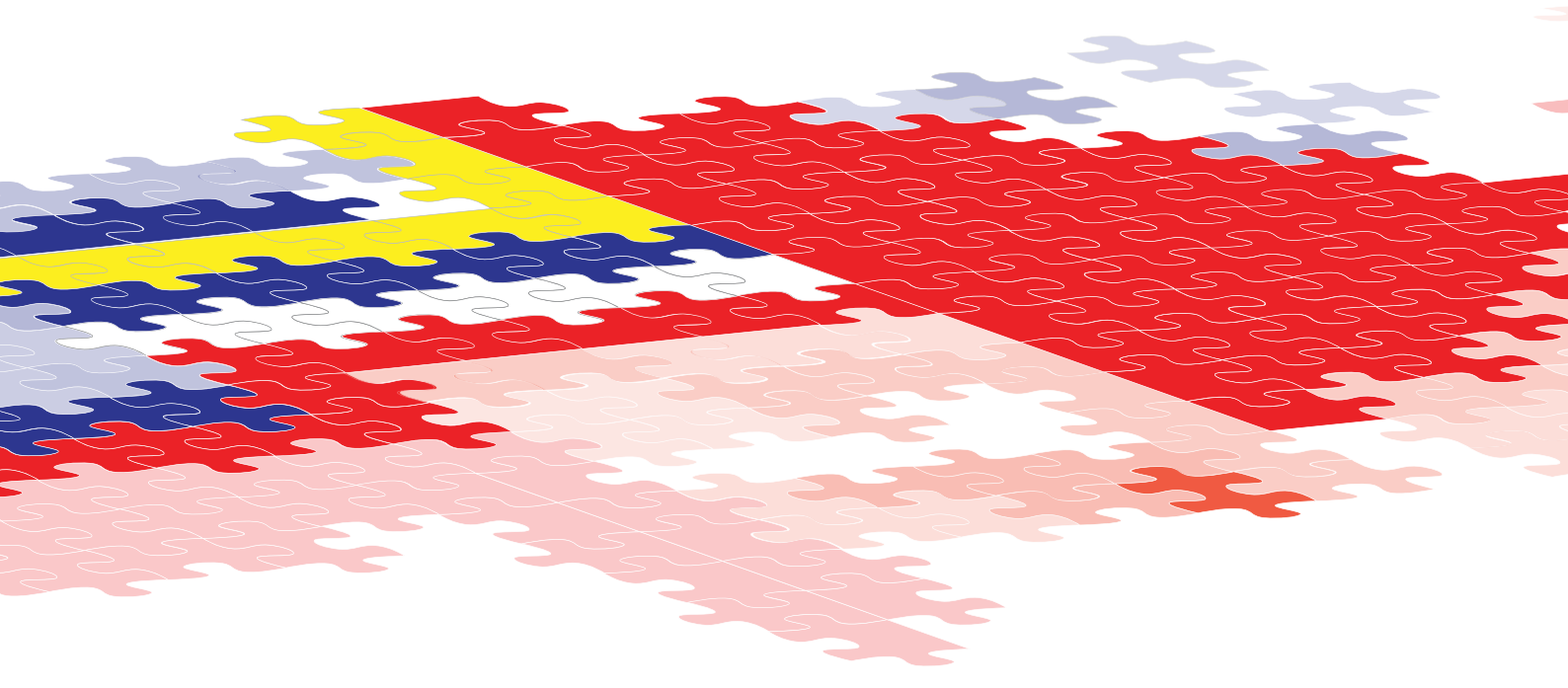# 6th British Council New Directions in English Language Assessment Conference: Standards in Learning Systems

KUALA LUMPUR

22-23 October 2018

Contents

Welcome Message

Welcome to the 6th New Directions in English Language and Assessment (New Directions) 2018 annual conference.

Celebrating our 70th anniversary this year in Malaysia, the British Council is delighted to be hosting New Directions for the first time in Kuala Lumpur and to welcome our local and international conference speakers and delegates to this wonderful city.

Over the next two days, you will join renowned plenary and panel speakers, global experts and decision makers in sharing, exchanging and identifying what defines the next level in the world of English language assessment.

This year's conference, with the theme of 'Standards in Learning Systems', centres on the design, use and implementation of language standards and proficiency frameworks in language testing and assessment, and the link between standards, assessment and the wider educational context, such as curriculum design.

New Directions 2018 will feature five key pillars, namely teaching and assessment, Artificial Intelligence, alignment and localisation of assessment/tests, as well as policy and assessment goal setting.

An important focus for Malaysia, the host country for New Directions 2018, will be the implications of aligning, localising and applying global assessment and teaching standards to other elements of the education system as part of the implementation of its Malaysia Education Blueprint (2013-2025) in transforming education and preparing young people to compete in a global economy.

We are very grateful to the Ministry of Education Malaysia for their support for New Directions 2018 and for their ongoing collaboration with the British Council over the years and now as we move forward together in this 'New Malaysia'.

Since its introduction, New Directions has helped build lasting partnerships between countries in East Asia and the United Kingdom in supporting foreign language proficiency testing in the region and aligning it to international standards.

We trust that New Directions 2018 will provide you with ample opportunity to network and learn from fellow academics and practitioners, will be beneficial to you and your language learners and will help to foster greater international exchange and cooperation.

Sarah Deverall
Director Malaysia
British Council

6th British Council New Directions in English Language Assessment Conference, Kuala Lumpur, 2018

British Council

New Directions in English Language Assessment conference is an annual event on the East Asian language assessment calendar, organised by the British Council. The conference provides insight on trends in English language assessment and is a showcase for innovative approaches and research in the field, locally and internationally. New Directions is intended as a space in which regional and international policy makers, education professionals, academics and teachers and assessment practitioners can interact, exchange information, and keep abreast of the leading developments in the field. This year, we aim to:

- Share approaches and solutions to language assessment challenges in the region and internationally.
- Host a unique platform to open the communication circle between language assessment academics, policy makers and practitioners.
- Connect local, national, regional and global agendas in language assessment.
- Host a global network for policy makers and practitioners working in the field of English Language Assessment.
- Support evidence-led decisions deriving from research.
- Support global thought leadership in assessment.

Previous Conferences

1st International Conference on Language Testing and Assessment

Language Assessment in China

Dates: 6-7 November 2013
Venue: National Museum of China, Beijing, China

The first New Directions conference addressed issues associated with assessment for learning, washback and formative assessment, localisation and customisation, adapting tests to Chinese contexts and developing English teacher assessment literacy. The event in Beijing coincided with a number of anniversaries: 35 years since the British Council was established in China; 25 years of IELTS worldwide and 10 years of the British Council delivering IELTS in China in partnership with the National Education Examinations Authority.

2nd British Council New Directions in English Language Assessment

Role of English Assessment in Internationalisation

Dates: 29-30 September 2014
Venue: Meiji Kinenkan, Tokyo, Japan

The second conference in Japan brought together chief educational officers and key officials from across Asia to review issues of localisation and globalisation in English language assessment and of expanding capacity to address current and future education and assessment challenges. It also provided a valuable networking opportunity and set the stage for further cooperation across East Asia and beyond.

3rd British Council New Directions in English Language Assessment

Quality and Consequence

Dates: 15-16 October 2015
Venue: JW Marriott Dongdaemun Square, Seoul, Korea

New Directions 2015 in Korea looked at test quality and the consequences of testing from the point of view of society and education policy. It also considered the impact of testing on pedagogy and curriculum design, examining the challenges in the testing and assessment sector and solutions to be found if countries such as Korea are to address the concerns amongst the wider public about the integrity and quality of testing methodologies.

4th British Council New Directions in English Language Assessment

Standardised Testing and the Development and Use of Proficiency Scales: Addressing Local Challenges, Meeting Global Standards

Dates: 13-14 October 2016
Venue: Sheraton Hanoi Hotel, Hanoi, Vietnam

The focus in Hanoi 2016 was to look at the role and effects of standardised testing and the development and/or use of proficiency scales to describe language ability. We also considered performance-based testing: its benefits and challenges. Previous New Directions have provided an important forum for the interaction of local and global perspectives, reflecting the wide range of challenges facing language education both within the region and internationally. The theme aims to highlight the approaches and solutions to these challenges being proposed in the region and internationally.

5th British Council New Directions in English Language Assessment

Connecting Assessment with Teaching and Learning

Dates: 2-3 December 2017
Venue: Hyatt on the Bund, Shanghai, China

The conference aimed to provide a forum for the presentation of innovative approaches and practical solutions, with a focus on real-life case studies and works-in-progress reports.

The critical role that language assessment plays in education was one of the main focuses, with how descriptions of proficiency, teaching ability and teachers' assessment knowledge inform teaching and assessment being one of the important topics discussed. The conference also looked at how language testing interacts with teaching and learning at the beginning and end of educational cycles and beyond as students are equipped for the working world. Last but not least, the possibility of new technology solutions to large scale demands was also being explored, in light of the demands of a focus on communicative competence in East Asia.

Conference Themes

Main Theme

Standards in Learning Systems

The design, use, and implementation of language standards and proficiency frameworks in language testing and assessment, and the link between standards, assessment and the wider educational context, such as curriculum design.

Sub-themes

Teaching and Assessment

The manner in which standards can inform classroom teaching and assessment.

Impact

The impact of using standards to inform policy decisions and set assessment goals, either at a national or institutional level, on teaching and learning.

Alignment

The alignment of existing tests to proficiency standards and the use of standards to inform the design and validation of new tests.

Artificial Intelligence

The relationship between the rapid development of artificial intelligence and automated rating technology and assessments designed from and aligned to existing proficiency standards.

Localisation

The localisation of standards and proficiency frameworks: adapting large-scale national or international standards to a more fine-grained focus on local needs.

Conference Programme

Day 1, Monday 22 October 2018 - Grand Hyatt, Kuala Lumpur

Location	Session	Time	Duration	Event/Speakers
Grand Ballroom Foyer	Reception	8:00	60 mins	Registration
Grand Ballroom	Opening	9:00	50 mins	Conference Opening Ceremony
Grand Ballroom	Plenary 1	9:55	45 mins	**Professor Barry O'Sullivan** (Head of Assessment Research and Development, British Council) Topic: **Local and Localised Language Tests.**
Grand Ballroom Foyer	Break	10:40	30 mins	Coffee break
Grand Ballroom Foyer	Plenary 2	9:55	45 mins	**Professor Han Baocheng** (Deputy Director of the National Research Centre of Foreign Language, Beijing Foreign Studies University) Topic: **A Use-Oriented Approach To Language Ability: Definition And Application In CSE.**
Thirty8 or Sky Lounge	Lunch	12:00	70 mins	Lunch

Breakout Parallel sessions — Ballrooms and meeting rooms

Time	Duration	Grand Ballroom 1: Teaching And Assessment	Grand Ballroom 3: Impact	Grand Residence 100: Alignment	Grand Residence 101: General Theme	Grand Residence 102: General Theme
13:10	30 mins	**Ms Kyungsuk Chang** (Researcher, Korea Institute for Curriculum and Evaluation) **Aligning The National Standards To The International Ones To Inform Classroom Teaching And Assessment, And To Meet Local Needs.** Co-presenter: **Ms Uisung Lee** (Teacher, Kimhwa Middle School) **Ms Miyoung Byun** (Educational Researcher, Gangwon International Language Institute)	**Associate Professor Alexander Imig** (Associate Professor, School of International Liberal Studies, Chukyo University, Nagoya, Japan) **An EIL-Informed CEFR For Academic Writing In The APAC-Region.**	**Mr Philip Horne** (Test Quality Assurance Manager, British Council) **The (Non-) Applicability Of Pronunciation Descriptors In A Holistic Scale.**	**Mr Dylan Burton** (Assessment Consultant, British Council China) **Raters' Perceptions Of Inauthenticity In Speaking Tests In China.**	**Professor Dr Noor Lide Abu Kassim** (Academic (Professor), International Islamic University Malaysia) **Alignment To CEFR And IELTS: The CELPAD IIUM Initiative.** Co-presenter: **Assoc. Prof. Dr Ainol Madziah Zubairi** (Academic (Associate Professor), International Islamic University Malaysia) **Prof. Dr Isarji Sarudin** (Deputy Rector, Academic and Industrial Linkages, as well as Academic (Professor), International Islamic University Malaysia)
13:50	30 mins	**Ms Mika Mori** (Teacher of English Language, Amakusa City Itsuwa Junior High School) **Disconnect Between MEXT English Frameworks And Assessment Standards.**	**Mr Penghao Song** (General Manager, New Oriental Education & Technology Group) **How AI Is Applied In The Auto-Marker For The TOEFL/IELTS Speaking Section.**	**Dr Ardeshir Geranpayeh** (Head of Automated Assessment & Learning, Cambridge Assessment English/ Cambridge UK) **The Alignment Of Malaysian University English Test To The CEFR.** Co-presenter: **Mr Ahmad Zufrie Abd Rahman** (Examination Officer, Malaysian Examinations Council)	**Dr Maruthi Vaddapali** (Team Leader for Language Assessment Consultants, British Council China) **Standards And Proficiency Frameworks In Assessing Pronunciation: An Exploration Of The Attitudes Of EFL Teachers To Assessing Pronunciation And How To Better Inform Assessment Practice Going Forward.** Co-presenter: **Mrs Neilane Liew** (Team Leader for Language Assessment Consultants, British Council China)	**Dr Hyoshin Lee** (Director of Lifelong Education Institute / Director of the Dept. of English Language, Konkuk University Glocal Campus) **Change In The Status Of The IELTS: From One Of Many Tests Towards A Lever Leading To Changes In Communication-Oriented English Education At A University Level.**
14:30	30 mins	**Ms Masreen Wirda Mohammad Ali** (Assistant Director, Curriculum Development Division, Ministry of Education Malaysia) **Adoption Of CEFR In Malaysia: Changes In The Classroom.** Co-presenter: **Mrs Anna Grenne** (Programme Director, Malaysia, Cambridge Assessment English)	**Mr Stuart Andrew Goodsir** (Exams Team: Team Leader for Language Assessment Consultants, British Council China) **Examiner Engagement With Candidates Prior To A Speaking Test.**	**Dr Sook Wah Ho** (Head of English Language Unit, Gamuda Berhad) **The Gamuda English Tests: Aligning Gaps, Targets And Standards.** Co-presenter: **Dr Bee Eng Wong** (Consultant, Gamuda Berhad)	**Mr Julian Copley** (British Council Vietnam) **Individual And Paired Interaction Influences On Exam Procedures And Rating.**	**Dr Vahid Aryadoust** (Assistant Professor, National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University) **Investigating The Neurocognitive Processes Of Listeners Using Functional Near-Infrared Spectroscopy (fNIRS).** Co-presenter: **Dr Chiao-Yi Wu** (Research Scientist, Centre for Research and Development in Learning, Nanyang)

Day 1 continued..

Ballrooms and meeting rooms				
	Break	15:00	30 mins	Coffee break
Grand Ballroom	Plenary 3	15:30	45 mins	**Dr Hanan Khalifa** (Head of Research & International Education, Cambridge Assessment English and University of Cambridge) Topic: **Standards & Frameworks: Virtues & Shortcomings.**
Grand Ballroom	Panel Discussion 1	16:20	70 mins	Topic: **Assessment in English Medium Education.** **Panel Chair:** **Allan Taggart** (Director English for Education Systems, East Asia, British Council Malaysia) **Panelists:** **Assoc Prof Dr Abdul Halim Abdul Raof** (Associate Professor, University of Technology Malaysia) **Professor Andy Kirkpatrick** (Professor, Griffith University) **Bruce Howell** (Associate Professor in Language Assessment, Head of Foundation, Study and Language Institute (FSLI)) **John Knagg** (Former Global Head of English for Education Systems, British Council)
Grand Ballroom	Day 1 Closing	17:30	15 mins	**Day 1 Closing Note**
Grand Salon	Conference Dinner	18:30	180 mins	**Conference Dinner**

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Notes:

Day 2, Tuesday 23 October 2018 - Grand Hyatt, Kuala Lumpur

Location	Session	Time	Duration	Event/Speakers	Grand Ballroom 1: Teaching And Assessment	Grand Ballroom 3: Artificial Intelligence	Grand Residence 100: Alignment	Grand Residence 101: Main Theme	Grand Residence 102: Localisation
Grand Ballroom Foyer	Reception	8:00	60 mins	Registration					
Grand Ballroom	Plenary 4	9:00	45 mins	Dr Souba Rethinasamy (Associate Professor of Faculty of Language and Communication, University Malaysia Sarawak) Topic: From Academic English to Workplace Communication: Needs and Challenges in Bridging the Gap					
Grand Ballroom	Plenary 5	9:45	45 mins	Geoff Stead (Chief Product Officer, Babbel) Topic: From The Digital Learning Trenches: What If The Future Of Assessment Is NO Assessment?					
Grand Ballroom Foyer	Break	10:30	30 mins	Coffee break					
Ballrooms and meeting rooms	Breakout Parallel sessions	11:00	40 mins		Dr Rama Mathew (Visiting Professor, Ambedkar University Delhi) Evaluation Of Teachers' Assessment Literacy: A Study In Goa, India.	Dr Adrian Raper (Technical Director, ClarityEnglish) AI Technology In Language Assessment Tools: Challenges And Opportunities.	Ms Priscilla Shak (Lecturer [UMS] and PhD student [UoA], Universiti Malaysia Sabah [Work], and The University of Auckland [Study]) Revising The Assessment Criteria Of An EOP Group Discussion Test.	Mr David Wei Dai (PhD student, The University of Melbourne) Including L2-English Varieties In Listening Tests For Adolescent ESL Learners.	Ms Manjima Bhadran (PhD Student, The Institute of English, University of Kerala, India) Towards Modifying Standards: Examining Teacher Reflections On Indian ESL Writing.
		11:40	30 mins		Dr Quynh Xuan Le (Head of ELT Department, Hoa Sen University) Aligning International Standards, National Requirements, And Institutional Goals In ELT. Co-presenter: Ms Trang Thuy Lam (ELT Programme Coordinator, Hoa Sen University - Vietnam)	Dr Vahid Aryadoust (Assistant Professor, National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University) Using Eye-Tracking Technology To Measure Reading Processes Of Listening Test Takers. Co-presenter: Ms Brigit Sebastian (PhD student, National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University)"	TBC	Mr Martin Robinson (Assistant Director, Assessment, Cambridge Assessment English) The Impact Of Using The CEFR To Help Inform Policy Decisions And Set Assessment Goals In The Malaysian State School System. Co-presenter: Dr Zuraidah Mohd Don (Adjunct professor, Sultan Idris Education University)	Ms Nurir Rohmah (English Teaching Staff, State Polytechnic of Madura (Politeknik Negeri Madura)) Need Analysis Of The Challenges Vocational High School Ells Face On Standardized Classroom Assessments In Sampang, Madura.
Thirty8 or Sky Lounge	Lunch	12:10	60 mins	Lunch					
Ballrooms and meeting rooms	Breakout Parallel sessions	13:10	30 mins		Dr Heather H. Koons (Director, Research Services, MetaMetrics) Maximizing The Utility Of English Assessment Scores. Co-presenter: Dr Eleanor Sanford-Moore (Sr. Vice President for Research and Development, MetaMetrics)	Ms Vanessa Forster (Senior Legal Advisor, British Council) Slave To The Algorithm: Legal And Ethical Pitfalls Of AI – Can Regulation Fix It And What Does This Mean For [English Language] Assessment?	Professor Shangchao Min (School of International Studies, Zhejiang University, Hangzhou, China) Validating The Cognitive Aspect Of The Listening Subscale In CSE: An Integrated Approach Of Cognitive Diagnostic Modeling And Standard Setting. Co-presenter: Ms Lidi Xiong (PhD candidate, School of International Studies, Zhejiang University, Hangzhou, China)	Dr Rajenthiran Sellan (Senior Assessment Specialist [Languages and Literature], Singapore Examinations and Assessment Board) Reconsidering National Assessment Standards In The English Language Classroom.	Dr Duyen Tran (Hanoi University of Industry) English Requirements At Workplace & Exit Language Standards For Vocational Education. Co-presenter: Dr Tue Hoang (Hanoi University of Industry)

Room	Session	Time	Duration	Parallel Session 1	Parallel Session 2	Parallel Session 3	Parallel Session 4	Parallel Session 5
Ballrooms and meeting rooms	Breakout Parallel sessions	13:50	30 mins	**Mr Evan Simpson** (Assessment Consultant, British Council Shanghai) **IELTS In China: Scores, Attitudes, And Paths For Improved Proficiency."**	**Mr Trevor Breakspear** (Innovation Projects Manager, British Council) **Developing A Speaking Construct For A China Digital Assessment Solution.** Co-presenter: **Dr Nahal Khabbazbashi** (Senior Lecturer in Language Assessment, CRELLA, University of Bedfordshire) **Dr Daniel Lam** (Post-Doctoral Research Fellow, CRELLA, University of Bedfordshire) **Dr Sathena Chan** (Senior Lecturer in Language Assessment, CRELLA, University of Bedfordshire) **Ms Xiaoyi Zhang** (PhD candidate, Shanghai Jiao Tong University)	**Ms Sheryl Cooke** (Director China Assessment Solutions Team, British Council China) **A Test Development Model For Developing A Localised Test.** Co-presenter: **Ms Judith Fairbairn** (Assessment Development Manager, Global Assessments, British Council) **Mr Richard Spiby** (Receptive Skills Researcher, British Council)	**Mr Zongyou Wu** (PhD candidate, School of English Studies, Shanghai International Studies University) **Investigating The Validity Of Score Reports From Diagnostic Language Assessment.** Co-presenter: **Ms Yangtian Xiao** (PhD candidate, Shanghai International Studies University)	**Dr Yujia Zhou** (Project Lecturer, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies) **Localisation Of An International Speaking Test For Japanese University Admission.** Co-presenter: **Dr Jamie Dunlea** (Senior Researcher, British Council) **Dr Masashi Negishi** (Professor, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies) **Dr Asako Yoshitomi** (Professor, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies)
		14:30	30 mins	**Dr Azlin Zaiti Zainal** (Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Languages and Linguistics, University of Malaya) **Assessing ProELT Training For Malaysian English Language Teachers.** Co-presenter: **Dr Lee-Luan Ng** (Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Languages and Linguistics, University of Malaya)	**Mr David Booth** (Director, Test Development, Pearson Education Limited) **Using Artificial Intelligence And Automated Scoring Across Different Contexts Of Learning.**	**Mr Richard Spiby** (Receptive Skills Researcher, British Council) **Developing Inclusion And Accessibility In Tests At The British Council.** Co-presenter: **Ms Judith Fairbairn** (Assessment Development Manager, Global Assessments, British Council)	**Ms Yasmine Abdelhamid** (British Council Egypt) **Using Augmented Reality Applications In Assessment.**	**Mr Allen Davenport** (Teacher Development Manager, ASEAN, Cambridge University Press) **Towards A Standard Framework of Life Skills In ELT.**
Ballrooms and meeting rooms	Break	15:00	30 mins	Coffee break				
Grand Ballroom	Plenary 6	15:30	45 mins	**Dr Carol Spöttl** (Senior Lecturer, University of Innsbruck) Topic: **Reforming National Language Exams: Challenges, Consequences And Potential Repercussions For Validation. Insights From An Austrian Project.**				
Grand Ballroom	Panel Discussion 2	16:20	70 mins	Topic: **Policy Makers and Implementers.** **Panel Chair:** **Professor Barry O'Sullivan** (Head of Assessment Research and Development, British Council) **Panelists:** **Datin Paduka Ir. Dr Siti Hamisah Tapsir** (Director General at the Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education Malaysia) **Dr Nguyen Thi Ngoc Quynh** (Founding Director of the Centre of Language Testing and Assessment, Vietnam National University) **Dr Souba Rethinasamy** (Associate Professor at the Faculty of Language and Communication, University Malaysia Sarawak) **Dr Carol Spöttl** (Senior Lecturer, University of Innsbruck) **Robin Skipsey** (Academic Manager, British Council)				
Grand Ballroom	Conference Closing	17:30	15 mins	**Conference Closing Ceremony**				

Plenary Speakers

Professor Barry O'Sullivan | Head of Assessment Research & Development, English & Exams, British Council

Professor Barry O'Sullivan is the Head of Assessment Research & Development at the British Council. He has undertaken research across many areas on language testing and assessment and its history and has worked on the development and refinement of the socio-cognitive model of test development and validation since 2000. He is particularly interested in the communication of test validation and in test localisation. He has presented his work at many conferences around the world, while almost 100 of his publications have appeared in a range of international journals, books and technical reports. He has published five books, the most recent being English on the Global Stage: The British Council and English Language Testing 1941-2016 (with Cyril Weir, 2017). He has worked on many test development and validation projects over the past 25 years and advises ministries and institutions on assessment policy and practice.

He is the founding president of the UK Association of Language Testing and Assessment (UKALTA) and holds honorary and visiting chairs at a number of universities globally. In 2016, he was awarded fellowship of the Academy of Social Science in the UK, and was elected to Fellowship of the Asian Association for Language Assessment in 2017.

Abstract: Local and Localised Language Tests

Localisation as a concept grew out of the socio-cognitive approach to test development and validation (Weir, 2005, O'Sullivan & Weir, 2011, O'Sullivan, 2016). In this approach, the candidate is seen as being placed firmly at the centre of the process. One critical consequence of this is that it is not possible that a convincing validity argument can be made for a test unless it can be shown to be appropriate on a range of levels to the individual candidate. This suggests that where there is no evidence that the test is appropriate for individual learners, it can only result in valid decisions being made where a clear argument is made that the test has a specific purpose where a criterion/passing level can be legitimately argued (e.g. university entrance, job selection, etc.). In terms of current international English language testing practice, the argument for English language tests that target so-called general proficiency across an international population is undermined. The suggestion is that where tests are designed for use with a specific population to make specific decisions they should be either designed with the specific population in mind or localised to meet the particular needs of the population and purpose.

In this presentation, I will outline the similarities and differences of the two approached suggested above – local and localised tests – giving examples of both, but focusing primarily on the latter. I will offer an operational taxonomy of localisation arguing that as the ultimate goal of localising tests is to create fully personalised assessments. Since the level of localisation required to achieve this is beyond the capacity of current approaches to test design and delivery, the implications and associated challenges for test theorists and developers, both local and global, are significant.

Professor Han Baocheng | Deputy Director of the National Research Centre for Foreign Language Education Beijing Foreign Studies University, China

Han Baocheng is serving as Deputy Director of the National Research Centre for Foreign Language Education of Beijing Foreign Studies University. He is also Secretary General of the Foreign Language and Literature Committee of the China Council for Self-taught Higher Education Examinations. His main research areas include language education and language assessment. He is particularly interested in the understanding of the nature of language ability, second language proficiency development and conducting research on teacher education and development.

He is the founding president of the UK Association of Language Testing and Assessment (UKALTA) and holds honorary and visiting chairs at a number of universities globally. In 2016, he was awarded fellowship of the Academy of Social Science in the UK, and was elected to Fellowship of the Asian Association for Language Assessment in 2017.

Abstract: A Use-oriented Approach to Language Ability: Definition and Application in CSE

Statements or descriptions of language ability are made largely on basis of the ideologies about language, instruction and assessment that the language educators hold. After examining the different theoretical language frameworks, the speaker will present a use-oriented approach to language ability, drawing on the research into the understanding of language use (Bachman & Palmer 2010). According this approach, language ability can be simply defined as the ability of comprehending and/or expressing meanings with language. The speaker will also discuss how this approach of language ability is used in the development of China's Standards of English Language Ability (CSE), with a concluding examination of its application in language teaching and test development.

Dr Hanan Khalifa | Director Cambridge Assessment, University of Cambridge

Dr Hanan Khalifa is a leading language testing and evaluation expert. Since 1993, she developed national examinations, validated international assessments, and led the alignment of locally produced curriculum and examinations to international standards. She has presented and published extensively on various assessment topics. In 1989, she received Hornby award for ELT; in 2007 she joined the Council of Europe as a CEFR Expert and EAQUALS inspection committee; in 2013 she won IEAA award for innovation in International Education together with Professor Burns and Brandon; and in 2018 she became the first international expert to join board of Directors at a Malaysian State University. Hanan has worked for the Egyptian Ministry of Education and Higher Education, international development agencies; and currently leads Cambridge Assessment work with governments on education reform.

Abstract: Standards & Frameworks: Virtues & Shortcomings

Standards and frameworks play a leading role when national and regional governments initiate educational reforms be it in teaching, learning or assessment. Standards and frameworks have several purposes. They act as a common metrics for assessing students' performance and teacher effectiveness; help establish a common understanding of what students are expected to know and be able to do across multiple developmental stages, ages, or grade levels; act as a means to support consistency and quality of the student learning experience; or as a way of demonstrating to stakeholders the professionalism that staff bring to the educational system, and much more.

In 2000, a new framework was born to the world of language learning and assessment, namely, the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). The framework describes in a comprehensive way what language learners have to learn on a learning ladder in order to use a language for communication and what knowledge and skills they have to develop so as to be able to act effectively. Since 2000, its influence grew beyond Europe and for many examination boards, test book publishers and curriculum developers, it became imperative to make the case that their products are aligned to the CEFR. Indeed, some stakeholders within the educational field and the assessment community regard curriculum and examination alignment to the CEFR as an essential quality mark.

In this plenary, I will take you through a CEFR journey from its inception to global utilization. On this journey, you will see examples of CEFR usage and explore its virtues and shortcomings. My talk will culminate with a case study from the region where the CEFR is being used as the gelling agent between curriculum, textbooks, assessment and pedagogy in an educational reform initiative. The case study will show the necessary conditions for success when implementing standards and frameworks.

Dr Souba Rethinasamy | Associate Professor, Faculty of Language and Communication, University Malaysia Sarawak

Dr Souba Rethinasamy is Associate Professor at the Faculty of Language and Communication, and also serves as Research Fellow at the Institute of Social Informatics and Technological Innovations, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS). She obtained her PhD in Language Testing and Evaluation from University of Roehampton, London. She has more than twenty years' experience in teaching English language and related courses at tertiary level. She pursues interests in language testing and evaluation, ICT in language teaching, English medium instruction and rural education. (rsouba@unimas.my)

Abstract: From Academic English to Workplace Communication: Needs and Challenges in Bridging the Gap

The English language has become an accepted global means of communication and its role as lingua franca is further enhanced by its extensive use not only in education but also workplace settings. While the debate on whether universities must produce graduates who are job-ready continues, the reality remains. Universities are required to enable their graduates to have a smooth career-landing. One of the crucial requirements is to equip them with 'workplace communication skills', ironically often referred to as English for Occupational Purposes (EOP). This paper will present some key challenges faced in designing, teaching and assessing EOP. The paper will also discuss the way forward in bridging the teaching and assessment gap for EOP.

Plenary Speakers

Geoff Stead | Chief Product Officer, Babbel

Geoff Stead is Chief Product Officer at Babbel, delivering digital language learning to well over 1m learners, learning 14 different languages. These learners are spread around the globe, and are not part of any organised class. Instead they are self-motivated individuals paying to improve their language skills. This focus on the end-user and how best to support them digitally can provide new insights to the traditional learning market. Before Babbel, Geoff led all new Digital Initiatives for Cambridge English which included both digital learning (apps, AI, VR) as well as digital assessment tools for some of their major exams. He is well versed in emerging technologies, and how to apply them effectively to learning and assessment.

Abstract: From the digital learning trenches: what if the future of assessment is NO assessment?

This session will dive into the self-serve, digital language learning sector. Babbel is the world's top grossing mobile language learning app, serving the kinds of learners that wouldn't otherwise be attending a language class, and have recently released the Babbel English Test, an online, digital assessment developed in partnership with Cambridge English.

We offer a "peek behind the curtain" to learn about what works for these very diverse, self-serve learners, and whether there are digital lessons that could be applied more widely across the sector.

In addition, we will present, and discuss some of the emerging technology trends that are impacting language learning and assessment: Machine Learning, AI, Natural Language Processing, VR, 360 Video.

Dr Carol Spöttl | Senior Lecturer, University of Innsbruck

Carol Spöttl has worked at the University of Innsbruck for many years in the field of language teaching, testing and evaluation. In 2013 she established the Language Testing Research Group (LTRGI) at the University of Innsbruck's School of Education. Current research projects LTRGI are involved in range from eye-tracking studies for listening tests, providing benchmarked performances for speaking and writing, comparing writing assessment in two European counties to cross disciplinary research projects with the university's medical faculty. Her work as a trainer has encompassed in-service teacher training at secondary school and tertiary level both nationally and internationally. She was on the IATEFL TEASIG committee for over 10 years and together with 3 colleagues, initiated the EALTA Speaking SIG. From 2007-2015, she was project leader for the exam reform in Austria. This government-funded project introduced a new CEFR linked national school-leaving exam in Austria in the foreign languages English, French, Italian and Spanish.

Abstract: Reforming national language exams: challenges, consequences and potential repercussions for validation. Insights from an Austrian project.

Reforming a national exam presents challenges. Some challenges are predictable and stem from professional issues already acknowledged in the field, others, however, are unpredictable and more political, technical or practical in nature. Reforms in assessment practices will always be contested. Individual interest groups emerge, some championing the reform others, for whatever reasons, resisting the change. Many of the underlying issues behind this opposition lie outwith the experience and training of language assessment professionals but can nevertheless influence the outcome. Some consequences of reform are commendable and intentional while other outcomes are unintended and frequently less well documented or researched. This talk tracks and evaluates the challenges and consequences of a high-stakes exam reform in Austria.

In this plenary, I will discuss the specific challenges encountered in implementing a CEFR linked exam reform by describing endeavours to introduce a best practice test development cycle, largely motivated by genuine desire to increase transparency and accountability to the Austrian educational system. The talk proceeds by exemplifying areas of conflict between political ambitions, legal parameters, language test constructs and intended exam functions. It will outline how and with what degree of success Politics and politics are reconciled with pragmatic realities and subsequently consider the ensuing consequences for the reform project. A key focus will be on initial research into different stakeholders perspectives on the intended consequences while identifying and examining subsequent unintended consequences. Finally the talk examines factors which should be considered in the validation framework (Chalhoub-Deville 2016), arguing for a stronger focus on political dimensions and consequences in validation research on accountability based exam reform.

Panel Discussion Speakers
Topic: **Assessment in English Medium Education**

Panel Chair
Allan Taggart | Head of English for Education Systems in East Asia, British Council

Allan began his working life as a social worker and spent a year in Sudan as an aid worker before finding true happiness as an English teacher in state primary and secondary schools in Lithuania. He joined the British Council in Bogota, Colombia in 1997 and spent the next ten years working as a teacher in Africa, Europe and East Asia. More recently his career has extended to an interest in management and in his more recent postings he has spent four years as regional teaching centre manager in Sub Saharan Africa and four years as Director English in the Americas region. He is currently British Council's Head of English for Education Systems in East Asia: working to support English language policy development and high quality English language teaching in schools and universities across the region. He has a particular interest in task-based approaches to language teaching.

When not worrying about work Allan can be found trying, and usually failing, to climb up mountains and crying at the football results (being a fan of the Scotland football team).

Panelists
Assoc Prof Dr Abdul Halim Abdul Raof | Associate Professor, University of Technology Malaysia

Dr Abdul Halim Abdul Raof is Associate Professor at the Language Academy, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Johor Bahru. His research interest includes Language Testing, English for Specific Purposes, and the Speaking Skill. In 2016 a research project he led won the British Council Innovation Prize. The project involved collaboration with industries in developing and validating an assessment instrument which measures university graduates' readiness to communicate in English in the workplace.

Halim is also a member of the national committee which looks at the revision of the Malaysian University English Test (MUET) to be aligned with the CEFR. He also supervises postgraduate students in the area of Language Assessment and Teaching of English as a Second Language.

Professor Andy Kirkpatrick | Professor, Griffith University

Andy Kirkpatrick is Professor in the Department of Humanities, Languages and Social Sciences at Griffith University and a Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities. He has lived and worked in many countries in East and Southeast Asia, including China, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Myanmar and Singapore. His research interests include the development of new varieties of English in Asia and the roles of English as a lingua franca in the region, language education policy in Asia and Chinese Rhetoric. He is the author of World Englishes: Implications for ELT and International Communication (CUP) and English as a Lingua Franca in ASEAN: a multilingual model (Hong Kong University Press). He is the editor of the Routledge Handbook of World Englishes. His most recent books are English as an Asian Language: implications for language education, co-edited with Roly Sussex and published by Springer, and Chinese Rhetoric and Writing, co-authored with Xu Zhichang and published by Parlor Press. He is founding and chief editor of the book series Multilingual Education, published by Springer.

He is currently co-editing two new handbooks namely, *Asian Englishes* (Wiley-Blackwell, with Kingsley Bolton as co-editor) and *Language Education Policy in Asia* (Routledge, with Tony Liddicoat as co-editor).

Bruce Howell | Associate Professor in Language Assessment, Head of Foundation, Study and Language Institute (FSLI)

After teaching English in Europe and Japan, Bruce took on teaching EAP (English for Academic Purposes) at the University of Reading (UK), and in doing so developed an interest for language assessment.

While being an active member of associations such as BALEAP, UKALTA and EALTA, Bruce has lead on-going development of EAP assessments such as the University of Reading's Test of English for Educational Purposes (TEEP), and directed English Language courses ranging from culture-based short courses to integrated ESAP modules for science students.

In 2016, Bruce was awarded the title of Associate Professor of Language Assessment in recognition of the lead he has taken in EAP assessment activities, alongside management roles taken within the International Study and Language Institute (ISLI) at the University of Reading.

Bruce's current role is to manage the growth of pre-university pathways (Foundation and Pre-Sessional English courses) at the University of Reading's Malaysia campus in Iskandar Puteri, and work to maintain high standards of Academic English among its students.

John Knagg | Former Global Head of Research and Consultancy, British Council.

John Knagg was Global Head of Research and Consultancy for English and Head of English for Education Systems at the British Council. From 2010 to 2018 he was Chair of Accreditation UK, the inspection and quality assurance programme for English language teaching in UK institutions and universities. John has been involved in the design, implementation and evaluation of numerous educational reform projects around the world, and developed the British Council's portfolio of ELT publications for policy-makers and educators. Recently retired from the British Council, he now works independently on international language-in-education and development initiatives.

Panel Discussion Speakers
Topic: **Policy Makers and Implementers**

Panel Chair
Professor Barry O'Sullivan | Head of Assessment Research & Development, English & Exams British Council

Professor Barry O'Sullivan is the Head of Assessment Research & Development at the British Council. He has undertaken research across many areas on language testing and assessment and its history and has worked on the development and refinement of the socio-cognitive model of test development and validation since 2000. He is particularly interested in the communication of test validation and in test localisation. He has presented his work at many conferences around the world, while almost 100 of his publications have appeared in a range of international journals, books and technical reports. He has published five books, the most recent being English on the Global Stage: The British Council and English Language Testing 1941-2016 (with Cyril Weir, 2017). He has worked on many test development and validation projects over the past 25 years and advises ministries and institutions on assessment policy and practice.

He is the founding president of the UK Association of Language Testing and Assessment (UKALTA) and holds honorary and visiting chairs at a number of universities globally. In 2016 he was awarded fellowship of the Academy of Social Science in the UK, and was elected to Fellowship of the Asian Association for Language Assessment in 2017.

Panelists
Datin Paduka Ir. Dr Siti Hamisah Tapsir | Director General at the Ministry of Education Malaysia

Datin Paduka Ir. Dr Siti Hamisah Tapsir is currently the Director General at the Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education Malaysia. She was deeply involved in the development of the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015-2025 (Higher Education) and currently tasked to implement the initiatives outlined in the Blueprint for the public and private higher education institutions. She played the primary role in the establishment of a rating system for private colleges and the liberalization of private higher education. She also contributed significantly in the formation of several foreign university branch campuses in Malaysia and the enhancement of the public universities' policies and governance. Prior to her position at the Ministry, Datin Paduka Ir. Dr Siti Hamisah was the Deputy Vice Chancellor of Universiti Teknologi Malaysia.

Datin Paduka also plays a key role in the Redesigning Higher Education initiatives of the Ministry including the Integrated Cumulative Grade Point Average (iCGPA), CEO at Faculty Programme, 2u2i (work based learning) programme, Malaysia Massive Open Online Courses (Malaysia MOOC), and Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) (a lifelong learning initiative). Currently, Datin Paduka Ir. Dr Siti Hamisah is looking into "Education 4.0", which assesses how the 4th Industrial Revolution will impact and change the higher education ecosystem.

At the professional level, she is a Board Member of Malaysia Board of Technologists and a registered engineer under Board of Engineers Malaysia. Datin Paduka Ir. Dr Siti Hamisah received an Honorary Doctorate (Doctor of Science) from the University of Southampton in 2016 for her outstanding contributions in the engineering field. She has received numerous education accolades including the Asia HRD Awards 2017 for her contribution to the Malaysian Society by advancing higher education and the Honorary Fellow of ASEAN Federation of Engineering Organisations (AFEO) in 2017 for her expertise and experience in advancing the growth of engineering in the ASEAN region.

Dr Nguyen Thi Ngoc Quynh | Founding Director of the Centre of Language Testing and Assessment, Vietnam National University

Nguyen Thi Ngoc Quynh holds a PhD in Applied Linguistics from the University of Melbourne, Australia. She is the founding director of the Center for Language Testing and Assessment at the University of Languages and International Studies, Vietnam National University, Hanoi. She is playing a key role in the research and development of the Vietnamese Standardized Test of English Proficiency (VSTEP). She participates in numerous national projects on education and assessment. She has also taught applied linguistics, teacher education, bilingual education and language assessment courses. She reviews for some journals on second language acquisition and teacher education, and has presented and published on second language education and assessment. She is currently the 2nd Vice-President of the Asian Association for Language Assessment (AALA).

Dr Souba Rethinasamy | Associate Professor, Faculty of Language and Communication, University Malaysia Sarawak

Dr Souba Rethinasamy is Associate Professor at the Faculty of Language and Communication, and also serves as Research Fellow at the Institute of Social Informatics and Technological Innovations, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS). She obtained her PhD in Language Testing and Evaluation from University of Roehampton, London. She has more than twenty years' experience in teaching English language and related courses at tertiary level. She pursues interests in language testing and evaluation, ICT in language teaching, English medium instruction and rural education. (rsouba@unimas.my)

Dr Carol Spöttl | Senior Lecturer, University of Innsbruck

Carol Spöttl has worked at the University of Innsbruck for many years in the field of language teaching, testing and evaluation. In 2013 she established the Language Testing Research Group (LTRGI) at the University of Innsbruck's School of Education. Current research projects LTRGI are involved in range from eye-tracking studies for listening tests, providing benchmarked performances for speaking and writing, comparing writing assessment in two European counties to cross disciplinary research projects with the university's medical faculty. Her work as a trainer has encompassed in-service teacher training at secondary school and tertiary level both nationally and internationally. She was on the IATEFL TEASIG committee for over 10 years and together with 3 colleagues, initiated the EALTA Speaking SIG. From 2007-2015, she was project leader for the exam reform in Austria. This government-funded project introduced a new CEFR linked national school-leaving exam in Austria in the foreign languages English, French, Italian and Spanish.

Robin Skipsey | Academic Manager, British Council

Robin comes from Gillingham, in the south east of England. He studied French Language and European History at the University of East Anglia and lived and worked in the UK and France before moving to Japan in 2005, where he has been working ever since.

After teaching in in public elementary and junior high schools as part as part of a British Council team-teaching project in Tokyo, Robin became the Academic Manager responsible for teacher-development at the British Council. Since April 2014 he has overseen the design, development and roll-out of the Leaders of English Education Project (LEEP), a 5-year national teacher training initiative commissioned by the Japanese Ministry of Education.

LEEP aims to help teachers deliver more communication-focused English lessons, in line with the demands of the national curriculum, and is now in its fifth and final year.

Breakout Sessions on Day 1
Topic: **Teaching and Assessment**

Primary presenter

Kyungsuk Chang | Researcher, Korea Institute for Curriculum and Evaluation

I have worked as a researcher at Korea Institute for Curriculum and Evaluation since 2002. I have had teaching experience at secondary schools and universities. I obtained my doctoral degree at the University of Manchester in 1996. I have been involved in research on curriculum, assessment, in-service teacher training, material development, and language policy. Currently I am in charge of global educational development projects with Korea International Cooperation Agency, Asian Development Bank and World Bank.

Co-presenter

Uisung Lee | Teacher, Kimhwa Middle School

I have been teaching English to high school students for almost 30 years and middle school students for one and a half years. I am very interested in how to teach English and how to assess students' abilities. I know the national standards affect the way of teaching and evaluating English. I, as an English teacher and English learner, strongly hope we have objective and reasonable standards meeting the ultimate purpose of learning, teaching and assessing English.

Co-presenter

Miyoung Byun | Educational Researcher, Gangwon International Language Institute

I have worked as an educational researcher at Gangwon International Language Institute (GILI) for the Teacher Training Program since 2016. I had more than 25 years teaching experience at secondary schools. I obtained my master's degree at the Korea Kyeowon University, which is a specialized university for teaching in 2014. I have been involved in research on teacher training, assessment and ESL educational policy. Currently I am in charge of Intensive Teacher Training Program for English teachers with other International staff in GILI.

Abstract: **Aligning the national standards to the international ones to inform classroom teaching and assessment, and to meet local needs**

As key competencies for the 21st century were reflected in setting the goals of education in the Korean national curriculum, there has been a great demand for changes in classroom teaching and assessment for achieving the goal of enhancing students' key competencies. The connection of assessment with learning and teaching, and the alignment of assessment to the national standards have been emphasized in the competency-based national curriculum. The Korean teachers of English attending a school-based teacher development programme investigated how the standards presented in the national curriculum can be used to inform their own classroom teaching, and the design and validation of the classroom-based performance assessment. The findings of the investigations revealed that a gap was identified between the policy to integrate competencies into the current national standards and the implementation of the standards in classroom teaching and performance assessment. Seeking to bridge the gap, they adapted the international standards, i.e. CEFR to meet their local needs, and examined possibilities and challenges at the level of aligning the national standards to the international ones to meet the local needs. Implications for the national curriculum revision are discussed within a wider context in English language education in Korea.

Mika Mori | Teacher of English Language, Amakusa City Itsuwa Junior High School

I graduated with a teaching degree in English from Kumamoto University. Since then, I have taught at various junior high schools in Amakusa city. My research interests are in students' acquisition and usage of English grammar in class, and issues in natural English pronunciation for Japanese students.

Abstract: **Disconnect between MEXT English frameworks and assessment standards.**

The Japanese Ministry of Education (MEXT) provides the framework for English education in schools, including the content of the high school entrance exams. And while this framework states that students should be proficient in spoken English, said exams do not include a speaking section, testing only a student's writing proficiency. This means that teachers don't devote much time to developing students' practical English, focusing on written theory alone.

MEXT's framework also states that teachers should teach English classes using only English in junior high school. However, explaining new points or words in class is often done in Japanese rather than English, as due to limited teaching time, and, for some, their perceived lack of own English abilities, tend to believe that this is the most efficient way to meet MEXT's expectations of written English in their limited teaching time, further reducing a student's engagement with spoken English. Hence, the framework does not facilitate its stated goals.

This disconnect between framework and assessment in speaking ability needs to be assessed in entrance exams as well as in junior high school, thus giving teachers a clear purpose to include speaking activities in class, and also for students to engage with these activities. Following from that, the current English teaching processes need to be overhauled to include said speaking activities organically, having teachers prepare various materials for class with the goal of providing comprehensible vocal input. With these changes, it becomes possible to achieve MEXT's expectations regarding the level of students' speaking proficiency.

Primary presenter

Masreen Wirda Mohammad Ali | Asst. Director, Curriculum Development Division, Ministry of Education Malaysia

A curriculum development officer for the Ministry of Education Malaysia since 2006. Masreen has extensive experience in developing curricula, curriculum related material and teacher training in both primary and secondary English language education as well as Literature in English for the Malaysia state school system.

Co-presenter

Anna Greene | Programme Director, Malaysia, Cambridge Assessment English

Anna started her career as a languages teacher before moving into the private sector. She has led teams responsible for developing products and services for international education reform clients who are international ministries of education with major reform agendas. The scope of work on these projects includes curriculum review, varied approaches to curriculum development, textbook review, support materials development, capacity development projects, trainer training and teacher training programmes covering many aspects of pedagogy, curriculum implementation monitoring and evaluation as well as examination development. She is currently working with the MoE in Malaysia to reform their English Language education system.

Abstract: **Adoption of CEFR in Malaysia: Changes in the classroom**

The growing use and implementation of language standards and proficiency frameworks in language testing and assessment requires the alignment of these standards with other elements of the education system, for example curriculum design. The Malaysian government has embarked on a long and admirable journey to transform its education and prepare its youth to complete in a global economy. The Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025 placed the Common European Framework of Reference (Council of Europe 2001) at the heart of English language reform and this has been key in creating a 'language learning ecology', which promotes a joined up approach to ensure that efforts to improve curriculum, teacher methodology, learning materials and assessment are coordinated in a coherent way.

This paper will discuss the practical implications for the Malaysian state school system of introducing CEFR as governing framework for teaching, learning and assessment and how this has specifically informed classroom teaching and learning in state schools.

The Roadmap 2015-2025 sets out the aspirational targets, which pupils should reach at the end of key phases of education. How these targets were used to develop Curriculum Frameworks and the subsequent syllabuses, schemes of work and teacher training will be outlined. The impact of implementing the new CEFR-aligned curricula is being monitored and evaluated nationally by the MoE and the early findings and recommendations will be discussed.

Breakout Sessions on Day 1
Topic: **Impact**

Alexander Imig | Associate Professor, School of International Liberal Studies, Chukyo University, Nagoya, Japan

Language teaching since 1992 and in different countries for more than 25 years. Master's degree in Philosophy in 1991, after that teacher training for German as a Foreign Language on University Level (Humboldt-University and TU Berlin). Since 2001 teaching at Japanese Universities: Aichi Prefectural University and since 2008 a tenured position as Associate Professor at the Chukyo University in Nagoya. Research focus is the CEFR, with participation in various research projects (e.g. for a CEFR-informed English Textbook, Asahi University Press). The outcome of the latest research project is the Publication: "Critical Constructive of CEFR-in- formed Language teaching in Japan and beyond" (Cambridge University Press).

Abstract: An EIL-informed CEFR for Academic writing in the APAC-Region

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) is one of the most influential concepts in the field of language learning and assessment worldwide. Yet its reception in Japan and beyond tends to follow local national paradigms, with the goal of using the development of the CEFR-Japan for establishing a new standard for English education (known as CEFR-J). The paper is arguing that the usage of the CEFR in academic environment in Japan needs certain adaptions, which will be demonstrated in the context of a case study for teaching and evaluation of (academic) writing in a fourth year University course in Japan. While it will not be possible to explain the CEFR and its assessment related philosophy in detail, some scales for writing, especially the scale "Reports and Essays" (p 62) will be covered in some detail. Furthermore, the new companion volume of the CEFR will be also be explained in the context of interactive writing. However, the main focus of the paper are issues of localization on the regional (Asian), national and classroom level. The presenter will refer to a case-study for Japan, which could have a wider impact for the Asian region. The case study will show in some detail how the CEFR can be implemented for Academic writing in Japan and possibly in wider Asian contexts. For the coverage of a wider Asian context the Feedback during the conference is essential.

Penghao Song | General Manager, New Oriental Education & Technology Group

Worked for New Oriental for 11 years, responsible for R&D, teaching and training, certified as CELT-P/S Trainer by Cambridge. Teaching English for 11 years. Students are mainly on intermediate and advanced level (CEFR Level B1-C1); some students are on foundation level (CEFR Level A2). Helping students prepare for IELS and TOEFL. Participating in planning and organizing of online lessons and live stream lessons since 2012. Designed online learning platform, which provides services including lesson-entry exams, modular learning, after class exercises, mock exam and learning process management; successfully online for 5 years. Leading in the development of the IELTS+TOEFL auto-marker, which combines online learning and AI techniques.

Abstract: How AI Is Applied In The Auto-Marker For The TOEFL/IELTS Speaking Section

For Chinese EFL learners, the problem of writing and speaking ability runs through all stages of learning. Due to the lack of real-life English scenarios, the learners' improvement of writing and speaking needs more high-frequency exercises and timely feedback after class.

The study based on a newly developed score engine used by RealSkill. This engine was trained by more than 100,000 Chinese EFL learners' answers.

Each answer was rated according to the official test rubrics by at least 2 raters whose teaching age is more than 2 years.

To develop a speaking score engine, recognize the students' undefined speech is the first step. Then convert the speech into text. Based on the text and speech, the machine calculates the scoring characteristics of each dimension. Finally, let the engine learn all the data and human scores. The model is used to fit the scoring features and human scores to realize the intelligent scoring.

The recent level of human-machine agreement of TOEFL speaking (task 1&2, score 0-4) engine shows that over 97.99% of overall scores was within band 1, and already being applied in several mock tests. As for IELTS speaking (part 2, band 0-9) engine, over 98.92% of overall scores was within band 2, over 97.37% of Fluency of Coherence scores was within band 2, over 98.61% of Grammatical Range And Accuracy scores was within band 2, over 97.84% of Lexical Resource scores was within band 2, and over 98.61% of Pronunciation scores was within band 2.

Stuart Andrew Goodsir | Team Leader for Language Assessment Consultants, British Council, Beijing

Work; Currently Team Leader for Language Assessment Consultants British Council Beijing. Previous roles: National Examiner Recruitment Manager British Council China, Offsite coordinator & Teacher Business Unit British Council Barcelona Online Language Consultant Open University of Catalunya, Teacher and Tutor School of Tourism CETT, University of Barcelona.
Testing & Assessment; Cambridge Assessment and IELTS as a Team Leader and Examiner Trainer in China, Spain, Morocco, Tunisia and Hong Kong for over 25 years.
Passions; fairness in assessment and life, football - Raith Rovers & Barcelona FC. Assessment Conferences; ALTE Barcelona 2001, New Directions Shanghai 2017

Abstract: Examiner engagement with candidates prior to a Speaking Test.

This work-in-progress presentation will look at unscripted interaction before the start of the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) and initial examiner engagement with candidates, looking specifically at how this can influence the test's validity and reliability.
This unscripted interaction can vary greatly, with examiners welcoming and ushering the candidates into the test room using different verbal prompts. Manner and posture can also influence.

In OPIs where an interlocutor is directly involved, the test-takers may well be influenced by the interlocutor's behaviour (Bachman, 1990; Sewell, 2009) and it is for this reason that OPIs, including IELTS, are standardised across examiners using scripts, extensive training and regular monitoring of performance. It could be argued that unsystematic influence on test performance, such as distracting noises (Alderson, Clapham and Wall, 2005) could be extended to include how the examiner initially engages with the test-taker. In order for a test to be reliable, there should be consistency of measurement (Bachman & Palmer,1996). This supports a recommendation that the pre-OPI interaction should also be standardised and possibly scripted.

This paper presents a first step in evaluating this recommendation with one stakeholder group. 25 examiners were surveyed about their opinions on this change. Next steps to gather other stakeholder responses is also outlined.

Keywords: unscripted interaction; OPIs; unsystematic influence

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Breakout Sessions on Day 1
Topic: **Alignment**

Philip Horne | Test Quality Assurance Manager, British Council

Philip works for the British Council's Global Assessment team, working on test development projects in a variety of different contexts. His MA dissertation focused on rating scale validation, in particular the circumstances under which pronunciation-focused descriptors factor into rater decision-making. Prior to this, he has worked for the China Assessment Solutions team, delivering assessment literacy and item writing training, as well as projects on test production and proficiency framework validation, such as CSE. He hopes to begin PhD studies, similarly focusing on rating scale validation and benchmarking these against existing frameworks.

Abstract: The (non-) applicability of pronunciation descriptors in a holistic scale.

As English is widely used as a lingua franca, language testers have started to consider revising the standard for listening comprehension and introducing non-native accents into English listening tests. This study investigates how accents influence test takers' performance, and also elicits test takers' subjective perception of accents. Eighty adolescent L1-Mandarin test takers were divided into four groups of equal proficiency, with each group listening to one accented version of the same English listening test. The test input was delivered in Australian, Spanish, Vietnamese and Mandarin accented Englishes with tasks measuring lexical and propositional comprehension and consisting of picture selection, true/false, and gap completion items. Test takers' perceptions of accent familiarity, comprehensibility and their attitudes were also measured. Results from ANOVA analysis, Factor Analysis and reliability analysis indicate that the test takers who received Mandarin accented input performed best, lending support to a shared-L1 effect, with the strongest advantage for lexical comprehension. No significant difference was observed in test scores among the groups exposed to non-Mandarin accents. Findings also reveal that the type of accent was not significantly related to test takers' attitude towards it. The central implication from this study is that there is potential for the inclusion of non-native accents into listening tests for adolescent learners if the shared-L1 effect can be addressed. Positive washback effect in English teaching, especially in the Asian EFL context, will also be discussed.

Primary presenter

Dr Ardeshir Geranpayeh | Head of Automated Assessment & Learning Cambridge Assessment English/Cambridge UK

Dr Geranpayeh is Head of Automated Assessment and Learning at Cambridge Assessment English. He has been leading on the development and implementation of automated assessment of Writing and Speaking in Cambridge English since 2009. Ardeshir holds a PhD in Applied Linguistics from the University of Edinburgh on the comparability of language proficiency testing. He has 29 years' experience of test validation and has contributed to the design, development, validation, revision and evaluation of almost all Cambridge English language proficiency tests. He is a regular presenter at international conferences where he has been leading on workshops on Statistics, Computer Based Testing, Test of Listening and Test Security.

Co-presenter

Ahmad Zufrie Abd Rahman | Examination Officer, Malaysian Examinations Council

Ahmad Zufrie Abd Rahman is an Examination Officer at the Malaysian Examinations Council (MEC). He has 12 years of experiences in the education industry. Currently he is working towards his PhD in English Literature at Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), under the sponsorship of MEC. His research interests are in the areas of second language education, assessment and evaluation, and postcolonial literature

Abstract: The alignment of Malaysian University English Test to the CEFR

The Malaysian University English Test (MUET) is a high stakes test of English in Malaysia which measures candidate ability across four components (Reading, Listening, Writing and Speaking) in the form of an aggregated score summarising performance on each and all components and a band, from 1 (lowest) to 6 (highest). MUET results are used for high-stakes decisions concerning entry to, and exit from, higher education courses in Malaysia for around 200,000 candidates per year. MUET Descriptors are available for each of the six bands awarded but were not aligned to any international standards until recently. As part of the implementation of the Education Blueprint for Malaysia (2013-2025), it was decided to align the MUET to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe 2001).

This paper reports on the alignment process which has been a collaboration between the Malaysian Examinations Council and Cambridge Assessment English. This collaboration builds on an earlier evaluation project carried out in 2014-15. The current collaboration reported on here, has consisted of two parallel strands: the revision of MUET syllabus for 2019-2020 first live administration and its alignment to the CEFR.

As the Malaysian Examinations Council and Cambridge Assessment English worked towards the alignment of MUET with the CEFR, the processes followed have been those recommended by the Manual accompanying the CEFR, namely familiarisation, specification, standardisation, standard setting and validation. This presentation details the progress made in each of these areas and the validation exercise that was followed.

Primary presenter

Dr Ho Sook Wah | Head of English Language Unit, Gamuda Berhad

Sook Wah HO is the Head of the English Language Unit at Gamuda Berhad, Malaysia, being seconded from Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM). At UPM, she taught undergraduate English proficiency courses. During her term as the Head of the Division at the Centre for the Advancement of Language Competence, she spearheaded the English Language Experience (ELEx) package, a comprehensive package that charts the teaching and learning of English proficiency at UPM which was implemented in 2013. Her interests include materials design and development, language assessment, cooperative learning and young learners' vocabulary acquisition.

Co-presenter

Dr Wong Bee Eng | Consultant, Gamuda Berhad

Bee Eng WONG is a consultant at the English Language Unit, Gamuda Berhad, Malaysia. She is involved in test design and training of staff. She was an Associate Professor in the Department of English at the Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia. She taught courses in linguistics and applied linguistics. Her main research interests were in the areas of syntactic and morphological mental representation and development, vocabulary development in SLA, generative syntax and morphology, discourse studies and second language assessment.

Abstract: **The Gamuda English Tests: Aligning Gaps, Targets and Standards**

English language test for the workplace, particularly in a second/foreign language context, needs to match the gaps between the (prospective) employees' language ability and the required language needs for their job roles, and at the same time informs the development of training syllabus. This paper shares the design and development of four targeted online English tests at Gamuda Berhad, a public listed Engineering and property development company in Malaysia. The tests, which are used for recruitment of prospective employees and diagnosis of language ability of current employees for training purposes, are intended to achieve the goal of the organisation to raise the level of English competence of its employees, who are mainly second/foreign language speakers of English, at the Managerial and Executive levels to meet its specific business needs. This paper will describe the process undertaken in the design and development of the four in-house online proficiency diagnostic tests based on language learning theories, document analyses, and needs analyses. Next, the paper will discuss the diagnostic reports of the test-takers which highlight their strengths and lacks or 'gaps' in the use of the English language. The paper also reports how the test-takers' gaps are addressed, which form the 'targets' of the customised training modules as required by their job roles. Finally, the paper discusses the need for setting 'standards' as an outcome of the testing process.

Breakout Sessions on Day 1
Topic: **General Theme**

Dylan Burton | Assessment Consultant, British Council Beijing, China

Dylan Burton has worked in education and language assessment for over 14 years. His work has taken him from the USA to Japan, Spain, and finally China, where he works at the British Council in Beijing as an assessment consultant. He has worked with a wide range of Cambridge and British Council exams as a language teacher and examiner and has delivered workshops and presentations on assessment issues across the East Asia region. He is currently completing an MA in language testing through Lancaster University with research interests in speaking assessment, rater cognition and language assessment literacy.

Abstract: **Raters' Perceptions of Inauthenticity in Speaking Tests in China**

Test-takers preparing for high-stakes speaking tests in China often engage in practices that lead to the use of construct-irrelevant response strategies (CIRS). These CIRS may result in discourse that reflects a lack of authenticity of engagement (Spence-Brown, 2001), which Messick (1982) noted is a threat to the validity of test scores. Despite this threat, to date there has been very little research investigating this discourse in speaking tests, and even less discussion of how it is detected and dealt with by human raters. This study has addressed that gap by exploring the accuracy of raters' authenticity judgments and what they identify as key features of inauthenticity.

This issue was approached by conducting and recording speaking tests with an unexposed control group of students and an experimental group which was exposed to the test questions beforehand. 58 trained speaking examiners based in five countries then rated the recorded samples using a speaker evaluation survey with semantic differentials covering various aspects of authenticity and proficiency. A small subset of these examiners participated in stimulated verbal recall protocols to explore their perceptions and thought processes.

The study revealed that raters overall are able to identify inauthenticity in many of the exposed samples, but only the examiners experienced with Chinese test-takers were able to categorize these consistently according to exposure. The verbal protocols supported this finding and revealed a taxonomy of features that raters associate with both authenticity and inauthenticity. This has potential applications for both test security and rater training.

Julian Copley | British Council Vietnam

Julian Copley is currently studying for an MA in Language Testing at Lancaster University. He works in the field of assessment at the British Council Vietnam and has a strong background in ESL education, having previously worked as an ESL teacher and teacher trainer. He has also been involved in projects for the Ministry of Education in Vietnam. His research interests are the social aspects of language and interaction; in particular, analysing oral proficiency and the extent to which speaking tests capture (and are sensitive to) the interactive, co-constructive, nature of speaking.

Abstract: **Individual and Paired Interaction influences on Exam Procedures and Rating**

This presentation relates to the theme of how oral tests are aligned to existing definitions of speaking and focuses on the extent to which speaking tests capture (and are sensitive to) the interactive, co-constructive, nature of speaking. This is of particular interest given that China´s College Entrance test (CET) is now to include a paired candidate format to assess interactional competence, an ambitious move to promote better productive skills in students.

In this presentation, a review of the major viewpoints of what constitutes speaking will be given with emphasis on interactional competence and its relevance to oral exams. In addition, existing paired vs. individual exam formats and their effects on ratings, and Interlocutor impact on candidate performance will be reviewed.

It will be shown that more work will have to be done to recognise which of these features of interaction are part of the speaking construct and what role they have in oral tests. In addition, the consistency of examiner procedures and delivery through the interaction displayed between the examiner and the test-taker has been brought into question.

This has implications on rating methods currently used in many high-stakes oral tests which will have to be changed if we accept that co-construction is part of the speaking construct and needs to be assessed.

Primary presenter

Dr Maruthi Vaddapalli | Team Leader for Language Assessment Consultants, British Council, China.

Maruthi Kumari earned her PhD in English Phonetics in 2008. She has taught English in Oman, Eritrea, India for over 16 years. She has been associated with the British Council Oman, India and China for the last 10 years and has been part of English and Exams teams playing a role in both teacher training and language assessment. With a research background in English pronunciation she has published and presented papers in India and Oman. Her interest in the area of pronunciation has motivated her to work on the assessment of English pronunciation in local and international language proficiency tests.

Co-presenter

Neilane Liew | Team Leader for Language Assessment Consultants, British Council, China

I am a qualified Primary school teacher , with 25 years of experience in ESL in 4 countries. I have been a teacher, assessor of public exams, and was a manager of a remote teaching centre for the British Council in Brunei Darussalam during the 1990's. I currently work in China where I lead a team of language assessment professionals and since being there have developed a growing interest in the varieties of "World English" pronunciation and the evolving nature of the spoken form of the language. I am delighted to assist in the research work initiated by my colleague, Maruthi Vaddapalli and in sharing the results of our research with participants of this conference.

Abstract: **Standards and proficiency frameworks in assessing pronunciation: An exploration of the attitudes of EFL teachers to assessing pronunciation and how to better inform assessment practice going forward.**

Many international students enrol for higher studies in English-speaking countries. However, adequate scores on international tests of English proficiency are not always reflected in the students' ability to interact. One key aspect of concern is producing globally intelligible speech and whether this is adequately assessed at the testing stage. This presentation focuses on the assessor's role in recognising the key features of globally intelligible speech and perceptions in assessing English pronunciation, in certain select universities in India and China. Using a small-scale qualitative study of a cohort of assessors in both countries, an inventory of International English pronunciation akin to that suggested by Jennifer Jenkins (Jenkins, 1998) was used to cite key features necessary for global intelligibility and teachers surveyed to gauge awareness and usage of these features in their own assessing. Talk Aloud protocol identified their own perceptions of how they assessed, and a post-assessment survey determined if these perceptions had changed. Analysis of the data and recommendations based on the result provide insights into perspectives of assessors on the assessment of pronunciation and will inform their practice going forward.

There were three phases to the research, involving completing a questionnaire, and looking at the IELTS public band descriptors for analysis and comparison. The data gave insights into perspectives of global intelligibility and possible future directions in this field.

Further Research Recommendations:
Implications of the research on the teaching of pronunciation.
References:
Jenkins, Jennifer. (1998). Which pronunciation norms and models for English as an International Language?. ELT Journal. 52. 10.1093/elt/52.2.119

Breakout Sessions on Day 1

Primary presenter

Prof. Dr Noor Lide Abu Kassim | Academic (Professor), International Islamic University Malaysia

Noor Lide Abu Kassim (PhD) is Professor at the Department of Language & Literacy, Kulliyyah of Education, International Islamic University Malaysia. She holds a Doctorate in Psychometrics & Education Evaluation, a Master's Degree in Curriculum Studies and a Bachelor Degree in English Language. She specializes in Standard Setting, Assessment, and Applied Statistics. To date, she has been appointed as a consultant for the development of two institutional tests of English Language Proficiency. She has also taught Biostatistics in Dentistry and Nursing; and has published in areas related to Language Assessment, Public Health, Life Science, Informetrics and Education.

Co-presenter

Assoc. Prof. Dr Ainol Madziah Zubairi | Academic (Associate Professor), International Islamic University Malaysia

Ainol Madziah Zubairi is Associate Professor at the Kulliyyah of Education of the International Islamic University, Malaysia (IIUM). She obtained her Bachelor of Arts from University of North Texas, USA in 1986, Master of Arts in TESL from University of North Texas in 1988 and PhD from the University of Surrey, England (2001) in Language Testing. Her publications are in areas of language testing, language education, employability studies and educational assessment in higher education. Her specialised areas include Teaching English as a Second Language, language testing, educational assessment and teacher education.

Co-presenter

Prof. Dr Isarji Sarudin | Deputy Rector, Academic and Industrial Linkages & Academic (Professor), International Islamic University Malaysia

Dr Isarji Hj. Sarudin is Professor of applied linguistics at the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). With 31 years of academic experience, he has published many articles and audited many academic programmes at various public and private institutions of higher learning. As an advisor, master trainer and consultant in curriculum design and programme evaluation, he has been designing and evaluating academic programmes and conducting Outcome-based Education training programmes at various public and private institutions of higher learning.

Abstract: **Alignment To CEFR And IELTS: The CELPAD IIUM Initiative**

The English Language Proficiency Test (EPT) has been in place at the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) since the inception of the University in 1983. It has a longer history than the Malaysian University English Test (MUET), a national standardized English language proficiency test, which was first introduced in 1999 by the Malaysian Examinations Council. The EPT, which was first developed as a single test to determine the English language proficiency of incoming students, went through a number of revisions to complement the changes made to the curriculum of the English language support courses at the IIUM. After its last major revision, 25 years ago, the EPT is now going through a major transformation; the alignment to the Common European Framework (CEFR) and the IELTS. This paper describes how the construct alignment of EPT Reading Subtest to the CEFR Levels and IELTS was implemented and also its validation which was based on a pilot test involving 754 test takers and 40 reading test items covering nine reading subskills. Rasch analysis of the pilot data indicated that the targeting of the items generally support the construct alignment. However, the presence of off-target items suggests possible interaction effects between item format and test takers' characteristics. Item developers' intuitive impression that the first reading passage, targeted at B1, would be more challenging than the second passage, which was targeted at B2, was also confirmed. Overall, the results look promising and efforts are being made for better alignment to the CEFR and the IELTS.

Dr Hyoshin Lee | Director of Lifelong Education Institute
Director of the Dept. of English Language, Konkuk University Glocal Campus

Hyoshin Lee is a director of the Lifelong Education Institute and a director of the Dept. of English Language, Konkuk University Glocal Campus, Chungju, S. Korea. She is currently holds the position of a vice president for the AsiaTEFL. She has been involved in a wide range of English education and multicultural education including teacher education and curriculum development since she received her doctorate degree in 2003 from The University of Manchester, UK. Her major interests include continuous professional development, curriculum alignment, intercultural communication and ESP.

Abstract: **Change in the status of the IELTS: from one of many tests towards a lever leading to changes in communication-oriented English education at a university level**

In South Korea, the abolition of the NEAT (National English Ability Test), which was developed to include speaking and writing test in the College Scholastic Ability Test (CSAT) with only listening and reading test, and the introduction of absolute test to the CSAT, still focusing on only listening and reading, have led to big concerns about the drop in Korean students' interest and proficiency in English. This concern has been increasing in many Korean universities, where much attention has been paid to the TOEIC test, which is a listening and reading test, as an official English proficiency test for strengthening their students' job skills. Based on this critical awareness of the Korean university ELT context, IELTS, including all four language skills assessment, was selected an alternative to the TOEIC test to improve students' English proficiency level. The research findings confirmed that the students who participated in the program had dramatically increased confidence, particularly in the use of productive language skills, These changes were viewed as the result of the intensive learning of productive skills in the process of the IELTS preparation at their own choice, unlike before the university where English was essential, accompanied by the change of affective factors such as self-perception, motivation, learning habit, and attitudes experienced by the students during the preparation of IELTS. This tells us the possibility that the wash-back effect, which was not carried out at the stage after primary and secondary schools, can be shown at the university level. The findings suggest that the change in the status of the IELTS from one of many tests towards a lever leading to changes in communication-oriented English education at a university level.

Primary presenter

Dr Vahid Aryadoust | Assistant Professor, National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University

Vahid Aryadoust, PhD, is the Assistant Professor in the English Language and Literature Academic Group. He is the Associate Director of the Global Listening Center, and a member of international associations such as the International Listening Association, American Association of Applied Linguistics, and the Cognitive Science Society. He has led multiple language assessment projects and published his research in Language Testing, Language Assessment Quarterly, Assessing Writing, Educational Assessment, Educational Psychology, and Computer Assisted Language Learning, etc. He has also (co-)authored multiple book chapters and books published by Routledge, Cambridge University Press, Springer, Cambridge Scholar Publishing, Wiley Blackwell, etc.

Co-presenter

Dr Chiao-Yi Wu | Research Scientist, Centre for Research and Development in Learning, Nanyan

Chiao-Yi (Joyce) obtained her B.S. in Psychology with the Dean's Award and finished the Neurobiology and Cognitive Science Program at the National Taiwan University, Taiwan prior to completing her PhD in Psychology with a research scholarship at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. She is interested in studying the neural basis of cognitive functions, in particular language and reading, by employing a variety of neuroscientific methodologies such as magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS). During her doctoral studies, she investigated the neural substrates of Chinese character processing and examined language and memory processing in the aging brain using functional MRI.

Abstract: **Investigating the neurocognitive processes of listeners using functional near-infrared spectroscopy (fNIRS)**

Language assessment scholars have widely used quantitative and qualitative methods to investigate the validity of uses and interpretations of test scores. Although these research methods have extended our knowledge of language assessment, there is a dearth of research on the neurocognitive mechanisms that correlate with such behavioural data. The goal of this project is two-fold: first, it introduces the concept of "neurocognitive evidence for validity" which has been developed by the presenters; second, it demonstrates the application of high-density functional near-infrared spectroscopy (fNIRS) to investigate the neurocognitive processes involved in listening assessment.

fNIRS is an advanced technique to measure human brain activities through hemodynamic responses (i.e., changes in oxygenated and deoxygenated haemoglobin that are induced by neural activities). We demonstrate the main steps of using fNIRS which include connecting optical sensors and the device as well as the software to record data. We illustrate the relevant software to develop proper "events" and "blocks" to make a "paradigm" for brain imaging. Next, we present relevant software packages which are used for various pre-processing steps followed by specific statistical analysis of fNIRS signals to identify the brain regions with hemodynamic effects.

As a case in point, we demonstrate using fNIRS to measure hemodynamic responses in the pre-frontal areas and explore whether cognitive functions during listening assessment are correlated with brain activities. We also propose that, as fNIRS is non-invasive and portable, it is a feasible device for conducting language assessment experiments in different settings without disrupting students' assessment experience.

Breakout Sessions on Day 2
Topic: **Teaching and Assessment**

Dr Rama Mathew | Visiting Professor, Ambedkar University Delhi

Rama Mathew is an ELT consultant and a retired Professor of Education from the University of Delhi (in 2016) where she was also Dean of the Faculty of Education. She taught at the EFL University (Hyderabad) for several years. She has directed many ELT projects in India. She was the Head of the Research, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit of English in Action project in Bangladesh in 2015 and later served as a Consultant. She has been involved in several teacher development and assessment projects, and published articles and books in the area.

Abstract: **Evaluation of teachers' assessment literacy: A study in Goa, India**

Assessment Literacy (AL) is here defined as a basic understanding of educational assessment and related skills to apply such knowledge to various measures of student achievement. This study is based on the premise that teachers are key agents in educational assessment and that their understanding and practice of assessment is located in their cultural and social context in which they work.

This study was conducted in Goa, India, as part of a project being carried out in Macau and Goa, both former Portuguese colonies for hundreds of years. The questionnaire was in a Likert scale format and was administered to about 500 teachers of Hindi, English, Marathi, Konkani and Portuguese online and face-to-face in about 90 schools.

While conducting the survey we realized that one-on-one conversations and focus group discussions where possible, yielded a deeper and a more holistic picture of their AL. The preliminary findings are: (1) Many teachers do engage in a variety of assessments using different activities in the classroom, and are aware of ethical issues involved; (2) Most often teachers consider those tasks as assessment tasks if the school Board mandates it; very often they were unaware that they were doing formative assessment or were hesitant to acknowledge it; (3) Class tests matched those of the Board's summative tests; (4) The teachers' AL was probably not at a level as to make the questionnaire a viable tool.

We will discuss the implications of the study for research methodology, assessment training and quality in assessment.

Primary presenter

Dr Quynh Xuan Le | Head of ELT Department, Hoa Sen University

Quynh Le has been teaching English for more than 10 years. He obtained an MA in English Language Teacher Development in 2005 and a PhD in Education in 2013, both from the University of Nottingham, UK. His research interests include learner autonomy, learning strategy, language assessment, and vocabulary learning. At present, he is the Head of ELT Department, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Hoa Sen University, Vietnam.

Co-presenter

Trang Thuy Lam | ELT Programme Coordinator, Hoa Sen University

Trang Lam is currently an English lecturer and also a programme coordinator of the English Language Teaching Department at Hoa Sen University. She obtained a master's degree in TESOL. She has been teaching English at the university level for over 8 years. Her many interests include professional development, curriculum development, language teaching and language assessment.

Abstract: **Aligning International standards, National requirements and Institutional Goals in ELT**

Selecting an English language test that can be aligned with the learning outcomes of an institution's programme as well as used as an internationally recognized benchmark for students' proficiency is one of the most challenging tasks of ELT management at any HE institutions in Vietnam. This challenge is compounded by the proliferation of English proficiency tests offered by various reputable organizations in the country. With the aim to ensure their quality of English language teaching, many Vietnamese institutions are turning to using international standards as a way to verify their students' proficiency in English. This paper discusses the strategies employed by a Vietnamese university to determine the suitability of APTIS as an instrument to measure the learning outcomes of its English programme. These strategies include utilising quantitative and qualitative data from students and teachers to analyse various aspects of the test. The paper will also highlight policy decisions made and assessment goals set by the institution following the implementation of the international standards. The wash back effects in terms of teaching and learning brought about by this selection will also be presented. Specifically, how the assessment specifications were translated into learning activities that could be adapted to the existing programme and course book of the institution. The paper concludes with recommendations for teacher training as an essential condition for the successful implementation of the new standards.

Primary presenter

Dr Heather H. Koons | Director, Research Services, MetaMetrics

Dr Heather H. Koons is Director, Research Services at MetaMetrics, where she works with clients to link their reading and mathematics assessments with the Lexile Framework for Reading and Quantile Framework for Mathematics. She also coordinates research projects related to text complexity, English learners, and vocabulary development. Koons taught English in East Asia and high school English in the U.S. before working in test development at the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. Koons earned her MA in Education at Stanford University and her Ph.D. in Educational Psychology, Measurement, and Evaluation at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Co-presenter

Dr Eleanor Sanford-Moore | Sr. Vice President for Research and Development, MetaMetrics

Dr Eleanor Sanford-Moore oversees MetaMetrics's research and development projects, linking studies, and other external consulting. For the past eight years, she has also been involved with studies related to English language learner assessments. Prior to joining MetaMetrics in 1998, she was with the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and responsible for the development of many public school assessments. She has written test reviews for "Buro's Mental Measurements Yearbook," and served on various national committees related to large-scale assessment. Dr. Sanford-Moore earned her undergraduate degree in statistics and master's and doctorate of philosophy in psychology from North Carolina State University.

Abstract: **Maximizing the utility of English assessment scores**

As increasing numbers of learners study English and take examinations designed to monitor language growth and determine readiness for entrance into the next stages of education, it is important to maximize test score utility by incorporating information from supplemental metrics to identify appropriate reading materials for learners.

During the pilot stages of the Aptis Teens Higher (ATH) development, a study was conducted to link The Lexile Framework reading scale to the ATH scale. Now, scores on ATH may be reported as Lexile measures as well as and CEFR levels. Participants were Chinese learners preparing for IGSE exams. The average learner reading ability (N=1358) was 1033L, within the B2 range on the CEFR scale. Previous linking studies with Aptis General and Aptis Advanced show strong alignment of CEFR levels and Lexile measures reported from the three assessments.

In a related study of IGSE textbooks and exam papers administered in Chinese international schools, text complexity, in Lexile measures, ranged from 780L to 1180L. When a learner's English reading ability (e.g. 1033L) is lower than the text demand of a text/exam (e.g. 1180L), he/she will encounter reading comprehension challenges. Knowing the Lexile measure of a learner and text provides educators insight into when a learner will need reading comprehension support.

In addition to examining ATH, Aptis General, and Aptis Advanced learner results and IGSCE texts, Lexile measures are used to examine reading demands of graded reader texts, Japan's Eiken test, S Korean school textbooks, and university texts in the UK and USA.

Evan Simpson | Assessment Consultant, British Council Shanghai

Since 2003, Evan Simpson has had the honor and privilege of working with second language learners in eight countries on a range of topics. To be more precise, Evan has taught everything from absolute beginner Korean kindergarten children, members of the State Bank of Vietnam, as well as Chinese students preparing for SAT, TOEFL iBT, IELTS and first-year writing courses.

Currently, Evan is a member of the China Assessment Solution Team at The British Council where he has the pleasure of working to improve the impact assessments have in China, East Asia, and around the globe.

Abstract: **IELTS in China: Scores, Attitudes, and Paths for Improved Proficiency**

IELTS is one of the most taken and widely accepted high-stakes language assessments in the world with over three million candidates sitting the exam annually (IELTS.org) with nearly a third of all exams taking place in China (ChinaIELTS.org). Given the scale and importance of IELTS in China, the question becomes how do examinees perform on the exam and what is the washback on teachers and learners?

This presentation focuses on the academic performance and language-learning behaviors of IELTS test takers from mainland China to provide some insight into these questions. To do so, data from the Mainland China IELTS White Paper, produced by the British Council China, will be presented. This data, gathered from June 1st, 2016 till May 31st, 2017, provides IELTS scores and demographic information for test-takers (N ~ 700,000) as well as responses to a survey of learning behaviors (N = 3108). An analysis of the data highlights the language proficiency of examinees as well as what practices need to be introduced/reinforced for them to achieve higher levels of language proficiency as measured by the IELTS exam.

Breakout Sessions on Day 2

Primary presenter

Dr Azlin Zaiti Zainal | Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Languages and Linguistics, University of Malaya

Azlin Zaiti Zainal is Senior Lecturer at the Department of English, Faculty of Languages and Linguistics, University of Malaya. Her research interests include teacher education, technology in language education and second language writing. Currently she is the Principal Investigator of a research project funded by the British Council Assessment Research Grant on the Impact of the ProELT training programme and Aptis on Malaysian English teachers' classroom practice.

Co-presenter

Dr Lee-Luan Ng | Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Languages and Linguistics, University of Malaya

Dr Ng Lee Luan obtained her PhD in Applied Linguistic from University of Otago, New Zealand. She teaches postgraduate courses related to research methodology, second language acquisition and social dimensions of English language at the Faculty of Languages and Linguistics. Her current research interest includes computer assisted language learning, online learning, the use of computer assisted qualitative data analysis system in deciphering data in qualitative research and social aspect of health related research. She is also a certified trainer for the software, NVivo.

Abstract: **Assessing ProELT training for Malaysian English language teachers.**

One of the many issues that plague the Malaysian government's effort in upgrading the English language standard for teachers is related to benchmarking. Lack of benchmarking against a common or international standard and offering training to English language teachers which is not aligned to these standards may produce teachers who are unable to play their roles effectively. In line with the Malaysian Roadmap for English Language Education 2015-2025, which was launched with an aim to reform and align the English language education system to international standards, the Malaysian Ministry of Education (MOE) has initiated a number of key interventions to strengthen the Malaysian primary and secondary school teachers' English language proficiency and language instruction. As part of the initiatives, the British Council's APTIS test was used to determine the level of English language proficiency of the English language teachers. In addition, ProELT, a teacher training programme for in-service teachers was conducted with an aim to enhance the teaching of English in schools. This paper will focus on the development of instruments that aim to assess the impact of the ProELT training programme, which among others covers areas such as teachers' perceptions of their English language proficiency and skills after completing the training programme; teachers' perceptions of improvements in proficiency, self-efficacy and classroom practices after the training; and the challenges faced by teachers in applying what they learnt in their classroom practices. Details related to the items used to assess these areas will also be presented.

Breakout Sessions on Day 2
Topic: Artificial Intelligence

Dr Adrian Raper | Technical Director, ClarityEnglish

Dr Raper is the technical director at Clarity English and is responsible for product development and teacher support. For more than 20 years he has led the teams developing some of the most popular English teaching programs in the world. Throughout that time he has worked with teachers in workshops, training sessions and conferences to help integrate ICT into the classroom and learning space.
He graduated with a PhD in Artificial Intelligence from Southampton University in the UK and is currently developing software platforms for delivering language tests using mobile devices.

Abstract: AI technology in language assessment tools: challenges and opportunities

In this presentation, the focus will be on how the online assessments we create can be aligned to standards and how AI technology impacts the design and development of assessment tools. Initially, we will look at the questions that assessment developers face when designing online tools and how the use of technology in assessments impacts the decision process. Second, as successful AI technologies for language are based on algorithms that many teachers and test developers do not understand, we will clarify to non-specialists how AI technologies are used in assessing speaking and writing: what we can control, what we need to check, and what we should be guarding against. Examples from existing tests that employ the latest technologies will be used to provide real-life examples and a review of the latest research into technology for assessment tools will be provided to substantiate claims made in the presentation.

Primary presenter

Dr Vahid Aryadoust | Assistant Professor, National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University

Vahid Aryadoust, PhD, is the Assistant Professor in the English Language and Literature Academic Group. He is the Associate Director of the Global Listening Centre, and a member of international associations such as the International Listening Association, American Association of Applied Linguistics, and the Cognitive Science Society. He has led multiple language assessment projects and published his research in Language Testing, Language Assessment Quarterly, Assessing Writing, Educational Assessment, Educational Psychology, and Computer Assisted Language Learning, etc. He has also (co-)authored multiple book chapters and books published by Routledge, Cambridge University Press, Springer, Cambridge Scholar Publishing, Wiley Blackwell, etc.

Co-presenter

Brigit Sebastian | PhD student, National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University

Brigit is a newly enrolled doctoral student who is interested in investigating the connections between language and literary studies, and in understanding the tensions that emerge where the two fields of study appear to have competing purposes in the enacted curriculum.

Abstract: Using eye-tracking technology to measure reading processes of listening test takers

From the test design perspective, listening tests can be divided into two groups: post-listening performance (PLP)—where listeners can see the test items only after listening to the auditory stimuli—and while-listening performance (WLP)—where listeners have to read the test items, listen to the auditory stimuli, and choose/write the answer almost simultaneously. Research shows that the concurrent application of listening and reading along with answering in WLP listening tests can present a set of challenges to test takers. For example, some eye-tracking studies suggest that whereas reading plays an important role in test takers' cognitive processes in WLP tests, it can result in cognitive overload due to the concurrent processing of visual with auditory stimuli.

The current on-going study aims to investigate how reading processes can influence WLP test takers' performance in a high-stakes computerized listening test. The listening test under investigation consists of a relatively long lecture on an academic topic which is followed by 11 comprehension items. The test items include multiple choice questions and minimal production items. We used the Tobii TX300 Eye Tracker to collect data from 50 international undergraduate candidates enrolled at a major Asian university. We have measured fixation counts, fixation durations, visit counts, and visit durations of test takers and aim to use the indices in a linear regression model to predict their scores. The study will help us understand the relationship between listening, reading, and test performance in listening assessment and thus would have significant implications for validation research.

[Note: This study was supported by a research grant from Paragon Testing Enterprises, Canada.]

Breakout Sessions on Day 2

David Booth | Director, Test Development, Pearson Education Limited

David Booth is Director Test Development at Pearson and is responsible for the development of test specification and test materials for Pearson Tests of English. David's main expertise in the development and revision of tests and he has given presentations at major conferences. Before joining Pearson David worked for 10 years at Cambridge Assessment.

David has extensive academic management, teaching and teacher training experience working for the British Council in South Korea, Hong Kong and Malaysia.

David has a master's degree in Education from the Institute of Education, London University, and is a Member of the Chartered Institute of Marketing.

Abstract: **Using Artificial Intelligence and Automated Scoring across different contexts of learning**

The talk will describe the implementation of artificial intelligence (Ai) and automated scoring in 2 different contexts – Academic English and Young Learners. The talk will describe how those assessments were developed incorporating AI and automated scoring and how these elements were aligned to existing proficiency standards including the CEFR and derivatives of that standard and State ELPD standards in the US.

The talk will look in detail at the validation work required to ensure that test items and test instruments are assessing students appropriately using the AI tools and automated scoring. The talk will also look at how the detailed outcomes and rich data from these assessments is being used to power learning; giving test takers a richer profile of their strengths and weaknesses which provides a data driven platform for stretch and remedial learning.

The talk will report data and feedback from pilot studies which took place in China and Turkey in 2018 as well as reporting data from a broad range of Asian countries on the impact of using AI technology in high stakes assessment and how that relates to international and local standards.

Vanessa Forster | Senior Legal Advisor, British Council

Vanessa works closely with the Exams & English business unit at the British Council on a variety of strategic and business development matters including large scale digital transformation projects and innovation.

Before joining the British Council in 2015, Vanessa was a European Counsel at a US listed technology, engineering and healthcare company, where she worked throughout Europe, Middle East and Africa, focussing on numerous corporate, commercial and competition law matters, as well as a wide variety of business development activities, strategic alliances and joint ventures. Prior to this she first worked in the City of London for over 7 years at the UK law firm, Allen & Overy, and later in the Global Projects Group at a large US law firm. Vanessa also worked in politics at the European Commission and European Parliament before embarking on her legal career.

Vanessa qualified as a Lawyer in September 2005. She holds an undergraduate degree in LLB Law from Kings College London and a postgraduate degree in LLM Public International Law from the University of London. She is currently studying for a postgraduate in Innovation, Technology & Law at the University of Edinburgh.

Abstract: **Slave To The Algorithm: Legal And Ethical Pitfalls Of AI – Can Regulation Fix It And What Does This Mean For [English Language] Assessment?**

AI's halo has tarnished somewhat in recent months following various investigations by government departments, think tanks and researchers, into its application. Exacerbation of discriminatory outcomes through its use, and robot/human communications, amongst other things including social media manipulation, are some of the concerns that have been identified. Domestic and international law makers are currently considering whether the time has come for law makers and regulators to step in to "fix" the problems and if so how without stifling innovation. Various suggestions have been made from data trusts which rank the quality of the data, to liability regimes, to creating legal personality for AI with related insurances, to outright regulation of AI.

This presentation will look at the following areas which apply to the assessment industry drawing upon examples from other industries:
- Describe some of the problems that have been identified with AI usage: exacerbating inequalities in society through poor quality training data, data mining and profiling; problems with human/robot communications in the autonomous vehicle industry and its implications on AI proctoring; stereotyping in AI design.
- Overview of the legal/regulatory thinking so far.
- Direction of travel.
- Application to the assessment sector.
- Thoughts on cultural aspects of AI and its acceptance.

Primary presenter

Trevor Breakspear | Innovation Projects Manager, British Council

Trevor Breakspear has 18 years of teaching and training experience within the Chinese ESL and EAP contexts and over 10 years of project management experience within localisation and assessment fields. Trevor currently works in a project development role within the British Council's East Asia Assessment Solutions Team, focusing on the implications and opportunities of China's new proficiency framework (CSE) for continuous assessment as well as the development of digital speaking assessment solutions leveraging both AI and human raters.

Co-presenter
Dr Nahal Khabbazbashi | Senior Lecturer in Language Assessment, CRELLA, University of Bedfordshire

Nahal is a Senior Lecturer in Language Assessment at CRELLA, University of Bedfordshire. She holds a DPhil in Education and an MSc in Applied Linguistics and Second Language Acquisition from the University of Oxford. Her primary research interests include rater-mediated assessment, automated assessment of speaking, test validation, the use of mixed methods approaches in language testing research, and the effects of task and test-taker related variables on performance. Her work appears in Language Testing (2017) and Language Learning Journal (2014), as well as in the Studies in Language Testing series (Moeller, Creswell, and Saville, eds. 2016).

Co-presenter
Dr Daniel Lam | Post-Doctoral Research Fellow, CRELLA, University of Bedfordshire

Dr Daniel Lam holds a PhD in Linguistics and English Language from the University of Edinburgh. His research interests include investigating the constructs of speaking and interactional competence, implementing learning-oriented assessment, and developing assessment literacy. His research has been published in Language Testing, and in an edited volume, Assessing Chinese learners of English. He is involved in funded research projects with The British Council, Cambridge Assessment English, and Educational Testing Service; and has delivered training workshops in language assessment in China, Germany, and Ukraine.

Co-presenter
Dr Sathena Chan | Senior Lecturer in Language Assessment, CRELLA, University of Bedfordshire

Dr Sathena Chan is a Senior Lecturer in CRELLA, University of Bedfordshire. Her research interests include integrated assessment, cognitive processing of language use, task design and rating scale development. She has been leading test development/validation projects for examination boards and educational organisations in the UK and worldwide. Her recent publications include the book, Defining Integrated Reading-into-Writing Constructs (2018, CUP), journal articles in Assessing Writing (2018) and Language Testing in Asia (2017), and open-access research reports (Chan, Bax and Weir, 2017; Bax and Chan, 2016; Taylor and Chan, 2015). She also conducts professional training on assessment literacy and statistical analyses for language testing.

Co-presenter
Xiaoyi Zhang | Shanhai Jiao Tong University

Xiaoyi Zhang got her MA degree (Distinction) in applied linguistics from Lancaster University. She is now a PhD candidate in Shanghai Jiao Tong University, with a focus on language testing and assessment, specifically speaking performance assessment.

Abstract: Developing A Speaking Construct For A China Digital Assessment Solution

For the first time, Chinese curriculum and assessment reform has driven the inclusion of speaking components within the high-stake middle school exit examination (Zhongkao), and consequently a clear need for speaking practice for younger learner groups. Given the lack of opportunities, caused by large class sizes, for meaningful diagnostic feedback on spoken performance within state education, the advancement of speech and deep neural network technologies suggests the possibility of developing an AI-driven digital assessment solution to address this need by providing formative and summative feedback that prepares students for Zhongkao requirements and beyond.

Based on the socio-cognitive framework for test development and validation (O'Sullivan & Weir 2011), this paper presents the collaborative research approach and findings of a review of the Chinese documentation and literature used in the development of the test construct definition underpinning the product proposition above, including reference to the Chinese national curriculum, relevant summative assessment criteria (Zhongkao), the Chinese Standards of English proficiency framework and textbook content. The definition is then contextualised by referring to the construct-relevant spoken features and task types that can be practiced and assessed using current automated assessment technology.

The paper concludes with an overview of refinements made to the construct definition, specifically to the spoken features and task types, as a result of findings from a variety of stakeholder focus groups and the development of a product mock-up.

Breakout Sessions on Day 2
Topic: **Alignment**

Priscilla Shak | Lecturer (UMS) and PhD student (UoA), Universiti Malaysia Sabah (Work), and The University of Auckland

Priscilla Shak is a PhD candidate in Applied Linguistics. She is currently on study leave as a lecturer in the University Malaysia Sabah. Her research interest lies in ESP, educational technology, curriculum innovation, and L2 task-based assessments.

Abstract: **Revising the assessment criteria of an EOP group discussion test**

The alignment of any existing course to meet an international standard often necessitates the scrutiny of all aspects of the course from its objectives, syllabus, and tasks design to the assessment methods employed. In this case study, in order to align an existing group discussion test to the corresponding Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) level, a review of the language components of the assessment was warranted. The aim of this study is to fine-tune the language criteria of a group discussion assessment consistent with the targeted CEFR level descriptors. To achieve this, audio recorded data of students participating in a group discussion assessment in an English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) setting of a higher learning institution were obtained. Subsequently, through examination of the language functions (LFs) elicited in the group discussion assessment, the specific LFs that were prominent in a group interaction setting were identified, and yielded a group discussion observation checklist. Results indicated that in addition to those identified in individual and pair settings, the group discussion method was able to elicit an additional range of 'interactional' and 'managing interaction' functions. It is therefore apt that the assessment of the EOP group discussion be based on a set of criteria relevant to the interactional objectives of the group mode, and reflective of the CEFR descriptors. Through this investigation, a CEFR calibrated assessment criteria is suggested. The implications of the findings and recommendations are discussed.

Primary presenter

Professor Shangchao Min | Associate Professor, School of International Studies, Zhejiang University, Hangzhou, China

Dr Shangchao Min is an Associate Professor at the School of International Studies, Zhejiang University, Hangzhou, China. Her main research interests are in language testing and assessment, especially computerized language testing and item response theory. She has been involved in several research projects funded by the National Social Science Foundation of China on topics such as the development of computerized adaptive language tests and has undertaken several research projects funded by the Provincial Department of Education as a principal investigator. She has publications on Language Testing and Language Assessment Quarterly.

Co-presenter

Lidi Xiong | Doctoral Candidate, School of International Studies, Zhejiang University, Hangzhou, China

Lidi Xiong is a doctoral candidate at the School of International Studies, Zhejiang University, Hangzhou, China. Her main research interests are in language testing and assessment.

Abstract: **Validating the cognitive aspect of the listening subscale in CSE: An integrated approach of cognitive diagnostic modeling and standard setting**

One identifiable limitation of CEFR is its failure to take the cognitive aspect of language ability into consideration (Alderson 2007; He & Chen 2017), which is important in language comprehension and production. Developers of China's Standards of English (CSE) have realized the problem and therefore created a cognitive-based scale, trying to unveil the cognitive characteristics of performance at different proficiency levels. Taking listening subscale as an example, this paper attempts to explore the cognitive embodiment in CSE by combining standard setting methods and cognitive diagnostic modelling (CDM). Two research questions are listed below: 1) what the salient cognitive features of different levels are and whether these features match the actual cognitive status of target students; 2) what the mastery patterns of the cognitive abilities among students at different levels are. Thirteen and four panellists participated in standard setting process and attributes defining stage of CDM respectively. The test aligned is a large scale in-house exit test administered in a prestigious university in China. Results show that the cognitive performances described at different levels basically conform with the cognitive ability diagnosis of target groups. Lower level students (level-3 and below) tend to master linguistic knowledge and more proficient students are more likely to fulfil cognitive activities such as synthesizing, summarizing and inferencing. Additionally, students at different proficiency levels master cognitive abilities differently. In terms of linguistic knowledge, there is no significant difference among students of level 3-5, but its mastery probability increases rapidly from level 5-7. On the contrary, the mastery probability of non-linguistic cognitive attributes keeps relatively stable from level 5-7 but it surges greatly from level 3-5. Serving as a good exemplar of cognitive-based scale, with which score users can realize what cognitive activities students can do, CSE is helpful indeed for the practice of language teaching, learning and assessment

Primary presenter

Sheryl Cooke | Director China Assessment Solutions Team, British Council

Sheryl Cooke leads a regional team that provides language assessment solutions for partners throughout East Asia including needs analysis, test development, post-test services and teacher support.

Sheryl has 20 years' experience in language assessment, including examiner training and item writing. Her qualifications include an MA Language Testing (Lancaster University), an MA Linguistics (SOAS), and the DELTA. She is currently a PhD candidate at the University of Jyväskylä (Finland), focusing on automated assessment of spoken English and the potential implications for ELF. Research interests include the use of new technologies and the ethics of language assessment in the global context.

Co-presenter

Judith Fairbairn | Assessment Development Manager, Global Assessments, British Council

Judith Fairbairn leads on assessment development projects for the British Council's Global Assessments team, which includes assessment design, item writing, test quality assurance and bespoke assessment solutions for clients.

Areas of expertise include online rater and item writer training, item writing, rating scale development, rater reliability, test data statistical analysis, automated and equality, diversity and inclusion in testing. Judith has an MA in Language Testing (Lancaster University) and is studying a PhD at University College London, Institute of Education focusing on rater decision making processes when marking speaking tests.

Co-presenter

Richard Spiby | Receptive Skills Researcher, British Council

Richard Spiby has been the Test Development Researcher for the receptive skills (reading and listening, together with grammar and vocabulary) since June 2016. His main responsibilities involve analysing operational data and revising and developing the receptive skills components of the Aptis test.

Richard has previously worked in the UK and Turkey, mainly in the university sector, in test production, management and research.

Abstract: **A test development model for developing a localised test**

This talk is aimed at test development practitioners as a practical example of a test development project for clients in China. The British Council's circular-flow model of test development (Fairbairn and Dunlea, 2018) is illustrated. The development also employed a theoretical model of localisation (O'Sullivan and Dunlea, 2015) to adapt an existing test, Aptis for Teens, for a particular group of test takers and for a clearly defined test use. From the initial stakeholder engagement activities undertaken to identify the test development context through to the final product, challenges that required balance and compromise are explored. The project was successful because it included an assessment research team, an assessment development team and a team working with the client on the ground.

The product developed was a test for teenagers (13-17 year olds) with a high level of proficiency (B2-C2) for entry into an English as a Medium of Instruction high school. Theoretical and ethical questions of young learners being tested at a high CEFR level were encountered. Proper sampling methodology for trialling was another area that raised questions. Item writing and quality assurance of content was challenging with such high level task types.

The circular-flow model facilitated an iterative process of test design that included regular stakeholder engagement and resulted in some interesting solutions. For example, including a speaking task that attempts to elicit interactive competence in a computer-delivered test. This test development case study showcases a process based on principled compromise to produce a quality test that achieves the overall aims of all stakeholders.

Breakout Sessions on Day 2

Primary presenter

Richard Spiby | Receptive Skills Researcher, British Council

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Abstract: Developing inclusion and accessibility in tests at the British Council

There is continuing growth in demand for testing and many governments and institutions are passing new laws and regulations to ensure that citizens can access tests. This means that there is therefore a legal as well as a moral case for mainstreaming inclusivity into tests. There are also business and research-related reasons for being leaders in this field. In short, the commitment of the British Council to accessibility in testing is consistent with its role as a charitable organisation providing educational opportunity, and it can promote its own thought leadership in the field by putting accessibility at the core of its research agenda.

Due to the many challenges of conducting original in-depth research into special needs testing, especially in terms of quantitative analysis and the generalisability of results, a useful method of collecting empirical data has been to compile a central log of requests for accommodations. The details of the request are recorded along with the response given and any issues related to feedback, practicality or theoretical challenges associated with meeting the request. These observations from the field have been built on iteration and intuition using grounded theory (Stake 2005). Knowledge has been accumulated from interpretation of special needs by colleagues and categories have emerged from the data collection. An ethnographical study of the customs and differences across the world with respect to EDI testing is starting to emerge.

Two illustrative case studies are described in this presentation and address the process of identifying and assisting test takers with special needs as well as the appropriateness of the reasonable adjustments.

Breakout Sessions on Day 2
Topic: **Main Theme**

Wei Dai (David) | PhD student, The University of Melbourne

I completed a master's degree in Applied Linguistics at the University of Melbourne and am now working towards a PhD degree at the same institution. My thesis in multidialectal listening assessment, which I hope I could present at this year's New Directions Conference, has won me the best minor thesis of 2015 at the University of Melbourne and the 2016 Caroline Clapham IELTS Masters Award. My research interests are general SLA, Conversation Analysis, multidialectal listening assessment and the learning and testing of L2 interactional competence.

Abstract: **Including L2-English varieties in listening tests for adolescent ESL learners**

As English is widely used as a lingua franca, language testers have started to consider revising the standard for listening comprehension and introducing non-native accents into English listening tests. This study investigates how accents influence test takers' performance, and also elicits test takers' subjective perception of accents. Eighty adolescent L1-Mandarin test takers were divided into four groups of equal proficiency, with each group listening to one accented version of the same English listening test. The test input was delivered in Australian, Spanish, Vietnamese and Mandarin accented Englishes with tasks measuring lexical and propositional comprehension and consisting of picture selection, true/false, and gap completion items. Test takers' perceptions of accent familiarity, comprehensibility and their attitudes were also measured. Results from ANOVA analysis, Factor Analysis and reliability analysis indicate that the test takers who received Mandarin accented input performed best, lending support to a shared-L1 effect, with the strongest advantage for lexical comprehension. No significant difference was observed in test scores among the groups exposed to non-Mandarin accents. Findings also reveal that the type of accent was not significantly related to test takers' attitude towards it. The central implication from this study is that there is potential for the inclusion of non-native accents into listening tests for adolescent learners if the shared-L1 effect can be addressed. Positive washback effect in English teaching, especially in the Asian EFL context, will also be discussed.

Primary presenter

Martin Robinson | Assistant Director, Assessment, Cambridge Assessment English

Martin works for Cambridge Assessment English and is responsible for the development of adaptive, automated assessments. This includes the development of online, adaptive products like Linguaskill and also the development of the Cambridge auto marking capabilities for Writing and Speaking. Martin is responsible for the Cambridge benchmarking and survey service and his work in this area has meant leading on national projects for Ministries of Education in countries such as Malaysia, Chile and Malta. It has also included management of the language test production for the multilingual European Survey on Language Competences (SurveyLang) for the European Commission between 2008 and 2012.

Co-presenter

Dr Zuraidah Mohd Don | Adjunct Professor, Sultan Idris Education University

Zuraidah Mohd Don has developed academic strengths in teaching and research covering a wide field centred on the study of language. In the course of her research, she has collaborated with researchers in several other disciplines, including computer studies, engineering and medicine. She has made many contributions to prestigious journals in her field, and has over 150 publications in total. She has in addition contributed to English language education at the national level. She was formerly professor at UM, and is currently Adjunct Professor at UPSI and UTM, and Chair of the English Language Standards and Quality Council at MoE.

Abstract: **The impact of using the CEFR to help inform policy decisions and set assessment goals in the Malaysian state school system**

Malaysia recognises that English is a global language and that the English language ability of its population contributes to its economic development and well-being. Malaysia has therefore invested heavily in a nation-wide reform of English language education linked to international standards.

The Ministry of Education (MoE) has placed alignment to the Common European Framework of Reference for languages (CEFR) at the heart of this reform. This paper will discuss how the reform started and how a comprehensive evaluation in 2013 of the curriculum, teaching, learning and assess- ment of English language in Malaysian schools provided evidence for the MoE of how the Malaysian English language education system was performing against internationally recognised standards. The paper then discusses how the findings and recommendations of the evaluation were used by the the English Language Standards and Quality Council (ELSQC) to inform the MoE Roadmap 2015–2025 that provides a framework to carry out the plans proposed in the Malaysia Education Blueprint in relation to improving English language teaching and learning and setting assessment goals.

The paper concludes with a summary of a further evaluation study undertaken in 2017 with the aim of determining where pupils and teachers are four years after the 2013 baseline in relation to the aspirational 2025 CEFR aspirational targets set out in the Roadmap. This second evaluation study represents the beginning of longer-term aspirations to monitor standards and measure the impact of using the CEFR to help inform policy decisions and set assessment goals.

Breakout Sessions on Day 2

Dr Rajenthiran Sellan | Senior Assessment Specialist (Languages and Literature),
Singapore Examinations and Assessment Board, Singapore

Dr Rajenthiran Sellan has taught in schools in Singapore and educational institutions in Australia. Over the last two decades, he has served in the Ministry of Education and the Singapore Examinations and Assessment Board, and contributed to many commit- tees that spearheaded changes in national curricula and assessments. He has also been involved in the training of in-service teachers in language assessment. In addition, he was a language consultant in the Progress in International Literacy Study 2001 and 2005. He currently serves as a Senior Assessment Specialist (Languages and Literature) in the Singapore Examinations and Assessment Board.

Abstract: **Reconsidering national assessment standards in the English Language classroom**

This paper offers insights into how teachers reconsidered national assessment standards to promote learning in their English Language (EL) classroom in a real-life collective study. The educational context of this study is the Integrated Programmes, which encourages greater teacher autonomy to broaden the learning of its students. The reconsideration of national assessment standards in the learning system of the Integrated Programmes is a significant one as the requirement for its students to sit the General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level examination is removed by its systemic design, unlike the case for their counterparts in the mainstream.

The analysis of the conceptual and practical experiences of the teacher-participants showed that there was a significant expansion of teacher-based assessment practices to increase students' EL learning in the Integrated Programmes, as compared to conventional practices in mainstream schools that followed closely the formats, procedures and standards of examinations. The nature and level of complexity of this expansion were reflected in the following four broad findings: (1) Teachers reframed their EL specialist roles to broaden students' learning. Consistent with their reframed roles, they (2) expanded the EL learning and assessment constructs as well as (3) the range of elicitation and judging procedures used to assess the expanded constructs. While these findings on the nature of expansion were not without tension, the greatest tension was evident when (4) teachers addressed the level of complexity of the expansion by reconsidering assessment standards.

Primary presenter

Zongyou Wu | PhD candidate, School of English Studies, Shanghai International Studies University

Born in 1974, I have been working as a college English teacher in School of Foreign Studies, Anhui Normal University, after finishing a MA program from Chongqing University in 2005, majoring in applied linguistics. Now I am a PhD candidate of School of English Studies, Shanghai International Studies University and tutored by Professor Zou Shen. My research interests are focused on classroom assessment and cognitive diagnostic assessment, on which the standards have great effect. As a member, I participated in developing the China's Standards of English and the project "An application of the UDig in senior high schools".

Co-presenter

Yangtian Xiao | PhD candidate, Shanghai International Studies University

A second-year PhD student supervised by Professor Zou Shen in SISU, with keen interest in language assessment literacy, as well as an English teacher in Dali University. Early in 2006, by a mere coincidence, I got involved in language testing as a master student and developed more interests in this field with the guide of my supervisor and extensive reading. Recently, I have deeply realized the importance of LAL for teachers, the key to the success of students' learning and the fact that further studies need to be conducted in this special field, which pushed the birth of my abstract submitted for this conference.

Abstract: **Investigating the validity of score reports from diagnostic language assessment**

With the rapid increase in computer technology, it is now feasible to provide an Internet delivered, computer-based diagnostic language assessment at the classroom level. The UDig is a computer-based diagnostic language assessment (http://uzx.iceshi.org), developed by Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press for Chinese senior high school students. After taking the assessment, the students not only get their sub-skill scores but also verbal description of their strengths and weaknesses, which related to English curriculum and China's Standards of English (CSE). However, the validity of the score reports is less investigated. This study aims to explore the students and teachers' perception of the score reports from the UDig. The subjects are 225 students and their 4 teachers from four different senior high schools who had used the UDig for 1 year. A questionnaire was designed to investigate whether the score reports provide valid feedback of their weaknesses and give suggestions for their future learning. In addition, 8 students and 4 teachers were also interviewed to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. The findings show that 81.4% of the students believe the score reports could provide feedback of their weakness, which is consistent with their teachers' judgments; and 62% of the students believe suggestions for their future learning are very concrete and useful. This means the score reports need to be improved and teachers' involvements are still important to help students' future learning. The study also finds that the UDig could motivate students for its instant and multi-dimensional feedback.

Yasmine Abdelhamid | British Council, Egypt

I am a teacher at the British Council Egypt. I have studied English pedagogy as well as applied linguistics. My real passion is English literature. My literary writing skills and my contributions to literary criticism have been acknowledged by the Connecticut University, USA. Besides, teaching English as a second language, I have been working as an interpersonal skills trainer for more than 7 years. I have worked with many reputable companies trying to promote their employees' well-being. In my free time, I like to write stories and novels.

Abstract: **Using Augmented Reality Applications in Assessment**

In searching for ways to improve learners' success in learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and ways for decreasing students' innate stress that is always associated with assessment, the importance of experiential learning in engaging students has become clear. In learning English as a second Language, success is achieved best by imitations of real life and providing authentic contexts. However, as general education class sizes increase, so do the cost, liability, and difficulty of creating opportunities for authentic language assessment. A solution for economically and conveniently bringing kinaesthetic assessment experiences to a broader audience lies in the integration of technology through mobile games, apps, and Augmented Reality (AR) applications. Using augmented reality in assessment entails the integration of teaching, learning and assessment to provide a whole AR experience.

The proposed model relies heavily on the fact that psychological factors do impact students' performance during language assessments. Because AR applications are of a particular interest to a wide range of learners, the advantages of using them are countless in terms of providing stress free and engaging assessment environment for students. These benefits would outcast any cost incurred initially in the development process.

The presentation will discuss the potentials of using augmented reality in the integration of teaching, learning and assessment. It will provide an overview of multiple mobile applications that help produce assessments that are both fun to work with on the part of the students yet very informative on the part of the teachers.

The study revealed that raters overall are able to identify inauthenticity in many of the exposed samples, but only the examiners experienced with Chinese test-takers were able to categorize these consistently according to exposure. The verbal protocols supported this finding and revealed a taxonomy of features that raters associate with both authenticity and inauthenticity. This has potential applications for both test security and rater training.

Breakout Sessions on Day 2
Topic: **Localisation**

Manjima Bhadran | PhD Student, The Institute of English, University of Kerala, India.

Manjima Bhadran is currently a PhD Student at the University of Kerala in India. Previously, she worked as a trainer and instructional designer for corporate giants Google and Accenture.

Abstract: **Towards modifying standards: examining teacher reflections on Indian ESL writing**

In recent years, educators in India have been increasingly concerned about the decline in the quality of writing of ESL students pursuing their graduate studies in universities across the country. Most of these ESL learners acquire a sufficient breadth of vocabulary required for academic writing in specialized disciplines, but often exhibit comparatively less syntactic control. This study will present the findings of a comparative ethnographic data analysis of teacher reflections following an impressionistic scoring of writing samples of tertiary level ESL learners in India and an analytic scoring of these samples employing IELTS Task 2 Writing Band Descriptors in order to explore the underlying beliefs that inform the scoring process. The metalanguage used by teachers to describe their evaluation of the samples, justifications for the scores and feedback to the learners will be analysed to understand if the prevalent concerns about the declining writing ability of Indian students are indeed valid or merely the result of educators focusing more on syntactic features of writing while overlooking lexical and discourse characteristics, even though a low degree of grammatical accuracy does not impede communication in certain educational contexts. The findings of the study will be used to explore the possibilities of fine-tuning international scoring standards using a descriptive analysis of the grammatical features of Indian English to evaluate ESL writing in the Indian context.

Nurir Rohmah | English Teaching Staff, State Polytechnic of Madura (Politeknik Negeri Madura)

Nurir is an English teaching staff of Electrical Industrial Engineering at State Polytechnic of Madura. She earned her master's degree in Learning Teaching and Curriculum from the University of Missouri Columbia, USA. Her research interests are in the areas of teacher professional developments, ESP, English Language Teaching and curriculum.

Abstract: **Need Analysis of the Challenges Vocational High School ELLs Face on Standardized Classroom Assessments in Sampang, Madura**

Assessment-driven performance is natural for academic settings but assessments results oftentimes tell us about the test taker's skills rather than about the combination of the skills and content knowledge. Assessing English Language Learners (ELLs) in engineering English classrooms particularly can be a challenge. English for Specific Purposes (ESP) instruction has been a part of English classrooms in vocational institutions in Indonesia. In Madura, however, actual analyses of learning needs are still limited especially learning needs for vocational high schools. This study is an attempt, as a pilot needs analysis, to the teaching trends and the utmost needed professional developments of twenty ESP teachers at vocational high schools in Sampang area. It draws an in-depth overview of needs towards ESP, particularly the value of its assessments for engineering students. The study was conducted by unstructured interview to subject teachers, focus group discussions, and questionnaires. This study found that traditional classroom assessments are still heavily used and that a more localized assessment are needed compare to national standards, and the findings support a more advance investigation on what types of instructional strategies and topics need to be introduced to facilitate learning and its assessments to examine the gaps of understanding that exists.

Key words: ESP, Vocational Education, needs analysis

Primary presenter

Dr Duyen Tran | Academic manager, Language Education Project and Deputy Director, Testing Centre, Hanoi University of Industry

Dr Duyen Tran is the Academic Manager of the Language Education project and the Deputy Director of the Testing Centre, Hanoi University of Industry, Vietnam. She has many years of experience working as an English teacher at her university. She has been actively involved in designing and conducting teacher professional training courses, especially in English language teaching and assessment. She received her PhD degree from Queensland University of Technology, Australia in 2015. Her research areas include language teaching and assessment, teaching methodology, testing and assessment, ICT employment in language education, and English for Occupational Purposes.

Co-presenter

Dr Tue Hoang | Dean, Faculty of Foreign Languages, Hanoi University of Industry

Dr Tue Hoang is the Dean of the Faculty of Foreign Languages, Hanoi University of Industry, Vietnam. He has been working as an English teacher and an educational administrator at his university for more than 15 years now. He has conducted many studies and projects to improve the quality of English language education at tertiary level. He received his Doctor of Education degree from Queensland University of Technology, Australia in 2015. His research interests include ICT in education, blended learning, English for Occupational Purposes and Teacher Professional Development.

Abstract: **English Requirements at Workplace & Exit Language Standards for Vocational Education**

One of the most important benefits of exit language standards is to give a clear description of what learners at a certain level are capable of. Such information will be helpful for teachers and educators in their work of designing curriculum, syllabus, materials and learning and assessment activities, for students to self-assess and self-monitor their studying and for employers to recruit suitable graduates for their professional positions. However, in vocational education in Vietnam, the common employment of the descriptions of A2 or B1 level (CEFR) in English as the exit language standards does not seem to provide the enough detailed guidance to support such decision making processes. This paper reports research results from a large-scale need analysis conducted by a Vietnamese public university on English requirements at work place. Participants include 81 employers and 412 professionals who graduated from various universities in Vietnam. The participants are currently working in 7 professional fields including Business, Electronics and Electrics, Information Technology, Tourism and Hospitality, Automobiles, Fashion and Garment technology and Environmental Technology. The need analysis results will be compared to the descriptions of A2 and B1 levels (CEFR) to heighten the need to develop more profession-oriented language standards for vocational education to enhance the educational effectiveness and to support related stake holders.

Allen Davenport | Teacher Development Manager, ASEAN, Cambridge University Press

Allen Davenport is the Teacher Development Manager for the ASEAN region at Cambridge University Press. He has been involved in English language teaching for more than a decade in various roles including teacher, academic program coordinator, certified examiner for multiple assessment organizations, and teacher trainer. Allen is a frequent speaker at conferences and has present- ed workshops and seminars on various topics throughout Asia and the Middle East. Allen's current interests involve integrating creativity into the classroom and investigating how English language teaching is adapting to suit the needs of the 21st-century learner.

Abstract: **Towards a Standard Framework of Life Skills in ELT**

This talk will help teachers and educational managers understand more clearly the different aspects of 21st century/life skills and how they can be integrated into English language programmes. We will look at the Cambridge Framework for Life Competencies, and show how it can help us develop these skills through teaching, curriculum, materials and assessment.

Specifically, we will highlight Can Do statements that have been developed by Cambridge to provide more detailed support to educators on what the different skills really mean for learners at each stage of the learning journey. For example, what can we expect a Primary level school child to be able to do in terms of collaboration skills? The combination of the Framework and the Can Do statements creates a tool that can be seen as comparable to the CEFR but for life competencies rather than language skills.

Breakout Sessions on Day 2

Primary presenter

Dr Yujia Zhou | Project lecturer, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies

Yujia Zhou is a project lecturer at Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, where she teaches undergraduate courses on English skills and a graduate course on teaching and learning speaking skills. She received her PhD in the area of language testing from Tokyo University of Foreign Studies in 2009. Her current research interests focus on three areas: assessing second language speaking skills, improving students' critical thinking skills through group discussion, and relating language curricula and speaking tests to the Common European Framework of Reference for languages (CEFR).

Co-presenter

Dr Jamie Dunlea | Senior Researcher, British Council

Jamie is a Senior Researcher with the British Council's Assessment Research Group, based in London. Jamie works on a range of language test development and validation projects for assessment systems designed and developed by the British Council, as well as collaborating on projects with researchers and organisations internationally. Jamie joined the British Council in 2013, and was previously Chief Researcher at the Eiken Foundation of Japan, a not-for-profit organization which develops and administers EFL examinations in Japan. He has 25 years of experience working in EFL education, first as a teacher, then in test development and production and assessment research.

Co-presenter

Dr Masashi Negishi | Professor, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies

Masashi Negishi received his PhD from the University of Reading, UK. He has participated in a number of research projects, including national education surveys and the development of several English proficiency tests in Japan. He is a member of the CEFR-J Project, and his current interests focus on the application of the Common European Framework of Reference for languages (CEFR) to English language teaching in Japan and the analysis of criterial features across the CEFR levels. He is currently a member of various committees on University Entrance Exam Reform in Japan.

Co-presenter

Dr Asako Yoshitomi | Professor, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies

Asako Yoshitomi is a professor at Tokyo University of Foreign Studies (TUFS), Graduate School of Global Studies. She received her PhD in Applied Linguistics from University of California, Los Angeles. She specializes in second language acquisition, foreign language attrition and maintenance of returnee students, and teaching English as a foreign language. She is the Head of the English Learning Centre at TUFS and is the leader of a research project on developing a CEFR-based formative assessment system of speaking skills for Japanese learners of English as a foreign language.

Abstract: Localisation of an international speaking test for Japanese university admission

In response to a new government policy of testing English across all four skills in the university admission system in Japan, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies (TUFS), in collaboration with the British Council, is developing a computer-based speaking test: British Council TUFS-Speaking Test for Japanese Universities (BCT-S). The development of BCT-S utilizes a model of localisation of an existing test system (O'Sullivan & Dunlea, 2015) that provides the framework for adapting an international speaking test for use within the Japanese university admission system.

This presentation reports on a study conducted to collect a priori validity evidence of BCT-S regarding task difficulty within and across test forms, students' perceptions, and language functions targeted for each task. Ninety-eight TUFS undergraduates and 40 high-school students took BCT-S. Their responses were recorded and scored by trained raters using task-specific holistic rating scales; their speech samples were transcribed. Students also completed a questionnaire that elicited their perceptions of BCT-S; 20 TUFS students participated in follow-up interviews.

While Multi-faceted Rasch analysis found the tasks performed adequately regarding the relationship between targeted proficiency level and empirical difficulty, some content-related differences in difficulty were identified for the highest-level task. Students were satisfied with the validity and testing procedure of BCT-S, but expressed concerns about the test environment as well as confusion caused by certain unclear test prompt. These results along with those of functional analysis of speech samples are reported in detail in the presentation, and the implications of the findings for test development are discussed.

Acknowledgement

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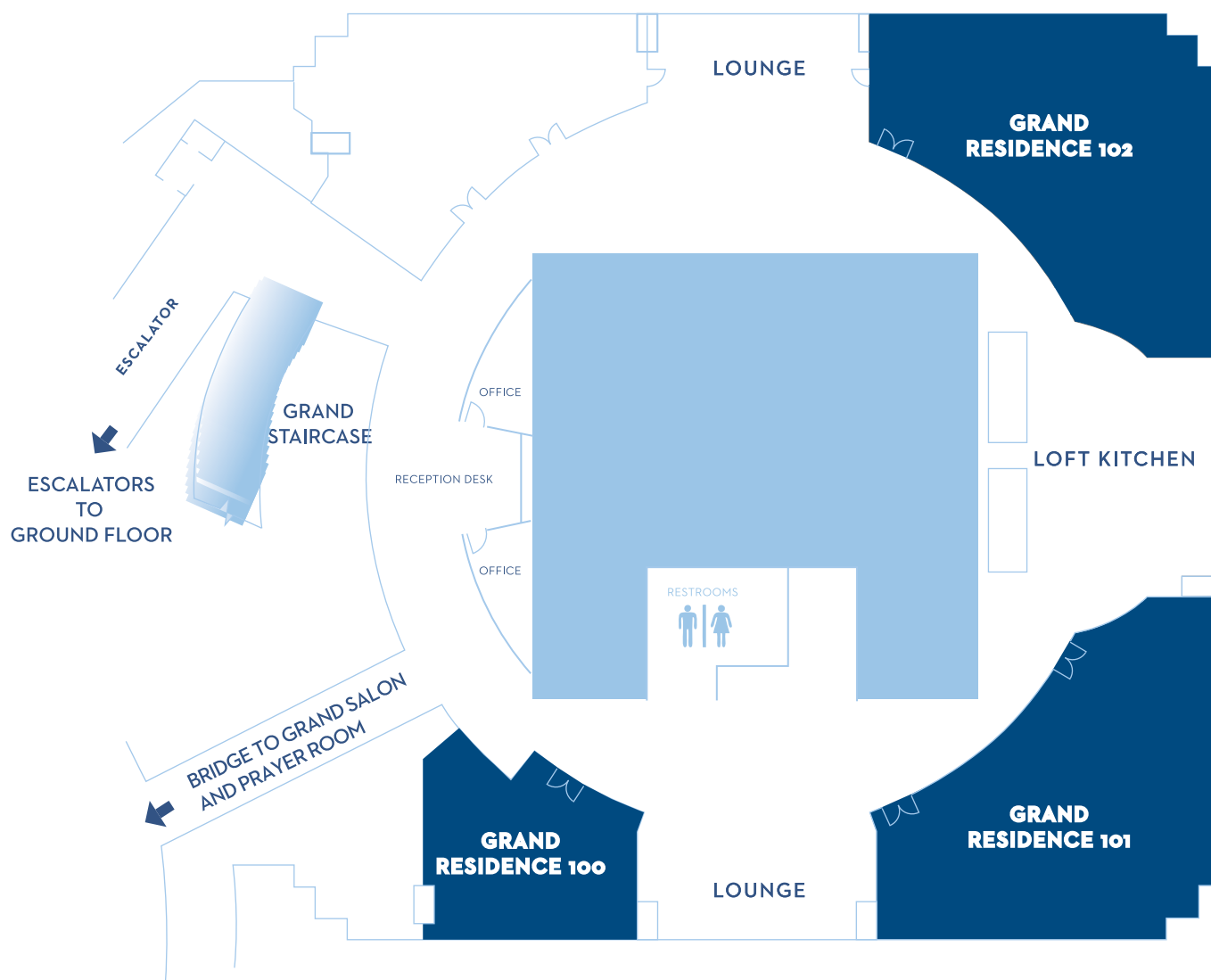# Floor Plan

RESTROOMS

CAR PARK LIFTS

ESCALATORS
TO LEVEL 1 EVENT SPACE &
PRAYER ROOM

GRAND BALLROOM 1

GRAND BALLROOM 2

GRAND BALLROOM 3

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RAMP

CAR RAMP
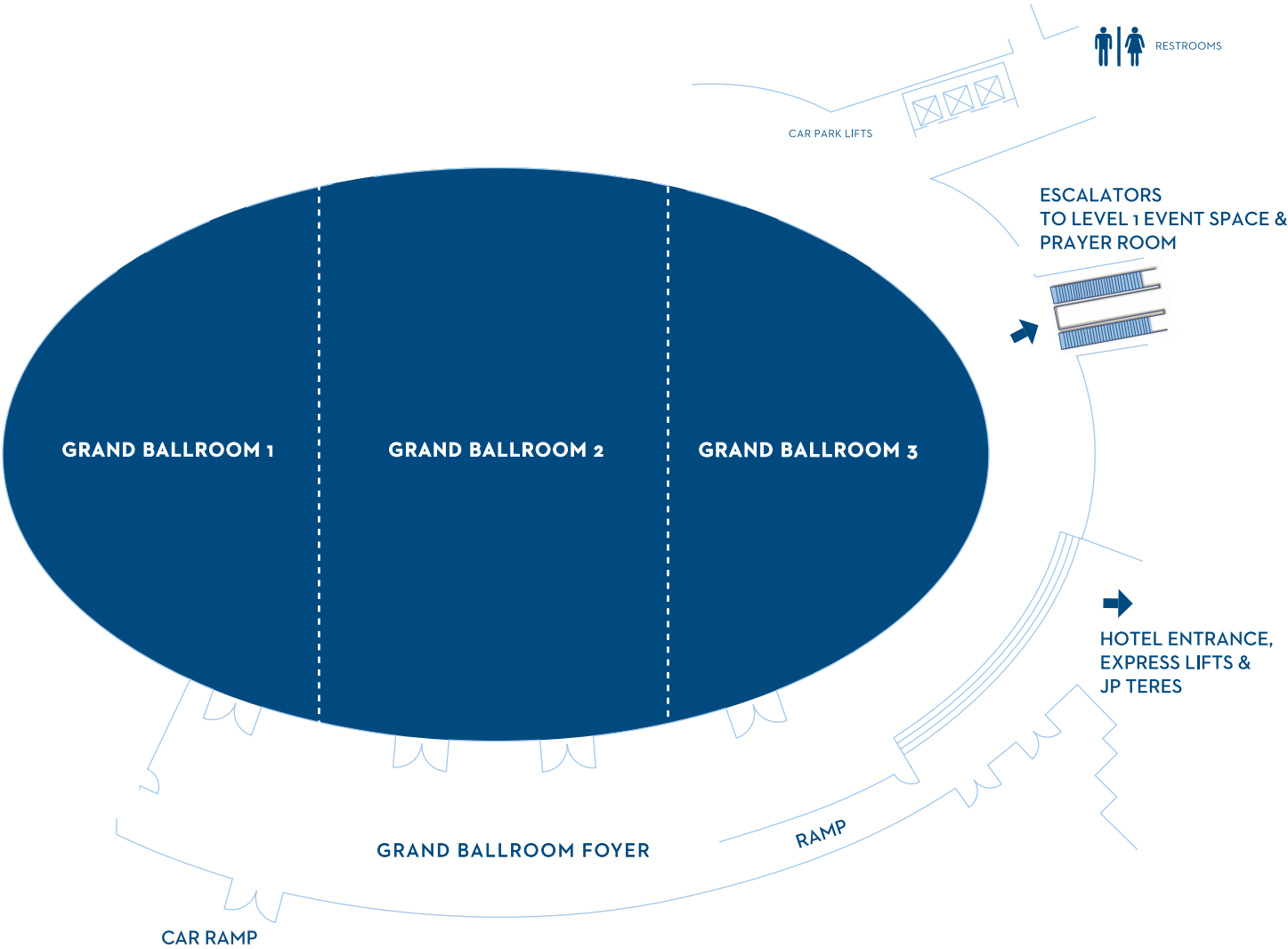
Floor Plan

FLOOR PLAN
Level 1 - Grand Residence

N

LOUNGE

GRAND RESIDENCE 102

ESCALATOR

GRAND STAIRCASE

ESCALATORS TO GROUND FLOOR

OFFICE

RECEPTION DESK

OFFICE

LOFT KITCHEN

RESTROOMS

BRIDGE TO GRAND SALON AND PRAYER ROOM

GRAND RESIDENCE 100

LOUNGE

GRAND RESIDENCE 101

FLOOR PLAN
Level 38M - Sky Lobby Lounge

STAIRCASE TO THIRTY8

BUBBLE
LIFT TO
THIRTY8

RECEPTION DESK

GUESTROOM
LIFTS

BUSINESS
CENTRE

PETRONAS
TWIN
TOWERS
VIEW

EXPRESS
LIFT

EXPRESS
LIF

EXPRESS
LIFT

EXPRESS
LIFT

RESTROOMS

SKY LOBBY LOUNGE
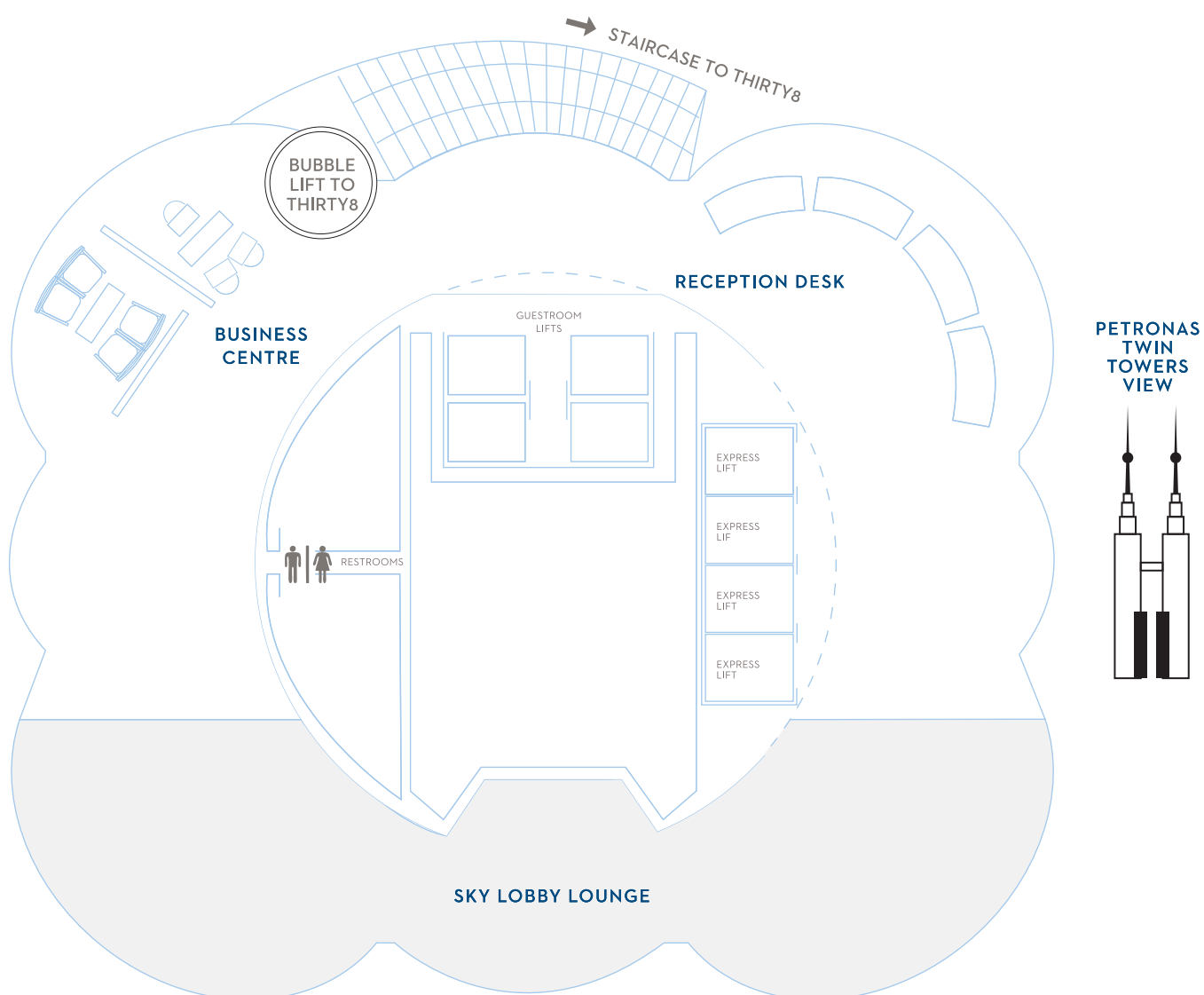
A special recognition for the contribution of:

Conference Chairperson

Dr Victoria Clark

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We would also like to thank:

Ossie Ishmael	Millie Lin	Joyce Ann Cruz	Kevin Bautista
Tiffany Shum	Tiffany Cheung	Prabha Sundram	Jennifer Wan
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