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LSP assessment in an academic context

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Testing languages for specific purposes concerns the area of language testing in which the test purpose, content and methods are derived from an analysis of a real life situation in which the learner is likely to use the language. There are two main attributes of LSP testing which distinguish it from general language testing: the authenticity of the task which should share the crucial features of assessment tasks used in the target language use situation and the engagement of specific purpose content knowledge. The relationship between language knowledge and content knowledge, which in general purpose testing is usually seen as a confounding variable, contributing to measurement error and which should be reduced as much as possible, is the essential feature of LSP testing which in fact increases the validity and reliability of the assessment. Such involvement of content knowledge in language assessment requires test developers to devise specific assessment criteria tailored to LSP assessment tasks. The objectives of my paper are to present a definition of LSP testing, discuss its rationale and present some examples of LSP assessment tasks and criteria.

Biographical note(s) of the author(s)

Barbara Sawicka holds an MA in English Philology and a PhD in language assessment from Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznan, Poland. Currently she is the Deputy Director of Centre of Languages and Communication at Poznan University of Technology, Poland. She has extensive experience in teaching English for Specific Purposes at a technical university. Areas of interest: innovative teaching methods, educational assessment and multimedia technologies in language learning.

Recommendation (for student section)

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