

Cambridge University Press

0521585430 - Assessing Languages for Specific Purposes

Dan Douglas

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Assessing Languages for Specific Purposes

Cambridge University Press
0521585430 - Assessing Languages for Specific Purposes
Dan Douglas
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

THE CAMBRIDGE APPLIED LINGUISTICS SERIES

Series editors: J. Charles Alderson and Lyle F. Bachman

In this series:

Assessing Vocabulary by John Read

Assessing Reading by J. Charles Alderson

Assessing Languages for Specific Purposes by Dan Douglas

Assessing Listening by Gary Buck

Assessing Writing by Sara Cushing Weigle

Cambridge University Press

0521585430 - Assessing Languages for Specific Purposes

Dan Douglas

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Assessing Languages for Specific Purposes

Dan Douglas



Cambridge University Press
0521585430 - Assessing Languages for Specific Purposes
Dan Douglas
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo

Cambridge University Press
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521584951

© Cambridge University Press 2000

This book is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception
and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,
no reproduction of any part may take place without
the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2000
Reprinted 2002

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

ISBN-13 978-0-521-58495-1 hardback
ISBN-10 0-521-58495-7 hardback

ISBN-13 978-0-521-58543-9 paperback
ISBN-10 0-521-58543-0 paperback

Transferred to digital printing 2005

Cambridge University Press

0521585430 - Assessing Languages for Specific Purposes

Dan Douglas

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

To Matt and Ben

Contents

<i>Series editors' preface</i>	<i>page</i> ix
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xi
1 Why test language for specific purposes?	1
2 Specific purpose language ability	24
3 Context, discourse domains, and task characteristics	41
4 Strategic competence: between knowledge and context	75
5 From target language use to test tasks	92
6 Specific purpose tests of listening and speaking	129
7 Specific purpose tests of reading and writing	189
8 LSP test development and technology	246
<i>Appendix: other LSP tests</i>	283
<i>References</i>	288
<i>Index</i>	299

Cambridge University Press

0521585430 - Assessing Languages for Specific Purposes

Dan Douglas

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Series editors' preface

The field of Languages for Specific Purposes (LSP) is a lively, productive and at times controversial field. Until recently, there has been very little in the way of research or publications for those who need to assess language for specific purposes. Teachers and testers have had to take what has been produced for teaching purposes, and seek to convert and adapt it for assessment. There has been very little practical guidance for test development, and there has been no attempt to develop a theoretical framework within which the assessment of language for specific purposes might develop.

The author of this book, Dan Douglas, has long experience of teaching and assessing languages for specific purposes, and has formulated a theoretical framework that provides a basis for developing and using assessments of languages for specific purposes. This framework reflects the belief that language performance in individuals varies according to the context in which the language is used, and the psychological schemata which are engaged by the discourse.

Dan Douglas clearly discusses the practical implications for test development of his theory, within a framework of language ability, and the latest approaches to language test development. Moreover, he richly illustrates his discussion with examples from a range of assessment situations. This is a book not just for professional test developers, but also for classroom teachers, those who teach languages for specific purposes. The book includes very important descriptions and evaluations of a number of 'high stakes' specific purpose tests in widespread use, for which teachers may be preparing their students, or which may be used to evaluate their courses. Furthermore, the book discusses principles and procedures according to which tests can be developed for a range of 'low stakes' settings, from classrooms to the workplace.

Cambridge University Press

0521585430 - Assessing Languages for Specific Purposes

Dan Douglas

Frontmatter

[More information](#)x *Series editors' preface*

A language test aims to elicit a person's language behaviour, and to provide for a means of describing and judging that behaviour. Language tests are needed by a whole range of professionals, from language teachers to speech therapists, from personnel recruitment agencies to college admissions officers and army officers: in short, anybody who uses language or needs to know how well somebody else uses language. The importance of the series, and Dan Douglas' volume in the series in particular, is that it combines different angles on language and language testing, bringing applied linguistic insights together with guidelines for test construction and test analysis.

This volume explores what language knowledge and language use are in the context of specific purposes for language; it derives principles for the design of assessment procedures from theories of language and from research in language use; and it shows how these principles can be applied to the design of good assessment instruments, appropriate for their contexts.

This book is unique in the two fields of languages for specific purposes, and of assessment, precisely because it brings them together. It combines in one volume theoretical and practical considerations for the assessment of languages for specific purposes.

*J. Charles Alderson**Lyle F. Bachman*

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to the series editors, Charles Alderson and Lyle Bachman, for the care they took in helping me get this book ready for publication. Their advice, suggestions, and occasional imperatives have contributed a great deal to whatever merits my book may have.

I must also thank a number of people who have read various parts of the manuscript and offered valuable advice: Carol Chapelle, Caroline Clapham, Andrew Cohen, Fred Davidson, Felicity Douglas, Tim McNamara, Margaret van Naerssen, and Larry Selinker.

I want to acknowledge and thank the members of my class in specific purpose language testing during the spring of 1997, who struggled through an early version of the book and offered many useful and insightful comments and suggestions: Roxanne Clemens, Beth Collins, Deb Crown, Louise Libby, Julio Rodriguez, Amy Waltman, and Christianna White.

I must also acknowledge generous support from the university departments I have been associated with during the writing of the book: the Department of Linguistics and Modern English Language at Lancaster University, the Department of English Language and Literature at Chukyo University, and the Department of English at Iowa State University.

Finally, thanks are owed to the editors at Cambridge University Press, Alison Sharpe and Mickey Bonin, for their wisdom and patience in helping me get the book ready for publication.

Whatever faults remain in the book are due entirely to my own stubbornness.

The publishers and I are grateful to the authors, publishers and others who have given permission for the use of copyright material identified in the text. It has not been possible to identify, or trace,

Cambridge University Press

0521585430 - Assessing Languages for Specific Purposes

Dan Douglas

Frontmatter

[More information](#)xii *Acknowledgements*

sources of all the materials used and in such cases the publishers would welcome information from copyright owners.

University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate. 1990. *International English Language Testing System. Module A Specimen Version* p. 2 with permission of UCLES: Cambridge; McNamara, T. 1990a. *Assessing the Second Language Proficiency of Health Professionals*. Doctoral Dissertation, University of Melbourne p. 454 and by permission of Addison Wesley Longman Ltd; OIBEC: *Executive Level Syllabus and Specimen Materials* 1990. University of Oxford Delegacy of Local Exams p. 3 by permission of UCLES: Cambridge; University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate. 1994. *An Introduction to IELTS* p. 6 with permission of UCLES: Cambridge; McNamara, T. 1996. *Measuring Second Language Performance* by permission of Addison Wesley Longman Ltd; University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate. 1995c. *International English Language Testing System: Specimen Materials. Listening* p. 8 and audio tape transcription with permission of UCLES: Cambridge; Northern Examinations and Assessment Board (NEAB). 19 June 1996. *University Entrance Test in English for Speakers of Other Languages. Listening Skills: Audio tape* Manchester: NEAB; Northern Examinations and Assessment Board (NEAB). 19 June 1996. *University Entrance Test in English for Speakers of Other Languages. Listening Skills: Answer Book* p. 10 Manchester: NEAB; National Languages and Literacy Institute of Australia Language Testing Centre. 1993. *Proficiency Test for Teachers: Italian. Draft Handbook for Candidates*. University of Melbourne pp. 4, 5 and 15 with permission of Department of Education Training and Youth Affairs: Australia; Iowa State University, Graduate College. *Instructions for Preparing for the TEACH Test* pp. 1–2; Iowa State University, Graduate College. Laboratory. *Exercise 11, Events in the Cardiac Cycle* p. 1; Iowa State University, Graduate College. *Guide for TEACH Test Student-Questioners* p. 3; Iowa State University, Graduate College. *TEACH Rating Sheet*; University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate. *CEIBT Content and Administrative Information* pp. 14, 15, 20 and 21 with permission of UCLES: Cambridge; National Languages and Literacy Institute of Australia Language Testing Centre. 1992. *The Japanese Language Test for Tour Guides. Handbook for Candidates* University of Melbourne p. 6 with permission of Department of Education Training and Youth Affairs: Australia; Institute of Air Navigation Services: Luxembourg. 1994. *PELA: A Test in the Proficiency in*

Cambridge University Press

0521585430 - Assessing Languages for Specific Purposes

Dan Douglas

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Acknowledgements xiii

English Language for Air Traffic Control. Information Package pp. 22, 23, 24, 29 and 30 with permission of EUROCONTROL Brussels; OIBEC: *Executive Level Syllabus and Specimen Materials* 1990. University of Oxford Delegacy of Local Exams. Sample case study pp. 2, 4, 8 and sample question paper pp. 2–3 by permission of UCLES: Cambridge; University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate. 1995a. *International English Language Testing System. Specimen Materials: Academic Reading* pp. 17, 18 and 19 with permission of UCLES: Cambridge; University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate. 1995b. *International English Language Testing System. Specimen Materials: Academic Writing* p. 23 with permission of UCLES: Cambridge; Northern Examinations and Assessment Board (NEAB). 28 February 1996. *University Entrance Test in English for Speakers of Other Languages. Written English: Question Paper* pp. 1 and 5. Manchester: NEAB; Northern Examinations and Assessment Board (NEAB). 28 February 1996. *University Entrance Test in English for Speakers of Other Languages. Written English: Answer Book* p. 13. Manchester: NEAB; Northern Examinations and Assessment Board (NEAB). 19 June 1996. *University Entrance Test in English for Speakers of Other Languages. Written English: Question Paper* pp. 4 and 5. Manchester: NEAB; Adult Migrant English Service. 1994. *Exemplar for ELSA Test*. Sydney: Australia pp. 4 and 5; Royal Society of Arts (RSA) Examinations Board. 1994b. *CBLC – German. Certificate in Business Language Competence. Sample Assessment Material* pp. 13 and 15 with permission of OCR: Coventry; Educational Testing Service. 1982 *Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC). Form 3EIC2* pp. 30, 42 and 43. Princeton; Fulcher, G. *Resources in Language Testing Page [On-line]*. Available: <http://www.surrey.ac.uk/ELI.ltr.html> and Fulcher, G. *Thesis Writing: Quiz 6 [On-line]*. Available: <http://www.surrey.ac.uk/ELI/sa/thesis6.html>; University of Birmingham. *MedWeb [On-line]*. Available: <http://www.medweb.bham.ac.uk/cases.markcase.fcgi>. The TOEIC test directions are reprinted by permission of Educational Testing Service, the copyright owner. However, the test questions and any other testing information are provided in their entirety by Cambridge University Press. No endorsement of this publication by Educational Testing Service or The Chauncey Group International Ltd. should be inferred.