

Experience of Developing Vietnamese Standardized Test Bank of English Proficiency Level 3 to 5 at People's Security Academy

Sunday, 28 July 2024 09:00 (30 minutes)

This paper aims at presenting experience of building an English test question bank in accordance with the 6-level Foreign Language Competency Framework for Vietnam, and in alignment with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and other English proficiency frameworks and assessment tools. Nine steps were involved in the test construction and four out of nine major steps are vital. English language lecturers who served as content specialists were asked to design test specification and exam matrix based on regulations of the Ministry of Education and Training. Four skill areas: listening, speaking, reading, and writing were targeted as the test construct. At this juncture, the content specialists were required to write test items in accordance with the test specification. Next, content assessment specialists assessed the test items in terms of question content, instructions and question format to ensure compliance with the requirements of the test specification. After receiving assessment, the authors directly edit the questions. Then the test items constructed were determined for their validity and reliability. Finally, a standard setting was carried out. Based on the theory of English proficiency assessment methods, the building, testing and assessing of the quality of the test bank have been conducted scientifically and procedurally. The result has been bringing up positive and innovative effects in foreign language testing at the Academy. In terms of validity and reliability, the VSTEP was of statistical significance, that is, it could be aligned with the CEFR levels and measure test takers' English proficiency at a specific CEFR level. The current findings provide useful insights for test developers or researchers who wish to design proficiency tests in alignment with the CEFR. Also, a number of recommendations to effectively implement foreign language training and testing to meet the needs of international integration are also proposed.

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Session Classification: Parallel Oral Presentations

Track Classification: Teaching Methods and Applied Linguistics