GEPT® Research Highlights

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- Investigating Taiwanese Teachers’ Language Testing and Assessment Needs
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  English Teaching & Learning, 38(1), 1-27
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- ESP or EGP Test for University Level ESP Courses: A Case Study Analysis
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For complete and more up-to-date information about the GEPT research publications, please visit https://www.lttc.ntu.edu.tw/thesis.htm.

The General English Proficiency Test (GEPT) is a five-level criterion-referenced EFL testing system implemented in Taiwan to assess the general English proficiency of EFL learners. In 1999, the Ministry of Education lent its support to the Language Training and Testing Center (LTTC) for the development of the GEPT. Since then, the GEPT has gained wide recognition in Taiwan. To date, over 6.5 million people have taken the test. In December 2015, to answer the growing need for an English assessment tool for young learners in Taiwan, the LTTC will launch the GEPT Kids (https://www.lttc.ntu.edu.tw/GEPTKids), a standardized test designed for English learners at the elementary school level.

Providing a brief and comprehensive picture of the GEPT development and validation efforts, this booklet includes an annotated bibliography that describes major research studies related to the GEPT that have been published in the last three years. The studies are divided into three categories: (1) LTTC-GEPT Research Reports, (2) LTTC Language Teaching & Testing Research Reports, and (3) Other Selected Studies. The first two categories contain studies funded by the LTTC and conducted by external researchers both at home and abroad. The third category contains studies conducted either by the LTTC research staff or through cooperation between the LTTC and external researchers. Up-to-date information about the GEPT research publications may be found at https://www.lttc.ntu.edu.tw/thesis.htm.

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A Comparability Study on the Cognitive Processes of Taking GEPT (Advanced) and IELTS (Academic) Writing Tasks Using Graph Prompts

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LTTC-GEPT Research Report RG-02

This study investigated the comparability between the GEPT Advanced Level Writing Task 2 and IELTS Academic Writing Task 1, both of which use graph prompts, by analyzing test-takers’ performances and cognitive processes while completing the tasks. Findings showed that test-takers’ scores on GEPT and IELTS were highly correlated. However, differences in the cognitive processes when completing the two tasks were clearly evidenced as the GEPT task requires the test takers to make personal interpretations of the data presented in the graph while IELTS does not. Furthermore, it was found that variables such as the types of graph prompts, and test-takers’ graphacy and writing ability have an impact on their cognitive processes.

Examining the Context and Cognitive Validity of the GEPT Advanced Writing Task 1: A Comparison with Real-life Academic Writing Tasks

LTTC-GEPT Research Report RG-03

This study investigated the context and cognitive validity of the GEPT Advanced Level Writing Task 1 by examining the test content and comparing the cognitive processes elicited by the task against those elicited by real-life academic writing tasks. Data were collected by means of expert judgment, an automated textual analysis tool, and a cognitive process questionnaire. Analyses of the data demonstrated that the GEPT writing task is comparable to real-life writing tasks in terms of context and cognitive validity, suggesting that the GEPT Advanced Level Writing Task 1 is a valid option when considering writing tests for academic purposes.

A Register Analysis of Advanced GEPT Examinees’ Written Production

D. Qian (2014)
LTTC-GEPT Research Report RG-04

This research examined the register features of test-takers’ written performances on the two GEPT Advanced Level writing tasks (Task 1-writing based on verbal input, and Task 2-writing based on non-verbal input). Findings revealed that Task 1 tends to elicit a more formal register than Task 2. Also evident from the findings were the distinct register features across the output of the two tasks lexicogrammatically and semantically, justifying the employment of the two tasks in the writing test. Finally, it was also found that the writing output based on both tasks presented a satisfactory coverage of academic words, showing that both tasks elicit academic register at the lexical level.

Linking the GEPT Listening Test to the Common European Framework of Reference

T. Brunfaut & L. Harding (2014)
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This linking study was designed to provide empirical evidence on which to base claims about the connection between the GEPT listening test suite and the CEFR. The study adopted an asynchronous twin-panel approach, and the investigation followed the procedures set out in the Manual (Council of Europe, 2009), including familiarization, specification, and standard setting. Results showed that the first four levels of the GEPT listening suite broadly correspond to the A2 to C1 CEFR levels.

To Pass or Not to Pass: Critical Features of Performance of GEPT Writing Tasks—Expository Writing at the Intermediate Level

C. Tseng (2014)
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This study investigated critical features of expository writings by Taiwanese EFL learners using a corpus of GEPT Intermediate writing samples. Text analysis results showed that the higher the writing score was, the fewer errors were identified. Some error types, such as collocation, verb form, singular/plural, and word choice, tended to persist in the writings of more advanced learners as well. Furthermore, the higher-score group employed more rhetorical structure features than the lower-score group did. The results have pedagogical implications for the teaching of EFL writing.

Examining the Conformity of the GEPT Test Takers’ Output to the Noun Phrase Accessibility Hierarchy

H. Chu (2014)
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This study tested the Noun Phrase Accessibility Hierarchy (NPAH), a theoretical assumption in Second Language Acquisition (SLA), using GEPT writing and speaking samples. The GEPT was selected because its test data come mostly from native Chinese speakers who are learning English as a second language. Results showed that the GEPT test-takers’ language output did not follow the NPAH predictions entirely, and that the GEPT test-takers at all four levels showed progress in their relative clause production from level to level. The results have implications for the use of GEPT as a reliable assessment tool for anchoring test-takers’ relative clause development.

Motivation and Test Anxiety in Test Performance Across Three Testing Contexts: The CAEL, CET, and GEPT

TESOL Quarterly, 48, 300-330

This study examined test-takers’ motivation, test anxiety, and test performance across a range of social and educational contexts in three high-stakes language tests: the Canadian Academic English Language Assessment (CAEL) in Canada, the College English Test (CET) in the People’s Republic of China, and the General English Proficiency Test (GEPT) in Taiwan. Results showed that differences in motivation and test anxiety emerged with regard to social variables (i.e., test importance to stakeholders and test purposes). Furthermore, motivation and test anxiety, along with personal variables (i.e., gender and age), were associated with test performance.
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