

# **Ensuring Quality and Fairness in the Asian EFL context: Challenges and Opportunities**

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## **Abstract**

Although objective testing originated and was developed in ancient China, today's English language assessment in China and other Confucian heritage cultures in Asia, such as Taiwan, Japan and Korea, has been heavily influenced by Western testing theories. Unlike generic international language tests that are intended to suit test-takers around the world, the English language tests developed in the Asian EFL domain are tailored to the specific educational systems and the changing contexts of test use within those territories. Also, these locally produced tests are often high-stakes examinations conducted on a very large scale. This results in challenges of ensuring test fairness and quality, especially given the presence of various constraints such as tight schedules for development and operation, and limited resources. Taking a fuller account of social and cultural contexts, this talk will also provide examples of the GEPT (The General English Proficiency Test) practice in Taiwan in relation to fairness and quality, while in the broader sense embedding these two concepts in validity arguments. In addition, this talk will discuss the continuing efforts of testing bodies in Asia to share information with one another about their attempts to ensure test quality and fairness. To conclude, this talk will suggest that while language testers in both the West and the East face similar problems in language assessments and though they may adopt different methods to achieve their common goal, they have the same responsibility to achieve fairness and quality. It is hoped that through the efforts and experience of its practitioners, the testing practice in the Asian context can have a positive impact on the revision of international standards or codes of practice.