

The Globality of Locally Produced EFL Assessment– Learning, Assessment, and Culture

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Abstract

An increasing number of countries in Asia have developed their own English language tests. Unlike generic international language tests that are intended to suit test-takers around the world, locally produced EFL tests in the Asian EFL domain, such as those in China, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan, are tailored to the specific educational systems and the changing contexts of test use within those territories. The General English Proficiency Test (GEPT) in Taiwan, which has assessed more than six million Taiwanese learners of English at all levels since it began in 2000, is one example. This paper first explores the trend among Asian countries to develop their own English language examinations from a cultural perspective, arguing that although learning and assessment are complementary in many respects, culture is inextricably linked to both learning and assessment. Just as effective English teaching and learning should take cultural factors into consideration as learners from different cultural backgrounds often experience distinct difficulties and challenges, tests that are tailored to suit local culture and contexts will better motivate learners, and their performance will be a more accurate indicator of their ability to use English as a lingua franca, both locally and internationally. The paper further examines the background and characteristics of the GEPT, its impact on local English language education, and the challenges of forging a closer connection with learning and teaching by incorporating cyber technologies and striking a better balance between local and global.