Developing the GEPT Diagnostic Learning System

Jessica Wu, Rachel Wu, & Anita Lin
The Language Training and Testing Center, Taipei

With the rapid advances in computer technology during recent years, researchers have demonstrated the pivotal role played by computer-assisted diagnostic systems in the improvement of student learning performance. In the presentation, we will report our recent efforts in developing a computerized diagnostic learning system for GEPT test-takers based on the principles of Learning-Oriented Assessment (LOA). We will introduce the conceptual framework behind the design of the diagnostic learning system. We will also discuss to illustrate how the feedback provided by the system can help learners improve their performance.

There are two aims for the project. Frist, we believe that providing diagnostic feedback to individual test takers based on their test performance will generate more effective learning opportunities because doing so provides learners with helpful information about their own strengths and weaknesses. In Taiwan students' future in terms of education and employment often is decided by large-scale standardized tests (e.g. GEPT); therefore, students devote much effort to preparing themselves to do well in the tests. GEPT data indicate a need for provision of more useful learning opportunities for learners wishing to take another or subsequent higher level test.

The second aim of the project relates to test purpose. In a test-driven society like Taiwan, the GEPT is used for summative purposes rather than formative ones. In learners' minds, tests are used to judge how good one is rather than to help one to learn better. We believe that providing the GEPT diagnostic and learning system can help improve this mindset. Ultimately, the GEPT can be used as a self-assessment tool by self-motivated leaners. More importantly, we hope that it can result in a paradigm shift from test orientation to learning orientation among learners as well as teachers.