

Reporting on Community Language Teacher Tests



Presenter

Dr Emily Li Bai

Sydney Institute for Community Language Education (SICLE)

School of Education and Social Work

Outline

- **Introduction**
- **Test Overview**
- **Reliability**
- **Validity (issues & next steps)**
- **Conclusion**

Introduction

- › Teachers with qualifications from outside Anglophone countries must meet minimum English language requirements but few options to accredit their language proficiency for the language they teach in Australia.
- › Community Language Teacher Test (CLTT), was developed for primary teachers who wanting to apply for permanent teaching positions. It was developed by UNSWIL in 1996 and based on ISLPR level 3 (basic vocational proficiency), and further developed by USYD in late 2019 trying to align across languages and the specific vocational requirement.
- › Verification of Language Proficiency Test (VLPT), requested by SSESW, was developed for pre-service secondary teachers needed evidence of the equivalent proficiency gained from 2/3 years undergraduate study.

Test overview

CLTT comprises 3 components:

- i. Writing (authentic text types, 3 tasks)
- ii. Reading Comprehension & Reading Aloud (authentic materials, 2 texts)
- iii. Speaking and Listening component (role plays, formal talks)

(Results: Band A, B (minimum vocational level), C, D, U)

› VLPT comprises 3 parts:

- i. Part A: Reading (2 texts of varying length)
- ii. Part B: Writing (formal/informal writing, 3 tasks)
- iii. Part C: Listening, Speaking & Reading aloud

(Results: Superior, Acceptable (major), Acceptable (minor), Below standard)

Test data to date:

Table 1.

Number of Candidates for CLTT & VLPT

No. Test	Round 1		Round 2		Round 3		Round 4		Round 5	
	Candidate	Language	Candidate	Language	Candidate	Language	Candidate	Language	Candidate	Language
CLTT	27	5	30+1	12	/	/	/	/	/	/
VLPT	6	2	20	6	2	1	9	4	14	4

- CLTT total candidates: 58
- VLPT total of candidates: 36+14

Table 2

Number of Candidates for Each Language in VLPT

	12/2019	11/2020	1/2021	5/2021	11/2021	Candidate_total
Arabic					2	2
Mandarin	5	6	2	6	6	25
Korean		8		1		9
Hindi					5	5
French		2				2
German		1				1
Greek					1	1
Italian	1				1 (TBT)	2
Japanese		1		1		2
Spanish		2				2
Vietnamese				1		1

- Languages for next round: Italian, German, Arabic, Korean, Mandarin
- Languages on the VLPT waiting list: Tamil, Russian, Punjabi, Indonesian, Portuguese (Bengali, Punjabi, Auslan for CLTT)

Test reliability

- › Two rounds of CLTT have been conducted with consistent results
 - Most candidates passed the test (50/58)
 - Writing is the most challenging component
 - Second language speaker found it challenging

- › The results from five rounds of VLPT are also consistent
 - Most candidates received a 'superior' results (33/36)
 - Writing and Cultural knowledge are the most challenging components

Test validity

› Do test items measure the related skills?

Reading – identify purpose and summarising+ reading aloud

Writing – informal/formal/descriptive,

Listening & Speaking– role plays, listen & summarise; given a talk, brief chats +reading aloud

Cultural knowledge – via reading texts, writing tasks & speaking topics

(types? e.g., story writing → describing; words limit? e.g., 30-50 → 50-100)

other skills? e.g., intercultural understanding?

› Do both tests reflect the right level of competency required for primary/secondary level of language teaching/learning need?

- Level of competence (grammatical, lexical and sociolinguistic) need to be identified and for each test to match the proficiency requirements
- How well the tests measure the macro skills required for primary and secondary levels
- In Australian educational context or in general?

› NESAs new regulations, 2018:

“A major (or minor) in a language including study of the spoken and written language. Units counted towards the major (or minor) must be above an introductory level of study.”

“Native speakers of a language must hold an undergraduate degree and may obtain verification from an Australian university indicating that their level of competency in reading, writing, speaking, listening and culture is equivalent to the completion of a major (or minor) in that language.”

- › Who is a native speaker? (L1/heritage learner/ born overseas/non-background learners who live and work in the target language countries?)
- › What does it mean “by competency after 2/3 years study”?
- › We identified levels of proficiency on the ISLPR Levels 2-3 as the standard with which to align VLPT at first, however, it varies by languages (some may be close to 2, 2+, and others (e.g. Chinese) would be at 3,3+.). Aligned with CLTT, we then identified ISLPT 3, 3+ as the standard level in early 2021.

Test validity

› Issues:

- The diversity of languages and teachers presents problems
 - Lack of resources for some language , and many less commonly taught languages (Samon, Urdu, Khmer)
 - Difficulty in finding qualified test developer/examiners (examiners and teachers often know each other)
 - Difference between the nature of language teachers (Speaking vs Writing, e.g. Hindi)
- The diversity of CL learners (L1/ L2/L3, background/heritage (exposure to the language only), dialect speakers, beginners/continuers)
- More evidence need to be collected for test validity (face, content& construct)
(small numbers of candidates in most languages are making this difficult)

Next steps:

- Work with language experts to align tests with International tests/framework/scales (ACTFL, CEFR etc.)

- To collect more evidence for reliability and validity for both tests. This would involve:
 - Working with education jurisdictions to plan evidence collection
 - Work with ISLPR align tests
 - A range of quantitative studies including double marking, comparison with candidates on other tests etc.
 - Follow-up studies of successful/unsuccessful candidates

Conclusion

- › Both CLTT and VLPT have been updated from old versions and carried out successfully in the last two years. There are a demand for VLPT for more than 12 languages including Auslan (over 120 Eols for VLPT so far).
- › We have collected some evidences for both tests, however, more evidence need to be collected for test reliability, especially test validity.
- › Support is needed for the VLPT from NESAs and DoEs, and from government and independent school sectors to fulfill this commitment and to benefit teachers from across NSW and other states.

Thank you & Questions

Contact:

Email: emily.bai@sydney.edu.au

Phone: 8627 9073

Sydney Institute for Community Language Education (SICLE)

School of Education and Social Work

Rm 328, Education Building (A35) | The University of Sydney | NSW | 2006