

Language Assessment Conference

Conference Theme

Innovations in English Language Assessment

Date

8 – 9 May 2023

Venue

Princess Nourah Bint Abdul Rahman University (PNU),
Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

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Welcome Message from the Exams Director

I am pleased to welcome participants to the British Council Conference “Innovations in Language Assessment”. We will be presenting this conference in partnership with Saudi TESOL and it will be hosted by Princess Nourah Bint Abdul Rahman University (PNU) in Riyadh.

Our 21st century world is a world of change, development and transformation – whether that be in economies and markets, in technologies or in societies. Understanding the nature of change and crafting appropriate responses is the key to success.

One of the significant challenges to Ministries, Educational systems and corporate entities is to harness technology advances and educational innovations in order to build comprehensive learning systems that equip populations to succeed in this fast-evolving context.

Saudi Arabia’s Vision 2030 project, for example, seeks to embrace this changing world so as to transform its landscape and to develop technical and vocational skills across the Saudi Arabian population. Vision 2030, as do similar projects and programmes in the MENA region, recognises that effective English communication is a key vocational skill and I look forward to an exciting dialogue with local and global experts on the impact of Vision 2030 on language teaching and assessment systems.

The British Council has extensive experience in English training and assessment – our Global Assessments team has successfully provided assessment solutions projects around the world and we are happy to share and discuss some of our achievements.

You will also be looking forward to our plenary sessions on innovations in Assessing English for Special Purposes, Test Construction, Artificial Intelligence and Assessment Technologies.

I am pleased to facilitate discussion and dialogue between local administrators, academics and practitioners in English Assessment and UK experts in assessment, our Global Assessments team and our British Council Assessment Research Group.

I’ll see you on May 8th!

Michael King

Exams Director, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait & Bahrain

Welcome Message from the Conference Chair

Dear Conference Participants,

It is a great honour and pleasure to welcome you all to the 2023 Language Assessment Conference in Saudi Arabia!

We are really elated to welcome our distinguished and renowned plenary speakers and panellists who are experts in language assessment with many years of experience and research expertise in this field.

This year's conference theme is 'Innovations in Language Assessment' where we have aimed to include various topics and issues to explore this timely and important theme. We do hope you will avail yourselves of this wonderful opportunity by attending a variety of well- selected sessions which cover a wide range of specialties in language assessment and technology. We hope our programme will meet your expectations and it will be an added value to your continuous professional development!

We are very grateful for the efforts and support of Dr. Hessah Shaja Abalallah, Dean of English Language Institute, Princess Nourah Bint Abdul Rahman University (PNU) for hosting this conference, Dr. Abdullah Al Bargi, President Saudi TESOL for bringing Saudi TESOL as a partner with the British Council for this conference and Mr. Michael King, Director of Examinations at the British Council, for making this strong collaboration between Princess Nourah Bint Abdul Rahman University (PNU), Saudi TESOL and the British Council possible and sustainable over the years.

This conference is the result of dedicated work of the Organising Committee members who have exerted tireless efforts to serve the ELT professionals in Saudi Arabia in particular and the region in general. We would like to thank the Organizing Committee members who have done a wonderful job in creating new initiatives, in addition to following up on their various tasks to the minutest details ensuring the efficiency and quality measures are met for the conference.

We thank all the participants, presenters and organisers of the conference for their dedication, passion and constant support. We hope that this will prove to be a very enjoyable and beneficial conference that we will all remember for years to come.

Muhammad Tayyab Rahman – Conference Chair

Organising Committee Members

Anna Koniuhova
Asim AlGhazzi
Gitanjali Jeganathan
Kamran Asghar
Lubna Shabir
Makram Elmouzayen
Manar Elhusseini

Mohammed Shaiju
Muhammad Anjum
Negar Siddiqui
Sameer Chaudhry
Sara Saemaldahr
Srideep Mitra
Wajeeh Abbas

About the Conference

This conference is the British Council's flagship language assessment conference in the MENA region. The conference provides perspectives and insight on trends and approaches in English language assessment at a local, regional, and international level.

The aims are to:

- Establish a unique platform for sharing both cutting-edge developments and best practice in English language assessment in education systems
- Provide a dynamic space in which regional and international policy makers, educational professionals, academics, teachers and assessment practitioners can interact, exchange information and keep abreast of the leading developments in the field
- Facilitate an ongoing dialogue amongst a range of regional and international professionals to explore assessment solutions that meet local needs and achieve global standards

British Council in Saudi Arabia

We support peace and prosperity by building connections, understanding and trust between people in the UK and countries worldwide.

We uniquely combine the UK's deep expertise in arts and culture, education and the English language, our global presence and relationships in over 100 countries, our unparalleled access to young people and influencers and our creative sparkle.

We work directly with individuals to help them gain the skills, confidence and connections to transform their lives and shape a better world in partnership with the UK. We support them to build networks and explore creative ideas, to learn English, to get a high-quality education and to gain internationally recognised qualifications.

Officially, the British Council Saudi Arabia office was established in the country in 1975 yet was present in supporting the country in education and Teacher recruitment since the mid 1960s.

Currently, the British Council in Saudi Arabia is well known as a leader in English language education, English language assessment, school exams and our programme connecting the UK and KSA, creating people to people links, and providing opportunities for young people in the country. We connect and showcase the best of what the UK has to offer in Education, Exams, the Arts, Civil Society and Sports.

We aim to work with partners countrywide and our priorities are to support:

- Education and training needs of young people in Saudi Arabia
- Development of reform policies
- English language learning needs of teachers and students
- Creative communities and building cultural links with the UK

Thank You to our Conference Partner and Host

The British Council would like to thank the following institutions and people for their help in organising the Language Assessment Conference 2023:

- Saudi TESOL for being an inspiring partner in spreading the message to their members about the conference.
- Princess Nourah Bint Abdul Rahman University (PNU) for being a gracious host of this conference.



Agenda – 8 May 2023

Time	Activity	Details
08.30 -09.30	Registration	Participants go to registration desk
09.30 -10.00	Opening & Housekeeping	British Council + Saudi TESOL
10.00 -11.00	Plenary 1	Making sense of specific-purpose language assessment Dr John Pill, Lancaster University
11.00 -12.00	Interactive Panel Discussion 1	Language Learning and Assessment in Local Context <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Government's strategy for language learning and assessment</i> • <i>Challenges for language learners</i> • <i>Transnational English language assessment practices in the age of metrics</i> • <i>How vision 2030 links with language learning and assessment</i> Panel Chair: Michael King Panel members: Dr Abdullah Albargi, Ghada Alshehri, Dr Hanoof Alkasham, Dr Othman Barnawi, Dr Ruqayya Moafa, Sultan Ayash
12.00 -13.00	Prayer + Tea Break + Networking	
13.00 -14.00	Plenary 2	Robots have no intelligence; they're here to help us. Let's welcome them. <i>Dr Ardeshir Geranpayeh, United Kingdom</i>
14.00 -14.30	Plenary 3	In a world of Metaverse, AI and Cyber security – Let's not forget the human at the heart of Change! <i>Saima Satti & Andriani Papapericleous, British Council</i>
14.30 -15.00	British Council Case Study 1	British Council Tokyo University of Foreign Studies Test of Speaking for Japanese universities (BCT-S) <i>Dr Johanna Motteram, British Council</i>
15.00 -16.00	Lunch	

Agenda – 9 May 2023

Time	Activity	Details
09.30 -10.00	Opening & Housekeeping	British Council
10.00 -11.00	Plenary 4	Test item writing: Current trends and future directions Dr Olena Rossi, Italy
11.00 -12.00	Interactive Panel Discussion 2	Language Learning and Assessment in Local Context <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>New trends in language learning and assessment</i> • <i>Local Assessment Practices and vision 2030</i> • <i>What needs to be changed for effective language learning and assessment?</i> Panel Chair: James Shipton Panel members: Dr Ahmed Nuriddin, James Lasak, Khatuna Tavartkiladze, Dr. Mansoor Al Malki, Dr. Sahar Al Zahrani, Dr. Hessah Aba-alalaa
12.00 -13.00	Prayer + Tea Break + Networking	
13.00 -14.00	Plenary 5	Technology in Assessment: Then, Now and the Future Paul Muir, <i>Surpass Assessment</i>
14.00 -14.15	Saudi Arabia Case Study 1	Aptis Exam and the Royal Commission for Yanbu Colleges and Institutes: Connecting the Dots <i>Dr. Othman Z. Barnawi, Dr Saeed Alkahtani & Dr. Wael Alharbi, Royal Commission for Yanbu Colleges and Institutes, Saudi Arabia</i>
14.15 -14.30	Saudi Arabia Case Study 2	Achieving with APTIS – a Success Story from Saudi Arabia <i>John Mackinlay, BAE Systems SDT, Dammam, Saudi Arabia</i>
14.30 -15.00	British Council Case Study 2	Workplace Literacy and Numeracy (WPLN) <i>Dr Johanna Motteram, British Council</i>
15.00 -15.10	Closing	British Council
15.10 -16.10	Lunch	

Plenary Speakers

Plenary 1: Making Sense of Specific-purpose Language Assessment

Dr John Pill



John Pill is a Lecturer in Language Testing in the Department of Linguistics and English Language at Lancaster University (UK). He is currently director of studies for postgraduate programmes in Language Testing. His research interests include specific-purpose language testing, particularly in healthcare and academic contexts, the scope and definition of language constructs, assessing speaking, and teaching and communicating about language assessment.

John's background is in teaching English as a foreign language. He taught and trained teachers in Italy, Hong Kong and Australia. He completed his doctoral studies at the University of Melbourne and has worked in academic roles in Australia, Lebanon and the UK. He serves as an ordinary member of the executive committee of the UK Association for Language Testing and Assessment.

Abstract

In my talk, I review the current state of language for specific purposes (LSP) assessment and foreground new developments in the field using recent research studies and publications.

I survey four core issues in LSP test development. First, I present different ways to understand and describe the target domain – the real-world contexts of language use, for example, university lectures or medical consultations – which provide the foundation for developing any test. Next, I investigate test tasks and the extent to which they can be authentic to practices and performance in the domain. Then, I explore the need for grading schemes that capture what matters to those operating in the domain (the insiders) and I consider the complicated boundary between language and professional knowledge/skills. Finally, I examine who might be best placed to assess LSP test performance – language specialists or domain experts.

My talk is illustrated with examples from research in education, healthcare and aviation. I argue that language assessment researchers and test developers need to engage with stakeholders in the various domains to understand their needs and to promote good practice in LSP testing that will help meet those needs.

Plenary 2: Robots have no Intelligence; They're Here to Help us. Let's Welcome Them.

Dr Ardeshir Geranpayeh



Ardeshir Geranpayeh is the Founder and Director of Cambridge Computational Psychometrics, Cambridge-United Kingdom. Ardeshir holds a PhD in Applied Linguistics from the University of Edinburgh on the comparability of language proficiency testing. He has over 30 years' experience of test validation and for the last two decades has contributed to the design, development, validation, revision and evaluation of several internationally recognised language proficiency tests developed by the University of Cambridge, including IELTS. Dr Geranpayeh has run numerous workshops on Basic Statistics,

Item Response Theory, Test Equating, Structural Equation Modelling, Differentiating Item Functioning, Test of Listening and Test Security in several international educational conferences and has published extensively on language proficiency testing, cheating detection and automated assessment. His current interest includes the application of computational psychometrics in language learning and assessment.

Abstract

Globalization has highlighted a greater need for a much more affordable language assessment where technology facilitates the inclusion of new methods which reflect the multimodal constructs of our language assessment in the modern integrated and often multilingual communities. Despite that, the recent influx of social media posts about the threat of ChatGPT to education and to the security of teaching and assessment jobs has raised lots of fear and uncertainty among educationalists on the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Assessment.

I will argue that AI products, no matter how advanced they may be, have no intelligence, hence should never replace teachers in the classroom. I further argue that Computational Psychometrics (CP), which is heavily dependent on AI, embraces the new technology much more effectively and helps language testers facilitate the learner's journey in education. I'll bring practical examples from the world of assessment to demonstrate how CP is already helping language assessment experts in their daily attempt to improve assessment of learner's progress. CP can help us make education more accessible and effective for everyone as long as we use it wisely.

Plenary 3: In a World of Metaverse, AI and Cyber security – Let's not Forget the Human at the Heart of Change!

Saima Satti



Saima Satti is currently the Director of Business Improvement at the British Council, based in London but working China to Chile in a days work. Having been at the helm of one of the largest high stakes English Proficiency tests, IELTS, for over 10 years she has been at the centre of evolution and transformation of the product, global delivery, security, integrity and validity that have ensured IELTS is delivered and accepted worldwide. With a robust background in teaching and assessment, she has been a business leader of Exams products and services, leading teams to deliver 'mission impossible' pivots globally. As an Agile coach and leader of Scaled Agile delivery for technological and non- technological value streams, she currently leads teams that develop and maintain technology solutions, identify technologies that enable assessment, deliver process efficiency and ensure change is implemented and embedded for every user and customer.

Andriani Papapericleous



Andriani Papapericleous is the Head of Technology Enabled Assessment which is one of strands of the Global Business Improvement Team which is part of the Global Exams Delivery team in the British Council. She has been with the British Council for 23 years and during this period she has held various positions in Exams at both the country and global level. She has vast experience in Exams Operations and knowledge of a wide range of products. She has also been involved in transformation and change initiatives in which she was responsible for rolling out processes, systems and new products. Andriani is passionate about technology and assessment while thinking about the customer first.

Abstract

As Digital transformations focusing on Technology development and adoption have proceeded at a fast pace in the years preceding Covid and they have been exponentially accelerated during the COVID pandemic, there is a pushback from numerous sectors on the need for sustainability and resilience and there is a question as to whether innovations are being provided to different industries or not. Industry 5.0 is very real and focuses on the key areas of human centricity, resilience and sustainability for the people, business models, environments and end to end (e2e) supply chains. This is no different in the learning and assessment arena. How can we ensure 'value' is being delivered to our learners, employees, assessors, MOEs, Institutions and ultimately the e2e learning and assessment experience. This session will focus on real life successes and lessons learnt by the British Council's Global Exams business improvement team that has been at the centre of embedding change and delivering 'value' in assessment products, delivery modalities and the very experience of assessors, learners, and users.

Plenary 4: Test Item Writing: Current Trends and Future Directions.

Dr Olena Rossi



Olena Rossi has an MA and a PhD in Language Testing from Lancaster University, UK. Her main research interests lie in the areas of test development, item writing, and assessment literacy for test stakeholders. Olena's doctoral thesis looked into the nature of item-writing skills and their development. Olena has worked as an associate lecturer at Lancaster University for a number of years teaching on the MA in Language Testing programme. Olena also has a lot of practical language testing experience as an examiner, item writer, item quality reviewer, and item-writer trainer.

Currently, Olena works as an independent assessment consultant, conducting research into language assessment and consulting companies and educational institutions on assessment-related issues.

Abstract

In this presentation, I will focus on item writing (producing test items based on existing specifications) as a crucial but often overlooked aspect of language test development. The presentation will start with discussing the role of item writing in test validation. I will give a brief summary of current approaches to item-writing documentation and item-writing procedures, based both on published research and on my own practical experience. I will then discuss the role of item writers in the test development process, providing answers to the following questions: Who makes a good item writer? How shall we train item writers? What feedback shall we provide to item writers so that they get better at their work? The second part of the presentation will concern innovations in item writing. In particular, I will touch upon the role of corpus linguistics in item development. I will also discuss automated item generation, including the prospects of using AI (artificial intelligence) such as ChatGPT, for text and item generation.

Plenary 5: Technology in Assessment: Then, Now and the Future.

Paul Muir



Paul Muir is Chief Strategy and Partnership Officer at Surpass Assessment where he is responsible for the strategic direction, innovation, and partnership strategy. Paul has worked in the assessment industry for over 20 years, in roles delivering education reform projects across the UAE, Qatar and Saudi Arabia, to transformational roles at Awarding Bodies and Regulators in the UK. Prior to joining Surpass Assessment, Paul spent 7 years at the British Council and was responsible in leading their transition from a predominantly Pen and Paper assessment business to one led by technology enabled assessment. Paul has a passion for enhancing access to education using technology, especially in parts of the world where this is not always the 'easy' path and where innovative ways of working can be rewarded. A regular conference speaker, webinar panellist and blog writer, Paul has also served on the e-Assessment Association (EAA) board since 2021 and is also a member of the Association of Test Publishers (ATP) Security Committee.

Abstract

Over the last 5 years, the adoption of technology in assessment, including Language assessment, has increased exponentially, resulting in greater reach, access, and more innovation than ever before.

But how did we get here, what does current 'best-in-class' look like and how will the use of technology in assessment develop in the future?

Join Paul Muir, Chief Strategy and Partnership Officer at Surpass Assessment and e-Assessment Association Vice-Chair, to reflect on our journey so far, will discuss some of the key considerations when moving to a digital assessment model and look forward to the innovations of the next 5 years.

We'll cover topics such as:

- Test security
- Online Proctoring
- Ensuring validity in assessment
- The Digital Divide
- The role of AI

Plus we'll share stories from organisations around the world who have already started this journey and finish the session with an interactive Q&A session to allow us all to share opinions and ideas.

Interactive Panel Discussion 1:

Language Learning and Assessment in Local Context

- *Government's strategy for language learning and assessment*
- *Challenges for language learners*
- *Transnational English Language Assessment Practices in the Age of Metrics in Saudi Context*
- *How vision 2030 links with language learning and assessment*

Michael King (Panel Chair)



Michael graduated in Economics and Politics and was awarded a Post graduate Diploma in Education. He taught in secondary schools in Australia and England before joining the British Council as an English teacher and Teacher Trainer. He worked as Teaching Centre Manager for the British Council in Spain, Pakistan Brazil and Venezuela. He moved into Examinations and Assessments and has directed Exams and Assessments in China, India and is currently Director Exams and

Assessments for KSA, Kuwait and Bahrain. He works at the intersection of curriculum, training and assessment and is committed to bringing UK excellence to bear in facilitating and supporting the development of effective learning systems.

Dr Abdullah Albargi



Prof. Abdullah Al-Bargi is Full Professor of Applied Linguistics/TESOL and currently serves as the Dean of the English Language Institute (ELI) at King Abdulaziz University (KAU). He also serves as the President of Saudi TESOL, following his election in 2021 as the first president of the only TESOL association in Saudi Arabia recognized and approved by the Ministry of Education. Prior to 2017 just before his

appointment as the ELI Dean, Prof. Al-Bargi had served as the ELI Vice-Dean for Development for seven years where he worked to develop major academic operations, including academic accreditation, curriculum & assessment, quality assurance and professional development. Prof. Al-Bargi is also an international site reviewer for USDE-recognized & US-based Commission on English Language Program Accreditation (CEA) and has served as the General Supervisor of the Strategic Planning Unit at the Office of the KAU Vice-President of Academic Affairs. Prof. Al-Bargi is also a seasoned journalist as he worked as a senior editor of major Saudi English language newspapers and as a national television commentator and anchor.

Ghada Ali Alshehri

Ghada Alshehri is an English Language instructor with six years of experience in teaching the language. She holds an MA in Arts from University of Missouri- Saint Louis and a diploma in teaching. She also has teaching experience in three different universities: TU, KSU, and PNU. She is a certified trainer from both Cambridge University and Nile Academy and has done workshops on many topics, such as effective communication in classrooms, the importance of emotional intelligence, and how to use rubrics. She is an experienced item developer and was the head of the Curriculum and Assessment Unit at the English Language Institute at PNU for

around two years. She is interested in experimenting with new methods of assessment and is doing research on students' perspectives of using e-assessment tools for assessing writing skills. She recently attained her Fellowship in 2022. She is always passionate about the quality of teaching by continuously trying new teaching methodologies and styles.

Dr Hanoof Alkasham

Dr. Hanoof Bandar Alkasham, Vice-Dean of Research, Innovation, and Business at ELI in PNU. Holds a Master's in TESOL and foreign language teaching from the University of Canberra and a PhD in TESOL and Language Teacher Education from Monash University. Dr. Hanoof worked in developing multiple academic programs at PNU, most recently the Post Graduate Diploma in English as a Medium of Instruction. Worked with other private and government sectors as a consultant on educational and research projects. Currently, Dr. Hanoof is part of a team of academics and researchers building a national English language proficiency test for young learners. Dr. Hanoof research interests are within language teacher education, teacher language awareness and teacher professional development. Assessment methods and learning about assessing language learners are big parts of English language teacher education. Due to her working with pre-service and in-service teachers, Dr Hanoof is always interested in reading and learning about the latest trends and studies in language assessment.

Dr. Othman Z. Barnawi



Dr Othman Z. Barnawi is a full Professor of Language and Education at the Royal Commission for Yanbu Colleges and Institutes, Saudi Arabia. His research interests include the intersection(s) of language and political economy, social and education policy studies, multilingual and multicultural studies, second language writing, language testing, and transnational education. His works appear in journals such as *Language and Education*, *Critical Studies in Education*, *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, *Critical Inquiries in Language Studies*, and *Australian*

Review of Applied Linguistics. He is the founding editor of *Global South Perspectives on TESOL* (Book Series published by Routledge-Taylor and Francis Group). His recent books are *TESOL and the cult of speed in the age of neoliberal mobility* (Routledge, 2020), *Neoliberalism and English Language Education Policies in the Arabian* (Routledge, 2018), and *Writing Centers in the Higher Education Landscape of the Arabian Gulf* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017). *The Past, Present, and Future of Higher Education in the Arabian Gulf Region: Critical Comparative Perspectives in a Neoliberal Era* (Routledge, 2022).

Dr. Ruqayya Nasser Moafa

Dr. Ruqayyah is an assistant professor of Applied Linguistics at the English Language Institute at Jazan university. She has dedicated her career to understanding and improving the ways in which people communicate across languages and cultures. With a doctorate in Applied Linguistics from the University of Memphis, Dr. Moafa has conducted extensive research on language acquisition and cross-cultural communication. Her work has been published in academic journals, and she has presented her findings at conferences around the world. In addition to her research, Dr. Moafa is a passionate teacher who takes pride in educating the next generation of language

experts. Her interactive approach draws on her students' experiences to help them develop new insights into the complexities of language and communication. Her passion for exploring the complexities of language is evident in her classroom instruction and scholarly work. Through her research and teaching, Dr. Moafa is making important contributions to the field of Applied Linguistics. Her work is helping to break down barriers and promote greater understanding between people of different linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

Sultan Ayash



Moving directly from the academic field, after 3 years of extensive teaching experience at university and community college as a lecturer in the USA. Sultan has gained great experience the field of Applied Linguistics by presenting in many academic conferences, like Washington University conference, Spokane Regional Conference, and Palouse and Culture Symposium. Likewise, his interest in cross-gender differences in language learning has enabled him to publish his first academic research then followed by a case study. His passion for empowering people has led him to earn the chartered CIPD level 5 diploma in L&D. Leveraging the unique lessons, he learned during the years he spent between Canada and the United States, when Sultan joined BAE Systems SDT, he was nominated to train English instructors before they join BAE Systems SDT. A knack for making young Saudis presence more obvious, stronger in the academic and technical Aviation training, Mr. Ayash experience has been rewarding and led him to run BAE Systems Jeddah exam center to deliver any academic and / or technical Aviation exams covering the whole western province in KSA.

Interactive Panel Discussion 2:

Language Learning and Assessment in Local Context

- *New trends in language learning and assessment*
- *Local Assessment Practices and vision 2030*
- *What needs to be changed for effective language learning and assessment?*

James Shipton (Panel Chair)



James has a wide experience as an educator and manager in International Education and Assessment with a particular interest in Cultures of Learning. After graduating with a MA in Social Anthropology from Edinburgh, Scotland, James began his career in Teaching and Assessment which, over the last 35 years, has taken him to Latin America, South and East Asia, Europe and the Middle East. James is currently Regional Director for Examination Services for Middle East and North Africa for the British Council. He has held a number of senior management roles including Head IELTS, Director Examinations China and CEO of British Council Education, India.

Dr Ahmed Nuriddin



Dr. Ahmad Nuriddin is the Director of the Preparatory Program, and he also teaches in the social sciences and foreign languages programs at Prince Mohammad University (PMU) in Al Khobar Saudi Arabia. He has over 40 years of experience in the field of International Education in the United States, Saudi Arabia, West Africa, and Latin America, and as a researcher at the Smithsonian Institute. He attended Columbia University, Northcentral University, Bowdoin College, and Yale University. His research interests include second language acquisition and promoting academic honesty to avoid cheating. He has written and presented on these topics at local and international gatherings. His students fondly refer to him as the “cheating” professor.

James Lasak



James Lasak is a senior learning and development professional at Aramco's Academic Curriculum & Testing Unit, where he and his team develop award-winning, performance-based English language learning programs to support the development of the company's industrial workforce. James' interests include the digital transformation of learning, with particular focus on assessment and learning analytics, performance consulting, and coaching. James holds a Master's Degree in English Language Teaching & Applied Linguistics from King's College London, is a Certified Talent Development Professional (Association for Talent Development), and is an Accredited Associate Executive Coach (Academy of Executive Coaching).

Khatuna Tavartkiladze

Khatuna Tavartkiladze is the English Programme Director at Naif Arab University for Security Sciences. She has extensive experience in the fields of language teaching and language teacher education for 20 years as a teacher, item writer, and teacher educator in the UK and Saudi Arabia.

She earned her postgraduate master's degree in TESOL 2021 after securing her DELTA qualification in 2016. She has designed, taught and supervised several ESP courses that focus on English for security sciences. Khatuna is passionate about helping teachers develop professionally, and she has written and delivered many teacher training workshops—both face-to-face and online—that help teachers develop practical teaching techniques and approaches. She is passionate about engaging and motivating the people she works with so that they can provide impactful education.

Dr. Mansoor Al Malki



Dr. Mansoor S. Almalki is an Associate Professor of Applied Linguistics, a HE Consultant, and currently serves as a Vice President for Development and Quality at Shaqra University. He obtained his PhD from the University of Melbourne (2014) in Applied Linguistics and Language Assessment & MA in TESOL from Curtin University (2009). He is an MA & PhD theses examiner, a teacher trainer, and has taught English for several years in Saudi Arabia and Australia. He is a certified reviewer for the US-based Commission on English Language Program Accreditation (CEA), and a member of different national and international associations including the Association for Language Testing and Assessment of Australia and New Zealand (ALTAANZ), the British Association for Applied Linguistics (BALL), and a member of Saudi TESOL Association's board of directors. His main research interests include language assessment, teacher identity, professional development, life competencies in ELT, and qualitative research methods in applied linguistics.

Dr. Sahar Al Zahrani



Dr Sahar M. Alzahrani is an Associate Professor of Applied Linguistics, the director of the English Language Centre at Umm AlQura University, and member of the Saudi TESOL Association board of directors. Her PhD is from the University of Southampton in England. She has given conference papers and has published research in areas of learner autonomy, innovation in teaching, language assessment, blended learning, MOOCs, online instructional design, and teacher education. She has won awards for best poster at LASIG Antwerp Conference; 3MT competition at The University of Southampton; and CALICO

Outstanding Graduate Student Award.

Dr. Hessah Aba-alalaa

Dr. Hessah Aba-alalaa is an assistant professor of linguistics, obtained her PhD from School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS). From 2016 until 2018 she was the head of Applied Linguistics Department in the college of languages at Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman University (PNU). Since 2018 until present she is the dean of English language Institute in PNU. Her research interests include Discourse Analysis; Politeness; Corpus Linguistics; interlanguage pragmatics and TESOL.

Dr. Johanna Motteram



Johanna is the Manager, Integrated Learning and Assessment in the Global Assessments team at the British Council. She works with specialist Exams Teams across the British Council to develop, deliver, and validate language assessments for different purposes. Her recent projects include test adaptation for the WPLN assessment suite, BCT-S validation studies with researchers from Tokyo University of Foreign studies, and new assessment development for graduate recruitment in India. Prior to joining Global Assessments, Johanna worked in the ELICOS industry in Australia, and in universities in Australia and Singapore, teaching Applied Linguistics and English for Specific Purposes. Her research centres on exams, candidates, and candidate performances, and she shares her work in publications and conferences. Fundamental to her work is providing a bridge between

academic and practical concerns to deliver quality assessments which solve policy problems: this unique standpoint means her case studies are useful for theoreticians and practitioners alike.

Case Study 1

Topic: *British Council Tokyo University of Foreign Studies Test of Speaking for Japanese universities (BCT-S)*

Summary

English language proficiency has long been a component of university entrance examinations in Japan. However, until recently these assessments have mainly focused on reading comprehension, translation, and grammar and vocabulary knowledge. In recent years, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology has been recommending that English spoken proficiency assessment be included in university entrance tests. Evaluation of English spoken proficiency is technically complex and resource intensive. BCT-S, a partnership product of the British Council and the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, is an add-on solution for university entrance testing. This fifteen-minute test of communicative and creative speaking proficiency is delivered using a secure palm held device. Responses are uploaded and then marked by the British Council's team of expert examiners and results are returned to the university in a matter of days. This presentation details the development, delivery, and validation of this end-to-end assessment solution, and explores alternative ways this process could be applied.

Case Study 2

Topic: Workplace Literacy and Numeracy (WPLN)

Summary

Workforce optimization is a high priority for the government of Singapore, and the multilingual capabilities of the Singaporean workforce have made the country an attractive hub for multi-national companies' activity in the East Asia region. The foundations of the Singapore economy have changed rapidly and markedly over recent decades, and a shift from light manufacturing to service opportunities for those with few or no qualifications has meant that meeting demand for workers with English language literacy has required investment in retraining and upskilling. The British Council developed and delivered Workplace Literacy and Numeracy (WPLN) suite of assessments which is a central component of a SkillsFuture Singapore Agency (SSG) program to enhance the employability of Singaporeans with few or no educational qualifications. This presentation details the development and introduction of the WPLN assessments, including our work with local training providers to ensure alignment of assessment, delivery and curriculum in upskilling training programmes.

Saudi Arabia Case Studies

Dr. Othman Z. Barnawi (Bio on Page 15)

Dr Saeed Alkahtani



Dr Saeed Alkahtani, PhD in English as a second Language Education, is Assistant Professor and Deputy Managing Director (Education & Training) at the Royal Commission for Yanbu Colleges and Institutes, Saudi Arabia. His research interests include ESL/EFL Education assessment and evaluation curriculum development, higher education studies and educational leadership.

Dr. Wael Alharbi



Dr. Alharbi is an Assistant Professor of Computer Assisted Language Learning at the Royal Commission for Yanbu Colleges and Institutes. His research interests focus on Artificial Intelligence applications in language education, ELT, language assessment, adaptive and personalized language learning, virtual and augmented reality, technology-enhanced language learning, online and e-learning, education for employability and quality of education. With broad and rich experience in language teaching and assessment for over two decades in general and in higher education settings, Dr. Alharbi has experienced the best of both worlds. He is also a higher education expert with an MBA in higher

education management from UCL and an external reviewer for different educational quality assurance agencies. He is an external reviewer for The National Commission for Academic Accreditation and Assessment and a certified academic quality practitioner from the Saudi Education & Training Evaluation Commission. He is also a certified KPI Professional, and an IDEAL ABET Scholar for the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology – The Institute for the Development of Excellence in Assessment Leadership.

Case Study 1

Topic: Aptis Exam and the Royal Commission for Yanbu Colleges and Institutes: Connecting the Dots

Summary

English language assessment practices are social, political and economic activities in the ground with various impacts on people's lives. Through transnational lens, this presentation frames and examines the case of Aptis exam at the Royal Commission for Yanbu Colleges and Institutes. It discusses how this very transnational exam is conceived, enacted, negotiated, contested and justified throughout our foundation year program. It concludes with some suggestions and recommendations for local universities as well as the test provider (i.e., British Council).

John Mackinlay



John Mackinlay was born and educated in Scotland, completing his MA there. Subsequent qualifications include a Diploma in TESOL and an MBA. He has spent his entire career in the field of English Language Teaching and Management. He has taught learners aged 6 to 66 in contexts such as secondary schools, universities, language schools & military education. His experience also covers roles in language assessment and examinations including many years as an examiner. He has lived and worked in eight countries, mainly in Central Europe and the Middle East, with over eight years in Saudi Arabia. He spent over 15 years with the British Council in several managerial roles before joining BAE Systems

SDT in 2019. Currently, he is Chief Instructor for English Language Training in Dammam.

Case Study 2

Topic: Achieving with APTIS – a Success Story from Saudi Arabia

Summary

In this short and punchy session, I will talk about the experience of using the British Council's APTIS test in a military training context in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The session will cover the reasons for selecting APTIS, our experience of test delivery, how we use the results and reflections on customer service.

Joining Instructions

This year's conference is a hybrid event where people can join in-person as well as online.

In-Person

Conference venue

The conference will be held at Princess Nourah Bint Abdul Rahman University (PNU), Riyadh. Participants coming by car or taxi, please find the location link on the google map or through the QR code below:

<https://goo.gl/maps/wmnvCHDiBgZGrQd27>



Participants can enter the university from Gate 4 on the Airport Road or from Gate 7 on Anas Ibn Malik Road.

The conference will be held in the Blue Hall and participants will use Entrance 3 to get into the hall.

Conference registration

Participants will be required to get their welcome pack and conference booklet from the registration desk on 8th May 2023 from 8:30AM to 9:30AM.

Online

Conference APP

For **in-person** and **online participants**, we will be using a mobile conference app called '**Whova**'. You'll be able to upload your profile, get schedule updates, event information, engage with the speakers, tweet and share photos. The app will play an important role throughout the conference experience as we use it to send important announcements- it is also a great networking tool to connect with like-minded English language leaders from across KSA and MENA. We suggest downloading the app on your mobile device and familiarising yourself with it. Use the below link or QR code to download the app on your mobile device.

<https://whova.com/faq/why-should-i-download-whova-app/>



To find out about Whova 'User Guide' and 'Sign In', visit the following link or scan the QR code below.

<https://whova.com/pages/whova-app-user-guide/>



To sign up, participants must use the same email address which they have put on the 'Expression of Interest form'.

Further details will be sent prior to the conference.

NOTES