

Comments and Reflections

Symposium "A Perspective on Language Testing ... in the Context of Migration and Integration"

Peter Lenz

Institute of Multilingualism

University of Fribourg – University of Teacher Education Fribourg

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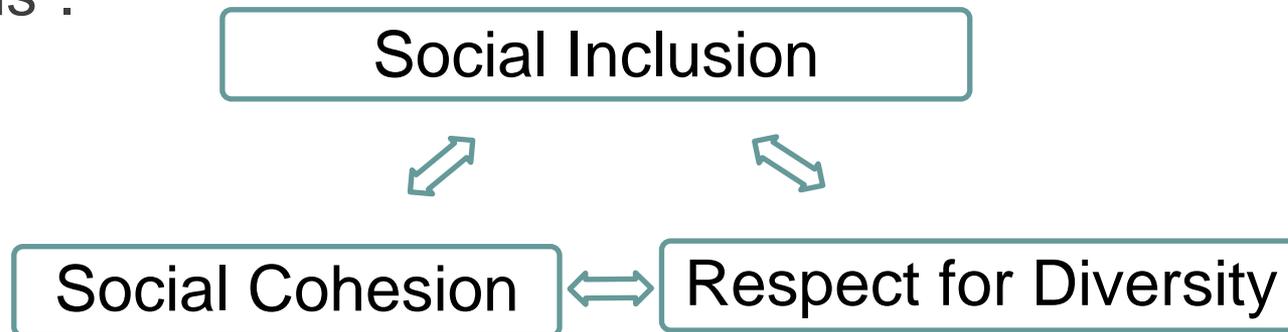
My takeaways in a nutshell

Philia (CoE/LIAM)

There *is* an institution that takes action on behalf of the **fundamental principles (ideals) of western states and societies**.

It brings together decision-makers/authorities, integration practitioners and experts and provides concrete support.

The CoE attempts to balance *and* promote three competing "actions".



A task for a giant to be carried out with little resources

Lorenzo (ALTE/LAMI)

A professional association of language testing institutions

... wants to have an impact on actual testing practice,

... is fighting misuses of language tests,

... contributes to fairer, better quality language tests,

by

... providing services and materials,

... researching the impact (and washback) of test regimes

(and wishing to do that much more).

=> Positive outcomes are visible!

Meg (AELRC)

Tests of adult language progress are approved by a government agency *based on a **self-declared AUA***

Test impact doesn't seem to be of interest.

... although it should be.

More validation than we are used to ... stopped short.

Elana, Ofra & Marina (Tel Aviv Univ.)

Taking multilingual profiles seriously in subject-matter tests,
avoid discrimination due a construct-irrelevant factor.

=> A highly interesting measure to assure **bias for best**.

? Just a thought:

Doesn't this point concern **myself and most of you**, too?

Don't *you*, NNS of English, feel challenged or
disadvantaged when using English?

How would **you** like to be accommodated for?

Are there **languages that must have priority for one's own
good?**

Hebrew in Israel? English as a Lingua Franca everywhere?

Tim (Univ. Melbourne)

It is *not only* about **test fairness**.

There is something going on that is more fundamentally
unjust.

But what can we do about it ...

... as **individual professionals?**

... as the language **testing profession?**

How much is being done in favor of **test fairness**? – **Not enough** for this high-stakes context!

Language requirements and language testing for immigration and integration purposes

—
A synthesis of academic literature

—
Evelyne Pochon-Berger
Peter Lenz

Pochon-Berger & Lenz (2014) applied some of the claims from Bachman & Palmer's **Assessment Use Argument (AUA)** to the published literature and **found very little validity evidence**.

- **Consistency** (\approx reliability) and **meaningfulness** (\approx construct validity): **1 publication** was explicit.
- **Beneficence** for the stakeholders: Mainly **2 impact studies**:
 - **INTEC** Study (Strik et al., 2010): Stats & 329 interviews with stakeholders from 9 EU countries;
 - Avermaet & Rocca (2013): 40 interviews in **Flanders**

Back to the solutions:

What can testers do when they don't like the way things are?

Can we expect help from professional codes or guidelines?

ILTA Code of Ethics

Principle 8

"Language testers shall be **mindful of their obligations to the society** within which they work, while recognising that those **obligations may on occasion conflict** with their responsibilities to their test takers and to other stakeholders."

...

"Where their disagreement is of sufficient strength to qualify as a **conscientious objection**, they should have the **right to withdraw** their professional services."

*Is that it? An individual versus society? **Conform or resign?***

*How can **we** possibly become **more influential agents?***

Steps in Test Development	Agents (actual & potential)
<p>Define intended test consequences, state test purpose => Phrase question for decision the test will inform</p>	<p>The 3 Powers Lead: Administration Citizens, Politics, Society Individual experts and expert groups (Social, Political, Legal Sciences alongside Lang. Testing)</p>

Experts can make themselves heard in the political process, individually or as a profession.

Team up with other professions!

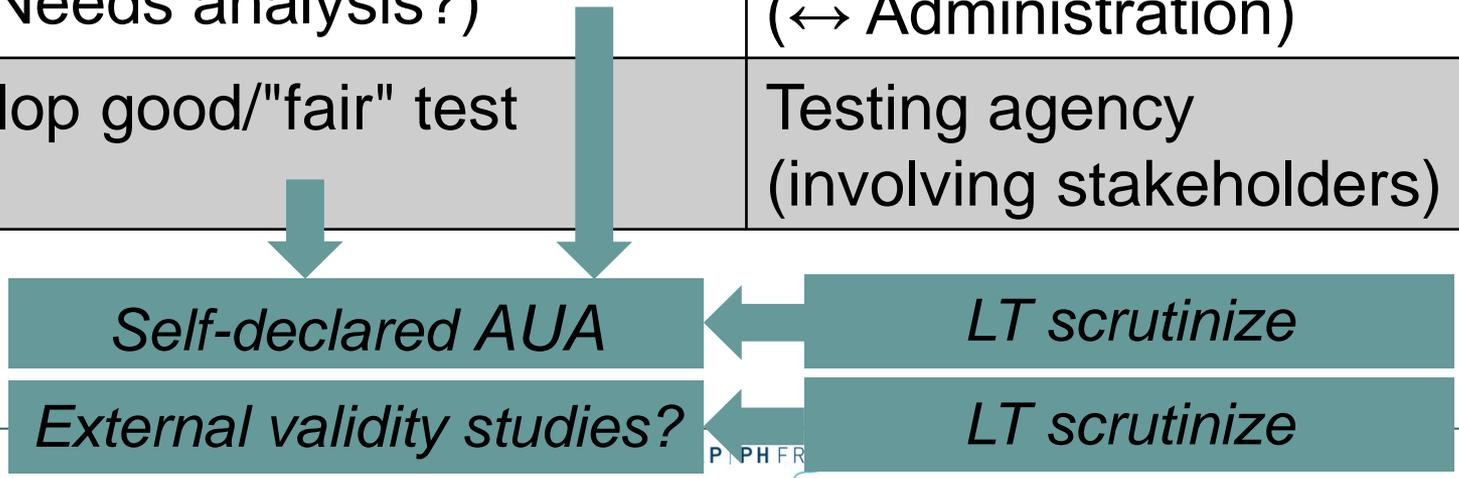
In addition: everyone of us is a political subject, too.

Steps in Test Development	Agents (actual & potential)
Define intended test consequences, state test purpose => Phrase question for decision the test will inform	The 3 Powers Lead: Administration Citizens, Politics, Society Individual experts and expert groups ...



EALTA Guidelines, section C: **Test developers are encouraged to engage in dialogue with decision makers** in their institutions and ministries to ensure that decision makers are aware of both good and bad practice, in order to enhance the quality of assessment systems and practices.

Steps in Test Development	Agents (actual & potential)
Define intended test consequences, state test purpose => Phrase question for decision the test will inform	The 3 Powers Lead: Administration Citizens, Politics, Society Experts and expert groups (Social, Political & Legal Sci.)
Define test construct, specify test (Needs analysis?)	Contracted testing agency (↔ Administration)
Develop good/"fair" test	Testing agency (involving stakeholders)



Steps in Test Development	Agents (actual & potential)
Define intended test consequences, state test purpose => Phrase question for decision the test will inform	The 3 Powers Lead: Administration Citizens, Politics, Society Experts and expert groups (Social, Political & Legal Sci.)
Define test construct, specify test (M... <i>Self-declared AUA</i>	Contracted testing agency (← Administration) <i>LT scrutinize</i>
Develop... <i>External validity studies?</i>	... <i>LT scrutinize</i> (involving stakeholders)
Study impact, relate it back to intended consequences ↓	Independent researcher or evaluator



**In order for us experts to have an influence as experts,
at least we and *those in charge* need to ...**

*... adhere to the 'axiom' of **accountability**,*

*... advocate **transparency**,*

*... hold **theory** and empirical **evidence** in high esteem,*

*... acknowledge the **rule of the better argument**.*

As we all know, this is not self-evident.

Contact

Peter Lenz

E-mail: Peter.Lenz@unifr.ch

Projektleiter KFM

www.centre-multilingualism.ch

Thanks for
listening!