

What are Good Criteria for the Assessment of Business English Performance?

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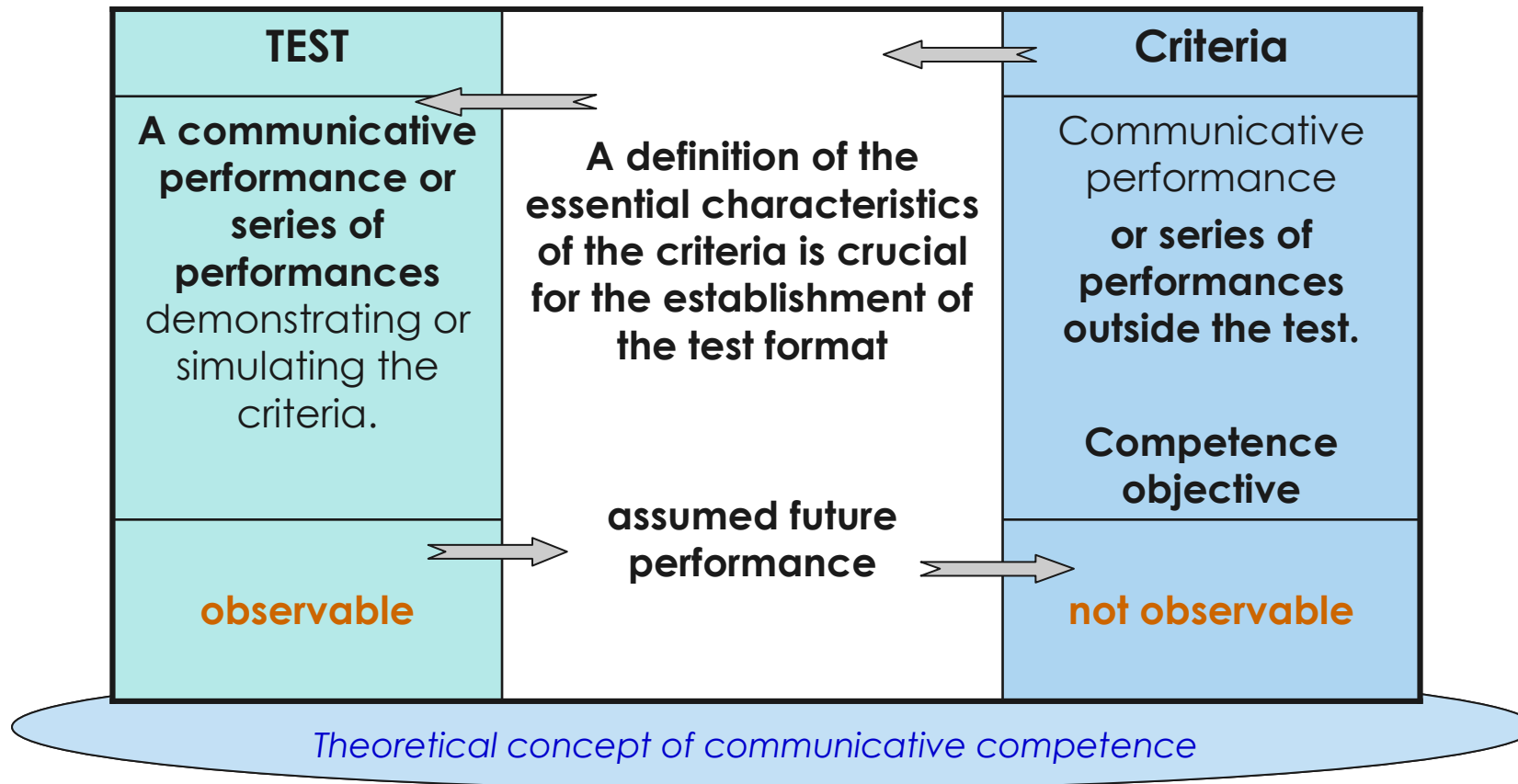
Why criteria?



- “right” answers
- justification of scores
- objectivity
- fairness
- ...

We need criteria to make decisions and justify them, e.g. on learners’ performance in English for admission, placement, qualification, ...

Test construct for language competence



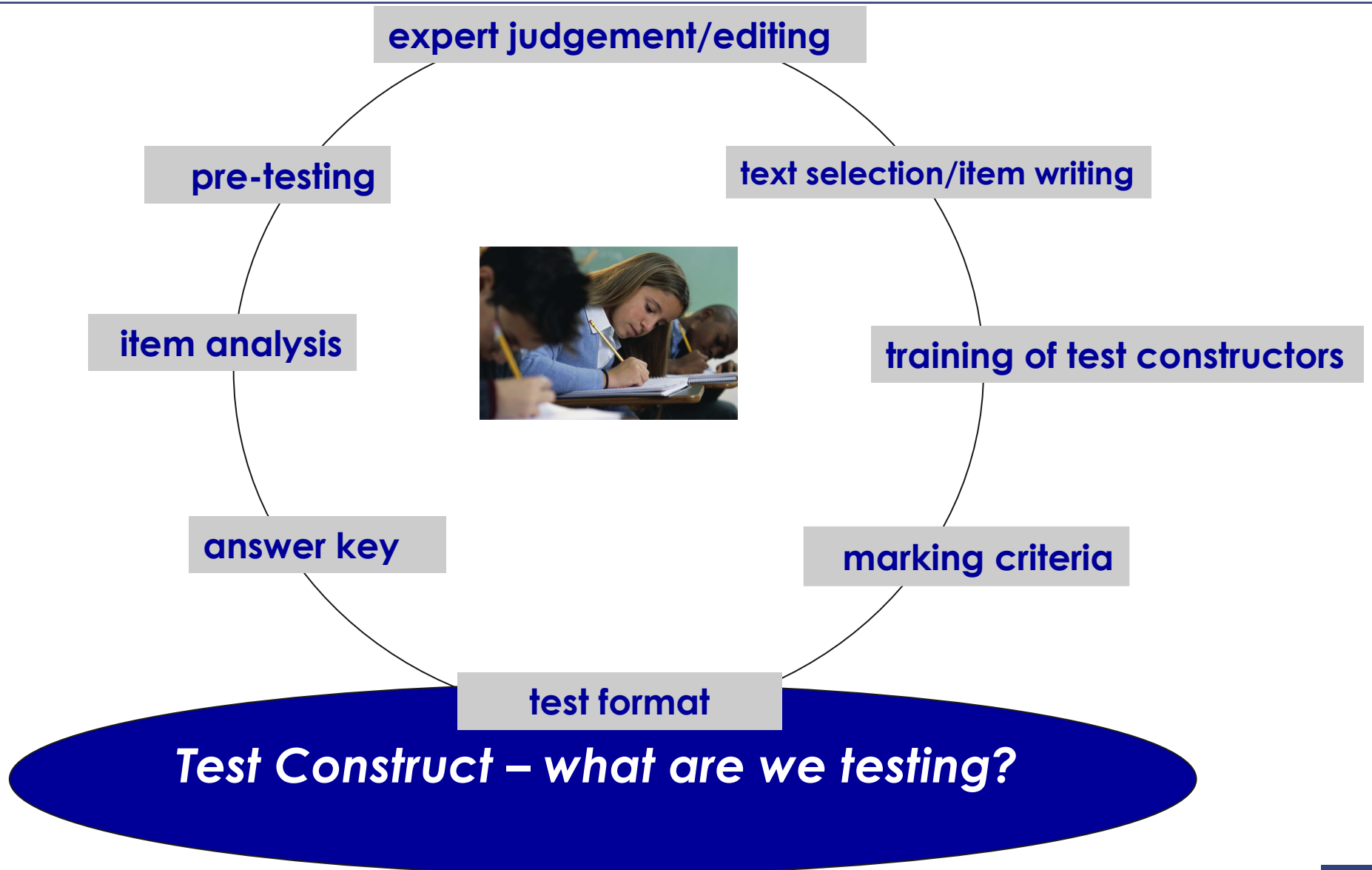
Communicative performance tests



Testing communicative competence = forecasting future performance



Stages in test production





What is a good performance? What can be tested?

What are the reasons for presentations?

What is a good presentation?

Qualitative Aspects of Spoken Language : range, accuracy, grammar, coherence

Table 3. Common Reference Levels: qualitative aspects of spoken language use

	RANGE	ACCURACY	FLUENCY	INTERACTION	COHERENCE
C2	Shows great flexibility reformulating ideas in differing linguistic forms to convey finer shades of meaning precisely, to give emphasis, to differentiate and to eliminate ambiguity. Also has a good command of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms.	Maintains consistent grammatical control of complex language, even while attention is otherwise engaged (e.g. in forward planning, in monitoring others' reactions).	Can express him/herself spontaneously at length with a natural colloquial flow, avoiding or backtracking around any difficulty so smoothly that the interlocutor is hardly aware of it.	Can interact with ease and skill, picking up and using non-verbal and intonational cues apparently effortlessly. Can interweave his/her contribution into the joint discourse with fully natural turn-taking, referencing, allusion making, etc.	Can create coherent and cohesive discourse (making full and appropriate use of a variety of organisational patterns and a wide range of connectives and other cohesive devices).
C1	Has a good command of a broad range of language allowing him/her to select a formulation to express him/herself clearly in an appropriate style on a wide range of general, academic, professional or leisure topics without having to restrict what he/she wants to say.	Consistently maintains a high degree of grammatical accuracy; errors are rare, difficult to spot and generally corrected when they do occur.	Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously, almost effortlessly. Only a conceptually difficult subject can hinder a natural, smooth flow of language.	Can select a suitable phrase from a readily available range of discourse functions to preface his remarks in order to get or to keep the floor and to relate his/her own contributions skilfully to those of other speakers.	Can produce clear, smoothly flowing, well-structured speech, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectives and cohesive devices.
B2+	Has a sufficient range of language to be able to give clear descriptions, express viewpoints on most general topics, without much conspicuous searching for words, using some complex sentence forms to do so.	Shows a relatively high degree of grammatical control. Does not make errors which cause misunderstanding, and can correct most of his/her mistakes.	Can produce stretches of language with a fairly even tempo; although he/she can be hesitant as he/she searches for patterns and expressions. There are few noticeably long pauses.	Can initiate discourse, take his/her turn when appropriate and end conversation when he/she needs to, though he/she may not always do this elegantly. Can help the discussion along on familiar ground (confirming comprehension, inviting others in, etc).	Can use a limited number of cohesive devices to link his/her utterances into clear, coherent discourse, though there may be some 'jumpiness' in a long contribution.

vocabulary

visuals

body language

interaction with audience

general impression

pronunciation

structure

content

fluency

vocabulary

delivery

Which criteria?



What is a good performance? What can be tested?

Which of the criteria is most important?

How do I decide on the final assessment / score / evaluation?

Analytically or holistically?



Designing criteria / rubrics

- Task
- Format
- Criteria
- Weighting
- Bands



Designing criteria

1. Decide on the task
2. Decide on the details of the format
3. Establish the criteria (traits)
4. How many should there be?
5. Decide on the wording
6. How important are they?
7. How many levels do you want to have?
8. How far apart should the bands be?



Designing criteria

Task

Presentation on business topic followed by discussion

Format

Timing, surroundings, examiners

Criteria

Content, structure, language, delivery, visuals

Wording of criteria

Avoid terms such as “good”, “advanced” or “poor” “weak”

Weighting

25% content and structure / 40% language / 25% delivery / 5% visuals / 5% discussion

Levels / Bands

How many do you want?

Big steps = easy to define BUT big errors

Small steps = difficult to define BUT small errors



Remember

Don't have too many different criteria

Avoid overlap

What does 0 mean?

How much room is there for interpretation?



Using criteria

Everyone must use the same criteria

Designing criteria may be democratic but using them is not

How is standardised behaviour ensured?

Discussion, **decisions, standardised instructions, training preparation**, several examiners



Terms

Criteria / rubrics

Traits

Weighting

Bands

Steps

Descriptions

Over to you!

Do you use standardised criteria?

1. How do you define them?
2. How do you ensure that they are used properly?
3. Are all good teachers necessarily good testers or examiners?
4. What constitutes a fair assessment?
5. What are the practical constraints on assessment procedures and how much should these be taken into consideration?

Thank you!
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