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

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BESIG 2012
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, …
Theoretical concept of communicative competence

**Test construct for language competence**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TEST</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A communicative performance or series of performances demonstrating or simulating the criteria.</td>
<td>Communicative performance or series of performances outside the test.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>observable</td>
<td>Competence objective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>assumed future performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>not observable</td>
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A definition of the essential characteristics of the criteria is crucial for the establishment of the test format.

Theoretical concept of communicative competence
Communicative performance tests

Testing communicative competence = forecasting future performance
Stages in test production

- Test Construct – what are we testing?
- Test Format
- Marking criteria
- Training of test constructors
- Text selection/item writing
- Pre-testing
- Item analysis
- Expert judgement/editing
- Answer key
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>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RANGE</th>
<th>ACCURACY</th>
<th>FLUENCY</th>
<th>INTEGRATION</th>
<th>COHERENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CF</td>
<td>Difficulty in conveying thoughts, ideas, and emotions clearly and effectively.</td>
<td>Error-prone pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary.</td>
<td>Speech is fluent and easy to follow, with natural pauses and inflections.</td>
<td>Speech flows naturally, transitions between sentences are smooth, and ideas are well-connected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA</td>
<td>Communication is often hindered by pauses, repetitions, or errors in pronunciation, grammar, or vocabulary.</td>
<td>Error-prone pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary.</td>
<td>Speech is fluent but contains occasional pauses or hesitations.</td>
<td>Speech flows well, with occasional hesitation or correction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BK</td>
<td>Speech difficulty may arise due to limited vocabulary, weak pronunciation, or poor grammar.</td>
<td>Error-prone pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary.</td>
<td>Speech is fluent and easy to follow, with natural pauses and inflections.</td>
<td>Speech flows naturally, transitions between sentences are smooth, and ideas are well-connected.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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
Avid 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
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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