

# Report on The Japan Language Testing Association's (JLTA) Online Tutorials

## -The JLTA's efforts to promote understanding of language testing in Japan-

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Web Publication Committee of the JLTA

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Takanori SATO (University of Melbourne)

### Introduction

With the advancement of information technology, a massive amount of information has been available on the Internet. Even though Internet search engines, such as Google, have helped us find necessary and useful information from a vast array of sources, collecting truly cohesive and comprehensive information on certain topics is no easy task. To publicize professional activities in addition to helping the general public and scholars to access necessary information, many professional academic associations and individual scholars around the world have their own web sites. In addition, as the current issue of *Language Testing* (Volume 30, Issue 3, 2013) takes up, promoting awareness on language testing among the public comes under the spotlight.

The Japan Language Testing Association (JLTA) also has a web site (<https://e-learning-service.net/jlta.ac/>), but the information on the site was limited to the descriptions of the organization and other not up-to-date information. In the language testing field, an outstanding web site, "Language Testing Resource Website," is maintained by Glenn Fulcher. This site presents everything from an up-to-date bibliography of language testing to short tutorial videos on various language testing topics. While Fulcher's site is an excellent resource for those who seek information on language testing, it does not necessarily address issues that language instructors in Japan face in their work place. As a local organization in Japan, we feel it is important 1) to serve local needs as well as 2) to introduce local resources to the world. In this presentation, we would like to report what we have accomplished and are trying to accomplish in order to achieve these two objectives.

### Initial stage

In fall 2011, JLTA decided to form a committee to disseminate language testing information and publicize JLTA's activities in Japan. Six JLTA members were selected for the JLTA Web Publication Committee and officially started working on the project in spring 2012. Through numerous discussions, the committee decided to focus our efforts on two areas: 1) to make JLTA journal articles freely available to the public, and 2) to publish useful materials regarding language testing on JLTA's web site. The main focus of this report is the second point, but, first, the process of the first point will be explained.

### **The JLTA Journal Open Access**

One aspect of the project was to make JLTA's official journal, the JLTA Journal, open access. In recent years, many professional organizations in the area of language teaching in Japan have joined the movement of open access, which allows free access to their official academic journals. Some organizations put a PDF version of their journal on their official site, and others submit their journal articles to CiNii, Scholarly and Academic Information Navigator, which is a database of academic books and journal articles maintained by National Institute of Informatics (NII). One of the advantages of keeping electronic files on one's own web site is a total control. However, depending on the popularity of the organization's web site, the openness could be limited to those who have already known the organization exists. Hosting the electronic files on a public database has more potential for journal articles to be found. Since the purpose of the project is to share our accumulated knowledge on language testing with the outside world, choosing CiNii to host the articles was a natural choice.

Once the decision was made to submit the journal articles to CiNii, we needed to address two practical issues. One was to decide when we open the access to the electronic version of the journal. Other organizations either open the access at the same time they publish the print version of their journal or wait one year before publishing on-line. The reason for the latter is to keep the access to the journal articles as a privilege for the organization members and subscribers. Although it makes some financial sense to give incentives to pay for the membership or the subscription, immediate online free access to the journal articles have more benefits to a wide range of researchers. [One sentence was deleted here.] It is obvious that the sooner the articles are made available, the better the chances for the articles to catch the eyes of outside researchers. Many articles in the JLTA Journal are written in English, and the target audience would be researchers all over the world. Thus, the committee reached the agreement that the future issues of the JLTA Journal will be published in paper and on-line at the same time.

Another issue to be handled was copyright. At the time of the discussion, JLTA did not have an official policy about the copyright of the JLTA Journal articles. To make the journal articles freely available on-line, we were advised to establish a policy that states that JLTA will retain the copyright of the articles on the JLTA Journal. The committee drafted the policy, which was approved by the JLTA board and the policy was enforced immediately for the future issues of the JLTA Journal. Regarding the copyright of the articles in the past issues, we reached a consensus that the copyright ought to belong to the original authors and they were submitted to CiNii after the authors approved on-line publishing. At the time of this writing, the articles in all the issues of the JLTA Journal (up to Volume 15) are available on CiNii. (see [http://ci.nii.ac.jp/organ/journal/INT1000005960\\_en.html](http://ci.nii.ac.jp/organ/journal/INT1000005960_en.html)).

### **Sharing Language Testing Materials on the JLTA site**

Concurrently with the processing of the JLTA Journal articles for open access, the committee started the discussion on publishing useful materials on language testing. The purpose of this on-line material sharing is to promote understanding/learning of language testing to practitioners/users of language tests and language instructors as well as applied linguistics/language education researchers. Although the ultimate goal was set to target a world-wide audience, since language testing resources in English are already collected and shared on Fulcher's "Language Testing Resource Website," we decided to prioritize our efforts on local needs and publish materials which are prepared in Japanese.

A two-stage plan was drawn up by the committee. The initial stage was to publish available materials as soon as possible. The candidates for the immediate publishing included two JLTA publications (*The JLTA Bilingual List of Language Testing Terms* and *The JLTA Code of Good Testing Practice*) and the materials from the past JLTA workshops. Permission to up-load the two JLTA publications was promptly granted by JLTA. Permission to do the same for the past workshop materials was requested of the authors and the material authorized by the authors were

Table 1. The proposed topics for the on-line tutorials

1. Introduction: What is a test?, validity, reliability, and practicality, washback	13. Fundamental statistics (Introduction and application of basic testing statistics) (Basic statistical analyses using Excel)
2. Different kinds of tests (including Norm-referenced vs criterion-referenced tests)	1. Three way we use numbers
3. The concept of test constructs (e.g., Bachman & Palmer's model)	2. Correlation (including limitations of correlation)
4. Steps in the process of building valid tests	3. Standard Error of Measurement
5. Selecting test tasks that enhance validity and reliability	4. Measures of central tendency
6. Test task specifications	5. Viewing distributions of data sets
7. Objective vs subjective scoring of tests (including Multiple-choice and gap-filling items)	6. Standardized scores
8. Testing reading (including example tasks)	7. When does a difference make a difference: Introduction to significance testing (including non-parametric procedures)
9. Testing listening	14. Scoring and analysis of test results (including item analysis)
10. Testing writing (including Global vs analytical scoring)	15. Test result reporting to enhance learning
11. Testing speaking (including Global vs analytical scoring)	
12. Testing vocabulary & grammar	

posted on the JLTA web site. For the future JLTA workshops, the committee will ask the workshop presenter for permission to post their materials on the JLTA site. Video recording of future conference workshops is also being considered as an option.

The second stage was to create on-line tutorials on language testing for language instructors in Japan. In order to help the project advance successfully, we applied for an ILTA (International Language Testing Association) grant to financially support material creation, site maintenance, and data gathering, which was approved by the ILTA board.

Since the purpose of creating the web tutorials is to promote better understanding of language test creation and use among language instructors, we decided to conduct a needs analysis. A questionnaire devised by Dr. Randy Thrasher was used to grasp language instructors' understanding of language testing/measurement and which aspects of language testing/measurement they felt necessary to know. The total of about 60 language instructors from junior high school to college levels answered the questionnaire on-line and off-line, the result of which was presented at the last year's KELTA conference (Thrasher, 2012). The instructors reported that their knowledge of language testing/measurement was not very good and they were interested in a wide variety of topics in language testing. It was also found that their interest lies in more basic practical issues than theoretical ones. The committee decided to create tutorials that would cover from the very basics of language testing to more advanced analysis of test results. The proposed topics for the on-line tutorials are presented in Table 1. Based on the result of the needs analysis, priority was given to more basic topics.

Initially, the committee listed potential candidates among the JLTA members who had given many workshops and/or who were teaching at teacher training programs. We asked them individually to submit PowerPoint (PPT) slides or other materials that would suit to the purpose of the on-line tutorials. Once the materials were submitted, the committee members carefully examined each submission to check whether it was suitable for the tutorials and if so, which topics the materials covered. After the examination, the submitted materials were assigned to the proposed topics (Table 1) and checked for the quality and coverage of the content. Based on our assessment, the materials were divided into two groups: 1) the ones that could be used with minor modifications, and 2) the ones that would need substantial revision. We requested the authors of the materials in the group 2) to revise the materials. In addition, because most of the slideshow materials were designed to be accompanied by oral explanations, virtually none of them were ready to be used as on-line tutorials for self-learning as is. Thus, the committee asked all of the original authors to add written/oral comments to their slides, keeping in mind that the tutorials were mainly targeted at

junior high/high school (English) language instructors. For the topics among the basic ones that did not have suitable materials, JLTA members whose research interests matched the topic were selected and requested to create new slideshow materials on the given topics.

The next step was to have the materials checked by the target audience. About 20 English language instructors from elementary school to college were nominated and the committee asked them to evaluate the on-line tutorial materials in their original slideshow format and to give suggestions for revision. Overall, the tutorials were generally well-received by the reviewers with some minor suggestions for revisions. The authors of the materials were, then, requested to revise their materials based on the users' feedback. Those contributors who made revisions and added comments as well as those who created a new material were compensated with a small reward.

When all the on-line tutorial materials were ready, the committee discussed the format of the slideshow materials to be posted on the JLTA web site. Since most of the materials prepared for the tutorials were in PowerPoint slideshow format, which can be easily edited by the users and requires the users to have a proprietary software application to view them, we decided to convert the slideshow files into more accessible format. Each slide of the PPT files was exported as a JPEG image file, which was then watermarked, and a web slideshow was generated for each slide file with HTML and simple Javascript. This allows access not only from PCs or Macs, but also from emerging tablet devices, such as iPad. As of the time of this writing, eleven web tutorials are available on the JLTA web site (see <https://jlta.ac/course/view.php?id=35>), nine of which are web slideshows and one Excel file (10) and one PDF file (11). One slideshow is accompanied by oral comments (7) and another one is supplemented with sample listening materials (5) (see Table 2).

Table 2. The JLTA language testing web tutorial topics (as of 2013/08)

- 
- (1) What is a 'good' test?: validity, reliability, and practicality
  - (2) The concept of test constructs
  - (3) Test Specification
  - (4) Testing Reading -6 basic test formats-
  - (5) Testing Listening
  - (6) Testing Writing
  - (7) Testing Speaking
  - (8) Testing Vocabulary & Grammar
  - (9) Standard Errors of Measurement
  - (10) \*What is 'Effect Size'?
  - (11) \*Making fair score adjustments
-

テストに関するチュートリアル

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Web Tutorials

- 「よい」テストの条件 (What is a 'good' test?: validity, reliability, and practicality)
- テストの構成概念 (The concept of test constructs)
- テスト概目 (Test Specification)
- リーディングテスト (Testing Reading -6 basic test formats-)
- リスニングテスト (Testing Listening)
- ライティングテスト (Testing Writing)
- スピーキングテスト (Testing Speaking)
- 語彙・文法テスト (Testing Vocabulary & Grammar)
- 測定標準誤差 (Standard Errors of Measurement)
- 効果量とは? (What is Effect Size?)
- 公平な独自評価を出す方法

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「よい」テストの条件: 妥当性、信頼性、実用性  
What is a 'good' test?: validity, reliability, and practicality

Katsumasa SHIMADA  
島田勝正

スライドの右下に青いマーク(■)がついたスライドには「解説」があります

1

JLTA Web Tutorial  
Assessing Listening

### 概要

- リスニング能力を規定する
  1. 言語操作
  2. テキスト
  3. パフォーマンスの合格基準
- タスクを設定する
  1. 音声テキストの選定
  2. アイテム作成
  3. 音声編集方法
- 採点する

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リスニングには、瞬間的に消えていくという固有の特徴があるため、指導が難しく、テストの作成にも困難が伴います。このスライドでは、Hughes (2003) のTesting for language teachers の第2版のTesting listeningの章をベースにして、どのような点に注意して、リスニングテストを作成したらよいかを考えていきたいと思います。この本は、邦訳が研究社から出版されています（静哲人訳（2003）『英語のテストはこう作る』）。

Hughesは、リスニングテストを作成する際には、3つの点に注意すべきであると述べています。1つめはリスニング能力を規定すること、2つめはタスクを設定すること、3つめは採点についてです。次のスライド以降で、これらについて見ていくことにします。

JLTA Web Tutorial  
Assessing Speaking

### スピーキングテストの分類

モノログ（一人で話す）

- 声を出して読む(reading aloud)
- スピーチ(speech)
- 描写（絵・写真をみて英語で述べる）(description)
- Show and tell(実物を見せて話す)

ダイアログ（二人で話す）

- 面接法（インタビュー）(face-to-face interview)
- ロールプレイ(role-play)(ある状況で役割を演じる)

マルチログ（3人以上で会話する）

- デイスカッション (discussion)
- デイベート(debate)

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ここではよく使われるスピーキングテストを、何人で実施するかで分類します。

スライドではタイプ別にモノログ型、ダイアログ型、マルチログ型に分類しています。

どのタイプの型を受験するかによって受験者のパフォーマンスに影響します。

それ故、時間が許す範囲で多くの型のテストをすることが最も受験者の能力を測ることができると考えられます。

## 目次

- (0) 問題のもとになる文章 Red Demon and Blue Demon
- (1) Reference (指示語・代名詞に関する問題)
- (2) Vocabulary/expressions in context (paraphrasing) (語彙や表現の意味・言い換えに関する問題)
- (3) Detail (Specific information) & inference (implied detail) (内容の詳細や内容から推論されることに関する問題)
- (4) Main idea (本文の要旨に関する問題)
- (5) Function (Meta-linguistic information) (文やパラグラフの本文内での機能・役割に関する問題)
- (6) Beyond the text (本文から想像したり、考えたりする問題) (おまけ)

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ここでは、目次にある6種の基本的読解問題について理解します。中学校の教科書の本文を使用して問題を作成していますが、問題の指示が英語になっていたり、解答にはかなりの能力の要するものも含まれていますので、このまま中学校の授業や試験で使用できるというものではありません。

## ライティングテストの流れ

- ✓ 構成概念（能力）の定義
- ✓ 構成概念の操作化
  - ▶ 測定するためのタスクの決定
  - ▶ 正答、採点基準の設定
- ✓ 採点および採点結果の検証（点数の信頼性）
- ✓ フィードバック

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この一連の作業を明確にするためにも、細目表を作る。細目表については、該当する Tutorial スライドを参照してください。

## Future plan

The preparation of on-line tutorials is an ongoing project. The topics that are not covered yet, especially on statistics, will be our next step. While adding new materials will be our priority at this moment, we will continue improving the tutorials that have been just published based on feedback from users. Adding video tutorials and conference workshops is considered one of the options. JLTA will continue our efforts to publicize our activities and promote understanding of language testing among professionals as well as the general public.

## Reference

Thrasher, R. (2012). *Teachers and trainees perceived need to better understand language testing*. Paper presented at The Korea English Language Testing Association (KELTA), 2012 Annual International Conference, Seoul, Korea.

## Appendix

### Financial Report

date	item	income	expense	balance	note
2012.04.20	ILTA Grant	239,028		239,028	\$3,000 as Japanese YEN.
10.02	Rental Server; domain fee		52,500	186,528	e-Learning Service
2013.7.10	gratitude for authors and respondents		103,096	83,432	book-cards
07.10	communication expense		5,000	78,432	
08.19	domain maintenance fee		10,500	67,932	e-Learning Service
08.21	KELTA presentation		30,000	37,932	dispatchment of Dr. Imao (aid)
09.21	JLTA presentation		40,000	-2,068	dispatchment of Dr. Imao (aid)