A Valid and Reliable Proficiency Exam for English language with Respect to University Language Program in Iran

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ABSTRACT

Proficiency exams are used for numerous purposes and there is several commercially produced proficiency exams available are the market today. But, these exams are costly, only offered at limited times, and may not be appropriate for the needs of some programs. As a result, many universities are in the process of creating their own language proficiency exams. However, there are few models for educational institutions to follow when creating their own proficiency exams.

The purpose of this paper is to present the procedures a university followed to create a language proficiency exam with an appropriate validity, high reliability, and strong correlations to established standardized exams. First, the paper outlines the procedures that were followed to create the three sections (grammar, reading, and listening) of the exam. Next, the steps that were used to determine validity and estimate reliability are presented. Finally, the paper concludes with a discussion and explanation of the changes to test specifications to better assess the current language ability of university students in Iran. Finally, the paper concludes with a discussion of the changes to test specifications to better reflex changes in the English ability of current university students in Iran. It is hoped that this paper will serve as a model for other schools that want to create their own language proficiency exams.

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