**Building an Assessment Competence Framework for Pre-service and In-service ELT Teachers in Vietnam**

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**Abstract**

 *Improving teachers’ competence in assessment has been addressed as one of the key agendas of educational reforms in many countries with low educational assessment quality, including Vietnam. To address this issue, it is of great importance to construct an operational definition and work out the components of the so-called “assessment competence”. In this paper, an assessment competence framework (ACF) for pre-service and in-service ELT teachers in Vietnam is constructed. The main task involves employing a well-justified cognitive model by Singer (2006) as a basis for arranging language assessment knowledge and skills – the three most important components of language assessment competence. The product is a four cognitive-level competence framework, including perceiving knowledge, primary processing, constructing mental structures and expressing knowledge through language. It is hoped that this framework can be used as a good source of professional development materials not only for the named targeted users but also for education policy makers and ELT postgraduate students specializing in assessment.*

Key words: language assessment, competence, English language teaching, Vietnam, cognitive models, framework.

**Introduction**

Recent decades have witnessed the worldwide spread of English and together with it is the boom period of ELT in many countries, Vietnam included. After about twenty years of that booming period, the quality of ELT in Vietnam is now a source of criticism. Vietnamese students’ command of English is limited and the proportion of students reaching competent levels on international English tests and standards (such as IELTS, TOFLE, CEFR, etc.) is low. One frequently stated reason for this is the poor conduct of assessment practices by administrators and educators. Because the quality of our ELT students cannot be higher than that of our teachers, it is believed that improving teachers’ assessment competence can be a tool to improve the quality of ELT. Recognizing this, the role of assessment in Vietnam has been heightened recently and the need to have professional staff qualified in assessment has been highlighted in the national education agenda. However, an ACF which can act as a skeleton for training ELT pre- and in-service teachers is still not available. This is the motivation for the researchers in this study.

1. **The components of language assessment competence**
	1. *Assessment Competence in Language Teaching*

There is no doubt that one of the most vital sets of skills that teachers need to possess is those for assessing students against learning goals. Assessment literacy, which is defined as an understanding of the principles of sound assessment so as to appropriately integrate assessment with instruction and utilize appropriate forms of teaching (Stiggins, 2002; McMillan, 2000), has become a popular requirement for teachers in many education systems. However, many teachers still feel inadequately prepared when they implement classroom assessments and make assessment-related decisions (Mertler, 1999; Mertler& Campbell, 2005, cited in Siegel &Wissehr, 2011). This is also the case in language assessment.

Due to the novelty of the discipline, many basic questions arise, such as: What is assessment? And what is competence? The ability to distinguish among these terms and other confusing terms is critically necessary at the first stage of defining the ACF. While assessment (the process of giving meanings to the above judgments to make decisions about learners’ competence) can be quite easily distinguished from measurement (the process of collecting evidences by many methods (one of them is testing) to classify learners basing on observed behaviours (Griffin & Nix, 1991), the definition of ‘competence’ has not been agreed on. However, most of the definitions share the basic view; that is, competence refers to the application of knowledge, skills and disposition by learners to complete the key tasks of a profession. As a result, competence in assessment entails knowledge about the language, knowledge about assessment, skills and dispositions in conducting language assessment, etc. Taking this typical definition into consideration, this study aims to collect, select and organise the essential knowledge, skills and appropriate attitudes which ELT teachers in Vietnam needs when they carry out assessment activities in their contexts. These contents will be presented below.

* 1. *Knowledge of Language Competence*

In order to assess learner’s language competence, ‘communicative competence’ - the term first stemmed by Hymes (1967) - is crucial knowledge for language teachers. This means that the teachers must be well qualified in both their English competence and in their understanding of that competence. Models of communicative language competence (CLC), which were respectively proposed by Canale and Swain (1980), Canale (1983), Celce-Murcia, Dornyei, Thurrell (1995) and Bachman and Palmer (1996) to be applied to instructional and assessment purposes, will be reviewed in this part.

Among the earliest theoretical revision of CLC is the model constructed by Canale and Swain (1980). According to this model, CLC composes of three dimensions. *Grammatical competence* is the first to be mentioned because it is the basic knowledge the students need to express their meanings accurately. It includes knowledge of lexical items, rules of morphology, syntax, sentence-grammar semantics, and phonology. Next, *sociolinguistic competence* refers to the extent that meanings and forms are appropriate within the given communicative contexts. The rules for that appropriateness are the cohesion and coherence of language production. The last component in this model is *strategic competence*, which is formed with verbal and non-verbal communication strategies selected by the language users to compensate for their communication breakdowns. This model was then further elaborated by Canale (1983) by his division of sociolinguistic component into *sociolinguistic competence* and *discourse competence*. In this later model, *sociolinguistic competence* is the ability to apply appropriately vocabulary, register, style, politeness in a given situation. *Discourse competence*, meanwhile, is the user’s capacity to combine different language structures into different styles of text. However, these early models receive some serious criticisms for not taking the interaction between components into considerations and limiting strategic competence to compensation strategies, which is only one component (Bachman & Cohen, 1998; McNamara, 1996).

Revised CLC models have been proposed (Celce-Murcia, Dornyei, Thurrell, 1995; Bachman, 1990; Bachman & Palmer, 1996). Celce-Murcia et al (1995) decided to coin the term ‘linguistic competence’ instead of ‘grammatical competence’ as in the model of Canale and Swain (1980) because this constituent component includes not only syntax and morphology, but also lexis and phonology. *Sociocultural competence* is also identified from *actional competence* in a way that the former refers to ability to appropriately convey messages in accordance with social and cultural communication contexts, and the latter is described as competence of matching actional intent with linguistic form, i.e. ability to perform speech acts.

Bachman and Palmer (1996), basing on the model of Bachman (1990), considers that CLC, or “communicative language ability” in their words), consists of two components: *language competence* or *language knowledge* and *strategic competence*. The *language knowledge* is specified into the first component - *organizational knowledge* (including *textual knowledge* and *grammatical knowledge*) involving in properly using language structures to produce, to comprehend and to organize these to create oral and written texts, and the second component – *pragmatic knowledge*. This subcomponent, comprising of lexical knowledge, functional knowledge, and sociocultural knowledge, entails ability to ‘create and interpret discourse by relating utterances or sentences and texts to their meanings (p.69), to the language user’s intention, and to the relevant setting characteristic. In this later version, *strategic competence* has been even further clarified. It is “a set of metacognitive strategies which can be thought of as higher order executive processes that provide a cognitive management function in language use, as well as in other activities” (Bachman & Palmer, 1996, p. 70). Summary of chronological model evolution from Canale and Swain (1980) to Celce-Murcia et al (1995) can be illustrated in Figure 1. As can be seen from Figure 1, the link between components of model constructed by Celce-Murcia (1995) and those of Bachman and Palmer (1996) can be made, suggesting an option of using either of these models for language users and teachers.

In addition to the competencies and the knowledge of language competences discussed above, language teachers are supposed to be qualified with knowledge of English teaching methodology (ELT), which entails different approaches, methods and techniques of language teaching and learning, roles of teachers and learner, learning strategies and learning styles, material design and development, and so on. This is to make sure that they can connect assessment with instructional and curricular contents.

**Canale& Swain (1980)**

Grammatical

Competence

Strategic

Competence

Sociocultural

Competence

**Canale (1983)**

Grammatical

Competence

Strategic

Competence

Sociocultural

Competence

Discourse

Competence

**Celce-Murcia et al (1995)**

Linguistic

Competence

Strategic

Competence

Sociocultural

Competence

Actional

Competence

Discourse

Competence

**Bachman & Palmer (1996)**

Language Knowledge

Organizational knowledge

Textual knowledge

Grammatical knowledge

Pragmatic knowledge

Lexical knowledge

Functional knowledge

Sociocultural knowledge

Metacognitive strategies

* Goal-setting
* Assessment
* Planning

Figure 1: Comparison of different models (adapted from Celce-Murcia (1995))

* 1. *A History of Educational Assessment*

Assessment is an integral part of instruction, as it determines whether or not the goals of education are being met. As far back to the dawn of the common era, the Chinese used competitive examinations to select individuals for civil service positions (Thorndike, 2005). Assessment affects decisions about grades, placement, advancement, instructional needs, curriculum and student learning. Assessment may give answers to the often-asked questions if we are teaching what we think we are teaching, or if students are learning what they are supposed to be learning, or if there is a way to teach the subject better, thereby promoting better learning. We believe that the understanding of the paradigms of educational assessment can give a hand to help language educators make better decisions.

Psychometric paradigm, also called the paradigm of assessment as measurement, is closely associated with modernist or positivist perspective (Serafini, 2001, p.288). It is the reign of standardized test content and standardized test administration for the purpose of better accountability. As all test items are objective and mainly designed as multiple choice formparametric tests are thought to be ideal instruments. With the advantages such as efficient, objective, quickly scored, economical (save time and money), provide better content coverage, and eliminate inconsistencies (solve the problem of teacher’s biased judgment), parametric paradigm experienced its boom period, from World War 1 to the 1930s, or the Battery period (1940s to 1965), when educational testing was a big business with such popularly used tests as the SAT (scholastic aptitude tests) or the ACTP (American College Testing Program). However, **parametric tests** also underwent two periods of criticisms, from the 1930s to the 1940s and from the 1965 forward. Tests are severely criticized for invading in people’s privacy, showing bias to the non-while residents or women, being intransparent and not universal, covering superficial, trivialized contents of narrow scope which do not illustrate the curriculum goals and show what students actually know, feel and can do or over-emphasizing/ overassessing recall and rote learning, without enough attention to higher level thinking, understanding and reflection: the “know-how” with knowledge, promoting the misleading idea that there is one single answer for a problem and that the students can be spoon fed for knowledge, raising unhealthy competitiveness among students for higher scores, not better knowledge, focusing on ranking, instead of assuring competence (Hart, 1994, p.33; Thorndike, 2005 p.27; Stiggins, 2005 p.38; Herman et al., 1992; Wiggins, 1992 p.158)

The second paradigm in assessment is contextual paradigm, reported by such educational measurement experts as Wiggin (1989), Griffin and Nix (1991), Berlak (1992). The new paradigm features more curriculum appropriate, authentic (useful), classroom-based, formative and instructional assessment. It also gives more stakes to students’ self-evaluation and teachers’ judgment in scoring the tests. This paradigm obviously is approved by students since it gives them chances to be justified given their different conditions of learning. Moreover, Wiggin (1989, 1992) also states that the collected performance assessment tasks should be authentic, meaningful, valid, generalisable of overall performance, the scoring criteria must base on essential successes or failures, the assessment standards must be real benchmarks set up with great consideration for contextual conditions and constraints, the scoring procedures must be feasible and reliable and the reporting must be taken seriously to satisfy all it concerns. However, when it comes to practice, this paradigm is at a disadvantage as regards the time-consuming scoring of constructed-response tests, the limited content coverage, the inconsistence of human scoring, etc. Moreover, the paradigm lacks a special instrument which can really serves the purpose it has set out, unlike the previous paradigm which is supported with standardized tests. Once again, there is the question over the mismatch between classroom objectives and external objectives.

Personalized paradigm is the third milestone in educational assessment (Marby, 1996). Personalization here means that everyone is different in understanding, responses, interests and needs. Stiggin (2001) and (2005) mentions the same argument in the so-called “student-involved assessment” and “student-centred assessment” while plenty of other authors use the terms “alternative assessment” or “alternatives in assessment” (Brown & Hudson, 1998) or the “new assessment culture” (Dierick, 2001). Alternative assessment can take many forms, such as projects, journals, simulations, exhibitions, observations, interviews, oral presentation, take-away exams, portfolios, overall tests, self -, peer-, and co-assessment (Dierick, 2001). Most authors seem to be optimistic that the new assessment paradigm will benefit the classroom teaching and learning with its characteristics. However, there exist some problems as follow. First, following the paradigm means the teachers and educators have to restructure quite a majority of their basic principles for teaching and assessing, which will take a lot of efforts and time.Second, it is also time consuming and runs bias risk. The different views of alternative assessment create so harsh controversies in the paradigm shift to its ideology, making the shift seem to last forever.

In a nutshell, the three paradigms have extremes in their features, so none of them have become completely dominant. A careful consideration to combine all of them would be a better alternative for the students and for education in general (Herman, 1992). This is therefore one of the supreme principle for constructing the ACF in this study.

* 1. *The Designs of Language Assessment Programmes*

Classifying assessment programme designs is a challenging task because there are many principles to base on. For example, we can classify assessment according to the purposes of assessment, the score reference frameworks, or the methods of assessment. However, in this section, we choose to follow the steps in planning educational assessment to classify language assessment programmes as this is the best way to encompass the variety of choices in each stage of the assessment process in a logical sequence. All the prominent features in each global assessment paradigm will be mentioned in this assessment sequence. In the light of pluralism – the most prominent trend in modern assessment, the assessment planners are not limited to any paradigm, but have the right to select the appropriate feature(s)/approach (es) for their programme. They can also change the sequence of stages in the sequence. In studying the components of the stages, language assessment planners may also see the closer links between some components than between others. For example, continuous assessment may be better realized via several methods (observations, interviews, etc.) than others. This means that depending on the competence of the assessment planners, the following figure can be used not only as a list of choices and features, but also as a map with links and interactions.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Assessment process** | **Choices in each stage of the language assessment process** |
| Identifying the purposes, scales and formality of assessment | Purposes:Diagnostic, continuous, formative or summative assessment; Assessment for learning or assessment for accountability; Informal or formal assessmentScales:Classroom assessment, school-based assessment, large-scale assessment (local, national, international) |
| Identify the time of assessment | At the beginning of the course, throughout the course or at the end of a course |
| Identify the assessment contents | Assessment of ability, competence, achievement, proficiency or progress.Assessment of language knowledge, skills, competences, etc.such as communicative language competencesAssessment of performances |
| Identify assessment methods, and assessment evidence types | Methods:Observations; Interviews and conferences; Performance-based assessment; Project-based assessment; Task-based assessment; Selected response (MTC, T/F, matching, etc.) and constructed response questions (essays, open-ended questions, etc.); Teacher-developed tests (for small scales) or standardized tests (for large-scales); Traditional tests or authentic/alternative assessment methodsTypes of evidence:Scores, rankings, comments on specific competences or general competence |
| Identify the types of assessment instruments | Anecdotal records; Observation schemes; Journals; Time sampling records/event frequency records; Learning diary; Analytical or holistic rating scales (including profiles or criteria) |
| Identify the assessors | Teacher assessment; Self-assessment; Peer assessment; Researcher assessment |
| Identify the data analysis methods to assure the assessment quality | Classical test theories; Modern test theories (item response theory); Qualitative or quantitative methods of data analysis |
| Identify the methods to interpret the assessment results | Norm referenced interpretations; Criterion-referenced interpretations; Outcome- and standard-based interpretations; Ipsative-referenced assessment |
| Identify the methods to report and provide feedback to the concerned stakeholders | ScoresComments, inferencesDescriptions of profiles/competence levels |

Based on the table, it is possible to describe any language assessment programmes. For example, for a programme of classroom reading assessment, for formative assessment purpose, informal assessment can be conducted with the students as the assessors on the language skills they have acquired in a subject. One appropriate method is journal writing, which yields qualitative evidence of students’ achievement in reading skills, such as their vocabulary use, their comprehension, etc. For summative assessment, traditional tests may be developed by the teachers to assess the overall reading competence of students, using both selected and constructed response questions, a rating scale for scoring, and criterion-referenced interpretations of scores. Such a programme of assessment obviously involves the pruralistic approach to assessment, the key feature of modern assessment paradigm.

The classification of assessment designs according to the features of the assessment process is an important consideration for any researchers in their attempts to model assessment knowledge. More references on modern assessment models can be found in the work of other researchers ([Airasian, 2005](#_ENREF_1); [Griffin & Nix, 1991](#_ENREF_14); [Luongo-Orlando, 2003](#_ENREF_19); [Oosterhof, 2003](#_ENREF_27), [Greenleaf, Gee, & Ballinger, 1997](#_ENREF_13); [Stiggins, 1995](#_ENREF_33); [Stiggins & Stiggins, 2001](#_ENREF_34)).

* 1. *A Summary of Assessment Courses for Pre-service and In-service Teachers*

In general, the objectives in the pre-service educational assessment courses are to familiarize students with the important concepts in assessment, such as the relation between measurement, assessment, and evaluation, the pros and cons of different assessment models and paradigms. These courses also provide the knowledge on different approaches and principles of measurement theory, focusing on the development of assessment instruments, the role of measurement and interpretations of measurement results for other stages of the assessment process, and the use of descriptive statistics in analyzing the results (Piedmont University,Nevada University, the United States). Besides, the methods and techniques in making inferences on student achievement and academic development are highlighted (Wabash University, the United States).

Beyond the basic contents, the undergraduate and postgraduate courses at many universities in Australia, United States and Singapore emphasize the provision of knowledge and skills on classical and modern assessment, the designing and construction of tests, the evaluation of programmes, the integration of assessment and instruction (Universities of Charter, George Mason, Connecticut, South Florida). Research methods in educational assessment, such as the use of qualitative and quantitative statistics, also make an important content of many postgraduate courses (such as at Universities of Boston, George Mason, Connecticut, South Florida, Western Michigan, Melbourne)

On a higher cognitive level, education assessment courses for in-service teachers at many universities (Universities of Arkon, Evangel, Nevada, James Madison in the United States; University of Melbourne, Australia) aim at the following practical competencies:.

* Demonstrating the knowledge and understanding of the structures and principles of education assessment and related areas.
* Applying the knowledge and understanding of educational assessment for different types of learners in different contexts
* Selecting appropriate instruments
* Communicating results to students, parents, and other stakeholders
* Controlling and solving problems in realizing the assessment process
* Identifying the techniques to evaluate the competence of students
* Developing the self-research competence
	1. *A Summary of Courses in Language Assessment*

In addition to the above contents, which are similar across educational assessment courses, language assessment courses specialize in those particular competencies needed for teachers in assessing language.

Similar to general educational assessment courses, the first common content in most language assessment courses at different universities is an introduction of the history of language assessment, with major issues, trends, approaches, and principles in each paradigm. Norm-referenced versus criterion-referenced assessment, validity versus reliability, etc. are some of the most frequently mentioned issues. Next, the process of language assessment, especially classroom language assessment, with similar steps and features to the general assessment process described above is one indispensable syllabus content.

However, what most clearly separates language assessment courses apart from other assessment courses is the focus on the assessment on language skills (speaking, writing, listening, reading, each has its own features) and, more recently, on language competences (grammatical, sociolinguistic, pragmatic, strategic, etc.) (Universities of Melbourne, University of Queensland - Australia, University of Victoria – New Zealand; University of Pennsylvania – The United States, to name a few). The methods for assessing each skill/competence in small scale (mostly classroom language assessment) are thoroughly defined, along with an introduction or discussion of the applicability of general assessment methods which have become popular in recent years for both their advantages and disadvantages, namely performance-based assessment, standardized assessment, alternative assessment, portfolio assessment, etc. into language assessment. Also, the relation between assessment and instruction is highly emphasized in all the above named language assessment courses. For example, the course named Language Assessment at the University of Pennsylvania includes task-based approach to assessment and instruction as a major unit, indicating the need to align the approaches in assessment and instruction, and the relation of the two disciplines.

***Summary of the Theoretical and Practical Backgrounds***

Given all the analyses in section 1 of this paper, it is possible to identify five major domains of competences Vietnamese ELT teachers need to be equipped in order to conduct effective language assessment. These are:

* Competence in language assessment design and process
* Competence in connecting language assessment to instruction
* Competence in developing language assessment instruments
* Competence in using measurement models and statistics
* Competence in conducting research in language assessment

Once the themes have been identified, the question is how to organize them in a competence framework. The next section will discuss this issue.

1. **Constructing the language assessment competence framework**

In this study, the authors employ ‘document analysis’ as the main method. Studied documents include related books and journal in language assessment, national and international credit and non-credit training courses on language assessment and evaluation, international framework on qualification standards for language teachers, and related documents and regulations issued by the Ministry of Education and Training. After reviewing those materials, different models of cognition, skill and competence are reviewed in the construction of the competence framework. Specifically, models by Bloom’s edited taxonomy of cognition ([Anderson & Sosniak, 1994](file:///D%3A%5CChuong%20trinh%20READ%5CDa%20Nang%5CKnowledge%20of%20English%20competence%20and%20methodology%20%281%29.doc#_ENREF_2)), Dreyfus model of skill acquisition (1980), SOLO taxonomy by Biggs and Collis (1992), Singer’s model of competence-based framework (2000), and CDIO outcome standards (CDIO Initiative, 2004) are investigated and compared to pinpoint the most appropriate for a framework of assessment competence for language teachers. The model of Dreyfus is mainly constructed on skills and experience, yet not emphasizing on assessing knowledge domains. Hence, this model can be used to propose a framework for in-service groups (including assessing their attitude towards their work), but not useful for the targeted groups of this study (both pre-service and in-service language teachers). CDIO standards provide a detailed guideline on curriculum design. It only highlights competences as desired outcomes, but fails to give a detailed framework on the development of cognition and competence. ‘Learning cycle’ of Biggs and Collis exactly reflects its name by reviewing a repeated learning or cognitive process when learners learn a new thing/skill. After careful examination and comparison, the author decided to choose Singer’s competence-based model for the following reasons. First, this model is constructed with different levels and stages of knowledge processing and applying, which helps to develop and form competence – the focus of current educational arena. It seems this six-leveled model properly matches the notion of ‘competence’ – which have been elaborated into knowledge, skill and deposition. Moreover, this model is more preferred than Bloom’s cognition taxonomy – a widely used model in assessing the cognition development because the latter focuses on assessing competence in knowledge cognition, rather than the competence in skill performing and its levels are not easily distinguishable. A framework on assessment competence, specifically assessment knowledge and skill for pre-service and in-service language teachers is constructed, basing on Singer’s model of competence. This model includes six levels of (1) perceiving, (2) primary processing, (3) constructing mental structures, (4) expressing through language, (5) secondary processing and (6) transferring. Only the first four levels are used to develop assessment competence for the targeted groups of this study, as the two latter ones reflect a higher level of competence are supposed to be developed for higher-qualification experts in language assessment, such as doctoral graduands and ministerial administrative staff. Moreover, in the limit of time, the construction of attitudes needed for language assessment have not been included in this instrumental framework.

The result of this study is an ACF for Vietnamese ELT pre-service and in-service teachers (in the appendix). Five domains of language assessment competence are set basing on the four levels of Singer’s model of competence. Each cognitive level in the framework has been clarified with the most fundamental knowledge and skills in language assessment as reviewed in section 1.

**Conclusion**

The ACF in this study is the first to be developed in Vietnam and among the few to be developed in ELT. We understand that this newly suggested framework will be needed to revised; therefore, further studies on its validation are necessarily conducted so that it will be more practical and ready to be applied in the Vietnam educational context.

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**APPENDIX: ASSESSMENT COMPETENCE FRAMEWORK FOR VIETNAMESE ELT TEACHERS**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Levels** | **Competences** | **Specifications/Indicators of Competence** | **Prioritized groups** |
| **Level 1: Receiving** | Competence in language assessment design and process | **Design*** Recognize differences among key terms, different purposes, principles and approaches in assessment theory and practices - Identify good language assessment
* Identify the targeted language competences in a specific ELT program (integrated or separated skills)

**Process(es)*** *Identify the key stages and stakeholders in a language assessment process in a given context and name the impacts/effects of assessment practice on an ELT program*
 | Pre-service teachers As a consolidation for in-service teachers |
| Competence in connecting classroom assessment and instruction | * Understand the relation between ELT instruction, learning, assessment and achievement
* Recognize both the potentialities and limitations of various tests and assessment procedures used in ELT classes
* Identify all the factors which can influence assessment results (including test items, students, L1, topics, tasks, rater bias, etc.)
* Understand guidelines for conducting effective language assessment
 | Pre-service teachers As a training content for BA teachers degree |
| Competence in assessment Instrument development  | * Identify the features of different assessment instruments for different English skills, the components of test specification and test items, the rules for selecting appropriate language assessment instrument
 | Pre-service teachers As a consolidation for in-service teachers |
| Competence in measurement models/statistics | * Understand the definitions of common measurement terms (norms, normal curves, mean, SD, standard error of measurement, percentile rank, etc.)
 | Both pre- and in-service teachers |
| Competence in language assessment research | * Recognize the similarity between stages in an assessment process and in a research
* Identify the types of assessment instruments to use in an language research, especially in action research: questionnaires, rating scales, observation checklists, interviews, etc.
 | Both pre- and in-service teachers |
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| **Level 2****Primary processing****(targeted for pre-service teachers)** | Competence in language assessment design and process | Design+ Understand the progress in the history of language assessment in the world and in Vietnam; Understand different philosophies, principles and methods of assessment in the traditional and modern time for different language skills/competences+ Distinguish the features and purposes of available language tests/exams on different English skills+ Rationalize the structure of the targeted language competences in one’s context (integrated or separated skills) (such as understanding the differences in the targeted objectives for speaking and listening, or between the competence requirements for mainstream students and English-majored students)Process* *Understand major cognitive and competence models (Bloom, SOLO, CLC, etc.)*
* *Understand in details the stages and participants in language assessment process*
* *Interpret language assessment results*
 | Pre-service teachers and in-service teachers with BA; As a consolidation for MA in-service teachers |
| Competence in connecting classroom assessment and Instruction | + Be aware of the importance of assessment planning in the designing of ELT curriculum, syllabus and classroom teaching plans and vice versa.+ Understand the principles, procedures of instructional language assessment practices, such as understand learning-centered alternative methods for classroom language assessment  | Pre-service teachers and BA teachers; As a consolidation for MA in-service teachers |
| Competence in assessment Instrument development | + Select assessment instruments appropriate for language teaching objectives and skills+ Understand the procedures of designing good teacher-made language classroom tests and tasks (from objectives to specifications to items and assessment instruments), fundamental methods and procedures of validating language test item of various skills, the use of different cognitive and competence models, the analysis of test items using CTT (such as on item discrimination and item difficulty) | Pre-service teachers and in-service teachers with BA; As a consolidation for MA teachers. |
| Competence in measurement models and statistics | + Interpret the major descriptive statistics and understand others’ application of different CTT techniques and several Item response theory (IRT) techniques to analyze language tests/assessment | In-service teachers |
| Competence in language assessment research | + Understand the fundamental components in a language assessment research + Select appropriate types of instruments to use in a language assessment research+ Understand the descriptive analysis of language items/tests/assessment instruments+ Use a variety of methods and means for reporting student achievement in language tests+ Discuss the assessment results in relation to ELT problems |  In-service teachers |
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| **Level 3: Algorithm processing****(targeted level for BA teachers)** | Competence in assessment process and design  | **Design**+ Develop models to show the relations between different concepts/theories/ approaches in language assessment history, and between different types of language tests/exam at different scales for different language competences/skills+ Construct the framework for the targeted language competences in one’s setting**Process**+ Develop an organization of stages in a specific language assessment process  | In-service teachers |
| Competence in connecting classroom assessment and instruction | + Involve cognitive philosophies/models and competence models in writing the objectives for an ELT course+ Model classroom language assessment process based on principles of assessment for learning+ Highlight the main effects of assessment methods on ELT classroom instruction | In-service teachers |
| Competence in assessment Instrument development  | + Develop models to show the relation of components and procedures for assessing language competences+ Use cognitive and competence models in developing instruments for language assessment or apply appropriately justified assessment instruments+ Improve language assessment instruments on an on-going basis | In-service teachers |
| Competence in measurement models and statistics | + Understand and applying a range of statistical techniques in CTT and a number of fundamental statistical techniques in IRT in analyzing the results of language tests+ Use computer softwares such as SPSS/EXCEL in CTT and several techniques in IRT computer softwares (such as QUEST/CONQUEST) to compute indices for the characteristics of language tests, test items and students  | MA teachers |
| Competence in language assessment research | + Collect, analyse and organise information from the literature and research on language assessment + Design language assessment research on both theoretical and practical grounds+ Select or design appropriate instruments to meet research needs+ Conduct analysis and discussion of language assessment results for research purposes | MA teachers |
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| **Level 4: Transferring into language (targeted level for an MA teachers)** | Competence in assessment process and design  | **Design**+ Explain the features of different ELTstudent groups and applying them in language assessment design + Summarize or expanding assessment knowledge with one’s own words+ Describe in words the designs (principles, methods, process, etc.) of any classroom assessment or familiar large-scale examinations (IELTS, TOEFL, TOEIC, GRE, etc.)**Process**+ Express the understanding or explaining the process of assessing different language competences/skills | MA teachers |
| Competence in connecting classroom assessment and Instruction | + Apply diverse theories and approaches in language assessment+ Explain models on language competence, on different types of language assessment methods, instrument, and standards (such as by CEFR, Cambridge ESOL, ETS)+ Discuss how large-scale assessments relate to classroom assessment and instruction+ Explain the “what”, ”how” and “why” in the process of doing language assessment | MA teachers |
| Competence in assessment Instrument development | + Justify the choice of assessment methods and instruments appropriate for language teaching needs and demonstrating standard use of these.+ Justify the use of standardized tests in classrooms, schools, etc.+ Demonstrate standard and pluralistic application of the assessment instruments  | MA teachers |
| Competence in measurement models/statistics | + Describe the measurement statistical models in both CTT and IRT+ Explain the use and meaning of measurement parameters and statistical values in measurement models. | MA teachers |
|  | Competence in language assessment research | + Describe different instruments for language assessment research+ Describe a variety of methods and means for reporting student achievement in language tests+ Justify the use of assessment methods, means, and items in research+ Justify and performing assessment research process on a frequent basis | MA teachers |

**Abbreviations:**

BA : Bachelors of Arts MA : Master of Arts

CTT : Classical test theory IRT : Item response theory

MOET : Minister of Education and Training CLC : Communicative language competence

ELT : English language teaching L2 : second language