

ELPA Validity Evaluation Instrument:

Protocol for Analysis of Language Content in ELPA
(Reading Passages and Items)

The logo for 'evea' features the word in a lowercase, sans-serif font. The 'e' and 'a' are blue, while the 'v' is a darker purple. The 'e' and 'a' have a slight shadow effect.

Washington
Idaho
Indiana
Montana
Oregon



edCount, LLC
Center for Assessment
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About EVEA

The U.S. Department of Education funded Enhanced Assessment Grant *Evaluating the Validity of English Language Proficiency Assessments* (EVEA; CFDA 84.368) was awarded to the Office of the Superintendent for Public Instruction of the State of Washington in fall 2009. The project brought together five states – Idaho, Indiana, Montana, Oregon, and Washington – to work on collaborative and independent validity plans for English language proficiency assessments (ELPAs) over an 18-month period. During the EVEA funding period, none of the partner states belonged to an existing ELPA consortium; rather each had worked with commercial test developers to create state-wide ELPAs that are aligned with their state English language development (ELD) standards. The main project goal was for each state to create a validity argument for its ELPA system. Additional project outcomes included:

- Building individual State Interpretive Arguments for the validity of each state’s ELPA,
- Building a Common Interpretive Argument for any ELPA;
- Designing a set of studies and instruments to support and pilot test these arguments; and
- Making instruments publically available at the close of the project for the wider education community to access.

This research instrument is one product of these efforts.

Collaborating institutions

edCount, LLC

The National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment (NCIEA, the Center for Assessment)

The Graduate School of Education and Information Studies (GSE&IS) at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)

Synergy Enterprises, Inc. (SEI)

The Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation (PIRE)

Authors

This validity evaluation instrument was prepared by:

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Research Objective

The protocol was developed to characterize the language features of items on an English language proficiency assessment (ELPA), particularly the language of reading passages and related items. Such analyses can reveal the degree of language complexity in the different forms of an ELPA used across years or across grade spans, and even across different ELPAs.

Claim

The ELPA has been designed to yield scores that reflect students' knowledge and skills in relation to academic English language expectations defined in the ELD/P standards.

Underlying Assumptions

Multiple forms of an ELPA that may be rotated year-to-year are equivalent in terms of the degree of complexity of the language they measure.

The different forms of an ELPA that are used across grade-spans will show a progression from the lowest complexity in language features at the earliest grade spans to the greatest complexity in language features in the highest grade spans.

Within any grade span of an ELPA that a range of items will show a progression from low-levels of complexity to high-levels of complexity in language to reflect the ELP levels found in state ELP standards.

Research Questions

Research Question 1: Are multiple forms of an ELPA equivalent in terms of the language complexity of reading passages and related items?

Research Question 2: Do grade spans within an ELPA demonstrate a progression in language complexity of reading passages and related items?

Research Question 3: Is a progression from low to high levels of language complexity across reading passages and related items reflected within a grade span?

Method

Each reading passage and related items can be subjected to the protocol that examines language features at the word, sentence and discourse levels. While all ELPA items can be subjected to language analyses, reading passages and related items in particular offer extensive text that also allows for the characterization of the complexity of discourse level features such as clause connectors and cohesive ties.

Analysis

Once the language features of passages and items have been identified, the equivalence (or progression) in language complexity can be ascertained. For example, the basic statistics of the passages such as number of words, number of sentences, etc., in a passage can give an indication of the "stamina" needed by the reader. Differences in basic statistics of reading passages and items can be compared within and/or across ELPA forms. Comparison of the number and types of word level

features of passages within and/or across ELPA forms can provide information about equivalence (or progression) in lexical demands placed on the reader. Comparison of the number and types of sentence level features can provide information about equivalence (or progression) in grammatical demands on the reader. Comparison of the number and types of discourse level features can provide information about equivalence (or progression) in discourse demands on the reader.

| Protocol for Analyses of Language Content of ELPA EVEA PROJECT M. Heritage & A. Bailey (2010; Revised 2011) | |
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| TEST: _____ TEST YEAR: _____ GRADE/SPAN: _____ FORM: _____ PASSAGE TITLE: _____ PAGE NO. _____ | |
| Text Layout & Purpose: Total words: _____ Total sentences: _____ Mean length of sentence: _____ Lengths of 3 longest sentences: _____ Lengths of 3 shortest sentences: _____ | |
| WORDS | |
| Cross disciplinary (General utility words) | |
| Topic-related (vivid words) | |
| Superordinate | |
| Subordinate | |
| Conceptual | |
| Background/topic knowledge/culturally specific knowledge | |
| Syllabic structure (3 and above) | |
| Derived forms | |

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| Compound words | |
| Adverbs | |
| Comparative Ex: ran faster | |
| Superlative Ex: ran fastest | |
| Adverbial phrase Ex: as often as possible | |
| Nouns | |
| Proper nouns | |
| Collective nouns | |
| Noun case – subject/object/possessive | |
| Adjectives | |
| Adjective Ex: rich | |
| Comparatives Ex: richer | |
| Superlatives Ex: richest | |
| Verbs | |
| Concrete | |
| Abstract | |
| SENTENCES | |
| Sentence Structures | |
| 1. Simple Declarative Ex: The boy read the book | |
| 2. Simple Negative Ex: The girl did not walk to school. | |
| 3. Yes/No – Interrogative Ex: Is that your new teacher? | |
| 4. Wh-interrogative Ex: What did the teacher talk about today? | |
| 5. A)Coordinating Conjunction Ex: The boy and the girl went to the playground. | |

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| <p>5. B) Coordinating Conjunction Ex: The teacher wrote a sentence and the students copied it.</p> | |
| <p>6. Infinitive Phrase Ex: The students wanted to finish their homework.</p> | |
| <p>7. Prepositional Phrase Ex: We read the books in school during quiet time.</p> | |
| <p>8. Sentential Coordination Ex: The children traced and colored the pictures.</p> | |
| <p>9. Object noun-phrase Complement Ex: I think that the teacher's gone</p> | |
| <p>10. Subordinating Conjunction Ex: If it is cold, I will bring a sweater to school.</p> | |
| <p>11. Sentential Coordination Ex: The teacher corrected, scored, and returned the homework assignment</p> | |
| <p>12. Subordinating Conjunction Ex: The girl did not go to school today because she is sick.</p> | |
| <p>13. Embedded Wh-Question Ex: Chantelle saw where the student went.</p> | |
| <p>14. Complex Wh-Interrogative Ex: What does he think is for lunch today?</p> | |
| <p>15. Complex infinitive phrase Ex: I know how to do my homework.</p> | |
| <p>16. Relative clause Ex: The people who work at school are nice.</p> | |
| <p>17. Relative clause Ex: I see the boy who rides his bike to school every day.</p> | |
| <p>18. Relative clause Ex: The girl who lived next door decided to go to school with them.</p> | |
| <p>19. Passive Ex: The book was read by the girl.</p> | |
| <p>20. Passive negative Ex: The book was not brought by the girl.</p> | |
| <p>21. Passive interrogative Ex: Was the book borrowed from the library?</p> | |
| <p>22. Negative/passive interrogative Ex: Wasn't the story written by the teacher?</p> | |
| <p>23. Non-intuitive passive construction Ex: The teachers were dismissed to recess by the students.</p> | |

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| 24. Multiple embedded clauses Ex: Electricity travels from the power source, such as a battery, around a series of conductors, back to the power source | |
| 25. Nominalization Ex: Discovery could result in adverse consequences. | |
| MARKING WITH MODAL VERBS *can *could *may *might *must *shall *should *will *would | |
| 26. modal verb + base form = will eat | |
| 27. modal verb + be + present participle = will be eating | |
| 28. modal verb + have + past participle = will have eaten | |
| 29. modal verb + be + past participle = will be eaten | |
| 30. modal verb + have + been + present participle = will have been eating | |
| 31. modal verb + have + been + past participle = will have been eaten | |
| 32. modal + be + being + past participle = will be being eaten | |
| 33. modal verb + have + been + being + past participle = will have been being eaten | |
| TENSES | |
| Present Tense | |
| Past Tense | |
| Future Tense | |
| Present Progressive Tense | |
| Past Progressive Tense | |
| Future Progressive Tense | |
| Present Perfect Tense | |
| Past Perfect Tense | |

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| Future Perfect Tense | |
| Present Perfect Progressive | |
| Past Perfect Progressive | |
| Future Perfect Progressive | |
| DISCOURSE FEATURES | |
| Discourse Markers | |
| Time/sequence | |
| Cohesive tie: Anaphoric references | |
| Cohesive tie: Cataphoric references | |
| Disjunctive | |
| Causal | |
| Others | |
| Genre | |
| Narrative (fact) | |
| Narrative (fiction) | |
| Persuasive argument/opinion | |
| Expository (informational) | |
| Poetry | |
| Humor | |
| Other | |
| Language Functions | |
| Define vocabulary and phrases | |
| Describe processes or phenomena | |
| Explain processes or phenomena | |
| Compare and classify information and phenomena | |

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| Reason with phenomena (cause and effect) | |
| Label processes or objects | |
| Enumerate (list) facts and processes | |
| Predict outcomes | |
| Generalize processes or facts to other phenomena | |
| Other | |