

## Commentaries on Computer-based Language Assessment

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The rapid change and use of computer technology has had a profound influence in the field of language teaching and assessment, and the changes that computer and technology has brought to language assessment in particular are not only in the delivery method, but also in the scoring systems (Chapelle & Douglas, 2006). For instance, a wide variety of tasks be given as a test online worldwide, and scores can be available immediately to the test takers. However, along with such advances come potential problems and concerns.

For this issue of *Teachers College, Columbia University Working Papers in TESOL & Applied Linguistics*, we asked five contributors to comment on the issue of technology used in language assessments. Heidi Han-Ting Liu discusses the application of natural language processing and its influence on automated scoring in assessing second language speaking and writing. Youngsoo Song overviews two automated essay scoring tools, *Criterion* and *e-rater* and discusses how they could be used to benefit learning and assessment in a classroom. Next, Fred S. Tsutagawa looks specifically at the issue of technology use in pragmatics assessment and discusses its potentials for enabling better assessment of pragmatic ability. Sarab Al-Ani examines the visual elements of computer-based language assessment and discusses relevant research that has investigated its effect on test takers. Finally, Ian Blood raises an interesting question of whether the widespread use and advance of technology has or should bring change to the definition and assessment of the language construct.

### REFERENCES

Chapelle, C. A. & Douglas, D., (2006). *Assessing language through computer technology*. Cambridge Language Assessment Series, Cambridge University Press.

### COMMENTARIES

1. The Application of Natural Language Processing and Automated Scoring in Second Language Assessment  
Heidi Han-Ting Liu
2. What is *Criterion* and *e-rater*, and How Can They Be Used in a Classroom?  
Youngsoo Song
3. Future Directions in Pragmatics Assessment  
Fred S. Tsutagawa
4. The Visual Elements of Computer-Based Language Assessment: Asepcts and Effects  
Sarab Al-Ani
5. Technological Growth and L2 Construct Definition: Will Applied Linguistics Keep Pace with Language Users?  
Ian Blood