Language Cert

A Review of LanguageCert IESOL Listening and Reading Test Reliabilities 2018-2020

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Introduction

This paper reports on the analysis of Listening and Reading Tests produced by LanguageCert in its IESOL suite over the period 2018-2020. Statistics of this type are now reported on an annual basis.

All test forms were analysed using classical test statistics, namely: reliability; standard deviation; and standard error of measurement. Intercorrelations between Listening and Reading subtests area also reported.

In summary, all tests have high reliability estimates. Standard deviations show an appropriately broad spread of candidate ability and standard errors of measurement are in a satisfactory narrow range, generally around 5%.

The Data

Each Listening and Reading subtest comprises 26 items, resulting total of 52 items. All test items are either multiple-choice or limited response, the latter requiring test takers to produce a short, written response of between one to eight words depending on the level being attempted. All items are scored either one or zero and marked objectively.

Classical Test Statistics

Table 1 presents a composite picture for the six levels of the key classical test statistics: comprising test means, the median; the range of reliability, the range of standard deviation (as a percentage of the maximum score) and the range of the standard error of measurement (as a percentage of the maximum score).

Table 1. Summary of key test statistics for IESOL A1-C2 tests

	KR20	SEM	SD
A1 Overall	**.88-.93**	**4-5%**	**10-18%**
A1 Listening	.75-.85		9-15%
A1 Reading	.82-.91		12-22%
A2 Overall	**.87-.94**	**4-7%**	**13-21%**
A2 Listening	.75-.89		13-22%
A2 Reading	.83-.90		15-23%
B1 Overall	**.86-.94**	**5-8%**	**15-22%**
B1 Listening	.76-.89		14-23%
B1 Reading	.80-.90		15-23%
B2 Overall	**.89-.93**	**5-6%**	**15-20%**
B2 Listening	.74-.87		16-22%
B2 Reading	.82-.89		16-23%
C1 Overall	**.89-.94**	**4-7%**	**15-24%**
C1 Listening	.78-.90		16-26%
C1 Reading	.81-.90		17-24%
C2 Overall	**.87-.90**	**5-6%**	**15-18%**
C2 Listening	.70-.83		15-19%
C2 Reading	.81-.85		16-20%

Correlations between Listening and Reading Tests

In order to indicate the nature of the relationship between the Listening and Reading components Pearson correlations were calculated. Table 2 presents a summary of the results for each CEFR level. All correlations are significant at the 1% level.

Table 2: Correlations between IESOL Listening and Reading tests

Test level	Correlation Set 1	Correlation Set 2	Mean Correlation
A1	0.64	0.78	0.72
A2	0.74	0.76	0.75
B1	0.72	0.69	0.71
B2	0.68	0.65	0.66
C1	0.79	0.74	0.77
C2	0.65	0.61	0.63

Conclusion

This paper has presented a picture of 62 LanguageCert IESOL tests from A1 to C2 level, developed and administered over the period 2018 to 2020. What has emerged is a picture of a series of well-constructed tests, with high reliability: all tests have reliability figures above 0.80, which is high for tests consisting of 52 items (Ebel, 1965) and 34 have a reliability above 0.9. Standard deviations show broad spread of abilities among the different levels of test, although this is to be expected with proficiency tests, which are open to the public, and able to be taken by any applicant. Standard errors of measurement are in a narrow range, generally around 5%, and indicative of test takers' "true scores" occurring within a range of plus or minus 2 points (5% of 52). With the Pass set at 50% of the total (26/52), the comparatively narrow range of 24-28 may then be confidently taken as the 'boundary'. Correlations between the Listening and Reading tests have emerged as either moderate-to-strong or strong.

References

Ebel, R. L. 1965. Measuring educational achievement. Prentice-Hall, NJ: Englewood Cliffs.

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