Designing a university placement test as an interactive process: analysing for improvement

Current needs in Higher Education in Europe have implied a change of roles for university centres, facing the challenge of training students in foreign languages and assessing their levels to participate in exchange programs. Since the implementation of the Bologna process, the UPV has been using placement testing as a practical and effective way to help the university determine the students' level and increase internationalisation by allowing a larger number of students to participate in mobility programmes.

With the increase in internationalisation and the amount of UPV students travelling abroad, placement testing was digitalised and several studies carried out to assess the effectiveness of the computer-based version of the test, Perez-Guillot, C. & Zabala Delgado, J. 2016. *Computer-based Language tests in a University Language Centre*. A.Jaime, C. Perez-Guillot, J. Zabala; *A comprehensive placement test tool for Language Centres*, 2012. From the first paper-based version, through the digitalisation of the test by means of open software, to the addition of anti-fraud mechanisms and the inclusion of real time analysis of test items and test results. Furthermore, several tests' versions were designed to comply with the different needs of the three main languages tested at the university: English, French and German

Our paper presents the latest study carried out to improve the validity and reliability of the test by means of statistical analysis and qualitative analysis of problematic items. Different statistical methods were used to assess reliability, discrimination and content validity, as well as fitness of the test to the university population. Items deemed problematic were then qualitatively analysed to determine whether a modification was required or whether they needed to be discarded and substituted. Lastly, a further analysis into the needs of prospective exchange students and into the new possibilities allowed by the software in use was conducted. The possibility of using video materials for the assessment of listening and socio-pragmatic adequacy were also explored.

Keywords: placement testing, mobility programmes, online testing platforms, statistical analysis, item analysis, Socio-pragmatic adequacy (video)