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Title
A protocol for a scoping review of learning-oriented language assessment in formal and non-formal educational contexts

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Review Question
The three research questions which guide this scoping review are:

(1) How is learning-oriented language assessment conceptualised?
(2) How is learning-oriented language assessment operationalised?
(3) How is learning-oriented language assessment evaluated?

Rationale
Learning-oriented language assessment (LOLA) refers to the use of assessment to support learners' language development through the collection and interpretation of an array of evidence (Turner, 2012). Such information provides insights into learners' current state of learning, their learning goals, and ways to help learners progress towards their goals (Wiliam & Thompson, 2008). In other words, LOLA underscores the indispensable role of language assessment in bridging teaching and learning (Colby-Kelly & Turner, 2007). LOLA, as an approach to language assessment, is grounded on formative assessment in educational assessment research (Black & Wiliam, 1998) and can take various forms, including classroom dialogues, peer assessment, self-assessment, and formative use of summative language tests (Turner & Purpura, 2016). The majority of the publications related to LOLA principles focus on classroom-based assessment (Fox et al., forthcoming; Lewkowicz & Leung, 2021) but not assessment activities that take place beyond the classroom (Reinders & Benson, 2017). With the rapid development of technology, LOLA is implemented in a wide range of non-formal language learning contexts including Language Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs)/ Small Private Online Courses (SPOCs) (Bárcena & Martín-Monje, 2014; Chong et al., 2022) and self-access language learning centres (Castellano et al., 2011). Focusing on LOLA in formal and non-formal EFL contexts in higher education in Southeast Asia, the first author is leading a study comprising a scoping review and a narrative inquiry, aiming to develop a literature-informed LOLA framework and examine English-as-a-Foreign-Language (EFL) teachers' and learners' experiences of LOLA. This protocol pertains to the first phase of this study, that is, the scoping review.

Bárcena, E. & Martín-Monje, E. (2014). Introduction. LMOOCs: An emerging field. In E. Martín-Monje & E. Bárcena (Eds.), LMOOCs: Providing learning, transcending boundaries (pp. 1-15). De Gruyter Open.

Black, P., & Wiliam, D. (1998). Assessment and classroom learning. Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice, 5(1), 7-74. https://doi.org/10.1080/0969595980050102

Castellano, J., Mynard, J., & Rubesch, T. (2011). Student technology use in a self-access center. Language Learning & Technology, 15(3), 12-27. http://dx.doi.org/10125/44256

Chong, S. W., Khan, M. A., & Reinders, H. (2022). A critical review of design features of LMOOCs. Computer Assisted Language Learning. Advanced online publication.

Colby-Kelly, C., & Turner, C. E. (2007). AFL research in the L2 classroom and evidence of usefulness: Taking formative assessment to the next level. The Canadian Modern Language Review, 64(1), 9-37. doi:10.3138/cmlr.64.1.009

Fox, J., Abdulhamid. N. & Turner, C.E. (Forthcoming). Classroom based assessment. In G. Fulcher & L. Harding (Eds.), Routledge handbook of language testing (2nd ed.) (pp. xx-xx). Routledge.

Lewkowicz, J., & Leung, C. (2021). Classroom-based assessment. Language Teaching, 54(1), 47-57. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444820000506

Turner, C. E. (2012). Classroom assessment. In G. Fulcher & F. Davidson (Eds.), The Routledge handbook of language testing (pp. 65-78). Routledge.

Turner, C. E., & Purpura, J. E. (2016). Learning-oriented assessment in second and foreign language classrooms. In D. Tsagari & J. Banerjee (Eds.), Handbook of second language assessment (pp. 255-274). De Gruyter Mouton.

Wiliam, D., & Thompson, M. (2008). Interpreting assessment with instruction: What will it take to make it work. In C. A. Dwyer (Ed.), The future of assessment: Shaping teaching and learning (pp. 53-82). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Inclusion Criteria

Conceptual framework
Include: There is a clear definition or conceptualisation of learning-oriented (language) assessment.
Exclude: The term "learning-oriented (language) assessment" is used without a clear definition or conceptualisation.
Rationale: RQ1 of this scoping review pertains to how LOLA is conceptualised. To address this question, included studies need to define LOLA explicitly with reference to existing frameworks or definitions.

Language
Include: Publications that are written in English.
Exclude: Publications that are written in languages other than English.
Rationale: Both authors are based in UK universities and their affiliations have access to mainly academic publications written in English. This is not to suggest that publications written in languages other than English are less important; the consideration relates to accessibility.

Type of publication
Include: The publication belongs to one of the following types: journal articles (primary studies, research syntheses, commentaries, conceptual pieces), editorials, doctoral theses, books, book chapters.
Exclude: Publications that are descriptive; for example, purely reflective pieces or publications that only describe assessment practices are excluded.

Rationale: While descriptive and reflective pieces provide rich information about how LOLA is implemented, and thus, answering RQ2 of this review, they are not likely to yield insights related to how LOLA is conceptualised (RQ1) and evaluated (RQ3).

Context
Include: In the case of a primary study, the context of the study is in higher education.
Exclude: In the case of a primary study, the context of the study is not in higher education.
Rationale: Learning-oriented assessment originates as an assessment concept in higher education literature and it is commonly practised in higher education institutes.

Information Sources
Sources of this scoping review will be selected from various online databases. Journal publications will be searched on Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), ERIC, PsycINFO, Scopus, and Social Sciences Citation Index. Since LOLA is still an emerging area of research in language testing, there will likely be a limited number of journal publications on this topic. Therefore, we consider including other types of academic publications: doctoral theses, books, and book chapters. These will be retrieved from EBSCO, Electronic Theses Online Service (EThOS) (specifically for doctoral theses), and ProQuest.

Search Strategy
The following search string will be used to conduct the scoping review:

("learning-oriented assessment" OR "learning-oriented language assessment") AND (("higher education" OR "universit*" OR "further education" OR "post-compulsory education" OR "vocational education" OR "college" OR "undergraduate" OR "postgraduate") OR ("language education" OR "language*" OR "language teaching" OR "language learning" OR "TESOL" OR "ESL" OR "EFL" OR "English"))

The search string was developed in consultation with two senior academics who have expertise in language testing and language education and experience in conducting systematic literature reviews. Additionally, the search string was reviewed by a subject librarian. The search string was piloted together with the librarian in an online library module that the first author attended as a PhD student at UCL. The search string includes two major components: the assessment concept in focus (i.e., learning-oriented language assessment) and educational context (i.e., higher/further education and language education). As for the assessment concept, we include both "learning-oriented language assessment" and "learning-oriented assessment" because the latter is a more widely used term than the former. As for the educational setting, we attempt to capture synonymous or nearly synonymous terms of "higher education", including the word "college", the US equivalent of "university". "College" is also used to refer to "university" in China. Additionally, to ensure that the publications relate to language education, we include synonymous terms of "language education". Since the second phase of the study concerns learning-oriented language assessment in EFL contexts, we also include key terms that locate publications on English language teaching and learning.

Data Management
Publications that are deemed to be suitable for inclusion during first-level screening (screening of titles and abstracts) will be imported, together with the full- texts in PDF format, to Zotero, a reference management system. Second-level screening (screening of full texts) will be performed in Zotero. Instead of removing excluded studies, they will be moved to a dedicated folder in Zotero for

further review, if necessary. After the second-level screening and appraisal of study quality, the PDFs of the final set of studies will be imported to NVivo 12, a qualitative data analysis software for data extraction and synthesis.

Selection Process

The selection process, which comprises three stages: Identification, screening, and inclusion of studies, will be performed by the first author. In instances where there is uncertainty or ambiguity, the second author will be consulted. The process will follow and be represented in the 2020 version of PRISMA diagram (Page et al., 2022).

Potential publications will be identified using the aforementioned search string (see "Search Strategy") on the databases mentioned in "Information Sources" by the first author in September 2022, constantly referring to the inclusion criteria (see "Inclusion Criteria"). Following first-level screening, potentially relevant publications will be imported into Zotero and their full texts downloaded as PDFs. The first author will then perform second-level screening, reading the whole text to ensure all inclusion criteria are met. To ensure methodological rigour of the review process, an additional reviewer, who has experience conducting research synthesis, will independently screen 20% of the publications included in first-level and second-level screening. The first author and the reviewer will meet to discuss and resolve discrepancies.

Primary studies and research syntheses will be subject to an additional phase of appraisal to determine their methodological rigour. Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods research will be evaluated using the appraisal checklist of qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods research published by TESOL Quarterly (2022), one of the flagship journals in language education. Syntheses of qualitative evidence will be evaluated following the methodological framework by Chong and Plonsky (2021) while appraisal of meta-analyses will be informed by Oswald & Plonsky (2010).

Chong, S. W., & Plonsky, L. (2021). A primer on qualitative research synthesis in TESOL. TESOL Quarterly, 55(3), 1024-1034. https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.3030
Oswald, F. L., & Plonsky, L. (2010). Met-analysis in second language research: Choices and challenges. Annual Review of Applied Linguistics, 30(March, 2010), 85-110. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190510000115
Page, M. J., McKenzie, J. E., Bossuyt, P. M., Boutron, I., Hoffmann, T. C., Mulrow, C. D., et al. (2021). The PRISMA 2020 statement: an updated guideline for reporting systematic reviews BMJ, 372, n71. https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.n71
TESOL Quarterly. (2022). TESOL Quarterly submission guidelines. Retrieved from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/page/journal/15457249/homepage/forauthors.html

Data Collection Process

The present review is a scoping review. A scoping review refers to a comprehensive, systematic literature review on emerging substantive topics (Tricco et al., 2016). Comparing with other types of research synthesis, for example, systematic literature reviews, scoping reviews usually adopt a more inclusive approach to study selection, and they are more exploratory in nature (e.g., Chong & Reinders, 2022).

The more encompassing nature of scoping review is reflected in the design of the data extraction form items. To ensure that the data extraction form is validated, an existing data extraction form for conducting a scoping review on a topic in the field of language education (Chong & Reinders, 2022)

will be modified. Although this data extraction form was designed to survey the landscape of another substantive topic, the overarching research questions of Chong and Reinders (2022) are identical to the three in this review, focusing on conceptualisation, operationalisation, and evaluation. The form was originally developed by the first author for Chong and Reinders (2022), reviewed and commented by two senior academics in language education who have experience in conducting research syntheses. A modified version of this data extraction form will be used to extract information from the included studies for the present review. This modified data extraction form will be reviewed by the second author, who is an expert in Language Testing and in conducting systematic literature reviews. Once feedback from the second author is incorporated, the data extraction form will be piloted on approximately 10% of the included publications, covering journal articles, books/book chapters, and doctoral theses, by the first author and an additional reviewer. Any further changes will be made after the piloting phase. This final version of data extraction form will be used to extract information from the remaining publications, again performed by the first author and the additional reviewer.

Chong, S. W., & Reinders, H. (2022). Autonomy of English language learners: A scoping review of research and practice. Language Teaching Research. Advanced online publication. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F13621688221075812
Tricco, A. C., Lillie, E., Zarin, W., O'Brien, K., Colquhoun, H., Kastner, M., ... Straus, S. E. (2016). A scoping review on the conduct and reporting of scoping reviews. BMC Medical Research Methodology, 16(1). https://10.1186/s12874-016-0116-4

Data Items
The following items are based on the data extraction form of Chong and Reinders (2020) and are tentative. The items may be revised following the validation process mentioned in "Data Collection Process".

Characteristics of included studies:
  • Type of publication
  • Year of publication
  • Location of authors
  • Location of study (only applicable to primary studies)
  • Research questions
  • Research design (qualitative, quantitative, mixed)

Research question 1: Conceptualisation of learning-oriented language assessment
  • Conceptual framework
  • Theoretical underpinnings

Research question 2: Operationalisation of learning-oriented language assessment
  • Context of the intervention
  • Description of the intervention
  • Duration of the intervention
  • Materials used
  • Information about teachers
  • Information about learners
  • Role of the teacher
  • Role of the learner

Research question 3: Evaluation of learning-oriented language assessment
• Evaluation mechanism/tool
• Nature of evaluation (perceptual, observational, effectiveness)
• Teacher's perception/experience
• Learner's perception/experience
• Effectiveness/outcome

Risk of bias/trustworthiness of individual studies

There are different measures of methodological qualities that are appropriate for different studies and publication types. Risk of bias and trustworthiness are not likely to be all encompassing. For example, assessing methodological quality is not applicable for commentaries or editorials. However, for primary studies and research syntheses, their methodological rigour will be appraised using existing appraisal tools/checklists designed specifically for language education research (see "Selection Process").

Data Synthesis

A narrative synthesis of the data will be conducted (Petticrew & Roberts, 2006). A narrative synthesis is deemed suitable because of the inclusion of studies from different disciplines and research paradigms (Schwarz et al., 2019). Specific steps include a preliminary thematic analysis (Nowell et al., 2017) followed by structural consolidation of themes through focused and axial coding (Charmaz, 2006). Results will also be presented in tabular form and main findings will be summarised into a literature-informed framework of learning-oriented language assessment.

Charmaz, K. (2006). Constructing grounded theory. Sage.
Nowell, L. S., Norris, J. M., White, D. E., & Moules, N. J. (2017). Thematic analysis: Striving to meet the trustworthiness criteria. International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 1 6(1), 1-13. https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406917733847
Petticrew, M., & Roberts, H. (2008). Systematic reviews in the social sciences: A practical guide. Blackwell.
Schwarz, C. M., Hoffmann, M., Schwarz, P., Kamolz, L., Brunner, G., & Sendlhofer, G. (2019). A systematic literature review and narrative synthesis on the risks of medical discharge letters for patients' safety. BMC Health Services Research, 19, 158.

Meta-biases

Confidence in cumulative evidence

See "Selection Process".

Sources of Funding

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Role of Funders

British Council provides financial support to the three phases of a study focusing on learning-oriented language assessment in formal and non-formal EFL contexts: this scoping review, a pilot study, and the main study.

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2022-09-01

Anticipated completion date:
2022-12-31

Other language resources

Current Status
Ongoing

Details of Published Review

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