

“A framework for addressing issues related to migration and language assessment: exemplification of the framework with Cambridge Sol's Skills for Life examinations”

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Abstract

This paper discusses the UK Government's recent policy decisions related to assessing language proficiency for migration purposes. We give an outline of the present arrangements made by the Home Office for testing for naturalisation, settlement and access purposes. This includes the recently introduced points-based system and the list of English language tests that are currently accepted as proof of language proficiency based on the Home Office's criteria of acceptance. Cambridge ESOL language tests that have been used for these purposes include IELTS, Skills for Life, and ESOL for Work. We systematically evaluate Skills for Life for fitness for purpose within a framework of criteria developed by the Language Assessment for Migration and Integration subgroup of the Association of Language Testers in Europe in collaboration with the Council of Europe. The framework allows policy makers to consider issues relevant to language assessment for migration in a wider perspective, considering aspects of quality and fairness of language tests accepted and used for the purposes of migration, residency and citizenship.

Recent history

This section offers a brief overview of the recent history of language assessment for migration purposes in the UK. The precursor of recent language testing for citizenship and settlement in the UK is the publication of the education White Paper entitled *Excellence in Schools* in 1997, when Citizenship became a separate subject rather than a cross-curricular theme in schools in England. Following this, the DfES introduced Citizenship education into secondary schools in 2002. In the same year, the latest Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act foreshadowed the round of renewed activities in the third millennium around migration. These activities are strongly reminiscent of concerns and solutions of the past 100 years (Saville 2008).

Life in the UK Test

Since July 2004, applicants for UK citizenship have had to demonstrate knowledge of the English language. In June 2005, a test with a language element, called the Life in the UK test was developed by Ufi/Learndirect Ltd for the Home Office (HO) and piloted at 8 test centres. All applicants for citizenship or British nationality have had to pass this test since 1 Nov 2005. Since 2 April 2007, applicants for settlement have had to take it as well to be granted indefinite leave to remain. There is no sample test available, but the HO offers guidelines on their website about the content and format of the test in an online tutorial. The materials provided by the HO towards preparation for the test include a Handbook for teachers and mentors of immigrants entitled *Life in the UK: A journey to citizenship*. The original Handbook was published in Dec 2004. A revised and simplified version was published specifically for candidates in March 2007. The targeted proficiency level of the test has always been ESOL Entry Level 3 or above, B1 or above in CEFR terms. For those learners not at this level yet, learning materials for ESOL with citizenship courses were developed by the National Institute for Adult and Continuing Education

(NIACE) and LLU+ (formerly the London Language and Literacy Unit) and piloted with 18 ESOL providers between Sep 2004 and March 2005, prior to the first launch of the test.

Points Based System

In addition to these developments in testing for citizenship and settlement, an Australian and Canadian-style Points Based System (PBS) is currently being phased in for the purpose of access/entry for people wishing to come or remain in the UK to work, train or study. In the PBS, launched in the first quarter of 2008, different groups of applicants are required to demonstrate knowledge of English at different levels of proficiency. In Tier 1 of the PBS, from April 2008 onwards, highly skilled migrants wishing to come or remain in the UK to work, train or study are required to demonstrate knowledge of English at **level C1** of the CEFR prior to entry. These are people in the finance, IT, medicine, science, and engineering sectors as well as entrepreneurs and investors. Tier 2 of the PBS was to include skilled workers with a job offer in a national shortage area (see schedule by HO, June 2008). Originally, this group of people were thought to come from the health service, white collar and trade sectors, e.g. work as nurses, teachers, and administrators. They were to demonstrate knowledge of English at **level B2** of the CEFR prior to entry. More recently, there is more differentiation within the group: 'For Tier 2 General, Intra-Company Transfers and Sportspeople, the test will be required to be close to **level A1** on the CEFR. This test should include an ability to understand and use everyday expressions and very basic phrases, to introduce themselves and others and ask and answer questions about basic personal details. For Tier 2 Ministers of Religion, the test will be required to meet **level B2** on the CEFR' (HO UK BA, June 2008).

In Tier 3, being rolled out in the course of 2008-2009, limited numbers of temporary low-skilled workers may also be required to demonstrate knowledge of English. These people will typically work in the agriculture, food processing, hospitality sectors, e.g. as catering or construction workers. Tier 4 will apply to students, specialist workers, and trainees, whereas Tier 5 will include temporary workers with non-economic objectives, such as young people on youth mobility or cultural exchange programmes, young people on temporary work experience or on a working holiday, gap year students, professional musicians on tour, professional sports people, and other performers. The HO has not yet specified the level of English required of these groups. However, as the results of the recent consultation on marriage visas show, there is strong indication that even would-be spouses of British citizens or settled individuals applying for marriage visas will be required to show evidence of knowledge of English at **level A1** of the CEFR prior to entry.

Home Office-approved English language tests

Migrants to the UK can demonstrate that they meet the required standard of English by providing evidence that they have passed an English language test. The HO have stated that only tests that have been assessed as having met their published criteria will be accepted as evidence. The procedure for inclusion on the list of approved English language tests states that the tests have to meet the following requirements:

- Components; the test should cover the four language components of listening, speaking, writing and reading.
- Security of test; the test should be secure to prevent any possible attempt at deception during test sittings.
- Security of awards or certificates; the test awards should be secure and encompass a number of security features.

- Verification; the organisation should have a system in place to enable the UK Border Agency to verify test results where there are doubts about the test certificate.
- Fast track service; preferably the organisation should offer a service where applicants can request the fast-tracking of their test and results.

In addition to providing contact details, etc, organisations have to provide the following information about the actual tests:

- Details of English language tests, including:
 - Title of test;
 - Mark or grade showing level of competence equal to CEFR levels, A1, B2, etc;
 - Details of how the test is mapped to CEFR;
 - Confirmation that the test covers the four language components;
 - Overview, structure and levels of test;
 - How often the test can be sat;
 - Where the test can be sat;
 - Whether there are special needs arrangements.
- Details of results, including:
 - When results are issued;
 - Any different grading of results;
 - Whether the test results are valid for a limited period.

If the HO is satisfied that the information provided meets the above requirements the test are accepted and details are published on their website (HO BIA, Oct 2007 and HO UK BA, June 2008). The tests included on the list of accepted tests by the HO can then be used by migrants wishing to demonstrate their English language ability. The question is whether these requirements are stringent enough.

An alternative framework for evaluating tests for migration purposes

Given the amount of criticism levelled against the current Life in the UK test which has a language element and some other English language tests on the HO's published list of accepted exams, it would be preferable to evaluate all proposed tests of English according to more stringent criteria. For instance, the following questions need to be answered:

- What purpose(s) was the test developed for?
- What does the test measure (i.e. the construct behind the test)?
- Who has been involved in developing, evaluating and revising the test?
- How best can one test language knowledge and skills needed for study, training, employment, social integration or the exercise of civic rights and responsibilities?

By having a language requirement as part of the requirements for citizenship, settlement, and permission to work, train or study in the UK, there is an underlying assumption that proficiency in the language of communication in the wider society is a democratic responsibility and a democratic right. This has implications not only for the candidates but wider society (government, policy makers, employers, colleges, schools, language course providers, etc.) as well. Also, it has implications for the development and administration of tests conceived and designed for these purposes (i.e. for professional language testers and stakeholders). Tests developed and accepted for these purposes need to be defensible. The question is whether there is a defensible argument, backed by evidence, for tests accepted for these purposes, in any of the frameworks developed within the assessment community. The framework chosen for test evaluation would reflect the primary issues and concerns and could be either Weir's (2005)

socio-cognitive framework focusing on aspects of different types of test validity hence quality (see Papp and Wright 2006) or Kunnan's (2008) micro- and macro-framework of test fairness.

In the following discussion, we combine Kunnan's language test fairness criteria with those considerations set out in a guide developed by professional language testers and others representing the Language Assessment for Migration and Integration (LAMI) special interest group of the Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE) working in collaboration with the Council of Europe (CoE).

The outline for policymakers set out by members of the ALTE LAMI group include considerations that need to be made when planning or accepting language tests for these particular purposes. The considerations include the mode of assessment, impact and consequences of the test, stages of test development and operation, including determining test purpose, determining linguistic demands, determining the appropriate level of difficulty, producing test specifications, and monitoring examiners.

According to the LAMI group, it is imperative to first decide on the purpose of the test: 'The first step in this process is the precise and unambiguous identification of the purpose of the test. After this is done, principled ways to determine the content and difficulty follow. Finally, the test specifications document, a document essential in later stages of test construction and review, must be developed' (CoE LAMI, 2008). The authors suggest that policy makers need to reflect whether the purpose of the test is

1. motivating learners (to help them use and improve their current competence in the target language),
2. ascertaining whether their competence is sufficient for participation in well-defined social situations (e.g. study or work and also other social situations more connected with the exercise of citizenship), to
3. making decisions which affect their legal [as well as human and civil] rights, such as their right to remain in a country or acquire citizenship of it.' (CoE LAMI, 2008)

It could be argued that only the second purpose can be tested in language tests. The first, motivational purpose represents a humanitarian perspective. The second purpose, assessing required competence for social participation, reflects an egalitarian aspect; and the last one, with the aim of making decisions which affect people's legal, human and civil rights, reflects a pragmatic, arguably cynical, legal and political purpose (cf. McNamara and Roever 2006). All of these purposes are recognised and hotly discussed in the public and professional discourse in the UK. However, professional language testers can advise only on the second purpose with authority and competence based on their expertise and professional codes and standards.

It is pointed out in the LAMI guidelines, that as well as informing test development, a clear and explicit purpose will not only help to clarify test takers' expectations towards the type, content and marking criteria of the test (all to be specified and made public in the test specifications), thus contributing to test fairness, but will also allow other members of society to interpret and use test results appropriately.

As a next step, 'only when the purpose has been clearly defined is it possible to identify the real-world demands that test-takers will face (e.g. the need to take part in societal processes and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship) and which should be reflected in the test' (CoE LAMI, 2008). The process of establishing the needs of candidates is termed *needs analysis*. However, needs analysis tends to be a taxonomic exercise which tends to significantly restrict

the construct behind any test. The questions policy makers and test developers for migration purposes need to address are:

- What level and type of social participation are migrants supposed to aim for?
- What level of ‘exercising their civil rights and responsibilities’ are they expected to demonstrate – is it up to representing other people in democratic processes?

In addition to these considerations, Kunnan (2008) defines an ethical and fair test as displaying

- a) comparable or equitable treatment in the testing process,
- b) comparability or equality in outcomes of learning and opportunity to learn,
- c) absence of bias in test content, language and response patterns, and
- d) comparability in selection and prediction.

According to the LAMI group, ‘test fairness is relevant to all types of language test and for all target candidates, but is especially important in the case of tests of language for migration, residency and citizenship, due to the serious implications for the test taker in terms of civil and human rights’ (CoE LAMI, 2008). For a fair and ethical test, a defensible argument is needed, backed by evidence collected in support of Kunnan’s five test fairness qualities:

1. validity,
2. absence of bias,
3. access,
4. administration,
5. social consequences.

The ALTE LAMI document makes direct reference to the CEFR, as a framework of reference for language tests for migration, particularly to enable determining the difficulty level of these tests. Some scholars have argued that the CEFR may not be appropriate, suitable, achievable, or justified for these purposes (see e.g. Krumm 2007, Hulstijn 2007:665, and Alderson 2007:662). Despite these reservations, the CEFR has been successfully applied to adult refugee immigrants, young migrants and minority groups in schools (see Little, Lazenby-Simpson, & O’Conner 2002, Little & Lazenby Simpson 2004, Little 2005, referred to in Little 2007). In line with the ethos of the CEFR, the task is to adapt it for the relevant groups of learners and the specific purposes. In the case of language assessment for migration purposes, the relevant groups are naturalistic adult and child L2 learners, studied longitudinally, for instance as in the early and highly influential SLA studies carried out in the first half of the 1990s in Germany with 5 L1 Gastarbeiter groups by Klein and Perdue (1991-1993). The descriptors of these learners’ performance need to be developed and expressed in language-specific, functional, linguistic, and socio-cultural exponents, based on learnability considerations, as well as actual language needs and language use of these groups of learners.

With regard to Kunnan’ (2008) criteria of access and administration, the following considerations would need to be made:

- Do candidates have equal opportunities?
- Do they have comparable educational, financial, geographical, personal access to language courses and the test itself?
 - Do they have equal opportunity to learn, to practice language learned in everyday life, to become familiar with the test, based on time engaged in high quality learning activities?

- Are the courses and the test affordable, are the accepted payment methods accessible?
- Are students able to attend classes and the test and not hindered by geographical distance?
- Are there accommodations for special needs?
- Is familiarity with test conditions, procedures and equipment assumed?

Exemplification of the framework for evaluating tests for migration and social integration purposes

As seen in the previous section, the ALTE LAMI group have produced their outline for policy makers to enable them to better judge the merits of various language tests for social cohesion and citizenship. Exemplification of this framework is provided in the form of the Cambridge ESOL Skills for Life examinations. The following considerations are reviewed for the Skills for Life tests:

1. Determining test purpose and real-world demands on test takers
2. Determining linguistic demands
3. Determining the appropriate level of difficulty linked to the CEFR
4. Producing test specifications to cover test format, task and item types, assessment criteria, item writing, pretesting, test administration, special requirements, marking and grading
5. Monitoring examiners, candidate responses and demographic information in order to be able to equate test versions and identify possible bias and to ensure test functionality and quality

Cambridge ESOL Skills for Life

1. Determining test purpose and real-world demands on test takers

The Cambridge ESOL Skills for Life qualifications contribute to the Government's Skills for Life initiative by providing assessment of ESOL which is designed around the standards for adult literacy and the ESOL core curriculum. It is designed to cover the standards and curriculum with sufficient range, breadth and depth to properly reflect the use of the English language in real world situations, appropriate to the needs of the client groups and the NQF level in question. The target users for the qualifications are settled communities, refugees (asylum seekers and settled refugees), migrant workers who work or settle in the UK for most of their lives, and partners and spouses of learners from all parts of the world who may have been settled for a number of years. The qualifications are designed to reflect the fact that target learners' educational and employment backgrounds are often highly diverse, from people with no previous education or employment to highly educated professionals.

2. Determining linguistic demands

Linguistic demands were determined partly by designing the tests around the standards for adult literacy and the ESOL core curriculum. However, a thorough needs analysis was also undertaken involving specialists in the field of ESOL learning and teaching and this was then followed by detailed trialling on the target language users.

It was expected that the learners' educational and employment backgrounds will be diverse, as well as their aspirations, literacy levels and language learning skills. This diversity is reflected in the range of material selected for use in these tests and in the task types which candidates need to

complete. Most of the topic areas correspond to themes contained in the ESOL Citizenship syllabus.

At Entry 1–3 candidates will encounter topics in the tests which are both familiar and relevant to them as learners of English. Topics may include: personal details and experiences, work, education/training, housing, family and friends, health, transport, weather, buying goods, leisure, UK society.

At Levels 1 and 2, the tasks are designed to reflect the fact that the needs of ESOL learners at these levels will be predominantly educational or professional, though broader social issues are also included in the materials where appropriate. Therefore, in addition to the above list of topics, candidates may encounter such topics as careers, academic study, information technology, the environment, law and order.

In line with the overall objectives of the Adult ESOL Core Curriculum, the choice of contexts, topics and texts is designed to encourage an understanding of spiritual, moral, ethical and cultural issues. It will also contribute to raising awareness of environmental issues and health and safety considerations, as well as European developments consistent with relevant international agreements.

3. Determining the appropriate level of difficulty linked to the CEFR

The levels of the Skills for Life examinations are demonstrably based on the Adult ESOL Core Curriculum and therefore the national standards for adult literacy and numeracy and specified at levels Entry 1 through to Level 2. The test specifications and more detailed item writer guidelines include thorough instructions on writing to these levels.

Cambridge ESOL Skills for Life examinations have also been mapped to the CEFR at levels A1 to C1. Cambridge ESOL examinations are the only certificated English language exams identified in the framework as being specifically linked to it by a long term research programme. Cambridge ESOL's processes include a range of measures to ensure alignment to the CEFR.

- When developing an examination, the test specifications include the CEFR level at which the exam will be set so that task types are chosen with the specific level in mind. The more detailed item writer guidelines include very detailed instructions on writing to each level of the CEFR and the writers themselves are trained to write to particular levels.
- To ensure consistency of the level of the examination, test questions are pretested and calibrated using anchor items to monitor exam difficulty before they are used in live exam papers. The calibrated items are then stored in the Cambridge ESOL Local Item Banking System (LIBS) where each item has a known difficulty and accordingly test papers are constructed to a target difficulty.
- Where human raters are involved, Cambridge ESOL follows a rigorous system of recruitment, induction, training, coordination, monitoring and evaluation (RITCME). Obligatory standardisation of writing examiners and general markers takes place prior to every marking session, and the writing samples used are evaluated by the most senior examiners for the paper. Oral assessors follow a similar RITCME process and are standardised using standardisation DVDs containing video recordings of Skills for Life candidates at each of the CEFR levels.
- Grading and post-examination review take place for each version of the test. Results of live administrations are monitored across a number of years to ensure consistent standards over time.

Cambridge ESOL Skills for Life certificates are available at Entry 1 (A1), Entry 2 (A2), Entry 3 (B1), Level 1 (B2) and Level 2 (C1) on the National Qualifications Framework. They are also available as separate modes or skills (Reading, Writing and Speaking & Listening) at each of the 5 levels. These individual qualifications make the examinations very accessible to candidates with a very broad range of individual level and skill profiles.

4. Producing test specifications to cover:

Assessment criteria, test format, task and item types. For Speaking and Listening, at each level, the assessment focuses on gathering evidence that the candidate can listen and respond, speak to communicate and engage in discussion. For Reading and Writing, at each level, the assessment focuses on gathering evidence that the student can operate at word, sentence and text level, while recognising that conveying meaning involves operating at these three levels simultaneously. This testing focus is then broken down into specific, individual testing points which can be assessed by using a suitable combination of test tasks and task types.

Item writing. The specifications and the more detailed item writer guidelines include very detailed instructions on writing to each level of the National Qualifications Framework and to each level of the CEFR. The items writers themselves have extensive ESOL teaching experience and are trained over a number of years to write to particular levels. Item writers work as external, independent consultants in teams on each of the Skills for Life modes and are led by very experienced Chairs or team leaders who are also external, independent consultants. The item writing process incorporates extensive monitoring, feedback and ongoing training for all item writers.

Pretesting. All test questions are pretested and calibrated using anchor items to monitor exam difficulty before they are used in live exam papers to ensure consistency of the level of the examination. Pretesting is carried out in Skills for Life teaching locations with large numbers of actual target test takers, ensuring a mixture of first language, nationality, age and gender. Both teachers and students have the opportunity to feed back on the suitability and level of the questions. The calibrated items are then stored in the Cambridge ESOL Local Item Banking System (LIBS) where each item has a known difficulty and accordingly test papers are constructed to a target difficulty.

Test administration. All Cambridge ESOL exams are taken at authorised Cambridge ESOL examination centres. They must meet high standards of professional integrity, security and customer service, and are subject to inspection by Cambridge ESOL. Centres running the exams can access detailed administrative information through a secure extranet, including handbooks for centres, administration instructions and regulations, minimum professional requirements for interlocutors, Speaking test administration guidelines, and interlocutor training packs. Cambridge ESOL Skills for Life exams are on demand, enabling colleges and other learning providers to offer them at a time that suits both them and their students.

Special circumstances. Special circumstances cover three main areas: special arrangements, special consideration and malpractice. Special arrangements candidates with visual, hearing, learning and other difficulties are given the chance to gain a Skills for Life certificate by Cambridge ESOL's Special Arrangements service. Examples of the kinds of special services offered include papers in Braille, enlarged print, papers printed on different coloured paper, lip-reading versions of Listening tests. Sample special papers are also made available so these candidates can have the same opportunity to practise as anyone else. Cambridge ESOL will give special consideration to candidates affected by adverse circumstances immediately before or during an examination. Examples of acceptable reasons for giving special consideration are in

cases of illness or other unexpected events. Malpractice Committees will consider cases where candidates are suspected of copying/colluding, or breaking the examination regulations in some other way.

Marking and grading. For Reading, marking reliability is ensured through extensive trialling and pretesting of tasks leading to detailed calibration of items, and by standardisation and co-ordination of clerical markers and examiners. Grading the exams takes into account statistics from pretesting and trialling, statistics on the candidature, statistics on the overall candidate performance, statistics on individual items, advice and recommendations of examiners, and comparison with statistics on exam performance on previous test versions. For Writing and Speaking & Listening, examiners mark according to criteria based on the Adult ESOL Core Curriculum, where candidates need to show that they can ordinarily achieve the stated standards. Writing examiners are recruited from ESOL practitioners meeting appropriate professional minimum standards. An induction process takes place where examiners are familiarised both with Cambridge ESOL standard procedures and with paper-specific issues. Training and co-ordination takes place through extensive engagement with, and discussion on, a large number of sample scripts showing a range of achievement across band levels. Throughout the marking process extensive monitoring of examiner performance is followed up by both qualitative and quantitative evaluation and feedback.

5. Monitoring

Monitoring examiners. Where human raters are involved, Cambridge ESOL follows a rigorous system of recruitment, induction, training, coordination, monitoring and evaluation (RITCME). Obligatory standardisation of Writing examiners and general markers takes place prior to the marking of all new test versions, and the writing samples used are evaluated by the most senior examiners for the paper. Standardisation of oral examiners takes place regularly and the video samples of performances which are used are rated by Cambridge ESOL's most experienced Senior Team Leaders and Team Leaders, representing a wide range of experience and familiarity with level. The marks provided are then subject to quantitative (SPSS and FACETS) and qualitative analysis before being approved for standardization purposes.

Monitoring candidate responses and demographic information. Cambridge ESOL constantly collects and analyses both information about candidate responses and demographic information about the candidates (e.g. age, gender and nationality). This together with information collected through pretesting and the analysis of live response data helps to ensure that the test items are free from bias and that candidates receive consistent results regardless of test version. This ensures that each test version works in a way which is fair to all targeted test takers, no matter what their background and that test results accurately portray the ability of the candidate. Conclusions from such analyses are constantly fed back into the item writing, test construction and grading processes so that these processes are continually improved.

Limitations of the framework for evaluating tests for migration purposes

The first step in the suggested framework above is to determine the test purpose and from this undertake a needs analysis in order to determine the real-world demands on the test takers. However, it is unlikely that there will ever be a single test that is designed solely to test language for migration, residency and citizenship purposes. What is more likely to happen is that language tests already in existence will be approved for these purposes, too. This means, of course, that tests approved for migration purposes would have originally been designed with a different purpose in mind. This may mean, for example, that the test was designed for a different target candidature and therefore the test format and test content may not be entirely appropriate. In the

case of the Cambridge ESOL Skills for Life tests, they were, in fact, designed for refugees and migrant workers, a candidature that is similar in some respects to the range of learners who have more recently taken them. However, they were designed for settled refugees and migrant workers who were settled in the UK. This is not the same as migrants who wish to come to the UK but who are currently resident in either their own or another country. This discrepancy would not just affect the content of the exam. The Skills for Life exams, since they were designed for settled migrants and refugees (and their partners), can only be taken in the UK. Clearly, migrants who are planning to come to the UK but who do not yet have the visa status to stay in the UK need to be able to take a language test outside the UK. So, whereas the Skills for Life tests would appear to be relatively suitable in terms of test format, content, level, etc, the fact that they cannot currently be taken outside the UK is a major limitation at the moment.

Conclusion

Since 2002, the year when the policy of language testing for migration and social integration purposes started to be formulated in the UK, the Language Assessment for Migration and Integration (LAMI) subgroup within ALTE has been working closely with the Council of Europe and relevant UK government departments, such as the Home Office Border and Immigration Agency and the Advisory Board on Naturalisation & Integration. Since this is an areas of fast changing policy-making with real social consequences, it is very important that the initial dialogue and collaboration between professional language testers and policy makers and stakeholders is maintained and enhanced in order to achieve successful social cohesion and integration in the UK.

By accepting more types and a wider range of evidence of knowledge of English and by differentiating specific groups of test takers, the recently introduced points based system will hopefully act as an instrument for recognition rather than a systematic means for exclusion. It will also tease apart content (knowledge of life in the UK) from language skills, and address the minimum language requirements for different purposes and different migrant groups. In the future, it might even, hopefully, require, profile and recognize partial competencies and recognize multicompetence which makes up migrants' linguistic capital. If it is implemented correctly and fairly, it could ultimately act as a strategic, forward-looking, overarching system for social cohesion (protection, integration, inclusion), rather than being part of the current retrospective management of migration (risk management, 'fire fighting', and inevitably, exclusion) in the UK.

Whatever policy making system is chosen, however, it is imperative that only language tests that meet rigorous standards should be approved for these purposes and it is here that the work of such special interest groups as the Language Assessment for Migration and Integration (LAMI) subgroup within ALTE have an important role to play.

(5,345 words)

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