

Investigating the relationship between input task characteristics and performance on written output tasks

Carolyn Westbrook
Southampton Solent University
University of Bedfordshire

Outline

- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ The pilot study
 - Methodology
 - Expectations
 - Findings
 - Expectations revisited
- ▶ Observations, issues and questions

Introduction

- ▶ Increased interest in integrated EAP testing: “real-life performance ... seen as the criterion of choice ...” (Shaw and Weir, 2007: 17)
- ▶ Research:
 - Independent vs integrated tests (Esmaeili, 2006; Gebril, 2009; Cumming *et al.*, 2004);
 - Input formats in listening tests (Daniel, 1986; Coniam, 2000; Ginther, 2002; Ockey, 2007; Wagner, 2010);
 - Note-taking in listening tasks (Dunkel, 1988; Faraco *et al.*, 2002; Carrell, 2007);
 - Assessing writing (Shaw, 2001; Weigle, 2002; Hamp-Lyons, 1991)

The pilot study

- ▶ Participants
 - 11 students on Pre-Master’s courses at a UK university
 - Ages: 18–40 (mainly 22–25 bracket)
 - Nationalities: Omani, French, Spanish, Taiwanese, Chinese, Japanese, Saudi
 - IELTS levels: roughly 3.5 to 6.5

Methodology

- ▶ VARK questionnaire
- ▶ IELTS Listening past paper
- ▶ IELTS Writing task 2 past paper
- ▶ EAP Listening into Writing task
 - Task: take notes on a lecture presented in four different formats and then write an essay on the lecture topic
 - Formats:
 - Seeing and hearing the speaker (Kinesthetic)
 - Hearing the speaker only (Auditory)
 - Hearing the speaker and seeing a diagram (Visual)
 - Hearing the speaker and seeing content information on a slide (Read/Write)
- ▶ Feedback questionnaire

Expectations

- ▶ Quantitative
 - Significant correlations between:
 - VARK and the independent listening & writing tasks
 - VARK and integrated task → sensory preferences impact on performance
 - Independent writing and EAP writing scores
 - Perceived performance vs actual performance
 - Perceived performance vs VARK scores
- ▶ Qualitative
 - A significant amount of language from lecture will be reproduced in integrated writing task
 - Mid-ability participants: to produce most matches
 - Higher ability participants: to paraphrase more
 - Lower ability participants: to understand less therefore reproduce less

Total number of reproductions

| BATH01 | BATH02 | BATH03 | BATH04 | BATH05 | BATH06 | BATH07 | BATH08 | BATH09 | BATH10 | BATH11 | TOTALS |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 8 | 15 | 0 | 36 | 37 | 10 | 31 | 24 | 20 | 20 | 27 | 236 |

EAP slides

| EAP slides | BATH01 | BATH02 | BATH03 | BATH04 | BATH05 | BATH06 | BATH07 | BATH08 | BATH09 | BATH10 | BATH11 | TOTALS |
|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 130 find out about the host culture | | | | | 1 | | | | | 1 | | 2 |
| 132 find out about the host country | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | 1 |
| 133 be aware of your own culture | | | | | 1 | | 1 | | | 1 | | 3 |
| 134 remember that culture shock exists | | | | | 1 | | 1 | | | 1 | | 3 |
| 135 aware of the symptoms | | | | | | | 1 | | | 1 | | 2 |
| 136 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 11 |

Expectations revisited

- ▶ Quantitative
 - Correlations
 - ↓
- ▶ Qualitative
 - Significant amount of language
 - mixed
 - Mid-ability participants: to produce most matches
 - ↓
 - Higher ability participants: to paraphrase more
 - ↓
 - Lower ability participants: to understand less therefore reproduce less
 - ☹ (Hooray!!)

Observations, issues and questions

- ▶ Observations
 - EAP essays – length and substance
 - IELTS vs EAP performance – ties in with Esmaili's (2006) findings
- ▶ Issues
 - Time pressure
 - VARK – limited research on validity
 - IELTS vs EAP test bias –
 - "I have nothing to say" vs "I don't understand the lecture!"
 - Cumming *et al.* (2004)
 - More participants needed – any volunteers?
- ▶ Questions
 - Film the participants?
 - Allow more time?

Thanks for your attention!
Any questions?



Bibliography

- CARRELL, P.L., 2007. "Note-taking strategies and their relationship to performance on listening comprehension and communicative assessment tasks." In: *TOEFL Monograph Series*, No. 35, January 2007. Princeton: ETS.
- CUMMING, A., L. GRANT, P. MULCAHY-ERNI & D.P. POWERS, 2004. "A teacher-verification study of speaking and writing prototype tasks for a new TOEFL." In: *Language Testing*, Vol. 21, no. 2, pp. 107-145.
- DANIEL, P., 1986. "But can your students read the diagrams?" In: *System*, Vol. 14, no. 1, pp. 15-27. Pergamon Journals Limited.
- DUNKEL, P., 1988. "The content of L1 and L2 students' lecture notes and its relation to test performance." In: *TESOL Quarterly*, Vol. 22, no. 2, pp. 259-281.
- ESMAILI, H., 2006. "Integrated reading and writing Tasks and ESL students' reading and writing performance in an English language test." In: *Canadian Modern Language Review*, Vol. 58, no. 4, pp. 599-620. University of Toronto Press.
- FLEMING, N., 2011. "The VARK Questionnaire Version 7.1". On: *VARK: A guide to learning styles*. [Online] Available at: <http://www.vark-learn.com/english/qaqa.asp?questionnaire> (Accessed: 19 April 2011).
- GEBRIL, A., 2009. "Score generalizability of academic writing tasks: does one test method fit it all?" In: *Language Testing*, Vol. 26, no. 4, pp. 507-531.
- GINTHER, A., 2002. "Context and content visuals and performance on listening comprehension stimuli." In: *Language Testing*, Vol. 19, no. 2, pp. 133-167.
- HAMP-LYONS, L., 1991. *Assessing Second Language Writing in Academic Contexts*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex Corporation.
- LEE, H.-K. & C. ANDERSON, 2007. "Validity and topic generality of a writing performance test". In: *Language Testing*, Vol. 24, no. 3, pp. 307-330.
- LEITE, W.L., M. SVINICKI & Y. SHI, 2010. "Attempted validation of the scores of the VARK: learning styles inventory with multivariate-multimethod Confirmatory Factor Analysis Models". In: *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, Vol. 70, no. 2, pp. 323-339.
- OCKEY, G.J., 2007. "Construct implications of including still image or video in computer-based listening tests". In: *Language Testing*, Vol. 24, no. 4, pp. 517-537.
- SHAW, S.D. & C.J. WEIR, 2007. *Studies in Language Testing 26 - Examining Writing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- WAGNER, E., 2010. "Test taker performance on video versus audio-only L2 listening tests." *LTRC Twenty-ten: 32nd Language Testing Research Colloquium*. University of Cambridge, Cambridge, 14-16 April.