

Assessing Languages for Specific Purposes

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Examples of past ESP assessments

- Doctors, nurses and other health professionals
 - Occupational English Test (Univ. of Melbourne)
- Air traffic controllers
 - Air traffic controllers test (ICAO)
- Language teachers
 - APTIS (British Council)
 - ITAs test (Iowa State Univ.)
- Business executives
 - BULATS (Cambridge ELA)
- College and university students
 - ESLPE (UCLA)

Authenticity in LSP

- ▶ Widdowson (1979):
 - ▶ Authenticity...is a function of the interaction between the reader/hearer and the text which incorporates the intentions of the writer/speaker...Authenticity has to do with appropriate response.

Situational and Interactional authenticity in LSP

- Bachman (1991):
 - **Situational authenticity** is composed of authentic characteristics derived from an analysis of tasks in the TLU situation, the features of which are realized as test task characteristics.
 - It can be demonstrated by making the relationship between the test task characteristics and the features of tasks in the TLU explicit.
 - **Interactional authenticity** involves the interaction of the test takers' specific purpose language ability with the test task;
 - the extent to which the test taker is engaged in the task by responding to the features of the TLU situation embodied in the test task characteristics.

Views on LSP

- ▶ Different performance views
 - ▶ **Weak performance view**
 - ▶ Language assessment making inferences about language ability and NOT job performance
 - ▶ **Strong performance view**
 - ▶ Language assessment making inferences about job performance



Weak performance
OET
ESLPE



Strong performance

LSP test development

- Needs analysis
 - Questionnaires
 - Observations
- Performance assessments
 - Designed to reflect real life situations, either in work or in study.
- Task types
 - Role play: OET
 - Traditional assessments
 - See ALTE Guidelines for the development of LSP tests

Examples from Traditional LSP

- ▶ Portuguese proficiency for law enforcement and courts in Macau
- ▶ Indonesian tour guides' Chinese proficiency in Bali
- ▶ Filipina domestic helpers' Japanese proficiency for elder care in Japan
- ▶ Indonesian and Filipina domestic helpers' English proficiency in Singapore
- ▶ Sanskrit proficiency for Buddhist studies in Hong Kong

Examples from assessing health-care professionals

- Physicians, surgeons, family practitioners
- Residents, Interns
- Nurses
- Pharmacists
- Para-medics
- Medical administrators
- Medical insurance companies

Communication skills: a patient-centered approach

- Western Michigan University:
- Example of Doctor-patient communication:
 - Interpersonal communication
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S4wWCIQhZaA>
 - <https://youtu.be/S4wWCIQhZaA>
- 1-9 mins; 9-13.30 mins

LSP in the digital era

- Use of technology for teaching, learning, and assessment
- Simulation-based learning
 - For teaching
 - For learning
 - For assessment

Simulation-based learning (Lateef, 2010)

- ▶ Simulation is
 - ▶ a technique for an immersive learning experience
 - ▶ a platform for presenting realistic scenarios
 - ▶ an excellent training and assessment instrument
- ▶ Simulation can include
 - ▶ training technical expertise
 - ▶ Problem-solving and decision-making skills
 - ▶ Interpersonal and communication skills

Simulated learning: Airline pilot training

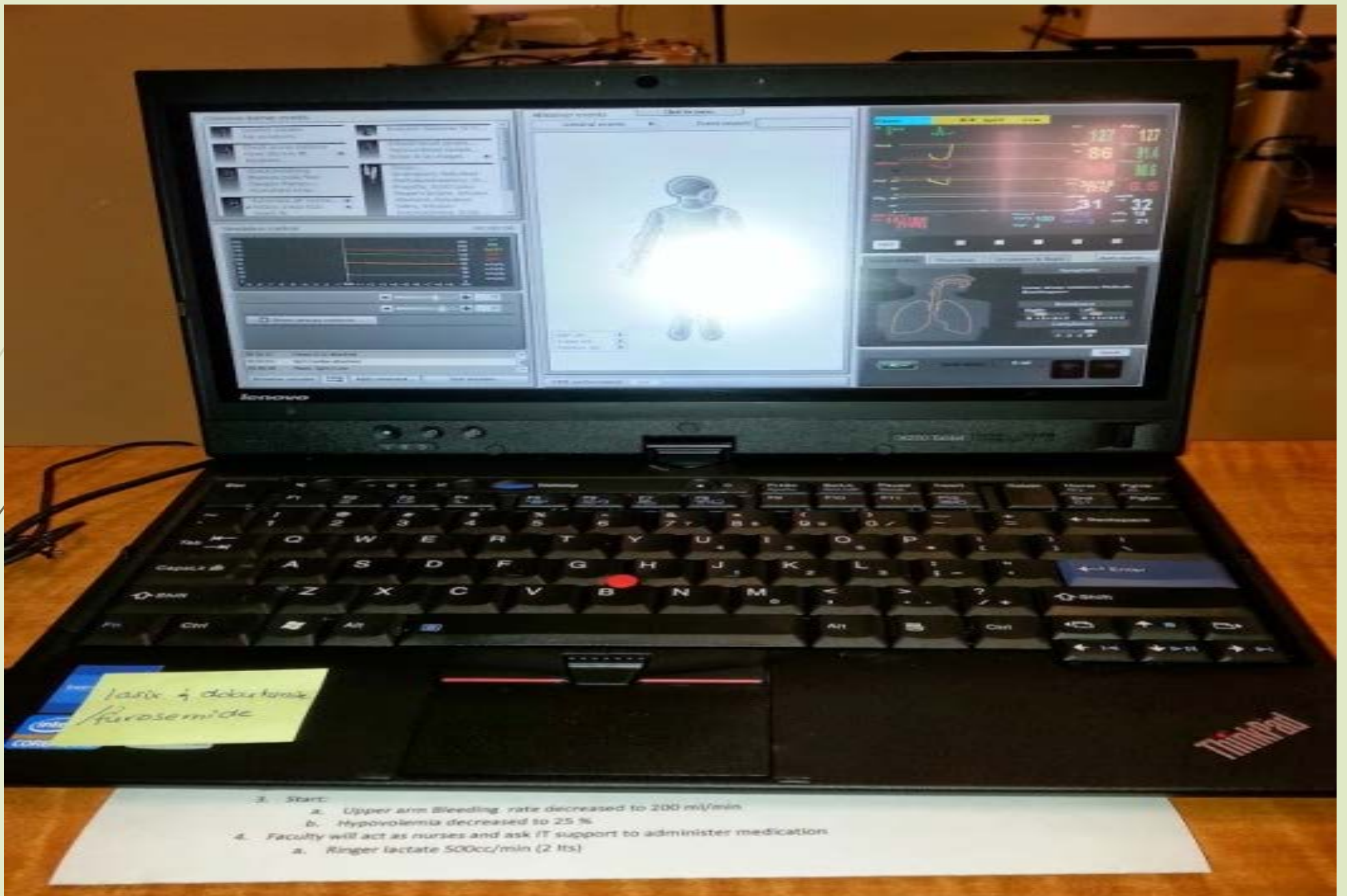
- ▶ Pilots train in simulated conditions for three **abnormal** conditions:
 - ▶ aerodynamic stalls at low, mid and high altitudes,
 - ▶ encounters with hazards [low level wind shear with and without warning], and
 - ▶ engine failures [on take off].
- ▶ These events are chosen with the highest occurrence rate.
- ▶ Regulators impose the penalties for getting them wrong.
- ▶ Regulations additionally set forth specific test standards that describe an acceptable performance on the part of the pilot.

Simulated learning sites

- By Monirb - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0,
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=50110458>
Photo
- <https://caehealthcare.com/patient-simulation//>
Photo; video tutorials
- <https://www.simulab.com/educational-resources>
 - TraumaMan







Simulation-based learning

- ▶ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZXY_VtEhTNI
 - ▶ Loma Linda University, California, USA
- ▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U1zq4T7MEWw>
 - ▶ Saskatchewan, Alberta, Canada
- ▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EK24OguMq6w>
 - ▶ Hip-replacement patient

Key aspects of training/assessment

- (1) **General medical knowledge [content knowledge]**
 - Application and Procedures
- (2) **Interactional proficiency**
 - Cultural and linguistic interaction [elicitation, empathy]
 - Other behaviors [bedside, note-taking, feedback]
- (3) **In contextually authentic settings**
 - Regular, distressed and irregular patient-nurse/doctor settings
 - Manikins[a model of the human body for teaching anatomy, or demonstrating surgical operations]
 - 360 degree feedback [from all persons involved]

Inseparability of content and L2 reading ability (Cai & Kunnan, 2018)

- ▶ Content knowledge, also known as specific **purpose background knowledge** (Douglas, 2000), refers to specialized language knowledge in a particular discipline (e.g., specialized medical and nursing knowledge for professional nurses)
- ▶ In the context of reading assessment, content knowledge plays an important role in determining language for specific purposes (LSP) reading performance, because it enables readers to contextualize information from the texts to be processed, and this contextualization eventually makes comprehension achievable (Kintsch, 2012; Kintsch & Van Dijk, 1978).

The future for LSP assessment: Simulation-based

- **Focus on**
- (1) Content knowledge
- (2) Interactional proficiency
 - Used together in Contextually authentic settings
- (3) 360 degree feedback from all relevant persons

References

- Cai, Y. & Kunnan, A. J. (2018). Examining the inseparability of content knowledge from LSP reading ability: an approach combining bifactor-multidimensional IRT and SEM. *LAQ*, 14,1-21.
- Douglas, D. (1999). *Assessing languages for specific purposes*. Cambridge University Press.
- *Occupational English test*. [Developed by the University of Melbourne]
 - Retrieved from:
<https://www.occupationalenglishtest.org/>