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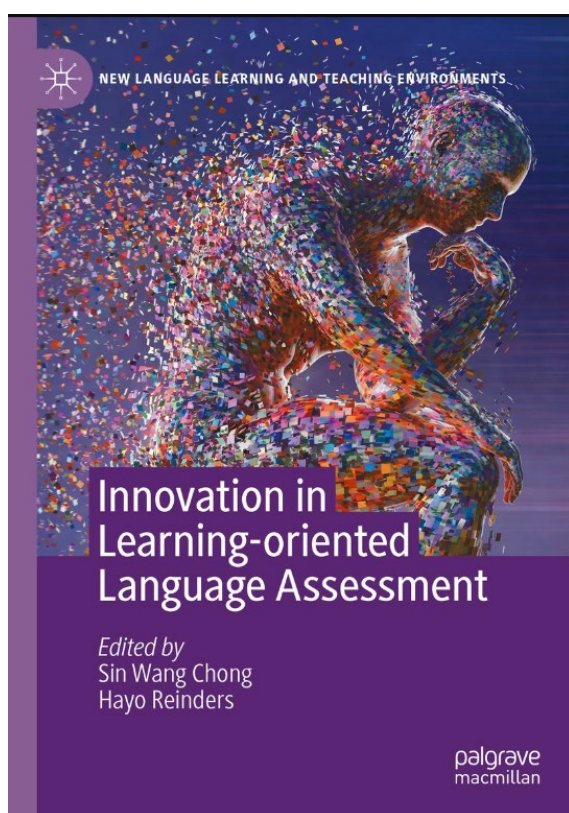
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Book Review

Innovation in Learning-Oriented Language Assessment, edited by Sin Wang Chong and Hayo Reinders, Palgrave Macmillan, 2023, 333 pp., EUR 129.99 (Hardcover), ISBN 9783031189494



Learning-oriented assessment (LOA) aims to address the negative effects of high-stakes testing and to strike a balance between accountability and learning. However, implementing LOA is not without its difficulties, among which validity concerns, the need for understanding educators' assessment beliefs and for conducting teacher training to improve assessment literacy pose significant challenges (Gebriel, 2021, p.1). While there is a growing body of theoretical and empirical research on LOA (e.g., Turner & Purpura, 2016; Tan, 2022; Zhao & Qi, 2022), evidence demonstrating its potential benefits in second language education is still in paucity. *Innovation in Learning-Oriented Language Assessment*, edited by Sin Wang Chong and Hayo Reinders, bridges that gap by providing educators and practitioners with valuable insights and practical guidance to effectively implement LOA in various teaching environments, unlocking its transformative potential.

This carefully curated edited volume comprises eighteen chapters that highlight innovative practices in the implementation of learning-oriented assessment (LOA) across various contexts, offering valuable practical insights into assessing a wide range of language skills in both offline and online classroom settings.

The studies included in this volume originate from ten different national contexts, with a particular emphasis on five Asian countries of China, Iran, Japan, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey. Each chapter of the book ends with a section titled "practice brief", which provides valuable tips and insights for language teachers who may be interested in implementing the assessment examples in their own classrooms or specific contexts to help more practitioners discover innovative ideas that inspire them to design and explore their own language assessment practices. Another interesting aspect of this book is the inclusion of critical reviews (Chapters 2 and 14) that synthesized relevant works on learning-oriented language assessment, providing readers with a comprehensive overview of the field.

The first chapter of the book provides a conceptualisation of language assessment and the emergence of learning-oriented assessment, particularly in the context of language education. The editors introduce ten



learning-oriented language assessment principles synthesised from the studies included in this volume. These principles highlight the need for authenticity in designing language assessment (principle 2) and that LOA can enhance not only teachers' (principle 7) but also learners' autonomy (principle 10).

Chapter 2 reviewed 44 empirical studies on formative language assessment; the review highlights key areas of focus, such as formative feedback and self-regulation, while identifying gaps, such as the need for studies on lower education levels and other language skills. The other review chapter is Chapter 14, which evaluated eleven studies on mobile-assisted language assessment, especially its application, advantages, and disadvantages in assessing the vocabulary of college or university students. Although the number of publications reviewed is limited, both chapters offer valuable insights and guidance for LOA research and practice.

Eight of the fifteen empirical studies included in this book are conducted in Asian countries, including China (Chapters 3, 6, and 8), Turkey (Chapter 5), Saudi Arabia (Chapter 11), Iran (Chapter 12), and Japan (Chapters 7 and 15). These studies provide rich instances of practical approaches to implementing LOA in diverse language assessment settings within Asia. Chapter 6, for example, explores the potential of using action-oriented assessment descriptors in the Chinese test-driven teaching and learning context. The findings provide insights particularly on the needs of teachers to help students understand the marking criteria for writing assignments to promote more effective self-assessment.

A tech-based innovation is presented in Chapter 12, which reports the utilisation of Virtual Reality (VR) for assessing English language learning among adult learners in Iran. While the prospect of using technology often incurs some accessibility issues, especially in low-income schools, this study demonstrates how teachers can create a more affordable and authentic way of improving students' learning experience by using a VR cardboard viewer and readability-available VR platforms. This study is a remarkable example of how creativity in teaching can promote richer learning experience and improve students' performance.

Chapter 15 presents another innovative approach to assessment; the study incorporated gaming into learning to build a speaking portfolio in the form of transcribed game montages. This approach was inspired by a popular practice among professional gamers who share highlighted videos of their plays while explaining their gaming processes to a wider audience. In this study, students were asked to create montages of themselves playing a video game during lessons. After that, they were instructed to record themselves as they narrated their play. This process was repeated to build a speaking portfolio for assessment materials, fostering a student-centered, constructive, and transparent assessment of students' speaking ability.

Overall, this volume provides a comprehensive selection of innovative approaches to learning-oriented language assessment. Nonetheless, adaptation and adoption of these innovative approaches to fit in diverse learning contexts are still challenging. This is further complicated by the order the studies are presented in the book, which does not seem to follow a certain theme, the way similar edited volumes (e.g., Gebriel, 2021; Sadeghi & Thomas, 2023) are usually structured. To improve the coherence of the book, themes that underpin featured studies could be added. For instance, the book can be structured in three parts: a) Review of current studies on learning-oriented language assessment comprising Chapter 2 and Chapter 14, b) Improving teachers' understanding and enhancing practice in LOA (Chapters 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 16 and 17), and c) Self-reflection and the use of technology in LOA to promote learner's autonomy (Chapters 5, 6, 11, 12, 13, 15, 18). The current reviewer also felt that the 'practice briefs' at the end of each chapter could achieve a more significant impact if the editors could have another concluding chapter at the end of the book to summarise all practice briefs and the editors' expert views. The concluding chapter could be further linked with the ten learning-oriented language assessment principles introduced in the first chapter.

In sum, this volume is a strategic and timely selection of current research from various learning contexts, particularly in Asian countries. The studies featured offer valuable practical insights for language teachers and researchers alike. I would recommend this book to second language teachers seeking inspiration to innovate their practice, researchers as well as graduate students whose interest aligns with the focus of this book.

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