

ECOLT Abstract
Heidi Liu Banerjee

Measuring Complex Constructs of Communicative Language Competence Using Scenario-Based Assessment

With the vast development of digital technology and the widespread use of social network platforms, the competences required for academic and career success in the 21st century have expanded to include complex skills such as critical thinking, analytical reasoning, and strategic problem-solving. Consequentially, there has been a call to broaden the constructs of communicative language ability in L2 assessment to better represent the everyday language use in the modern society.

Scenario-based assessment (SBA), an innovative, technology-based assessment approach, shows great affordances for expanding the measured constructs of an assessment. Through the utilization of a sequence of thematically-related tasks along with simulated character interaction, SBA offers opportunities to examine L2 learners' communicative competence in a purposeful, interactive, and contextually meaningful manner.

The purpose of this study is to utilize SBA to measure high-intermediate L2 learners' topical knowledge and their L2 KSAs as part of the broadened constructs of L2 communicative competence. To fulfill the scenario goal, learners are required to demonstrate their listening, reading, and writing abilities to *build and share knowledge*. In addition, learners' prior topical knowledge was measured and their topical learning tracked using the same set of topical knowledge items.

118 adult EFL learners participated in the study. The results showed that the tasks embedded in the SBA served as appropriate measures of high-intermediate learners' communicative competence. The topical knowledge items were found to function appropriately, supporting the use of SBA to measure topical knowledge as part of the broadened constructs of communicative competence. In addition, most learners exhibited substantial topical learning over the course of the SBA, suggesting that with proper contextualization, learning can be facilitated within an assessment. In sum, this study demonstrates the potential value of SBA as an approach to measure complex constructs of communicative language competence in L2 contexts.