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Introduction to the Special Issue in Honour of Professor Glenn Fulcher

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Developments in Language Testing and Assessment

Language testing and assessment are diverse areas which continue to experience rapid development as fields of study. The same growth is also true when we consider the range of methods of testing and assessing student abilities that we have at our disposal. Indeed, as a glance at ‘flagship’ journals such as *Language Testing* (2022) and *Language Assessment Quarterly* (2022) will confirm, the scope of academic scholarship is now enormous, as are the many ways in which testers and assessors create, administer, score, and evaluate the tests and assessments they have at their disposal.

However, despite this rapid and continuous development, at the heart of these areas is the need for appropriate, fair, valid, reliable, and useful testing and assessment practices and instruments (see recent considerations of these issues in Fulcher & Harding, 2022). This Special Issue in honour of Professor Glenn Fulcher is a tribute to his work at the heart of these areas. The Special Issue describes this work holistically and across different domains of focus.

Professor Fulcher's Role in Developments

Professor Fulcher's work has combined theory and practice to promote good testing and assessment practices. His long engagement with rating instruments (e.g., Fulcher, 1996a, 1997,

2007, 2012a; Fulcher et al., 2011), assessing speaking (e.g., see, Browne & Fulcher, 2017; Fulcher, 1996b, 1998, 2014, 2015, 2018; Fulcher & Márquez-Reiter, 2003), assessment standards (e.g., see Davidson & Fulcher, 2007; Fulcher, 2004, Fulcher, 2016a, 2016b), computerised testing (e.g., Davidson & Fulcher, 2012; Fulcher, 1999, 2000) and language assessment literacy (e.g., see Fulcher, 2012b, 2019, 2020, 2021) have inspired many to adopt, adapt and advance his work.

The scale of Professor Fulcher's impact is clearly evidenced by the number of studies that have cited his work. On his Google Scholar profile alone, he has amassed a count of over 7,131 citations: with just under half of these in the last five years, indicating the continuing impact of his work. Amongst the work which has drawn on Professor Fulcher's, is research carried out by test and assessment providers across all continents. These include studies such as research reports for IELTS (e.g., Weir et al., 2003) and TOEFL (e.g., Jamieson & Poonpon, 2013) and many other international providers and stakeholders.

At the same time, Professor Fulcher's work has inspired many recent works of our own in the MENA region (e.g., see McCallum & Coombe, 2020, 2021; Rauf & McCallum, 2020) and that of others (e.g., Davidson & Coombe, 2019; Gebril & Eid, 2017; Hidri, 2016, 2020), as well as other local contexts and domains of study (e.g., see studies on proficiency testing in (Quyhn, 2019)); studies of rating scale development for proficiency tests for work (e.g., Knoch et al., 2020), blog posts (e.g., Rock, 2022) and studies in countries such as England (e.g., Tavakoli & Hunter, 2018), Iran (e.g., Ghanbari & Barati, 2020), the USA (Choi, 2021), among many more; studies in language assessment literacy across Asia (e.g., Lam, 2015; Xu & Brown, 2017), South America (e.g., Giraldo, 2021), Europe (Vogt & Tsagari, 2014; Vogt et al., 2020) and Turkey (e.g., Hatipoğlu, 2015) to name a few.

Professor Fulcher has also inspired many in the testing and assessment world through other professional activities and service. Indeed, he has driven innovation and advances in assessment through his editorship of *Language Testing* (2006 - 2015), amongst other journals; and has been awarded multiple accolades for his contributions to the field by organisations such as ILTA (2011), the Higher Education Academy, in the UK (2014) and ETS (2021).

The impact of Professor Fulcher's work is the motivation behind this Special Issue. In this Special Issue we pay tribute to that impact with a collection of theoretical and empirical papers from language testing and assessment scholars who have all been inspired by Professor Fulcher's work. In doing so, we hope these papers will encourage further discussion and innovation in the field.

The Organisation of the Special Issue

The Special Issue begins with an interview with Professor Fulcher. He elaborates on his own scholarly journey in language testing and assessment by sharing his early and more recent interests in these domains. As he approaches retirement, he reflects on his career by considering the key influences and inspirations behind his own work and explaining what he sees are still considerable areas of opportunity in language testing and assessment.

We then present 8 papers which have reviewed and revisited theoretical and empirical aspects of Professor Fulcher's work. The first paper titled '*Glenn Fulcher's Thirty-Five Years of Contribution to Language Testing and Assessment: A Systematic Review*' is a systematic review of Professor Fulcher's work, written by Professor Fulcher himself, Dr. Ali Panahi, and Dr. Hassan Mohebbi. In their systematic review, they cover the key contributions of Professor Fulcher's work over his 35-year career in language testing and assessment.

The 7 remaining papers cover specific aspects of Professor Fulcher's work including: scales and frameworks, language assessment literacy, performance-based speaking tests, test preparation and fairness and the provision of feedback. In the first of these papers, **Papagergiou** looks at the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) and highlights how the field of language assessment needs to consider more carefully how score mapping is often misinterpreted and the implications for this. Next, **Kermad** and **Bogorevich** also draw on the notion of scales but take a quantitative approach to analysing speech perception scale lengths. Their paper has important practical and theoretical implications for scale validity and length.

Taking influence from another cornerstone of Professor Fulcher's work, **Butler** discusses the important idea that language assessment literacy should include assessment with learners. Drawing on interview data with children, Butler advocates that including learner voices in LAL can make LAL itself more connected to learning and instruction. **Mohammadkhah et al.** also take an empirical approach to their study of LAL in Iran. They use a commendable sample of teachers to establish their conceptualisation of assessment theories and skills.

Focusing on the skill of speaking, **Dimova** provides a comprehensive review of the use of performance-based speaking tests in local language testing contexts. The final two papers in the issue examine test preparation and the provision of feedback. **Kim** focuses on the former and provides an interesting insight into TOEFL cramming schools in South Korea and the specific techniques students employ in test preparation. In the final paper of the issue, **Panahi and Mohebbi** look at the issue of giving feedback from the internal structure of a test paper and its questions. They conclude that using CDMs (Cognitive Diagnostic Models) can helpfully identify test takers' strengths and weaknesses with different item types.

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