

# **Assessing the Suitability of the Project 2020 Test for EFL Teachers in Vietnam**

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## **Abstract**

With the aim to upgrade English teaching and learning in the country, the Vietnamese ministry of Education and Training has conducted a nationwide project known as Project 2020. As part of this project, EFL teachers across the

about the quality of the project !!! Test itself, particularly in light of literature on language for specific purposes /%2 0 tests# This paper will address the characteristics of and current issues in

Another common choice when conducting an E2 test is to adapt or combine recognised general English tests such as IELTS or TOEFL (Sullivan, 1980), regardless of the possible drawbacks of constrainedly adapting the functions of general language tests to those for occupational purposes (Foulas, 1990).

The replacement of E2 tests with non-specific and standardised tests (e.g., IELTS) has received criticism from other researchers and test takers. These tests are not intentionally developed for specific purposes, and, therefore, fail to assess the language essential for test takers' in-service performance. Although they manage to evaluate, more or less, the information related to general language proficiency, the specific language determining successful performance

effects on their performance in classrooms# Those teachers tend to (e less con' dent in their teaching and have dif' culty choosing suitable teaching strategies /2madi 7 Al)Lha1o, !"8H: Tang, !"8H: Tang /!"8H: Tang /!"8H: Tang witnessed that E\$% teachers with limited English pro' ciency provided inappropriate feedback to their students# Teachers' target language pro' ciency also affects their professional development and prestige within the staff# According to =akata's /!"8H: Tang observations, there was a positive correlation (etween teachers' language pro' ciency and their ability and confidence in assessing their colleagues' teaching performance#

Evaluating teachers' performance has (ecome a prerequisite for the quality of foreign language teaching and learning# A multitude of efforts and investments have contributed to substantial projects meant to assess teachers' language competency# It is undeniable that test tasks are supposed to reflect teachers' professional activities# In that case, performance tests are an ideal choice /Araham 7 Lakans, 8CDD# Performance tests are usually in-house assessments conducted within an educational institution in which teachers are required to perform a part of their teaching process in a real classroom situation# However, an obvious drawback of this kind of assessment is that it can only involve a small number of teachers and the results might (e questioned due to the subjectivity of (eaminers' assessments#

In an attempt to investigate teachers' target language pro' ciency on a (road scale, teachers' language pro' ciency has (een assessed (y nationwide projects involving all teachers across a country /e#g#, Song Ong -oniam 7 Salvey, !"8H: Tang, Ireland /J Sullivan, !"8H: Tang and Vietnam /=\$% !"8H: Tang# As a telling example, Song Ong is now /!"8H: Tang in the middle of a national project involving secondary and primary teachers# They are required to take reading, writing, listening and speaking pro' ciency tests, as well as perform a teaching demonstration# It appears to have (een a well-prepared project, since piloting processes and repeated training for assessors were conducted in advance /- oniam 7 Salvey, !"8H: Tang# However, the initial outcomes still show no significant improvement in teachers' standards /Frave, !"8H: Tang, as cited in - oniam 7 Salvey, !"8H: Tang#

It should (e noted that %2 tests for teachers have (ontained (oth praise and criticism with respect to their specificity, authenticity and impact on teachers# It is worth acknowledging that (eaminers have had limited engagement with the literature on developing a proper test /Foulas, !"8H: Tang# Also, the nature of an %2 test itself contains a variety of factors to (e considered /J Sullivan, !"8H: Tang# As for tests designed for assessing teachers' pro' ciency, aspects specific to teaching should (e taken into account# In the following sections, I will closely examine the case of Vietnam, where E\$% teachers' English pro' ciency has only recently drawn serious attention /; ai, !"8H: Tang#

### **The Adapted CEFR in the Vietnamese Context**

Developed (y -ouncil of Europe in !"8H: Tang, the most updated format of the - E\$. is originally designed for the contexts of European countries only# It is designed to help Europeans overcome possible difficulties arising in a \*multilingual and multicultural Europe+ /-ouncil of Europe, !"8H: Tang, and intended to (e used to assess,



showed that 79 percent of elementary teachers and 62 percent of high school teachers were

/An example of Writing task 1 of the Project "Test"

The topic can be argued to be unsuitable for English language teachers in the Vietnamese

English teachers actually need for their teaching practices. Also, the organization of the examination, which might affect the results of teacher test takers, should be taken into account.

### **Conclusion**

It is praiseworthy that the Project English Test has offered teachers an opportunity to self-evaluate their language proficiency as well as encourage lifelong learning, which is of paramount importance to teachers' success. Furthermore, for many Vietnamese teachers, the training they receive from the project helps them get exposure to new teaching methods. This is valuable and urgent for those who are from rural areas.



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**APPENDIX A**  
**CEFR Reference Levels**

Level	Code	Local descriptor
Proficient user	B1	Independent user
	B2	Proficient user
Independent user	B1	Independent user
	B2	Proficient user
Basic user	A1	Breakthrough
	A2	Waystage

Source: Council of Europe, 1998

**APPENDIX B**

**Description of a Project 2020 Test for Vietnamese EFL test**

Components	Point Allocation	Duration (minutes)	Number of items	Task description
Listening	100	45	19 items	Task 8@short or instructions Task every
Reading	100	45	10 items	
Writing	100	45	1 task	
Speaking	100	45		

Source: <http://www.vstep.edu.vn>

**About the A**