

On the Factor Structure of the Grammar Section of University of Tehran English Proficiency Test (UTEPT)

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted with 3,385 participants who took an English language proficiency test as a partial requirement for entering a PhD program in different fields of education. This test has three sections which are grammar, vocabulary and reading comprehension. To determine the construct validity of the test, a series of analyses were done. Total test items were subjected to a factor analysis assuming three factors. It was seen the three components postulated theoretically were verifiable. In other words, there were three distinct sections in the test. These were grammar, vocabulary, and reading comprehension. Furthermore, the data from the grammar section were subjected to an exploratory factor analysis (EFA). Having conducted EFA through Principal Components Analysis (PCA) with varimax rotation yielded distinct factors in the grammar section. In one sub-section, eight distinct factors and in the other sub-section six distinct factors were extracted.

Keywords: Construct validity, factor analysis, exploratory factor analysis, principal components analysis, grammar section

1. INTRODUCTION

Test validation is an important enterprise, especially when the test is a high stake one. University of Tehran administers a proficiency test to PhD candidates on a yearly basis. The test is a high stake one; almost 9000 candidates take the test. High-stakes assessment is any assessment whose outcome has life-changing implications for the test taker. Admission tests for universities or other professional programs, certification exams, or citizenship tests are all high-stakes assessment