

## A book review of the Language Classroom Assessment, Second Edition

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**Language** assessment within the classroom context is a multifaceted endeavor, combining theory, practice, and pedagogy. In the rapidly evolving landscape of language teaching and learning, assessments play a vital role in gauging students' linguistic proficiency, shaping instructional methodologies, and informing educational policies and practices. Within this enormous field, Liying Cheng's seminal work, *Language Classroom Assessment, Second Edition*, edited by Thomas S. C. Farrell, emerges as a beacon, guiding teachers through the intricate terrain of language assessment. In this review, I delve into the depths of this comprehensive volume, exploring its structure, theoretical underpinnings, practical applications, and its enduring significance in the field of language education.

Cheng's work is a testament to her expertise in the field, drawing from her extensive research and practical experience. The second edition of *Language Classroom Assessment* is a well-crafted text that offers a holistic perspective on language assessment, encompassing diverse facets ranging from theoretical frameworks to practical implementation strategies. At its core, the book strives to bridge the gap between theory and practice, equipping teachers with the requisite knowledge and tools to design, implement, and evaluate effective language assessments.

The book is structured into three sections, each describing crucial aspects of language classroom assessment. The first section, "Understanding Language Classroom Assessment," lays the theoretical groundwork, key concepts, principles, and approaches. Cheng navigates through the theoretical landscape, discussing the intricacies of validity, reliability, authenticity, and washback. Through her explanations and examples, she simplifies complex theories, empowering teachers to make informed decisions regarding assessment design.

Building on this theoretical scaffold, the second section, "Principles and Procedures for Language Classroom Assessment," dives into the practical aspects of assessment design, administration, and evaluation. Cheng utilized a pragmatic approach, offering a large number of assessment techniques and tools that are tailored to diverse linguistic contexts and proficiency levels. From the traditional paper-and-pencil tests to creative performance-based assessments, the book encompasses a wide variety of assessment modalities that can cater to the diverse needs and preferences of language teachers.

Furthermore, Cheng underscores the importance of aligning assessment practices with instructional objectives, fostering continuity in the language learning process. By emphasizing the integration of formative and summative assessments, she advocated for a balanced approach that promotes continuous feedback and learner autonomy. Drawing

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upon contemporary research and best practices, Cheng equips teachers with practical guidelines for creating valid, reliable, and fair assessments that promote real language acquisition and proficiency.

The final section, "Assessment for Learning and Beyond," goes beyond the traditional boundaries of assessment, exploring its transformative potential in promoting learner engagement, motivation, and autonomy. Cheng believes there should be a shift towards assessment as a formative tool for learning enhancement instead of just an evaluative measurement. Through innovative approaches, such as self-assessment, peer assessment, and portfolio assessment, teachers are encouraged to create an environment of reflective practice and learner empowerment.

One of the strengths of Cheng's work is its inclusivity and accessibility. While grounded in theory, the book purposely makes complex concepts more understandable to novice teachers and seasoned professionals. Moreover, the inclusion of diverse case studies, classroom scenarios, and reflective questions enhances the pedagogical value, facilitates active engagement, and critical reflection. In addition, one of the book's strengths is its global perspective. Cheng's insights offer cultural understanding, sensitivity, and equity, as she advocates for inclusive assessment practices that honor and respect the linguistic diversity and identities of the learners.

While *Language Classroom Assessment, Second Edition* has its justified place in language education, it is not without limitations. The breadth and depth of the content may appear daunting to some teachers who have time constraints and need more timely assistance. Moreover, the dynamic nature of language teaching and learning facilitates the need for continuous updates and revisions to reflect the emerging trends and innovations in assessment practices.

Another limitation is that the text does not discuss Generative AI in the field of education. Perhaps this was intentional, as the topic is extremely large, complex, and highly debatable. However, AI is becoming a widely used assessment tool for teachers, from specific websites that offer spelling and grammar check like Grammarly.com, to more general AI websites that can create the assessment methods directly like ChatGPT.

Having said that, as someone who teaches future teachers, I would recommend this text for professors in my situation. It is an excellent book for future teachers to read and then use a discussion platform. Since assessment is a vital part of teaching, it needs to be in the forefront of any teacher program. And this text can greatly assist the teacher and the students.

In conclusion, *Language Classroom Assessment, Second Edition* is a strong and useful book in the field of language assessment. It offers a comprehensive synthesis of theory, practice, and pedagogy. As teachers attempt to navigate through the complex terrain of language assessment, Cheng offers a guiding light to assist teachers on their pathway towards more equitable, effective, and transformative assessment practices.

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