

Research Notes 84

**Towards Reforming the University Entrance Exam
System in Japan: A Case Study of Linguaskill General**

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Towards Reforming the University Entrance Exam System in Japan: A Case Study of Linguaskill General

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Foreword

This issue contains a report from the Cambridge English Funded Research Programme. This programme provides funding and other support for researchers at universities and other institutions to carry out projects related to Cambridge English tests and services. The purpose is to enable independent research on our tests and support the global language testing community. Earlier reports from the Funded Research Programme have appeared in Research Notes issues 47, 52, 54, 57, 70 and 75, and information about it can be found at www.cambridgeenglish.org/english-research-group/research-and-collaboration

The lead researcher for this project was Fumiyo Nakatsuhara of the University of Bedfordshire. In response to the increasing demand for reforming the university admission examination system in Japan, this research investigated (a) to what extent and in what ways Linguaskill matches the curriculum of English education in Japan, and (b) what support test-takers and high school teachers wish to receive when preparing for taking Linguaskill General. The research consisted of two phases. In Phase 1, they mapped the construct of Linguaskill General against the latest Course of Study for high schools (MEXT [Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Technology] 2018). A template provided by MEXT for the 2018 test evaluation was used for this purpose. In Phase 2, they gathered the voices of test-takers and high school teachers to explore the support materials/training that they wish to receive when preparing for the test. Twenty-eight Year 1 students at Rikkyo University, Japan, took the Linguaskill General test and then responded to a survey. Follow-up interviews were also conducted with six selected students. Furthermore, six teachers from different high schools reviewed an online sample Linguaskill General test, and their support needs were sought through a questionnaire and follow-up interviews. Findings from the two phases of the project were integrated to offer a pathway to facilitate two-way communication between the exam board and high school teachers and students. Drawing on O'Sullivan's (2020) test validation model that highlights the importance of a clear communication model for a testing system to achieve its intended consequences, this research took the first step towards building a relevant communication model in the examination reform in Japan.

1 Research background

Extending Weir's (2005) socio-cognitive framework, O'Sullivan (2020) proposed a test validation model that highlights the importance of the *context of use* and the *consequences* of a test for a range of stakeholders (Figure 1). He argues that test development projects need to start from a *theory of action* which specifies the desired consequences and how they can be achieved, taking account of all stakeholders who constitute the context of use. He also notes that intended consequences cannot be achieved without a clear *communication model* that drives the ways in which stakeholders are communicated about why a new test or testing system is worthwhile.

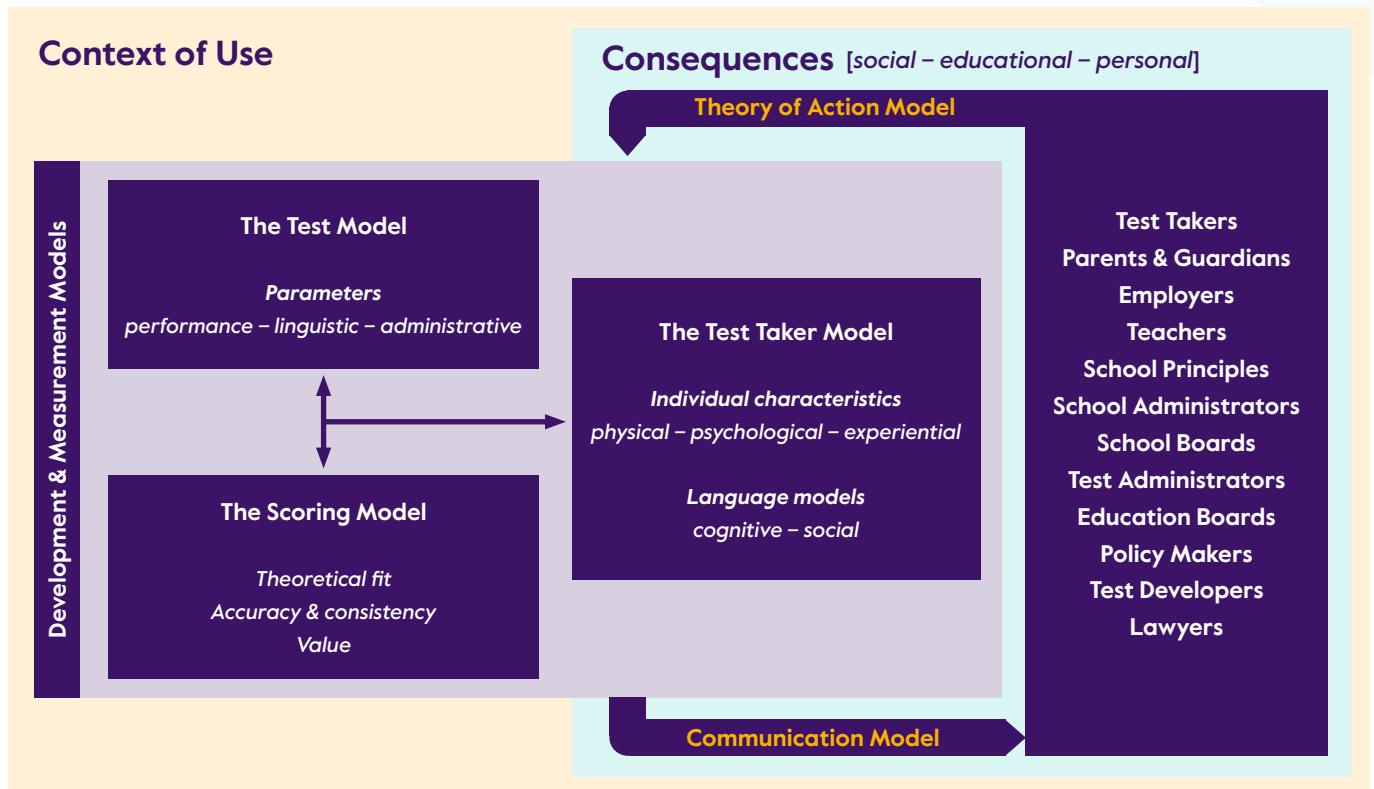


Figure 1: O'Sullivan's (2020) test validation model

This model is highly relevant when discussing a recent controversy in Japan – namely, the deferral of the launch of a new university admission examination system, in which four-skill private sector English examinations were to be used to supplement or replace the National Center Test for University Admissions (with over 550,000 test-takers per year). The introduction of four-skill private sector examinations was planned to be implemented in 2020 in response to the nation’s long-standing concerns about the negative washback effect of the English paper of the Center Test, since the test includes only Reading and Listening papers and Speaking and Writing skills are not assessed (Green 2016). The change to the testing system was therefore supposed to be an initiative to reform the education system to equip students with *practical communication ability* in English.

The main reason for deferring the examination reform is generally understood as insufficient measures for ensuring fairness in terms of access to testing locations and affordability of examination fees. O’Sullivan’s (2020) model, however, points to a more fundamental cause behind it; there was no clear theory of action or communication model that was necessary to drive the examination reform.

Following the decision to postpone the introduction of the new testing system, the education minister, Mr. Hagiuda, made an announcement in November 2019¹ that the Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Technology (MEXT) would start reviewing the system, rescheduling the reform for 2024². As part of the review process, MEXT initiated open hearings that were broadcast online³. While this was a great attempt to involve the public in their decision making, those who were invited to the hearings were mostly government officials, university professors, and exam board personnel – i.e., those groups located towards the bottom of the stakeholder list in Figure 1. The problem here is a general scarcity of voice from students and high school teachers⁴ who would be most affected by the changes, the key stakeholders to be consulted for a successful reform (Nakatsuhara 2020).

This echoes Baker’s (2020) warning about the deficit interpretations implied in the body of language assessment literacy literature, in which language testers are considered to be the ‘literate’ agent who would inform other stakeholders of what

1 www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2019/11/01/national/private-english-tests-for-university-exams-delayed-gaffe

2 After the project had commenced, a further announcement was made in 2021 that they abandoned the plan to target 2024 for the nation-wide examination reform. This, however, does not seem to be slowing down the trend of individual universities in accepting more and more external standardised examinations for admission purposes. Indeed, Rikkyo University, where this project was conducted, is one of the universities that newly added Linguaskill General to their approved list of private sector English examinations that can be used for admission from Academic Year 2021/2022.

3 www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/shingi/chousa/koutou/103/index.htm

4 It should be noted that students and teachers were occasionally invited to some of the hearing sessions (e.g., one high school student and two high school students offering their views in the sixth and seventh session respectively; an experienced teacher giving a presentation in the 11th session; see www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/shingi/chousa/koutou/103/index.htm).

a 'good' test looks like and how it should best be conducted. Baker (2020) alarms that the deficit model of language assessment literacy is counter-productive, 'hamper[ing] our ability to effectively collaborate with other stakeholder groups'.

In exploring how the Japanese examination can be successfully reformed, Green's (2016:135) remark is noteworthy: 'Radical changes in approaches to testing are unlikely to deliver benefits for the education system unless they are well supported by teacher training, new materials and public relations initiatives'. In light of Baker's (2020) concern, Nakatsuhara (2020) adds that rather than imposing what we think teachers and students might need, we have to work together with them to identify and address their needs.

This research is a first step towards building a relevant communication model in this reform endeavour by gathering students' and high school teachers' voices. O'Sullivan (2020) recommends 'a two-way process that involves stakeholders knowing about testing and developers knowing what and how to communicate to different stakeholder groups'.

For this research, Linguaskill General was selected since it is one of the standardised tests that individual universities have started accepting for admission purposes, while the test is not widely known among high school teachers and students. This research therefore aimed to offer the pathway to facilitate two-way communication between the exam board and high school teachers and students by mapping the construct of Linguaskill General against the relevant Course of Study (CoS) and by collecting the voices of high school teachers and students.

2 Research questions

This research addresses two research questions (RQs):

RQ1. *To what extent and in what ways does Linguaskill General match the curriculum of English education in Japan as specified in the CoS for high schools?*

RQ2. *What support do test-takers and high school teachers wish to receive when preparing for Linguaskill General?*

3 Research design

The research consists of two phases. Figure 2 presents an overview of the research design.

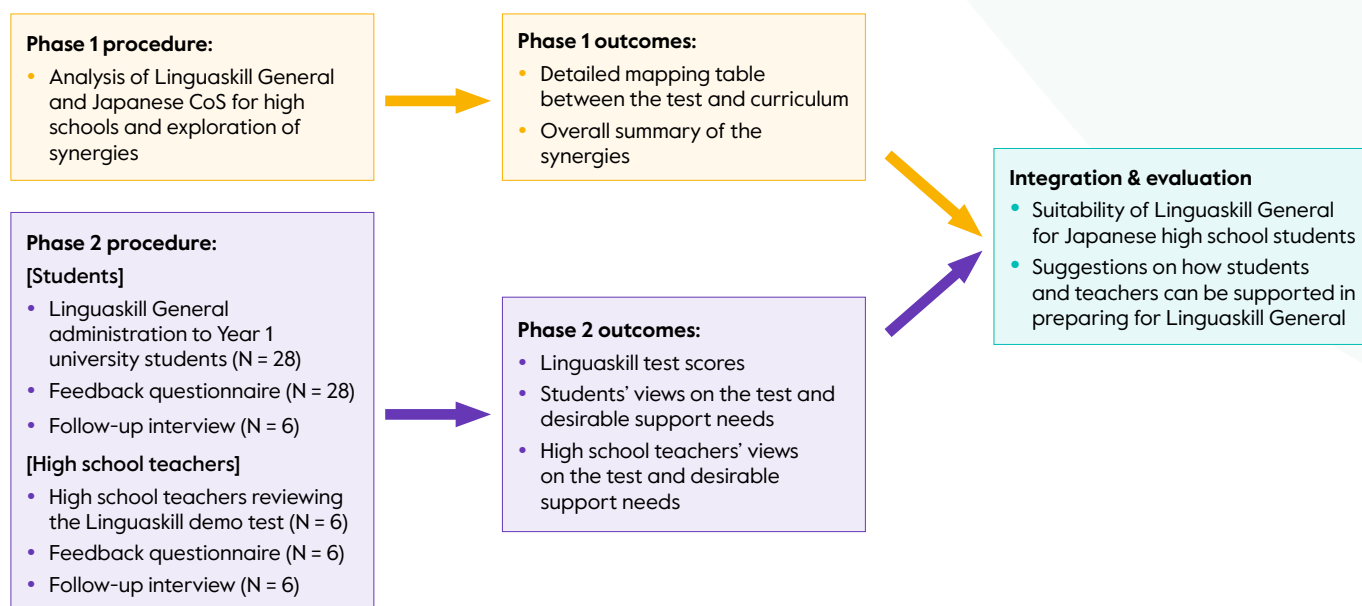


Figure 2: Overall research design

3.1 Phase I methodology

This stage is led by two language testing researchers who are familiar with the English education system in Japan. In 2017, they mapped IELTS to the CoS, leading to the approval of IELTS by MEXT for university admission purposes in 2018. The researchers scrutinised the guidance documents, research evidence, and sample items/tasks of Linguaskill General, and the *English and Foreign Languages* sections of the latest CoS for high schools (MEXT 2018; implemented in April 2022). A template provided by MEXT for the 2018 test evaluation was used, which includes four separate summaries of how a test corresponds to each of the four-skills targets in the CoS, followed by item-by-item/task-by-task mapping that specifies which descriptions in the CoS best describe each test item/task.

3.2 Phase 2 methodology

3.2.1 Participants

Two groups of participants took part in this phase of the project:

- 28 Year 1 students (proficiency level: CEFR A2 to B2+) at Rikkyo University, Japan. Rikkyo University is one of the most prestigious universities that started using private sector English examinations for admission purposes (the governmental deferral of the new testing system notwithstanding).
- Six teachers from six different high schools.

Students

While all data collection materials for the Linguaskill test, feedback survey, and follow-up interviews were ready in time for April/May 2021, the closure of the University campus due to the outbreak of COVID-19 significantly hindered the recruitment of participants and caused the in-person data collection to take place much later in the year, namely September and December 2021. After several rounds of test announcements sent to approximately 5,000 Year 1 students, we managed to recruit 28 students for the test. Numbers were reduced as some participants were unable to attend due to positive COVID-19 tests, self-isolation, or a fear of travelling to the University campus.

Although the research team wished to have a more balanced spread across the three levels, the majority of the students obtained B1 (A2: N=5, B1: N=20, B2: N=3) on Linguaskill General, reflecting the typical level of proficiency of the Year 1 cohort at the University (Nitta 2021, personal communication). The students' demographic information provided in the survey included gender (male: N=7, female: N=20, prefer not to say: N=1), the department to which they belonged (e.g., Law, Economics, Literature, Sociology, Intercultural Communication, Social Welfare), the type(s) of the test that they used to get admitted to the University (e.g., Rikkyo University Entrance Exam, Common Test for University Entrance, Eiken), recent results of standardised English tests (e.g., Eiken, TEAP, GTEC), experience of taking an online English test (Yes: N=18, No: N=10), the frequency of their computer use when they were high school students (Average = once a week), and the perception of their own typing speed (Average = relatively slow). The 28 participating university students' demographic information is summarised in Table 1. In the table, A2 students are shaded in pink and B2 students are shaded in blue. The table also highlights in red the six students (S01, S04, S07, S11, S21, S23) who were interviewed after the test and survey. For information on the interviews, see Section 3.2.3.

Table 1: University students' demographic information

Student ID	Linguaskill (overall)	Age	Gender	Department	English test(s) used to apply to Rikkyo University	Most recent private-sector test and overall score	Experience of online test and name of the test	Use of PC when high school student	Typing speed
S01	B1	18	F	Law & Business	Rikkyo exam, Common Test, Eiken	Eiken 2300	Yes Eiken	Once/month	Very slow
S02	B1	19	F	Sociology	Rikkyo exam, Common Test, Eiken	TOEIC 711	Yes Eiken	Once/week	Very slow
S03	B1	18	F	Economics	Eiken	TOEIC 600	Yes Eiken S-CBT	Several/year	Slow
S04	B1	18	F	Sociology	Eiken	TOEIC 595	No	Every day	Neither
S05	B1	18	M	English Literature	Eiken		No	Once/week	Slow
S06	B2	18	Prefer not to say	Sociology	Common Test, TEAP, IELTS	IELTS 6	No	Three days/week	Quick
S07	B1	19	F	Tourism	Eiken	Eiken 2417	No	Once/month	Slow
S08	A2	18	M	Maths	Rikkyo exam, Common Test, Eiken	Eiken Grade 2 2050	Yes Eiken S-CBT	Once/month	Slow
S09	A2	19	F	Social Care	None	TOEIC (LR only) 500	No	Once/week	Neither
S10	B1	19	F	Tourism	Eiken	TOEIC 785	Yes Eiken S-CBT	Three days/week	Slow
S11	A2	19	F	Economics	GTEC	Eiken	Yes Eiken	Several/year	Slow
S12	B1	18	M	Finance	None	TOEIC (LR only) 750	No	Everyday	Slow
S13	B1	18	F	Law & Business	Eiken	Eiken Grade Pre-1 Pass	No	Several/year	Very slow
S14	B1	18	F	Sociology	Eiken	TOEIC 635	Yes Eiken S-CBT	Once/week	Slow
S15	B1	21	F	History	Eiken, TEAP, GTEC CBT	Eiken Grade Pre-1 2446	Yes GTEC CBT	Once/week	Quick

Student ID	Linguaskill (overall)	Age	Gender	Department	English test(s) used to apply to Rikkyo University	Most recent private-sector test and overall score	Experience of online test and name of the test	Use of PC when high school student	Typing speed
S16	B1	18	F	English Literature	Eiken	TOEIC 715	Yes Eiken S-CBT	Once/week	Neither
S17	B1	19	F	Social Welfare	Common Test, Eiken	Eiken 2370	Yes Eiken S-CBT	Several/year	Quick
S18	B1	19	F	Media Studies	Rikkyo exam, Common Test	Eiken Grade Pre-1 Pass	Yes Eiken S-CBT Pre-1	Once/week	Neither
S19	B1	19	M	Economics	Eiken		Yes TOEIC IPT	Every day	Quick
S20	B1	19	F	Economics	Eiken, Cambridge	Eiken 2420	Yes Eiken S-CBT	Once/week	Neither
S21	B2	19	F	Literature	Eiken, TEAP	TOEIC 745	No	Several/year	Slow
S22	A2	19	M	Law	None	Eiken Grade 2 2019	Yes GTEC CBT	Every day	Slow
S23	A2	18	M	Economics	Rikkyo exam, Common Test		No	Every day	Slow
S24	B2	30	F	Intercultural Communication	Rikkyo exam, Common Test	IELTS 5.5	No	Every day	Quick
S25	B1	19	F	Education	Rikkyo exam	TOEIC 820	Yes Eiken	Once/week	Quick
S26	B1	19	M	Tourism	Common Test, Eiken	TOEIC 610	Yes Eiken CBT	Every day	Quick
S27	B1	19	F	Sociology	Rikkyo exam, Common Test, Eiken	TOEIC 420	Yes Eiken S-CBT Pre-1	Once/month	neither
S28	B1	19	F	German Literature	Rikkyo exam, Eiken, TEAP	TOEIC 730	Yes Eiken CBT	Every day	Neither

Teachers

Six high school teachers were recruited for remote data collection. The six teachers' demographic information is summarised in Table 2.

Table 2: High school teachers' demographic information

Teacher ID	Gender	School location	Teaching experience	% of the students going to university	When last taught Year 3
T01	F	Kyoto	10 years	90%	Last year
T02	M	Chiba	18 years	100%	Now
T03	F	Chiba	9 years	100%	Two years ago
T04	F	Niigata	12 years	100%	Now
T05	F	Saitama	38 years	100%	Five years ago
T06	M	Tokyo	19.5 years	100%	Last year

It is worth noting that none were novice teachers, teaching in different prefectures in Japan. In their schools, (almost) all students typically pursue Higher Education after graduating. They play a vital role in preparing their students for university admission exams and thus they were an ideal cohort for this project. Since their experience of teaching Year 3 (i.e., Year 12 in the UK) students was key to this research, they were also asked when they last taught Year 3 students. It ranged from one to five years (Median = 2). While T05's teaching experience with Year 3 students was five years ago at the time of the data collection, she had also been serving as a teacher trainer and therefore had up-to-date knowledge of university entrance examinations and preparation activities.

Ethical clearance

Ethical approval was granted for this research by the CRELLA Research Institute Ethics Committees overseen by the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) at the University of Bedfordshire, with the Approval Number RES2021-04. Prior to the data collection, all participants received an information sheet and signed a consent form.

3.2.2 Administration of Linguaskill General

The Linguaskill General test was administered to 28 students at Rikkyo University's ICT suite on 6 to 8 September and then on 4 December 2021. One of the researchers invigilated all the test administration sessions. Personnel from the Sendagaya Linguaskill test centre in Tokyo and another researcher of the project team provided technical support.

3.2.3 Student survey and interview

Upon completion of the test, all 28 students responded to a survey in Japanese, concerning their test-taking experience and the learning materials/support that they would wish to receive if they were to prepare better for the test. The survey includes both selected-response and open-ended items (see [Appendix A](#) for the English translation of the survey). The content of the survey was discussed and agreed by the research team. Each member was familiar with the local context and the current trends in test preparation materials in Japan. Some additional useful feedback comments were provided by the Linguaskill team in Cambridge, but we were unable to address all of their comments in the questionnaire. This was because many of the comments focused on obtaining further evidence of test validity, whereas the aim of the survey was not to validate Linguaskill General or to evaluate the appropriacy of the test tasks for the given students, but to seek students' support needs if the test was used for university admission purposes. It was also deemed important to keep the first two parts of the questionnaire (questions about students' background and feedback on each of the four-skill components) short, so that the students would still be motivated to carefully consider the final part on their support needs, which was the key section of the survey.

Of the 28 participants, six students (S01, S04, S07, S11, S21, S23) were further interviewed to elaborate on their views. The students were pre-selected based on their proficiency levels judged by their recent standardised test results and their availability. As indicated in Table 1, the six students included two A2 students (S11, S23), three B1 students (S01, S04, S07) and one B2 student (S21). The researcher who invigilated all tests conducted a semi-structured interview with each of the six students. Immediately after the completion of the test and survey, the researcher quickly skimmed the survey responses, and selected relevant questions from the semi-structured interview protocol for a 20-minute interview. All interviews were conducted in Japanese and audio recorded.

3.2.4 Teacher survey and interview

The data collection with high school teachers was completed in July-August 2021. Six high school teachers reviewed a free online sample Linguaskill test⁵, responded to a survey, and on the same day, participated in an online interview in Japanese with one of the researchers. The original research plan was to conduct only online interviews, but the research team decided to provide a survey first (see [Appendix B](#) for the English translation of the teacher survey), so that parallel questions could be asked to students and teachers and so that the interviews could be more focused and succinct.

It was a semi-structured interview to seek further insights into the teachers' views expressed in their survey responses and the types of support/training that they would wish to receive. Prior to each of the interviews, the interviewing researcher quickly reviewed the survey responses to select relevant questions

5 www.cambridgeenglish.org/exams-and-tests/linguaskill/information-about-the-test/practice-materials

from the interview protocol. All interviews were conducted in Japanese. Each interview took approximately 30 minutes, and the online interviews were video recorded. The researchers also took detailed notes while sharing the screen, and the accuracy of the researcher notes was constantly checked.

3.3 Data analysis

Test scores. The main purpose of obtaining the test scores was to understand the proficiency levels of the students who shared their test-taking experience and expressed their support needs. As noted earlier, the majority of the students fell in the B1 range (i.e., A2: N=5, B1: N=20, B2: N=3), and as such, our results mainly relate to those at B1.

Student survey. The 28 responses to the student survey provided on paper format were scanned and sent to the project team in the UK. Together with the six teachers' survey responses in Word format, all survey data were collated in Excel. Given the small sample size, only the frequency and percentage of each response category on selected-response items were calculated. Responses to open-ended items were used to interpret and elaborate on responses to selected-response items.

Interviews. Since the semi-structured interviews were guided by the participants' individual survey responses, the audio/video recordings of students' and high school teachers' interviews were transcribed and tagged to relevant questionnaire items to enrich the results of the survey data.

4 Results and discussion: Phase 1

This section discusses the correspondence between Linguaskill General and the *English and Foreign Languages* sections of the latest CoS for high schools (MEXT 2018; implemented in April 2022). A template provided by MEXT for the 2018 test evaluation was used. Section 4.1 briefly describes the changes observed in the current CoS from the previous version. In Section 4.2, following the structure of the MEXT 2018 template, an overview of Linguaskill General is first presented. It is followed by a short evaluative summary of each of the four language skills regarding the main synergies between the test and the CoS. The detailed results of part-by-part/task-by-task mapping, specifying the relevant descriptors in the CoS, are found in [Appendix C](#) (N.B. The mapping results in [Appendix C](#) are offered both in English and Japanese).

4.1 Changes in the CoS

First, it is worth noting the changes from the previous version of the CoS to the current version, as summarised in Table 3. The current version places greater emphasis on training productive skills as well as facilitating more integrated use of skills (e.g., reading into speaking and writing), with a view to nurturing more ‘practical’ English skills. These changes in the emphases are reflected in the names and contents of the new modules, *Logic & Expressions I, II and III*, which promote using English through debates and discussions in classrooms.

Table 3: Comparisons of modules in the previous and current versions of the CoS in senior high school English

Previous		Current (2022-)	
Module	Credits	Module	Credits
Communicative English Basic	2	English Communication I*	3
Communicative English I*	3	English Communication II	4
Communicative English II	4	English Communication III	4
Communicative English III	4		
English Expressions I	2	Logic & Expressions I	2
English Expressions II	4	Logic & Expressions II	2
English Conversations	2	Logic & Expressions III	2

*Mandatory module

4.2 Correspondence between the CoS and Linguaskill General

4.2.1 Overview of Linguaskill General

Linguaskill General is a four-skill computer-based test of English which utilises an automated scoring system. It is intended to measure the ability to use the language in everyday life across a wide range of proficiency levels from CEFR Pre-A1 to C1+, and the results are reported⁶ in terms of the scores in the Cambridge English Scale as well as the CEFR levels (for overall and each of the four skills).

Since we were unable to obtain the test specifications of Linguaskill General, the descriptions of Linguaskill General in this report are based on:

- Resources available at: www.cambridgeenglish.org/exams-and-tests/linguaskill
- Validation reports and trial reports available at: www.cambridgeenglish.org/exams-and-tests/linguaskill/information-about-the-test/the-science-behind-the-test
- Seguis (2022, personal communication).

The Speaking component comes first in the test. It contains five task types (detailed in Section 4.2.2) and lasts for 15 minutes. It adopts a hybrid approach to marking responses, where human examiners step in when the auto-marker flags up low confidence in marking. The auto-marker scores are reported in good agreement with human marking (reaching 95.6% exact agreement) on the resultant CEFR levels (Xu et al 2020).

The next component in the Linguaskill General test is Writing, which includes two tasks, and responses are marked by an auto-marker based on machine learning

⁶ A sample score report can be found here: www.cambridgeenglish.org/Images/399862-linguaskill-test-report-form-for-individual-candidate.pdf

technology. According to Cambridge Assessment English (2017:7), 'the ranking of test responses by the computer auto-marker correlates strongly and positively with the aggregate ranking of test responses by the panel of experts'. The duration of the Writing component is 45 minutes.

The Listening and Reading sections are combined in one testlet and both tests are adaptive, which means the system selects test items according to how well the candidates answered the previous questions. The Rasch reliability was high for both Listening and Reading, with values over 0.92 (Cambridge Assessment English 2016, 2021). The numbers of test items differ for each candidate, with each response scored immediately, and the test finishes when the system decides that a sufficient number of items have been given in order to achieve the accurate estimate of a candidate's ability. The durations of the Listening and Reading parts range from 60 to 85 minutes.

4.2.2 Speaking

In the Speaking component of Linguaskill General, test-takers speak to the computer using a headset with a microphone. There are five parts in total, where test-takers are required to:

1. Answer questions about themselves.
2. Read sentences aloud.
3. Talk about a given topic for one minute.
4. Talk about one or more graphics for one minute.
5. Give opinions by answering questions related to a topic.

According to the Linguaskill Speaking assessment criteria⁷, the auto-marker (and in case of low confidence by the auto-marker, a human marker) marks the responses on (1) *Pronunciation and Fluency*, (2) *Language Resource*, and (3) *Discourse Management*. *Pronunciation and Fluency* evaluates the delivery in terms of intelligibility, the amount of dysfluency markers and ease of understanding. *Language Resource* concerns the range, accuracy and complexity of lexis and grammar. *Discourse Management* concerns the clarity of logic behind the message and coherent progression within the development of ideas. For read-aloud questions in Part 2, the responses are marked in the three categories of the *Overall Intelligibility*, *Individual Sounds*, and *Stress, Rhythm and Intonation*.

Of particular note is that there are no descriptors regarding read-aloud in the current CoS (whereas the previous version contained read-aloud descriptors). The knowledge and skills related to pronunciation and phonology are mentioned under the 'Content' of English Communication I (EC I; see [Appendix C](#)), but being able to read aloud well, in itself, is no longer stated as part of the aim or focused activities in Speaking at senior high schools. Read-aloud is now regarded as part of Reading

⁷ support.linguaskill.com/hc/en-gb/articles/360031112492-Linguaskill-Assessment-Criteria

rather than Speaking in the current CoS. In the foreign language section of the CoS for junior high schools, read-aloud is explicitly specified as a Reading activity that promotes reading comprehension (MEXT 2017). The new CoS seems to promote more spontaneous use of spoken English. Nevertheless, the ability to read aloud evidences the degrees of facility with the language that candidates have (e.g., Van Moere 2012), and therefore Part 2 questions, although testing more mechanical or fundamental skills in speaking, are well justified and relevant to the CoS.

The questions in other parts of the Speaking component emphasise the use of appropriate use of language according to the purposes and settings, as well as minding the logical development and referring to multiple sources (see [Appendix C](#)). Overall, the test seems to have a good degree of correspondence with the types of speaking skills promoted in the CoS.

4.2.3 Writing

In the Writing component of Linguaskill General, there are two parts, requiring candidates to write 50 words or more in an email to a familiar person (e.g., respond to an email from a college friend who suggests a reunion) in Part 1, and a longer, more formal message of 180 words using information given in a scenario in Part 2 (e.g., write a comment to the local forum to suggest a solution to the increase in traffic in town). Part 1 requires test-takers to read an email prompt first and then respond. Thus, a more integrated use of skills of reading and writing is targeted, which is directly in line with the current CoS, and the situational context (if this task were performed in Japanese) would presumably be familiar to high school students in Japan. Part 2 task targets the ability to produce longer, more elaborated writing, which matches the aims of the English modules specified in the CoS, especially the higher-level modules such as *English Communication III* and *Logic & Expressions III*. However, the topics of the sample writing tasks that were designed for adult Linguaskill test-takers (i.e., ‘a reunion with college friends’ in Part 1, ‘traffic in a town’ in Part 2) do not seem to be suitable for Japanese high school students. The college friends’ reunion is not appropriate for their life stage, and they are unlikely to be aware of the amount of traffic in their town to engage in online discussion with other local residents.

The written responses in the test are marked in the following criteria:

1) *Task Achievement*, 2) *Language Resource*, and 3) *Organisation*. *Task Achievement* concerns the achievement of the communicative goals as specified in the prompt. *Language Resource* looks at the range of vocabulary and grammar, as well as the overall accuracy, complexity, and appropriateness of language use. *Organisation* concerns text organisation, idea flow and coherence. Overall, the skills measured in the Writing component appear to have synergies with the CoS, although Japanese high school students may need further training and practice in producing longer pieces of writing for less familiar readers on social topics (as in Task 2).

4.2.4 Listening

The Listening part in Linguaskill General consists of three parts: Part 1: Listen and select (based on pictures), Part 2: Listen and select (no pictures), and Part 3: Extended listening. The test items target lower-level (such as understanding short, simple sentences and facts in Parts 1 and 2) to higher-level listening skills (such as understanding the gist and the speakers' opinions and intentions in Parts 2 and 3). The use of pictures and multiple-choice formats can be regarded as the provision of (some) support, which can match the differing scaffolding levels considered relevant to different target levels of the modules in the CoS (i.e., modules with 'I' in the title concerns the basic level, 'II' the middle, and 'III' the highest). Overall, the Listening component seems to have a good degree of correspondence with the types of listening skills promoted in the CoS (see [Appendix C](#) for more details).

4.2.5 Reading

The Reading part consists of five item types:

1. Read a sentence with a missing word and choose the correct word to fill the gap.
2. Read a short notice, label, memo or letter and choose the sentence or phrase that most closely matches the meaning of the text.
3. Type the right word or phrase to fill the gaps in a text.
4. Read a short text with some missing words and choose the missing word for each gap.
5. Read a longer text and answer a series of multiple-choice questions.

A range of text types are involved, targeting lexical and grammar knowledge (Task 1) and reading comprehension at the sentence level to multiple-paragraph levels (Tasks 2 to 5). The texts target lower-level (such as understanding short, simple sentences for facts) as well as higher-level reading comprehension (such as understanding the gist and inferring the writers' views and intentions) on everyday topics or social topics. Again, the Reading component seems to have good synergies with the types of reading skills promoted in the CoS. As stated earlier, the correspondence using CoS descriptors for each test task is found in [Appendix C](#).

5 Results and discussion: Phase 2

We now report on the questionnaire and interview responses from first-year university students (N = 28) and high school teachers (N=6). Responses from the two sources are integrated since the interviews aimed to elaborate on the selected participants' questionnaire responses and interview questions were constructed based on their questionnaire responses.

5.1 Speaking

Tables 4 to 6 summarise the responses from university students and high school teachers on the speaking tasks in Linguaskill General.

5.1.1 Speaking: Familiarity with tasks

From Table 4, we can see that the majority of students had at least some experience with the types of speaking tasks given in Linguaskill General – with combined percentages of 'Yes, some' and 'Yes, a lot' at 92.9% (Task 1), 85.7% (Tasks 2 and 3), 78.6% (Task 4), and 89.3% (Task 5).

A similar trend was found with the high school teachers. Based on their understanding of Year 12 students' English ability at their schools, a strong majority of them (100.0% for Task 1; 83.3% for Task 2; 100.0% for Task 3; 83.4% for Task 4; and 83.3% for Task 5) indicated that their students have had at least some experience with the task types given in Linguaskill.

Table 4: How much experience students have with relevant speaking tasks

	No	Yes, some	Yes, a lot
Task 1: Answer questions about themselves			
Uni students	7.1%	50.0%	42.9%
HS teachers	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%
Task 2: Read sentences aloud			
Uni students	14.3%	46.4%	39.3%
HS teachers	16.7%	50.0%	33.3%
Task 3: Talk about a given topic for one minute			
Uni students	14.3%	57.1%	28.6%
HS teachers	0.0%	66.7%	33.3%
Task 4: Talk about one or more graphics for one minute			
Uni students	21.4%	64.3%	14.3%
HS teachers	16.7%	66.7%	16.7%
Task 5: Give opinions by answering questions related to a topic			
Uni students	10.7%	60.7%	28.6%
HS teachers	16.7%	83.3%	0.0%

In the individual follow-up interviews, all six university students noted the similarity of the Linguaskill General tasks to those in Eiken, GTEC, or TEAP that they had previously taken or practised for (S01, S04, S07, S11, S21, S23).

Similarly, high school teachers also reported that their Year 12 students are relatively familiar with the task types found in Linguaskill General, especially those that are found in other private sector English tests such as Eiken, GTEC and TEAP (e.g., speaking about a topic for one minute, picture description). However, the frequencies of taking such external tests, as well as practice with similar speaking tasks in classrooms seemed to vary according to the school curricula. Some of the teacher responses are exemplified below:

- In my school, all students in Years 10 and 11 take the GTEC at school. We also administer Eiken twice a year at school for those students who wish to take it. We however do not offer any speaking tests in classes (T01).
- We practise these speaking tasks in classrooms. Most of my students have an Eiken Grade 2 certificate, and some also passed Grade Pre-1. TEAP and GTEC are also becoming common among those students who wish to take private sector exams for university admission purposes. The tasks included in these tests are familiar to my students (T02).
- In my school, we offer a lot of speaking classes and activities to Year 10 students, and we use some of the task types included in Linguaskill. However, the number of speaking activities reduces significantly in Years 11 and 12 as English classes become more and more exam-oriented (T05).

However, two teachers commented that students are less familiar with Task 2.

- I believe that my students do not have any experience with the specific type of the read-aloud task used in Task 2. In Eiken, students have 20 seconds to read the passage silently before they read it aloud. As far as I'm aware, in Japan we do not use assessment or learning tasks that require learners to read aloud a passage without any preparation time to understand the content first (T04).
- My students' familiarity with Task 2 and the suitability of the task for Japanese high school students may be questionable. We use read-aloud tasks in classrooms and Eiken also has a read-aloud task. We however always ask students to read silently and understand the content before starting to read it aloud. The current CoS also considers that reading aloud a passage whose meaning has not been comprehended is not effective for learning. As such, this task does not seem to be congruent with the national curriculum (T03).

One teacher also made the following comment on Task 4:

- My students have experiences with tasks to explain tables and graphs, but these tasks do not usually require the speaker's views towards items in the visual information. I believe my students might be confused by this task where their description of a table or graph should be formulated in a way that would support their own opinions (T05).

5.1.2 Speaking: Understanding task requirements

Table 5 shows that over 90% of students were able to quickly understand what was required in the tasks, except for Task 4, which revealed a slightly lower percentage of 'Yes' (they would be able to quickly understand) at 78.6%. The same trend is found in Table 2 from the six high school teachers.

One of the students commented on Task 4 in the free comment box that they were not sure how much to talk about which elements because the visual input was small and there was a lot of information in the input (S17). As anticipated by one of the teachers above, one student was unsure whether the visual information could just be described, or his own opinion should also be shared (S26). Moreover, one of the high school teachers mentioned that in Task 4, it was not clear whether they could assume that the visual input was shared with the (hypothetical) audience, which might affect the organisation of test-taker responses (T02).

Two teachers commented on Task 1 that while the instruction was clear, they were unsure about the precise requirements for the response. For instance, can it be just answered with a few words, or does it need to be in the form of a full sentence? Does the full 10 seconds need to be filled? These teachers felt they would need more guidance on the requirements of Linguaskill General speaking tasks (T02, T03).

Table 5: Whether students were/would be able to quickly understand the requirements of speaking tasks

	Yes	No
Task 1: Answer questions about themselves		
Uni students	100.0%	0.0%
HS teachers	83.3%	16.7%
Task 2: Read sentences aloud		
Uni students	100.0%	0.0%
HS teachers	100.0%	0.0%
Task 3: Talk about a given topic for one minute		
Uni students	96.4%	3.6%
HS teachers	100.0%	0.0%
Task 4: Talk about one or more graphics for one minute		
Uni students	78.6%	21.4%
HS teachers	66.7%	33.3%
Task 5: Give opinions by answering questions related to a topic		
Uni students	92.9%	7.1%
HS teachers	83.3%	16.7%

5.1.3 Speaking: Perceived task difficulty

Regarding the perceived difficulty of the tasks, there were more variations in the students' responses (see Table 6). The majority of the students found Tasks 1 and 2 to be 'easy' or 'very easy' (78.5% for Task 1, 85.7% for Task 2). However, Tasks 3 to 5 were more difficult for them, with the majority finding Tasks 3 to 5 to be 'difficult' or 'very difficult': 64.3% (Task 3), 67.9% (Task 4), and 75.0% (Task 5), respectively.

Table 6: Perceived difficulty of Linguaskill speaking tasks

	Very difficult	Difficult	Neither difficult nor easy	Easy	Very easy
Task 1: Answer questions about themselves					
Uni students	0.0%	10.7%	10.7%	46.4%	32.1%
HS teachers	0.0%	0.0%	16.7%	33.3%	50.0%
Task 2: Read sentences aloud					
Uni students	0.0%	7.1%	7.1%	39.3%	46.4%
HS teachers	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%

	Very difficult	Difficult	Neither difficult nor easy	Easy	Very easy
Task 3: Talk about a given topic for one minute					
Uni students	10.7%	53.6%	17.9%	17.9%	0.0%
HS teachers	0.0%	66.7%	0.0%	33.3%	0.0%
Task 4: Talk about one or more graphics for one minute					
Uni students	28.6%	39.3%	10.7%	17.9%	3.6%
HS teachers	16.7%	50.0%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Task 5: Give opinions by answering questions related to a topic					
Uni students	7.1%	67.9%	14.3%	10.7%	0.0%
HS teachers	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

We know from Table 4 that over 83.3% or more of the student respondents had at least some experience with similar tasks to the five tasks in Linguaskill. The fact that over 70% of them found Tasks 4 and 5 ‘difficult’/‘very difficult’ indicates that Linguaskill tasks are more demanding than what they are used to practising. Some of the teachers’ interview responses explain why this might be the case:

- My Year 12 students can perform description tasks in which they explain information in a table or for travel destination. However, Task 4 is very difficult because we don’t practise observing different graphs/tables, selecting and describing specific features in order to support their own views. It is cognitively more demanding. In addition, the task setting does not seem realistic for Japanese students (T05).
- Although the information is provided in the task, students need to select, compare, make judgements, and give reasons. My Year 12 students are not very experienced in doing it (T06).
- My students are familiar with opinion-giving tasks, but the preparation time for Task 5 is far too short. I don’t think they can prepare or perform well in the given time (T05).

Students also noted that in Tasks 3 to 5, the preparation time was not sufficient (S01, S07, S21, S23), and that talking for one minute on one’s own without any conversational support would be difficult even in Japanese (S04).

5.2 Writing

Tables 7 to 9 summarise the responses from first year university students (N=28) and high school teachers (N=6) on the Writing tasks in Linguaskill General.

5.2.1 Writing: Familiarity with tasks

From Table 7 we can see that the majority of the students had at least some experience with the types of writing tasks given in Linguaskill General, with combined percentages of ‘Yes, some’ and ‘Yes, a lot’ of 82.2% (Task 1) and 78.6% (Task 2). This means that approximately 20% of the student respondents did not have any experience of doing similar writing tasks. This seems to indicate the scarcity of opportunities to write in English either at high schools or at home. In particular, it was surprising to find that of the six students who participated in interviews, four mentioned that they had never written emails in English (S01, S07, S11, S21). Those who had taken Eiken and TEAP reported that the Task 2 format was somewhat familiar due to their test taking experience (S04, S11, S23).

A similar trend was found with the high school teachers for Task 1, with all of them indicating that their Year 12 students would have had at least some experience with writing over 50 words based on a prompt. However, for Task 2, half of them (N=3, 50%) answered that their Year 12 students would have had no experience with writing over 180 words in a scenario-based task.

Table 7: How much experience students have with relevant writing tasks

	No	Yes, some	Yes, a lot
Task 1: Write a response of over 50 words to a prompt (e.g., email)			
Uni students	17.9%	53.6%	28.6%
HS teachers	0.0%	66.7%	33.3%
Task 2: Write over 180 words using the information given in a scenario			
Uni students	21.4%	50.0%	28.6%
HS teachers	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%

In the individual follow-up interviews, high school teachers once again confirmed that while their Year 12 students are familiar with short writing tasks, the majority of their students would not have had any experience with an ‘extensive’ writing task that requires them to write 180 words. It seems that the typical length of writing that students perform in classes and end-of-the-term exams are four to five short sentences (S01) or 50 to 60 words (S05), while others use tasks that require longer pieces of writing of 100 to 120 words (T02, T06). However, even those teachers who said their students are experienced with longer pieces of writing agreed that 180 words is very long. Only those students who aim for the highest-ranking universities that require up to 200 words of writing in their entrance exams would have some experience (T05, T06).

The lack of familiarity with the email genre was also articulated by T03. She noted that in her school they usually focus on academic writing, so her students would not necessarily know the extent to which emails should contain formal or informal language and whether the first person pronoun could be used for the subject of a sentence unlike the academic writing taught in her school. This indicates that some aspects of pragmatic knowledge such as the formality of language in emails might not be sufficiently taught in some schools, although they are embraced in the CoS (see [Appendix C](#), English Communication III: ‘using a variety of words, phrases and sentences ... appropriately to the purposes, settings and contexts’). Additionally, she was concerned about topic familiarity, especially because the Task 1 topic in the demo test was about organising a college reunion.

5.2.2 Writing: Understanding task requirements

Table 8 shows that over 90% of the university students were able to quickly understand what was required in both Writing tasks. The six high school teachers agreed unanimously that Task 1 was easy to understand for their Year 12 students, but a slightly lower percentage (83.3%) did so for Task 2.

Table 8: Whether students were/would be able to quickly understand the requirements of writing tasks

	Yes	No
Task 1: Write a response of over 50 words to a prompt (e.g., email)		
Uni students	96.4%	3.6%
HS teachers	100.0%	0.0%
Task 2: Write over 180 words using the information given in a scenario		
Uni students	92.9%	7.1%
HS teachers	83.3%	16.7%

Regarding the slightly lower percentage of ‘yes’ for Task 2 among high school teachers, they pointed to the lack of their students’ understanding of what exactly is expected in the responses. They stated that their students would find the task unclear in terms of:

- the types of register to use when posting a message onto a public forum to discuss community issues (T02, T03, T06)
- the organisation of discourse for a forum post (because they are much more familiar with simpler, shorter opinion-writing tasks based on a given topic) (T03)
- what kinds of phenomena would qualify as ‘potential causes’ of increased traffic in the area (T03).

5.2.3 Writing: Perceived task difficulty

Regarding the perceived difficulty of the tasks (Table 9), there were variations in the students' responses for both tasks, mirroring the responses to the Table 7 question on their experience with relevant task types. While just over half of the students (57.2%) found Task 1 either 'easy' or 'very easy', 21.4% found it 'neither difficult nor easy', and 21.4% found it 'difficult'. It is likely that students' unfamiliarity with the email genre might have caused such variations for Task 1. The teachers' responses are also varied for Task 1. Despite stating that their Year 12 students would have had at least some experience with short writing, the teachers reported in the interviews that:

- It would be difficult for my Year 12 students to come up with their own sentences, even for a short writing task, within the time given (T05).
- The task setting is difficult and not authentic for high school students – the sample Task 1 sets out that “you” are working and are trying to organise a college reunion (T03).

For Task 2, over 80% of the university students and high school teachers found it either 'difficult' or 'very difficult'. While this quantitative result is not surprising, given that the task was designed to target B2 and above and the majority of the test-takers in this study were at B1, qualitative data gathered in relation to their perceived difficulty provided useful insights when considering how Japanese students could be supported better in preparing for taking Linguaskill. In the interviews, teachers and students described causes of the high level of difficulty, as summarised below:

- The sheer volume of 180 words is overwhelming for my Year 12 students (T02, T05).
- It would be a bit difficult for my students to imagine posting to “a website where local people can discuss local issues”, and the expectation of the post's organisation is unclear—whether it is a contact form or a more interactive forum, which would affect the register that students need to use (T06).
- In the instruction of the sample Task 2, “what problems the increased traffic is causing in your town” is syntactically complex and would confuse some of my students (T06).
- I struggled to write such a long piece of writing (S01, S04, S07, S11, S21, S23). I needed more time to plan ideas and monitor my writing (S01, S04).
- I am slow at typing on computer. Typing 180 words in such a short time was very demanding (S01, S07).

It was also noted by T05 that in the Writing test, neither Task 1 nor Task 2 is accessible to very weak students, when the other three components (Speaking, Listening, Reading) start with very easy items and tasks. T05 explained that for very weak students to be able to perform at least one task, an additional task, such as requiring them to write one sentence, could be considered.

Table 9: Perceived difficulty of Linguaskill writing tasks

	Very difficult	Difficult	Neither difficult nor easy	Easy	Very easy
Task 1: Write a response of over 50 words to a prompt (e.g., email)					
Uni students	0.0%	21.4%	21.4%	53.6%	3.6%
HS teachers	0.0%	33.3%	50.0%	16.7%	0.0%
Task 2: Write over 180 words using the information given in a scenario					
Uni students	28.6%	53.6%	71%	10.7%	0.0%
HS teachers	33.3%	50.0%	0.0%	16.7%	0.0%

5.3 Listening

Tables 10 to 12 summarise the responses from first year university students (N=28) and high school teachers (N=6) on the listening tasks in Linguaskill General.

5.3.1 Listening: Familiarity with tasks

From Table 10, we can see that all students had at least some experience with the types of listening tasks given in Linguaskill General, with combined percentages of 100% for ‘Yes, some’ and ‘Yes, a lot’ across the three tasks. The same responses were found for the high school teachers.

Table 10: How much experience students have with relevant listening tasks

	No	Yes, some	Yes, a lot
Task 1: Listen to a short audio recording and choose the correct picture that matches the audio recording			
Uni students	0.0%	21.4%	78.6%
HS teachers	0.0%	33.3%	66.7%
Task 2: Listen to a short audio recording and answer a multiple-choice question			
Uni students	0.0%	17.9%	82.1%
HS teachers	0.0%	16.7%	83.3%
Task 3: Listen to a longer recording and answer a series of multiple-choice questions based on it			
Uni students	0.0%	35.7%	64.3%
HS teachers	0.0%	33.3%	66.7%

In the follow-up interviews, all six students reported the formats were all familiar and they experienced similar tasks in Eiken, the Common Test, the GTEC and so on. Similar comments were shared by teachers. In particular, T05 noted that the biggest change she saw in the English education in Japan in the past 10–15 years is the amount of listening practice in teaching and learning. She reported that students now practise listening much more and they can recognise various listening formats immediately.

5.3.2 Listening: Understanding task requirements

Both university students and high school teachers unanimously agreed that they, or their Year 12 students would be able to quickly understand the requirements of Linguaskill listening tasks, except for Task 3 from high school teachers (see Table 11). One of the six teachers (T06; making up 16.7%) pointed out a potential source of confusion:

- In the sample Task 3, Items 1 and 3 were straightforward and easy to understand because they were formed as questions. However, Items 2, 4 and 5 require students to select the latter half of incomplete sentences, which may be confusing at first glance (T06).

Table 11: Whether students were/would be able to quickly understand the requirements of listening tasks

	Yes	No
Task 1: Listen to a short audio recording and choose the correct picture that matches the audio recording		
Uni students	100.0%	0.0%
HS teachers	100.0%	0.0%
Task 2: Listen to a short audio recording and answer a multiple-choice question		
Uni students	100.0%	0.0%
HS teachers	100.0%	0.0%
Task 3: Listen to a longer recording and answer a series of multiple-choice questions based on it		
Uni students	100.0%	0.0%
HS teachers	83.3%	16.7%

5.3.3 Listening: Perceived task difficulty

Regarding the perceived difficulty of the tasks, Table 12 shows some variations in the students' responses. For Task 1, a total of 78.9% of the university students found it either 'easy' or 'very easy'. Just over half (53.5%) did so for Task 2. For Task 3, 89.3% found it either 'difficult' or 'very difficult'.

High school teachers' responses also indicated that their Year 12 students would find Task 1 either 'easy' or 'very easy' (accounting for a total of 83.3%). Their responses for Task 2 were more varied, with 50% saying it would be 'easy' and 33.3% choosing 'difficult'. The two teachers who chose 'difficult' for Task 2 gave the same reasons as they did for why they thought that their Year 12 students would not quickly understand the task requirements; see Table 11.

Table 12: Perceived difficulty of Linguaskill listening tasks

	Very difficult	Difficult	Neither difficult nor easy	Easy	Very easy
Task 1: Listen to a short audio recording and choose the correct picture that matches the audio recording					
Uni students	0.0%	3.6%	17.9%	53.9%	25.0%
HS teachers	0.0%	16.7%	0.0%	33.3%	50.0%
Task 2: Listen to a short audio recording and answer a multiple-choice question					
Uni students	0.0%	17.9%	28.6%	46.4%	7.1%
HS teachers	0.0%	33.3%	0.0%	50.0%	16.7%
Task 3: Listen to a longer recording and answer a series of multiple-choice questions based on it					
Uni students	35.7%	53.6%	3.6%	7.1%	0.0%
HS teachers	0.0%	33.3%	16.7%	50.0%	0.0%

Of the six students interviewed, five reported the length of the audio recording as the source of difficulty for Task 3 (S01, S04, S07, S11, S21). S01 and S07 said that the task had the longest listening text that they had ever experienced as a test. S04, S07 and S11 noted that they had difficulty to keep concentrating while listening to the Task 3 audio recording.

5.4 Reading

Tables 13 to 15 summarise the responses from 1st year university students (N = 28) and high school teachers (N=6) on the reading tasks in Linguaskill General.

5.4.1 Reading: Familiarity with tasks

From Table 13, we can see that the majority of the students had at least some experience with the types of reading tasks given in Linguaskill General – with combined percentages of ‘Yes, some’ and ‘Yes, a lot’, 96.4% (Tasks 1), 89.3% (Task 2), 82.1% (Task 3), 82.1% (Task 4), and 89.3% (Task 5). All six students reported the similarity of these tasks with tasks in the Common Test and private sector examinations like Eiken, GTEC and TEAP.

A similar trend was found with the high school teachers. Based on their understanding of Year 12 students’ English ability at their schools, a strong majority of them (100% for Tasks 1, 2 and 5; 66.7% for Task 3; 83.3% for Task 4) indicated that their students would have had at least some experience with the task types given in Linguaskill.

Table 13: How much experience students have with relevant reading tasks

	No	Yes, some	Yes, a lot	N/A (not given)
Task 1: Read a sentence with a missing word (gap) and choose the correct word to fill the gap				
Uni students	3.6%	35.7%	60.7%	0.0%
HS teachers	0.0%	33.3%	66.7%	
Task 2: Read a short notice, label, memo or letter and choose the sentence or phrase that most closely matches the meaning of the text				
Uni students	10.7%	25.0%	64.3%	0.0%
HS teachers	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	
Task 3: Type the right word or phrase to fill the gaps in a text				
Uni students	14.3%	57.1%	25.0%	3.6%
HS teachers	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	
Task 4: Read a short text with some missing words (gaps) and choose the missing word for each gap				
Uni students	7.1%	32.1%	50.0%	10.7%
HS teachers	16.7%	50.0%	33.3%	
Task 5: Read a longer text and answer a series of multiple-choice questions				
Uni students	7.1%	14.3%	75.0%	0.0%
HS teachers	0.0%	33.3%	66.7%	

In the individual follow-up interviews, high school teachers reported that their Year 12 students have not experienced having to fill in gaps in reading texts that they encounter for the first time (T01, T04, T06) and that they need to type the missing words rather than selecting them from available choices (T02, T03). These may explain the lower percentages of ‘yes, some’ and ‘yes, a lot’ for Task 3 (79.2%).

5.4.2 Reading: Understanding task requirements

Table 14 shows that over 90% of the university students were able to quickly understand what was required in all of the tasks (100% for Task 1; 92.9% for Tasks 2, 3 and 4; and 96.4% for Task 5). Regarding the responses from high school teachers, all of them said ‘yes’ to Tasks 2 and 5. Two teachers (accounting for 33%) chose ‘no’ for Tasks 1, 3 and 4, where they explained in the interviews that their students might be perplexed to see items that are focused on ‘vocabulary and grammar’ in a reading test (T03, T05, T06). However, despite the two teachers’ concerns, students seem to be used to regarding lexico-grammatical knowledge as part of the reading test construct as indicated by the very positive responses of the students.

Table 14: Whether students were/would be able to quickly understand the requirements of reading tasks

	Yes	No	N/A
Task 1: Read a sentence with a missing word (gap) and choose the correct word to fill the gap			
Uni students	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
HS teachers	66.7%	33.3%	
Task 2: Read a short notice, label, memo or letter and choose the sentence or phrase that most closely matches the meaning of the text			
Uni students	92.9%	7.1%	0.0%
HS teachers	100.0%	0.0%	
Task 3: Type the right word or phrase to fill the gaps in a text			
Uni students	92.9%	7.1%	3.6%
HS teachers	66.7%	33.3%	
Task 4: Read a short text with some missing words (gaps) and choose the missing word for each gap			
Uni students	92.9%	0.0%	7.1%
HS teachers	66.7%	33.3%	
Task 5: Read a longer text and answer a series of multiple-choice questions			
Uni students	96.4%	0.0%	3.6%
HS teachers	100.0%	0.0%	

5.4.3 Reading: Perceived task difficulty

Regarding the perceived difficulty of the tasks (see Table 15), there were variations in the students' and teachers' responses, and often there was not any response option that the majority chose. To summarise:

- **Task 1:** 50.0% of the university students found it either 'easy' or 'very easy'. 50% of the high school teachers did the same.
- **Task 2:** 46.4% of the university students found it either 'easy' or 'very easy'. 50% of the high school teachers did the same.
- **Task 3:** 60.8% of the university students and 66.7% of the high school teachers found it 'difficult' or 'very difficult'.
- **Task 4:** University students' responses were spread: 28.6% selected 'difficult'; 35.7% 'neither difficult nor easy'; and 25% 'easy'. 66.7% of the high school teachers selected 'neither difficult nor easy'.
- **Task 5:** 77.1% of the university students found it either 'difficult' or 'very difficult'. 50% of the teachers selected 'neither difficult nor easy'.

Table 15: Perceived difficulty of Linguaskill reading tasks

	Very difficult	Difficult	Neither difficult nor easy	Easy	Very easy	N/A
Task 1: Read a sentence with a missing word (gap) and choose the correct word to fill the gap						
Uni students	0.0%	17.9%	32.1%	35.7%	14.3%	0.0%
HS teachers	0.0%	16.7%	33.3%	33.3%	16.7%	
Task 2: Read a short notice, label, memo or letter and choose the sentence or phrase that most closely matches the meaning of the text						
Uni students	3.6%	14.3%	35.7%	35.7%	10.7%	0.0%
HS teachers	0.0%	16.7%	33.3%	33.3%	16.7%	
Task 3: Type the right word or phrase to fill the gaps in a text						
Uni students	17.9%	42.9%	17.9%	17.9%	0.0%	3.6%
HS teachers	16.7%	50.0%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	
Task 4: Read a short text with some missing words (gaps) and choose the missing word for each gap						
Uni students	0.0%	28.6%	35.7%	25.0%	0.0%	10.7%
HS teachers	0.0%	16.7%	66.7%	16.7%	0.0%	
Task 5: Read a longer text and answer a series of multiple-choice questions						
Uni students	25.0%	32.1%	28.6%	10.7%	0.0%	0.0%
HS teachers	0.0%	16.7%	50.0%	16.7%	16.7%	

While students felt that these tasks are relatively familiar, three interviewed students mentioned that Task 3 was challenging as they were not given options to choose from and had to fill gaps using their own words (S04, S07, S23). One of the teachers also noted that students might find it difficult to demonstrate the understanding of the precise meaning of some words (e.g., site, district, location) in the sample task for Task 4, since at school, students are usually encouraged to understand the overall meaning of a passage rather than focusing on specific lexical items (S03). This seems to indicate some variation in the teaching practice of reading across different high schools, although the CoS specifies the importance of local reading as well as global reading (see [Appendix C](#), English Communication I (2) Module Content (1) Characteristics & Rules in English (Knowledge and Skills): [C] ‘Words, Collocations and idioms’ and [D] ‘Sentence structure and grammar items’; English Communication III (2) B ‘Understand ... details of the text and the writer’s intention’).

We have so far described survey and interview responses from high school teachers and Year 1 university students. Before moving on to the next section on their desired support and preparation materials for taking Linguaskill General, it is worth sharing some of the students’ general impressions of Linguaskill General and their test-taking experience that were not captured in the selected responses in the questionnaire.

- Generally speaking, I found Linguaskill easier than Eiken or TEAP. Although listening texts were much longer, there are no specific vocabulary items that we need to learn only for Linguaskill. The way we normally study English is good enough to prepare for the test. If the test scores had been accepted by many universities when I was in Year 12, I would definitely have taken the test. The test is particularly suitable for those who are skilled with computers (S07).
- Linguaskill is more similar to GTEC than Eiken. GTEC is easier, though. In Linguaskill, there are more speaking tasks, listening texts are longer, and I found the topics dealt with in the test more demanding (S11).
- I was a little distracted by the speaking voices of other students taking the test around me, even though I was wearing a headphone. It was my first time to take a speaking test on computer (S21).

These students' perceptions on the accessible vocabulary in Linguaskill General, test comparison and the administration setting of the Speaking test are all interesting issues that the test provider may wish to further investigate.

5.5 Desirable support for test preparation

Table 16 shows an overview of the students and teachers' responses regarding desirable support and materials for test preparation (students: N = 28, teachers: N = 6). In the questionnaire, three options were given regarding whether they wish to have each of the specified support and materials: *Yes*, *Not sure*, and *No*. Table 16 shows the percentages of participants who selected 'Yes', and figures over 70% are highlighted in **red** for ease of reading.

As can be seen in Table 16, strong preference was indicated by the students for support materials that illustrate example answers with scores and explanations (a–e) and Speaking/Writing feedback services (j and k). High school teachers also wanted support materials with example performances with scores and explanations (a–e), as well as mobile apps that would encourage more autonomous learning and practice for their students, particularly for Speaking, Writing and Listening (f–h).

Table 16 also summarises insights obtained from the student and teacher interviews (N=6 in both groups) regarding why they wish to receive the specific support and how they wish to use such support and test preparation material. [Appendix D](#) details the actual comments, and those comments that we would especially like to draw the readers' attention to are highlighted in **blue**.

Table 16: Percentages of participants selecting 'yes' for desirable support

Types of support/materials	Students	Teachers	Summary of comments
(a) Practice test book with audio recordings of listening tests, together with answers and commentaries	92.9%	83.3%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practice materials should be provided in different modes (paper, computer, mobile phone). Paper versions are essential.
(b) Practice test materials to be accessed on computer, together with answers and commentaries	75.0%	100.0%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Past papers should also be provided on computer.
(c) Practice test materials to be accessed by mobile phones and tablets, together with answers and commentaries	75.0%	83.3%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mobile phone versions will give flexibility. Japanese educational companies usually offer all 3 modes.
(d) Example answers and commentaries for the Writing test	78.6%	83.3%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students can learn how to structure responses from model examples. Teachers can use them as a teaching guide.
(e) Example answers and commentaries for the Speaking test	82.1%	83.3%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers can use them as a teaching guide.
(f) Speaking practice app	71.4%	100.0%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apps are accessible to students. Feedback is desirable.
(g) Writing practice app	57.1%	83.3%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apps are accessible to students. Feedback is desirable.
(h) Listening practice app	75.0%	100.0%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apps are accessible to students. Grouping of listening items according to difficulty is desirable.
(i) Reading practice app	53.6%	66.7%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small font size may be a problem. A computer version may be preferable.
(j) Speaking feedback service (e.g., you record and submit your speaking samples and receive recorded feedback and/or have an online feedback session)	85.7%	66.7%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback in Japanese may be more accessible to students. Teachers can use the feedback given to students to develop their teaching skills and resources.
(k) Writing feedback service (e.g., you submit your writing samples and receive written feedback and/or have an online feedback session)	89.3%	83.3%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A feedback service is welcome. Teachers can use the feedback given to students to develop their teaching skills and resources.
(l) On-demand service of Linguaskill test preparation video(s)	50.0%	50.0%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is useful just to get to know the test quickly.
(m) Online, interactive Linguaskill test preparation course (at home)	21.4%	33.3%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not highly desired by the majority.
(n) Linguaskill test preparation course in a face-to-face classroom (in high schools, preparatory schools etc)	28.6%	16.7%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Face-to-face courses specific to Linguaskill only are not highly desired.
(o) A mock exam to be taken at home	50.0%	83.3%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the real test is to be taken at home, doing a mock test at home is desirable. Not everyone finds it accessible.
(p) A mock exam to be taken at a test venue	42.9%	16.7%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the real test is to be taken at a test venue, doing a mock test in a similar environment is desirable.

Support needs and materials other than (a)–(p) and additional comments were also expressed in teachers' interviews.

- Teachers would also want to know the **assessment criteria** in Linguaskill (e.g., grammar, vocabulary) as clearly as possible, as it'd be directly relevant to the content of our teaching (T01).
- Since the test seems to be designed with a **task-based approach**, it'd be good if teaching materials and learning website can be designed with the same principle (T02).
- A **teachers' guidebook on academic writing** is needed. The task of writing 180 words is particularly challenging. I want to know how best teachers can teach for the task. The higher-achieving a school is, the more likely that traditional teaching methods are used (e.g., Think in Japanese first and translate ideas into English). It is necessary to practise, for example, how to use a spider diagram to organise main ideas and supporting ideas visually (T05).
- I would want **support for vocabulary teaching and learning** (e.g., a list of words to learn for different Linguaskill levels) (T05).
- Japanese students are used to American English, they need to obtain some basic knowledge of **British English spelling** (e.g., organise vs organize) and get use to its **accent** (T06).
- I wish the **online demo test was much longer**. Even if the demo test is not adaptive, if more tasks and items are available, teachers and students can get a fuller picture of what the test is like (T06).
- Any medium is fine, but I would be grateful if the teaching materials come with **clear explanation of the test structure**, task types and response format (T06).

One teacher also highlighted the importance of past papers and teachers' guidance books based on her experience with GTEC.

- I'd especially want **past papers and teachers' guidance books**. Our school administers GTEC for all students, as GTEC is the most affordable test. When we started using GTEC at school some years ago, we couldn't find past papers or teachers' guidance books. There was no workbook for students either. And, we struggled to prepare students for the test (T01).

One teacher also commented how teachers could make use of an external feedback service in order to enable them to further support students individually.

- I wish I had the time to provide our students with detailed individual feedback and advice especially on writing and speaking, but in reality, it is often impossible. A system that could provide students with individual feedback is most appreciated. The system should give specific, learning-oriented feedback on how each student can improve their writing and speaking, not just make corrections. If the feedback and advice can be shared with us teachers, then it will **allow us to engage with each student in a more effective way**. Although not every time, teachers can find the time to follow up, by saying, “You received this kind of feedback the other day. Show me a new version, and I can check your revisions” (T03).

In addition to commenting on the desirable support and materials listed in the survey (a–p, Table 16), a number of students also specified in more detail what they would like to have in the free answer box. They are exemplified below:

1. **A detailed information page on Linguaskill** (S10).
2. **Opportunities to practise speaking** (online or in-person) (S03).
3. **Vocabulary books**. Students suggested having some lists of vocabulary and expressions for Linguaskill (S11) and of useful English collocations and colloquial (non-academic) expressions (S06).
4. **A web-based app for Linguaskill preparation** exclusive for those who purchase past exam books (S15) or some exclusive services for those who add Linguaskill as a ‘friend’ through the LINE app (S07).
5. **A website or web-based app to practise typing** (S14).
6. **Listening practice materials**. Students mentioned those for practising shadowing (S24).

The first two comments seem to indicate that the range of Linguaskill information and practice resources (including *Write & Improve* and *Speak & Improve*) already available in Japanese webpages need to be more widely recognised (e.g., www.cambridgeenglish.org/jp/exams-and-tests/linguaskill/information-about-the-test/practice-materials, www.kawai-juku.ac.jp/cambridge-english/linguaskill). Those websites should also continue to be populated with more resources (especially with more sample tasks and question items without having to do a demo test), so that students and teachers will regularly visit those websites as a useful place to find relevant and new resources as they prepare for the test.

Finally, on the last free comment box on the questionnaire, Year 1 university students left recommendations for Year 12 students as to what types of test preparation may be helpful. Those are summarised below, and they largely overlap with what was found in Table 16 above. Although these recommendations are not direct requests to the test provider, these students’ views may be useful for future development of support materials for Linguaskill.

General

- You need to **familiarise yourself to the test formats** (S01, S04, S07).
- **Practise with past papers and Linguaskill-specific materials** (S04, S07, S21, S23).
- **Study vocabulary** so as to enable comprehension in reading and listening (S03, S11)/use mobile apps for vocabulary learning (S18).
- **Get used to typing using a keyboard** (S07, S09, S14, S17, S22, S27, S28)/use a typing practice app (S15).
- **Get used to taking a test on a computer** (S09, S22) as taking a test on screen is very different from paper-based ones.
- **Practise using all four skills** (S13, S25).

Speaking/Writing

- Ask someone (e.g., teachers at school or cram school) **to evaluate your written and spoken responses** (S04, S07, S14, S27); getting feedback is crucial for productive skills testing.
- **Practise writing in a short period of time**; practising putting your ideas down fast is useful (S06, S09, S24).
- **Practise planning and speaking in a short period of time** (S16).
- **Learn typical organisations of model performance** of Linguaskill writing (S14).
- **Practising writing emails in English** and **having discussions in English** will be helpful as practical skills are required in Linguaskill (S10).
- **Familiarise yourself with everyday English** through SNS, as the tasks simulate emails and online reviews (S26).

Listening

- **Practise shadowing** (S15)/repeating sounds of unfamiliar words (S03).
- **Practise listening regularly** (S05, S11).
- **Get used to British accents** (S06, S11); Japanese students are more used to American English accents.
- **Practise listening to longer texts** (S06, S17) from English TV shows and radio programmes (S06).

Reading

- Practise **reading long texts** (S03, S20) **fast** (S23).
- Practise **reading texts outside textbooks** (such as on SNS), as Linguaskill reading seems to require understanding of English colloquial expressions (S06).

6 Conclusions

For the purpose of contributing to building a relevant communication model (O’Sullivan 2020) that would enable a successful educational reform in Japan through the use of four-skills private sector English examinations for university admission purposes, this project explored the current position of one private sector test in light of the content of the national curriculum and teaching and learning practices in Japan. Linguaskill General was selected to be the focus of this project, and the test content was mapped against the CoS for high schools (Phase 1) and voices from the most important, albeit often neglected stakeholder groups – students and teachers – were elicited regarding the test itself and desired test preparation support and materials (Phase 2).

In Phase 1, we scrutinised the correspondence between Linguaskill General and the sections on English within the chapter on *Foreign Languages* of the latest CoS for high schools (MEXT 2018; implemented in April 2022). Following the requirements of the MEXT 2018 template for test evaluation, the constructs measured in Linguaskill General were matched with relevant descriptors in the CoS. Section 4.2 reported the overall results per skill, and the detailed results of part-by-part/task-by-task mapping, specifying the relevant descriptors in the CoS, are found in [Appendix C](#).

In Phase 2 of the project, 28 Year 1 university students took Linguaskill General and then responded to a feedback questionnaire on their test-taking experience and desired support and materials that they would wish to have if they were to prepare for the test. Of the 28 students, six also participated in follow-up interviews. In addition, six high school teachers reviewed an online sample Linguaskill General test, and the suitability of the test for their students and their support needs were sought through a questionnaire and follow-up interviews.

The majority of the students were judged as B1 in Linguaskill General (A2: N=5, B1: N=20, B2: N=3). The six teachers were recruited from different regions of Japan, and all the teachers but one, who responded 90%, reported that 100% of their students typically go to universities. This means that university entrance examinations, explicitly or implicitly, play an important role in setting goals and materials for both teachers and students in those schools. The questionnaire and

interview responses from students and teachers were integrated and presented together in Section 5.

In this conclusions section, we briefly summarise the main findings from the two phases of the project, and then discuss implications for the provider of Linguaskill General, namely, Cambridge University Press & Assessment, as well as wider implications for the field of language testing.

6.1 Summary of the main findings

RQ1. To what extent and in what ways does Linguaskill General match the curriculum of English education in Japan as specified in the CoS for high schools?

In general, the degrees of match between the Linguaskill General and the CoS were high, which evidences the suitability of Linguaskill General for university admission purposes in Japan. Nevertheless, there were some discrepancies in what CoS promotes and what Linguaskill tasks require – namely, in Speaking Part 2 and in Writing Task 2.

Part 2 in Speaking requires test-takers to read aloud sentences, while the current CoS regards read-aloud to be part of reading skills. There was also some scepticism among high school teachers for this part (as elicited in Phase 2) because reading aloud sentences that student have never seen before (nor had enough time to comprehend) is not practised in classrooms. While the ability to read aloud sentences is arguably part of more fundamental skills in speaking (e.g., Van Moere 2012), providing clearer rationales on the test website may be worth considering.

Additionally, the sample Writing Task 2 on the Linguaskill website concerns writing an online post about the increased traffic in a local town and a potential solution to it. This task targets the ability to write appropriately on a less familiar topic for a wider audience, which has the potential to correspond well with ‘writing on social topics’ in the CoS. However, it has been suggested that those ‘less familiar’ topics designed for the current adult test-taker population of Linguaskill General might be totally unfamiliar to high school students in Japan. Thus, a system that pre-selects a subset of tasks for Writing Task 2 according to test-takers’ main demographic information might be useful, so that more engaging and appropriate topics can be given to Japanese high school students.

RQ2. What support do test-takers and high school teachers wish to receive when preparing for Linguaskill General?

A range of support needs and preparation materials were identified for Japanese high school students to prepare for Linguaskill General for university admission purposes, reflecting its specific culture of test preparation, the content of the CoS, the proficiency level of the students, and varied teaching practices across high schools in Japan.

Generally, all task types and item types included in Linguaskill General were considered to be relatively familiar to the target students, and instructional clarity

was also confirmed. This was largely due to the students' prior test-taking and test preparation activities for other private sector examinations such as Eiken, GTEC and TEAP as well as the Common Test (the national university entrance test launched in January 2021). However, certain aspects of some tasks were considered less familiar (e.g., Speaking Task 4, describe graphics to support one's opinion; Writing Task 2, write over 180 words; and Reading Task 3, type missing words to fill gaps in texts that they encountered for the first time). In terms of the perceived difficulty of the test, some tasks were judged as particularly challenging. For example, over 80% of the students and teachers thought that Writing Task 2 was either 'very difficult' or 'difficult', which is however not surprising since the majority of the students in this study were at B1. Linguaskill Writing is not an adaptive part of the test, and it is a multi-level test where Task 2 targets test-takers at B2 or above. More importantly, nearly 90% of the students, even though the Listening test is adaptive, reported that Listening Task 3 was 'very difficult' or 'difficult'. It is speculated that the perceived difficulty is, to some extent, associated with the length of writing and listening input. This indicates that their perceptions may change if students get used to writing longer pieces and listening to longer recordings.

Next, we sought the test preparation support and materials desired by students and teachers and how they can be utilised. To sum up, they wish to have a set of test practice materials through different mediums ((a) book, (b) computer, (c) mobile phone) to have choices and flexibility for their teaching and learning. However, it should be noted that a strong preference for studying with hard copies was expressed by students. Students and teachers also shared ideas on how they could make the best use of model answers and detailed commentaries for the Speaking and Writing test (d–e). It is also worth noting that apps to prepare for Linguaskill seem to be generally welcomed by the students (note that in Japan, 'apps' usually mean those on mobile phones). However, for Reading and Writing, much smaller numbers of students were interested in having mobile apps ((i) 53.6% and (g) 57.1%, respectively) due to the small screen size and the lack of a keyboard in mobile phones. Furthermore, feedback services for Speaking and Writing (j–k) were perceived useful by both students and teachers, and it was encouraging to hear that teachers would also consider such services as professional development opportunities. In contrast, it seems that on-demand video resources, interactive online courses and face-to-face courses specific to Linguaskill General (l–n) were not very desired, although of the three, on-demand videos are thought to be more readily accessible. Students and teachers' views of the need of a mock test at home and at a test venue (o–p) were mixed, but they generally found it useful to have a test-taking experience in an environment similar to the real test. Finally, in providing support, those students' computer-familiarity should also be taken into account. The students in this study reported that the average frequency of their computer use when they were high school students was 'once a week', and the average perception of their own typing speed was 'relatively slow'. As indicated in Section 5.2.3, some of the students struggled with the lack of keyboard-typing experience, especially for Writing Task 2 where typing a longer text was required.

6.2 Limitations of the study

While this study achieved its overall objectives despite the challenges of data collection caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, there are two main limitations to be addressed in future research.

Firstly, our original research design was to recruit approximately equal numbers of students at A2, B1 and B2 so that we could identify level-specific perceptions and needs from students. However, the closure of the University campus and difficulty of in-person data collection due to the pandemic meant that we were unable to select participating students according to their proficiency levels. Instead, the majority of the students who participated in the study were at B1 (A2: N=5, B1: N=20, B2: N=3) as judged by Linguaskill General. Although this made it impossible for us to compare and contrast students' perceptions and needs at the three levels, the collected data reflected the typical level of proficiency of the Year 1 cohort at Rikkyo University (Nitta 2021, personal communication), which actually uses Linguaskill General as one of the admission tests. Additionally, the achievement level of high school graduates in Japan is generally considered as B1 (e.g., Eiken Grade 2, benchmarked as the high school graduate level by MEXT, is aligned to the CEFR B1; see www.eiken.or.jp/eiken/en/research). As such, the findings of this study have practical values that are applicable to the general student population who could use Linguaskill for university admission.

The other limitation relates to the selection of the six high school teachers who participated in the study. While we succeeded in gathering a variety of views from teachers teaching in five different prefectures with different lengths of teaching experience (ranging from 9 to 38 years), they all work for high-achieving schools where almost all students pursue Higher Education after graduating. We deliberately selected those participants, as their students are most likely to study for Linguaskill General for university admission purposes, and the information gained by them would therefore be the richest and most relevant to this research. However, it should be noted that the study missed out the views of those teachers who work for schools where more graduates choose paths other than going to university. It is recommended that future research should supplement this research by investigating voices from high school teachers who teach students with different demographics as their needs might be different from what we have reported in this study.

6.3 Implications of the study

Despite these limitations, the findings obtained in this project are believed to have a range of valuable implications for Cambridge University Press & Assessment – the provider of Linguaskill General – and for a wider audience in the field of language testing.

First, this project achieved the mapping of Linguaskill General on the CoS for high schools in Japan. This is believed to offer valuable objective information based on which individual high schools and universities consider and evaluate Linguaskill General for its suitability as a university admission test. The test provider now has

a publicly available research report and stakeholder voices that can be used when communicating with high school teachers and students about the use of Linguaskill General.

Second, the test provider can also prepare relevant support and materials based on the actual voices of high school students and teachers. This will in turn empower students and teachers, who should be playing a central role in the proposed educational reform through the introduction of private sector English examinations. In so doing, we believe that we can move towards building ‘a two-way process’ in which stakeholders know about the test and test providers know how best they can support and communicate with stakeholders (O’Sullivan 2020). The two stakeholder groups – students and teachers – are the groups most affected by the reform whether positively or negatively. It is hoped that this research helped their voices to be heard to explore how they can benefit from the educational reform initiative, and how they can drive the reform initiative for their benefit.

Third, the findings of the study suggested potential ways to accommodate Linguaskill General to be a more suitable university entrance examination in Japan. The following is a list of possible accommodations that the test provider might wish to consider if an adapted version of the test and accompanying materials can be developed for university admission purposes in Japan.

Speaking

- **Task 1: Answer questions about themselves.** The response requirements can be made clearer by specifying whether test-takers can respond just with a few words or they should form a full sentence, and by noting whether or not they should use all 10 seconds.
- **Task 2: Read sentences aloud.** A read-aloud task, especially with no preparation time for silent reading, is not recommended in the CoS. While the current read-task format without preparation time is considered effective as a method to measure learners’ automaticity in speaking (e.g., Van Moere 2012), it is worth considering either providing clear rationales in the handbooks for teachers and students or giving 10 to 20 seconds for silent reading. Giving some preparation time would make the reading aloud task a more meaningful activity for students (as they understand what they are communicating), although the measured construct would be shifted. Alternatively, this task could be replaced by another task that is more aligned to the CoS.
- **Task 4: Talk about one or more graphics for one minute.** It has been brought to our attention that Japanese high school students do not usually practise integrating their own views and information from tables/graphics – in other words, describing such information in order to support their own opinions. It is therefore recommended that the task requirements should be explained clearly in the handbooks for teachers and students. Given the suitability of this task type for the corresponding CoS descriptors (see [Appendix C](#), English Communication III (1 – Spoken Interaction B)), this task has the great potential to encourage teachers and students to engage in the learning activities that may have been neglected in the classroom and foster positive washback for students to acquire the skills to extract relevant information and logically describe it to support their own views.

- **Administration conditions.** It was reported that some students felt distracted by the speaking voices of other students during the Speaking test. While it must be very challenging to provide a completely silent environment for the test-takers who take the test in a test centre, this is also an issue that could potentially undermine the scoring validity of the test. The auto-marker would be less accurate if the audio recording has a high level of background noise. As such, it is recommended that careful consideration should be given to the use of high-quality noise cancelling headsets and optimal seating plans for test-takers.

Writing

- **Topics and settings.** Topics and settings that are relevant to Japanese high school students should be selected.
- **Task 1: Write a response of over 50 words to a prompt (e.g., email).** It was surprising to find that no or very little email writing is taught or practised in Japanese high schools given the digital age that we currently live in. Since email writing is included as one of the example language use settings for English Communication II (MEXT 2018:166), this email task in Linguaskill General can be used to foster positive washback to high school teachers and students in Japan.
- **Task 2: Write over 180 words using the information given in a scenario.** This task, which targets test-takers at B2 and above, seems too demanding to most high school students in Japan. Lowering the target level of the task is therefore likely to result in more accurate assessment of the writing ability of Japanese high school students. As such, consideration can be given to modify this task to target B1. Nevertheless, it should also be kept in mind that even if the word count is reduced, Task 2 should still be long enough to allow for a few paragraphs, since the descriptors of the CoS English Communication III (5: Writing B; see [Appendix C](#)) target 'a written piece consisting of several paragraphs'. A little shorter task (e.g., 150 words) on more familiar topics might be a good way forward to encourage Japanese high school teachers and students to engage in longer pieces of writing.
- **Accessible first task.** Compared to the other three skills (Speaking, Listening, Reading) that start with very easy items and tasks, neither Task 1 nor Task 2 in Writing is accessible to very weak students. Consideration can be made to include an additional task for weak students to be able to perform, such as writing one sentence on a familiar topic.

Listening

- **Task 3: Listen to a longer recording and answer a series of multiple-choice questions based on it.** It seems that students are not used to listening to as long a recording as that of Task 3, finding it difficult to keep concentrating for an extended period of time. While there is no advised length(s) of audio recordings specified in the CoS, its example language use settings for listening includes TV and radio programmes, films and online videos, which usually require an extended period of listening. Task 3, therefore, has the potential to foster positive washback by encouraging high school teachers and students to practise listening to longer texts, and it is recommended that the handbooks for teachers and students contain some tips in engaging with longer listening recordings.

Reading

- **Task 3: Type the right word or phrase to fill the gaps in a text.** It has been found that high school students are not used to the open gap-fill response format where they have to type the missing words by themselves rather than selecting them from available choices. Therefore, high school teachers and students are likely to benefit from clear guidance and tips in handbooks for teachers and students.
- **Balanced coverage of reading types in the classroom.** Additionally, the test handbooks for teachers and students can also highlight the value of different types of reading (e.g., careful reading, expeditious reading, local reading, global reading) because the research revealed varied teaching practices across different high schools, such as some schools focusing mainly on global reading. If the test handbooks clarify the importance of different reading types and how they can be taught and studied, then this is another area where positive washback of the test can be expected for high school teachers and students in Japan.

Furthermore, this project demonstrated a possible way for all stakeholders to work together, to move away from the 'deficit model of language assessment literacy' (Baker 2020). It is also hoped that this research offered insights into a wider social context (e.g., possible enabling factors and impediments) that plays a key role in implementing an educational/examination reform successfully. The issues and contextual information gained from students and teachers (e.g., students' wide use of mobile phones, students' limited typing skills on computer, teachers' heavy workload, teachers' willingness for professional development) can be embraced so that support and materials can be localised for their needs.

Finally, we conclude the report by sharing one of the teachers' insights into the future reform of the English educational system in Japan and how we can facilitate it.

The Japanese government's official launch of private sector English tests [to replace the National Center Test] was cancelled this time, but I do believe that they will be officially introduced in 10 years. Despite some debate and criticisms, students, teachers, and parents all know that English exams for university admission purposes need to change, and that all four skills must be assessed. When we think about what we can do from now to then, I believe that this is exactly the type of research necessary for Japan, so that we can start building a bridge between private sector exams and English teaching at high schools. That way, in 10 years' time we'll be ready to fully embrace the English education reform through university admission tests (T05).

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8 Appendices

Appendix A: Student questionnaire (given in Japanese)



A feedback questionnaire on the Linguaskill General English test (about 15 mins)

Thank you very much for participating in the Linguaskill research project. Please share your test taking experience by answering the questions below.

1. About yourself

1.1 Name:

1.2 Age: _____ years old

1.3 Gender: (please circle as appropriate) Male Female Prefer not to say

1.4 Your faculty / department:

1.5 When you applied for Rikkyo University, which English exam(s) did you take? Please circle ALL that apply.

Rikkyo University Entrance Exam · Common Test for University Entrance · Eiken · TEAP · GTEC ·
Cambridge English Qualifications (e.g., B2 First) · IELTS · TOEFL iBT · I didn't take any English test ·
Others – please specify:

1.6 What is your most recent score(s) of a private-sector English standardised test?

Name of the test:

Overall score:

Reading score:

Writing score:

Listening score:

Speaking score:

1.7 Have you ever taken any English tests on computer? Yes No

If 'Yes', which test(s) have you taken?

1.8 How often were you using a computer when you were a high school student?






(Almost) everyday · 3 days a week · Once a week · Once a month · Several times a year or less

1.9 What is your typing speed?

Very quick · Quick · Neither quick nor slow · Slow · Very slow

2. About the Speaking test

Task type examples

				
Task 1	Task 2	Task 3	Task 4	Task 5

2.1 Have you ever practised the following task types? Please circle as appropriate.

Task 1: Answer questions about themselves	No	Yes, some	Yes, a lot
Task 2: Read sentences aloud	No	Yes, some	Yes, a lot
Task 3: Talk about a given topic for one minute	No	Yes, some	Yes, a lot
Task 4: Talk about one or more graphics for one minute	No	Yes, some	Yes, a lot
Task 5: Give opinions by answering questions related to a topic	No	Yes, some	Yes, a lot

2.2 Did you understand quickly what you need to do to respond to the following task types?

Task 1: Answer questions about themselves	Yes	No
Task 2: Read sentences aloud	Yes	No
Task 3: Talk about a given topic for one minute	Yes	No
Task 4: Talk about one or more graphics for one minute	Yes	No
Task 5: Give opinions by answering questions related to a topic	Yes	No

If you selected 'No' in any of the above questions, what did you find difficult to understand?

Please describe in detail while specifying the task type(s).

2.3 How difficult/easy were the following task types?

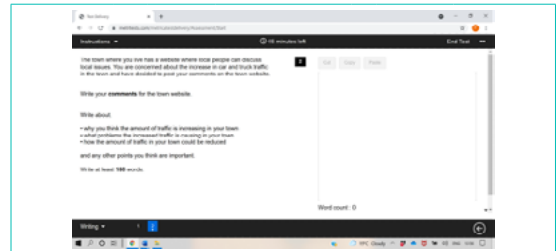
Task 1: Answer questions about themselves	Very difficult	Difficult	Neither difficult nor easy	Easy	Very easy
Task 2: Read sentences aloud	Very difficult	Difficult	Neither difficult nor easy	Easy	Very easy
Task 3: Talk about a given topic for one minute	Very difficult	Difficult	Neither difficult nor easy	Easy	Very easy
Task 4: Talk about one or more graphics for one minute	Very difficult	Difficult	Neither difficult nor easy	Easy	Very easy
Task 5: Give opinions by answering questions related to a topic	Very difficult	Difficult	Neither difficult nor easy	Easy	Very easy

3. About the Writing test

Task type examples



Task 1



Task 2

3.1 Have you ever practised the following task types? Please circle as appropriate.

Task 1: Write a response of over 50 words to a prompt (e.g., email)	No	Yes, some	Yes, a lot
Task 2: Write over 180 words using the information given in a scenario	No	Yes, some	Yes, a lot

3.2 Did you understand quickly what you need to do to respond to the following task types?

Task 1: Write a response of over 50 words to a prompt (e.g., email)	Yes	No
Task 2: Write over 180 words using the information given in a scenario	Yes	No

If you selected 'No' in any of the above questions, what did you find difficult to understand?
Please describe in detail while specifying the task type(s).

3.3 How difficult/easy were the following task types?

Task 1: Write a response of over 50 words to a prompt (e.g., email)	Very difficult	Difficult	Neither difficult nor easy	Easy	Very easy
Task 2: Write over 180 words using the information given in a scenario	Very difficult	Difficult	Neither difficult nor easy	Easy	Very easy

4. About the Listening test

Task type examples

Task 1	Task 2	Task 3

4.1 Have you ever practised the following task types? Please circle as appropriate.
If you did not see any of the task types, please select 'N/A' (not applicable).

Task 1: Listen to a short audio recording and choose the correct picture that matches the audio recording	No	Yes, some	Yes, a lot	N/A
Task 2: Listen to a short audio recording and answer a multiple-choice question	No	Yes, some	Yes, a lot	N/A
Task 3: Listen to a longer recording and answer a series of multiple-choice questions based on it	No	Yes, some	Yes, a lot	N/A

4.2 Did you understand quickly what you need to do to respond to the following task types?

Task 1: Listen to a short audio recording and choose the correct picture that matches the audio recording	Yes	No	N/A
Task 2: Listen to a short audio recording and answer a multiple-choice question	Yes	No	N/A
Task 3: Listen to a longer recording and answer a series of multiple-choice questions based on it	Yes	No	N/A






If you selected 'No' in any of the above questions, what did you find difficult to understand?
Please describe in detail while specifying the task type(s).

4.3 How difficult/easy were the following task types?

Task 1: Listen to a short audio recording and choose the correct picture that matches the audio recording	Very difficult	Difficult	Neither difficult nor easy	Easy	Very easy	N/A
Task 2: Listen to a short audio recording and answer a multiple-choice question	Very difficult	Difficult	Neither difficult nor easy	Easy	Very easy	N/A
Task 3: Listen to a longer recording and answer a series of multiple-choice questions based on it	Very difficult	Difficult	Neither difficult nor easy	Easy	Very easy	N/A

5. About the Reading test

Task type examples

				
Task 1	Task 2	Task 3	Task 4	Task 5

5.1 Have you ever practised the following task types? Please circle as appropriate.

If you did not see any of the task types, please select 'N/A' (not applicable).

Task 1: Read a sentence with a missing word (gap) and choose the correct word to fill the gap	No	Yes, some	Yes, a lot	N/A
Task 2: Read a short notice, label, memo or letter and choose the sentence or phrase that most closely matches the meaning of the text	No	Yes, some	Yes, a lot	N/A
Task 3: Type the right word or phrase to fill the gaps in a text	No	Yes, some	Yes, a lot	N/A
Task 4: Read a short text with some missing words (gaps) and choose the missing word for each gap	No	Yes, some	Yes, a lot	N/A
Task 5: Read a longer text and answer a series of multiple-choice questions	No	Yes, some	Yes, a lot	N/A

5.2 Did you understand quickly what you need to do to respond to the following task types?

Task 1: Read a sentence with a missing word (gap) and choose the correct word to fill the gap	Yes	No	N/A
Task 2: Read a short notice, label, memo or letter and choose the sentence or phrase that most closely matches the meaning of the text	Yes	No	N/A
Task 3: Type the right word or phrase to fill the gaps in a text	Yes	No	N/A
Task 4: Read a short text with some missing words (gaps) and choose the missing word for each gap	Yes	No	N/A
Task 5: Read a longer text and answer a series of multiple-choice questions	Yes	No	N/A

If you selected 'No' in any of the above questions, what did you find difficult to understand?

Please describe in detail while specifying the task type(s).

5.3 How difficult/easy were the following task types?

Task 1: Read a sentence with a missing word (gap) and choose the correct word to fill the gap	Very difficult	Difficult	Neither difficult nor easy	Easy	Very easy	N/A
Task 2: Read a short notice, label, memo or letter and choose the sentence or phrase that most closely matches the meaning of the text	Very difficult	Difficult	Neither difficult nor easy	Easy	Very easy	N/A
Task 3: Type the right word or phrase to fill the gaps in a text	Very difficult	Difficult	Neither difficult nor easy	Easy	Very easy	N/A
Task 4: Read a short text with some missing words (gaps) and choose the missing word for each gap	Very difficult	Difficult	Neither difficult nor easy	Easy	Very easy	N/A
Task 5: Read a longer text and answer a series of multiple-choice questions	Very difficult	Difficult	Neither difficult nor easy	Easy	Very easy	N/A

6. Desirable support and materials

The Linguaskill English test is used as a university admissions test for a number of universities including Rikkyo University. If you were a high school student preparing for the Linguaskill test for university admissions, what support and/or materials would you like to have?

2.1 Have you ever practised the following task types? Please circle as appropriate.

(a) Practice test book with audio recordings of listening tests, together with answers and commentaries	Yes	Not sure	No
(b) Practice test materials to be accessed on computer, together with answers and commentaries	Yes	Not sure	No
(c) Practice test materials to be accessed by mobile phones and tablets, together with answers and commentaries	Yes	Not sure	No
(d) Example answers and commentaries for the Writing test	Yes	Not sure	No
(e) Example answers and commentaries for the Speaking test	Yes	Not sure	No
(f) Speaking practice app	Yes	Not sure	No
(g) Writing practice app	Yes	Not sure	No
(h) Listening practice app	Yes	Not sure	No
(i) Reading practice app	Yes	Not sure	No
(j) Speaking feedback service (e.g., you record and submit your speaking samples and receive recorded feedback and/or have an online feedback session)	Yes	Not sure	No
(k) Writing feedback service (e.g., you submit your writing samples and receive written feedback and/or have an online feedback session)	Yes	Not sure	No
(l) On-demand service of Linguaskill test preparation video(s)	Yes	Not sure	No
(m) Online, interactive Linguaskill test preparation course (at home)	Yes	Not sure	No
(n) Linguaskill test preparation course in a face-to-face classroom (in high schools, preparatory schools etc)	Yes	Not sure	No
(o) A mock exam to be taken at home	Yes	Not sure	No
(p) A mock exam to be taken at a test venue	Yes	Not sure	No
(q) If there is any other support that you would like to receive or any other materials that you would like to use in order to prepare for the Linguaskill test, please describe them here.			

If you have any advice to those high school students who are going to take the Linguaskill test for university admissions purposes, please share your suggestions here (e.g., what to study, how to prepare for the test).

Thank you very much for responding to the questionnaire. Please give this questionnaire back to the test invigilator and receive an Amazon gift voucher.

- If you are participating in an interview, please seek the invigilator's instructions. You will receive a gift voucher after your interview.
- We will email you when your test results are ready.

Appendix B: Teacher questionnaire (given in Japanese)



A feedback questionnaire on the Linguaskill General English test (about 20 mins)

Thank you very much for participating in the Linguaskill research project. Based on your review of the sample Linguaskill test, please share your perceptions by answering the questions below.

1. About yourself

1.1 Name:

1.2 Gender: (please circle as appropriate) Male Female Prefer not to say

1.3 Years of teaching at the senior high school years

1.4 Your prefecture

1.5 At your school, what is the percentage of students going to universities? (please circle as appropriate)

0–10% · 11–20% · 21–30% · 31–40% · 41–50% · 51–60% · 61–70% · 71–80% · 81–90% · 91–100%






1.6 Are you currently teaching Year 12 English? If not, when did you last teach it? (please circle as appropriate)

This year · last year · 2 years ago · 3 years ago · Other: _____ years ago · Never

Please answer the following questions considering the ability and experience of an average Year 12 student (after Term 1) at your high school.

2. About the Speaking test

Task type examples

				
Task 1	Task 2	Task 3	Task 4	Task 5

2.1 How much experience do Year 12 students have with the following task types? Please circle as appropriate.

Task 1: Answer questions about themselves	No	Yes, some	Yes, a lot
Task 2: Read sentences aloud	No	Yes, some	Yes, a lot
Task 3: Talk about a given topic for one minute	No	Yes, some	Yes, a lot
Task 4: Talk about one or more graphics for one minute	No	Yes, some	Yes, a lot
Task 5: Give opinions by answering questions related to a topic	No	Yes, some	Yes, a lot

2.2 Would your Year 12 students understand quickly what you need to do to respond to the following task types?

Task 1: Answer questions about themselves	Yes	No
Task 2: Read sentences aloud	Yes	No
Task 3: Talk about a given topic for one minute	Yes	No
Task 4: Talk about one or more graphics for one minute	Yes	No
Task 5: Give opinions by answering questions related to a topic	Yes	No

If you selected 'No' in any of the above questions, what did you find difficult to understand?

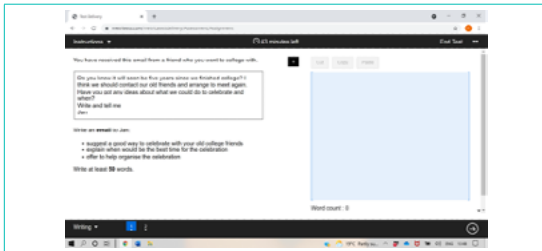
Please describe in detail while specifying the task type(s).

2.3 How difficult/easy do you think are the following task types for your Year 12 students?

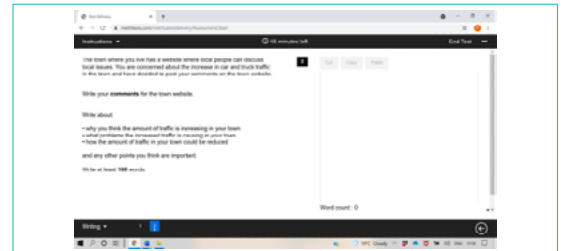
Task 1: Answer questions about themselves	Very difficult	Difficult	Neither difficult nor easy	Easy	Very easy
Task 2: Read sentences aloud	Very difficult	Difficult	Neither difficult nor easy	Easy	Very easy
Task 3: Talk about a given topic for one minute	Very difficult	Difficult	Neither difficult nor easy	Easy	Very easy
Task 4: Talk about one or more graphics for one minute	Very difficult	Difficult	Neither difficult nor easy	Easy	Very easy
Task 5: Give opinions by answering questions related to a topic	Very difficult	Difficult	Neither difficult nor easy	Easy	Very easy

3. About the Writing test

Task type examples



Task 1



Task 2

3.1 How much experience do Year 12 students have with the following task types? Please circle as appropriate.

Task 1: Write a response of over 50 words to a prompt (e.g., email)	No	Yes, some	Yes, a lot
Task 2: Write over 180 words using the information given in a scenario	No	Yes, some	Yes, a lot

3.2 Would your Year 12 students understand quickly what you need to do to respond to the following task types?

Task 1: Write a response of over 50 words to a prompt (e.g., email)	Yes	No
Task 2: Write over 180 words using the information given in a scenario	Yes	No

If you selected 'No' in any of the above questions, what did you find difficult to understand?
Please describe in detail while specifying the task type(s).

3.3 How difficult/easy do you think are the following task types for your Year 12 students?

Task 1: Write a response of over 50 words to a prompt (e.g., email)	Very difficult	Difficult	Neither difficult nor easy	Easy	Very easy
Task 2: Write over 180 words using the information given in a scenario	Very difficult	Difficult	Neither difficult nor easy	Easy	Very easy

4. About the Listening test

Task type examples

Task 1	Task 2	Task 3

4.1 How much experience do Year 12 students have with the following task types?

Please circle as appropriate. If you did not see any of the task types, please select 'N/A' (not applicable).

Task 1: Listen to a short audio recording and choose the correct picture that matches the audio recording	No	Yes, some	Yes, a lot	N/A
Task 2: Listen to a short audio recording and answer a multiple-choice question	No	Yes, some	Yes, a lot	N/A
Task 3: Listen to a longer recording and answer a series of multiple-choice questions based on it	No	Yes, some	Yes, a lot	N/A

4.2 Would your Year 12 students understand quickly what you need to do to respond to the following task types?

Task 1: Listen to a short audio recording and choose the correct picture that matches the audio recording	Yes	No	N/A
Task 2: Listen to a short audio recording and answer a multiple-choice question	Yes	No	N/A
Task 3: Listen to a longer recording and answer a series of multiple-choice questions based on it	Yes	No	N/A






If you selected 'No' in any of the above questions, what did you find difficult to understand? Please describe in detail while specifying the task type(s).

4.3 How difficult/easy do you think are the following task types for your Year 12 students?

Task 1: Listen to a short audio recording and choose the correct picture that matches the audio recording	Very difficult	Difficult	Neither difficult nor easy	Easy	Very easy	N/A
Task 2: Listen to a short audio recording and answer a multiple-choice question	Very difficult	Difficult	Neither difficult nor easy	Easy	Very easy	N/A
Task 3: Listen to a longer recording and answer a series of multiple-choice questions based on it	Very difficult	Difficult	Neither difficult nor easy	Easy	Very easy	N/A

5. About the Reading test

Task type examples

				
Task 1	Task 2	Task 3	Task 4	Task 5

5.1 How much experience do Year 12 students have with the following task types? Please circle as appropriate.

Task 1: Read a sentence with a missing word (gap) and choose the correct word to fill the gap	No	Yes, some	Yes, a lot	N/A
Task 2: Read a short notice, label, memo or letter and choose the sentence or phrase that most closely matches the meaning of the text	No	Yes, some	Yes, a lot	N/A
Task 3: Type the right word or phrase to fill the gaps in a text	No	Yes, some	Yes, a lot	N/A
Task 4: Read a short text with some missing words (gaps) and choose the missing word for each gap	No	Yes, some	Yes, a lot	N/A
Task 5: Read a longer text and answer a series of multiple-choice questions	No	Yes, some	Yes, a lot	N/A

5.2 Would your Year 12 students understand quickly what you need to do to respond to the following task types?

Task 1: Read a sentence with a missing word (gap) and choose the correct word to fill the gap	Yes	No	N/A
Task 2: Read a short notice, label, memo or letter and choose the sentence or phrase that most closely matches the meaning of the text	Yes	No	N/A
Task 3: Type the right word or phrase to fill the gaps in a text	Yes	No	N/A
Task 4: Read a short text with some missing words (gaps) and choose the missing word for each gap	Yes	No	N/A
Task 5: Read a longer text and answer a series of multiple-choice questions	Yes	No	N/A

If you selected 'No' in any of the above questions, what did you find difficult to understand?
Please describe in detail while specifying the task type(s).

5.3 How difficult/easy do you think are the following task types for your Year 12 students?

Task 1: Read a sentence with a missing word (gap) and choose the correct word to fill the gap	Very difficult	Difficult	Neither difficult nor easy	Easy	Very easy	N/A
Task 2: Read a short notice, label, memo or letter and choose the sentence or phrase that most closely matches the meaning of the text	Very difficult	Difficult	Neither difficult nor easy	Easy	Very easy	N/A
Task 3: Type the right word or phrase to fill the gaps in a text	Very difficult	Difficult	Neither difficult nor easy	Easy	Very easy	N/A
Task 4: Read a short text with some missing words (gaps) and choose the missing word for each gap	Very difficult	Difficult	Neither difficult nor easy	Easy	Very easy	N/A
Task 5: Read a longer text and answer a series of multiple-choice questions	Very difficult	Difficult	Neither difficult nor easy	Easy	Very easy	N/A

6. Desirable support and materials

The Linguaskill English test is used as a university admissions test for a number of universities including Rikkyo University. If you were to teach a high school student preparing for the Linguaskill test for university admissions, what support and/or materials would you like to have?

2.1 Have you ever practised the following task types? Please circle as appropriate.

(a) Practice test book with audio recordings of listening tests, together with answers and commentaries	Yes	Not sure	No
(b) Practice test materials to be accessed on computer, together with answers and commentaries	Yes	Not sure	No
(c) Practice test materials to be accessed by mobile phones and tablets, together with answers and commentaries	Yes	Not sure	No
(d) Example answers and commentaries for the Writing test	Yes	Not sure	No
(e) Example answers and commentaries for the Speaking test	Yes	Not sure	No
(f) Speaking practice app	Yes	Not sure	No
(g) Writing practice app	Yes	Not sure	No
(h) Listening practice app	Yes	Not sure	No
(i) Reading practice app	Yes	Not sure	No
(j) Speaking feedback service (e.g., you record and submit your speaking samples and receive recorded feedback and/or have an online feedback session)	Yes	Not sure	No
(k) Writing feedback service (e.g., you submit your writing samples and receive written feedback and/or have an online feedback session)	Yes	Not sure	No
(l) On-demand service of Linguaskill test preparation video(s)	Yes	Not sure	No
(m) Online, interactive Linguaskill test preparation course (at home)	Yes	Not sure	No
(n) Linguaskill test preparation course in a face-to-face classroom (in high schools, preparatory schools etc)	Yes	Not sure	No
(o) A mock exam to be taken at home	Yes	Not sure	No
(p) A mock exam to be taken at a test venue	Yes	Not sure	No
(q) If there is any other support that you would like to receive or any other materials that you would like to use in order to prepare for the Linguaskill test, please describe them here.			

If you have any advice to those high school students who are going to take the Linguaskill test for university admissions purposes, please share your suggestions here (e.g., what to study, how to prepare for the test).

Thank you very much for responding to the questionnaire.

Appendix C: Relevant descriptors in the Course of Study that correspond with the constructs measured by Linguaskill General

Notes. EC = English Communication (Modules I, II, III); LE = Logic and Expressions (Modules I, II, III); CoS descriptors were translated into English by the researchers of this project.

Speaking

Question	Relevant descriptors in the CoS	資格・検定試験の問題と学習指導要領の関連項目 [Relevant descriptors in the CoS in Japanese]
<p>1</p> <p>EC1 (2) C Organise what to say and communicate information and own ideas on everyday (...) topics.</p>		<p>英コミI(2)ウ「日常的な話題(…)について、伝える内容を整理し、(…)情報や自分自身の考えなどを伝え合う」</p>
<p>2</p> <p>EC1 (2) Module Content (1) Characteristics & Rules in English (Knowledge and Skills): A 'Phonology'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stress in words, phrases, and sentences • Intonation in sentences • Boundaries in sentences <p>[**The same applies to EC II and EC III]</p>		<p>英コミI(2)の(1)英語の特徴やさまじりに関する事項(活用できる知識技能): ア「音声」:(7)語や句、文における強勢(イ)文におけるイントネーション(ウ)文における区切り</p> <p>※英コミIIとIIIもこれに準ずる</p>
<p>3</p> <p>EC III (1) A Communicate information, ideas, feelings etc. on everyday topics using a variety of words, phrases and sentences appropriately to the purposes, settings and contexts, with little support in terms of the choice of words, phrases, and sentence structures, or the provision of preparation time.</p> <p>EC III (2) A Clearly communicate information, ideas, feelings etc. on everyday topics related to life outside school and local communities, detailing reasons and supporting evidence.</p> <p>LE II (1) A Communicate information, ideas, feelings etc. on everyday topics using a variety of words, phrases and sentences appropriately to the purposes, settings and contexts, with some support in terms of the choice of words, phrases, and sentence structures or the provision of preparation time.</p> <p>LE III (1) A Communicate information, ideas, feelings etc. on everyday topics using a variety of words, phrases and sentences while mindng logical development and organisation in order to persuade the listener, with little support in terms of the choice of words, phrases, and sentence structures or the provision of preparation time.</p> <p>LE III (2) Communicate information, ideas, feeling etc. on everyday topics detailing effective reasons and supporting evidence in order to persuade the listener.</p>		<p>英コミIII(1)ア「日常的な話題について、使用する語句や文、事前の準備などにおいて、支援をほとんど活用しなくても、多様な語句や文を目的や場面、状況などに応じて適切に用いて、情報や考え、気持ちなどを論理的に詳しく話して伝える」</p> <p>英コミIII(2)ア「学校外での生活や地域社会などの日常的な話題について、情報や考え、気持ちなどを明確な理由や根拠とともに詳しく話して伝える」</p> <p>論理表現II(1)ア「日常的な話題について、使用する語句や文、事前の準備などにおいて、一定の支援を活用すれば、多様な語句や文を用いて、情報や考え、気持ちなどを論理の構成や展開を工夫して詳しく話して伝える」</p> <p>論理表現III(1)ア「日常的な話題について、使用する語句や文、事前の準備などにおいて、支援をほとんど活用しなくても、多様な語句や文を目的や場面、状況などに応じて適切に用いて、情報や考え、気持ちなどを、聞き手を説得できるよう、論理の構成や展開を工夫して詳しく話して伝える」</p> <p>論理表現III(2)「日常的な話題について、聞き手を説得することができるよう、情報や考え、気持ちなどを効果的な理由や根拠とともに詳しく話して伝える」</p>

Question	Relevant descriptors in the CoS	資格・検定試験の問題と学習指導要領の関連項目 [Relevant descriptors in the CoS in Japanese]
<p>4</p>	<p>EC III (1 – Spoken Interaction) B For social topics, communicate information, ideas, solutions to problems, etc. in a logical, detailed manner, using various words and sentences based on reading (..) appropriately to the purposes, settings and situations with little support in terms of the choice of words, phrases, and sentence structures or the development of interaction.</p> <p>EC III (1 – Spoken Production) A Communicate information, ideas, feelings etc. on everyday topics in a logical, detailed manner, using a variety of words, phrases and sentences appropriately to the purposes, situations and contexts, with little support in terms of the choice of words, phrases, and sentence structures or the provision of preparation time.</p> <p>LE III (1) B Communicate opinions and arguments etc. on everyday and social topics using a variety of words, phrases and sentences appropriately to the purposes, settings and contexts, while referring to multiple sources and minding logical development and organisation in order to persuade the listener, with little support in terms of the choice of words, phrases, and sentence structures or the provision of preparation time.</p>	<p>英コミIII(1・やり取り)イ「社会的な話題について、使用する語句や文、対話の展開などにおいて、支援をほとんど活用しなくても、(...)読んだりしたことを基に、多様な語句や文を目的や場面、状況などに応じて適切に用いて、情報や考え、課題の解決策などを論理的に詳しく話して伝える)」</p> <p>英コミIII(1・発表)ア「日常的な話題について、使用する語句や文、事前の準備などにおいて、支援をほとんど活用しなくても、多様な語句や文を目的や場面、状況などに応じて適切に用いて、情報や考え、気持ちなどを論理的に詳しく話して伝える」</p> <p>論理表現III(1)イ「日常的な話題や社会的な話題について、使用する語句や文、事前の準備などにおいて、支援をほとんど活用しなくても、(...)複数の資料を活用しながら、多様な語句や文を目的や場面、状況などに応じて適切に用いて、意見や主張などを、聞き手を説得できるよう、論理の構成や展開を工夫して詳しく話して伝える」</p>
<p>5</p>	<p>EC III (1 – Spoken Interaction) B For social topics, communicate information, ideas, solutions to problems, etc. in a logical, detailing manner, using various words and sentences based on reading (..) appropriately to the purposes, settings and situations with little support in terms of the choice of words, phrases, and sentence structures or the development of interaction.</p> <p>EC III (1 – Spoken Production) A Communicate information, ideas, feelings etc. on everyday topics in a logical, detailing manner, using a variety of words, phrases and sentences appropriately to the purposes, settings and contexts, with little support in terms of the choice of words, phrases, and sentence structures or the provision of preparation time.</p>	<p>英コミIII(1・やり取り)イ「社会的な話題について、使用する語句や文、対話の展開などにおいて、支援をほとんど活用しなくても、聞いた(...)ことを基に、多様な語句や文を目的や場面、状況などに応じて適切に用いて、情報や考え、課題の解決策などを論理的に詳しく話して伝える)」</p> <p>英コミIII(1・発表)ア「日常的な話題について、使用する語句や文、事前の準備などにおいて、支援をほとんど活用しなくても、多様な語句や文を目的や場面、状況などに応じて適切に用いて、情報や考え、気持ちなどを論理的に詳しく話して伝える」</p>

Writing

Question	Relevant descriptors in the CoS	資格・検定試験の問題と学習指導要領の関連項目 [Relevant descriptors in the CoS in Japanese]
1	<p>ECII (1) A Write multiple sentences to communicate information, ideas, feelings etc. on everyday topics using basic words, phrases and sentences, with some support in terms of the choice of words, phrases, and sentence structures or the provision of preparation time.</p> <p>ECII (2) A Communicate information, ideas, and feelings etc. in writing on everyday topics with reasons and supporting evidence over multiple written paragraphs, with some support such as the provision of example words, phrases and sentences and the provision of preparation time as necessary.</p>	<p>英コミII(1)ア「日常的な話題について、使用する語句や文、事前の準備などにおいて、一定の支援を活用すれば、基本的な語句や文を用いて、情報や考え、気持ちなどを(...)文章を書いて伝えることができる」</p> <p>英コミII(2)ア「関心のある事柄や学校生活などの日常的な話題について、必要に応じて、使用する語句や文、文章例が示されたり、準備のための一定の時間が確保されたりする状況で、情報や考え、気持ちなどを理由や根拠とともに複数の段落を用いて詳しく書いて伝える」</p>
2	<p>ECIII (5: Writing) B For social topics, communicate information, ideas, feelings etc. in a written piece consisting of several paragraphs in a logical, detailed manner, using a variety of words, phrases and sentences (...) appropriately to the purposes, settings and contexts, with little support in terms of the choice of words, phrases and sentence structures or the provision of preparation time.</p>	<p>英コミIII (5)書くこと イ「社会的な話題について、使用する語句や文、事前の準備などにおいて、支援をほとんど活用しなくても、(...)多様な語句や文を目的や場面、状況などに応じて適切に用いて、情報や考え、気持ちなどを複数の段落から成る文章で論理的に詳しく書いて伝える(る)」</p>

Listening

Question	Item	Relevant descriptors in the CoS	資格・検定試験の問題と学習指導要領の関連項目 [Relevant descriptors in the CoS in Japanese]
1	<p>Various</p> <p>ECI (1) A Understand necessary information (...) on everyday topics with substantial support in terms of the speed of delivery, lexical, phrasal and sentential complexity and the amount of information.</p> <p>ECII (1) A Accurately grasp the gist, main points, details (...) etc. of given information and the speaker's ideas on everyday topics.</p>	<p>英コミI(1)ア「日常的な話題について、話される速さや、使用される語句や文、情報量などにおいて、多くの支援を活用すれば、必要な情報を聞き取(...)ることができる」</p> <p>英コミI(2)ア「日常的な話題(...)について、英語を聞いたり(...)して、情報や考えなどの概要や要点、詳細(...)などを的確に捉える」</p>	
2	<p>Various</p> <p>ECI (1) A Understand necessary information and the speaker's intention on everyday topics with substantial support in terms of the speed of delivery, lexical, phrasal and sentential complexity and the amount of information.</p> <p>ECI (1) B Understand necessary information, gist and main points on social topics with substantial support in terms of the speed of delivery, lexical, phrasal and sentential complexity and the amount of information.</p> <p>ECI (2) A Accurately grasp an overview of information and ideas, details, and the speaker's intention on everyday and social topics.</p>	<p>英コミI(1)ア「日常的な話題について、話される速さや、使用される語句や文、情報量などにおいて、多くの支援を活用すれば、必要な情報を聞き取り、話し手の意図を把握することができる」</p> <p>英コミI(1)イ「社会的な話題について、話される速さや、使用される語句や文、情報量などにおいて、多くの支援を活用すれば、必要な情報を聞き取り、概要や要点を目的に応じて捉えることができる」</p> <p>英コミI(2)ア「日常的な話題や社会的な話題について、英語を聞いたり(...)して、情報や考えなどの概要や要点、詳細、話し手(...)の意図などを的確に捉える」</p>	

Question	Item	Relevant descriptors in the CoS	資格・検定試験の問題と学習指導要領の関連項目 [Relevant descriptors in the CoS in Japanese]
2 continued	<p>Various</p> <p>EC II (1) A Understand necessary information and the speaker's intention on everyday topics with some support in terms of the speed of delivery, lexical, phrasal and sentential complexity and the amount of information.</p> <p>EC II (1) B Understand necessary information, gist, main points and details on social topics with substantial support in terms of the speed of delivery, lexical, phrasal and sentential complexity and the amount of information.</p> <p>EC II (2) B Understand the development of stories and the speaker's intention in speeches and dialogues on everyday topics, with some support in terms of the speed of delivery and the use of paraphrasing.</p>	<p>英コミII(1)ア「日常的な話題について、話される速さや、使用される語句や文、情報量などにおいて、一定の支援を活用すれば、必要な情報を聞き取り、話の展開や話し手の意図を把握することができる」</p> <p>英コミII(1)イ「社会的な話題について、話される速さや、使用される語句や文、情報量などにおいて、一定の支援を活用すれば、必要な情報を聞き取り、概要や要点、詳細を目的に応じて捉えることができる」</p> <p>英コミII(2)ア「日常的な話題について、必要に応じて、話される速さが調整されたり、別の語句や文での言い換えを聞いたりしながら、対話やスピーチなどから必要な情報を聞き取り、話の展開や話し手の意図を把握する」</p>	<p>英コミII(1)ア「日常的な話題や社会的な話題について、英語を聞いたたり(…)して、情報や考えなどの概要や要点、詳細、話し手(…)の意図などを的確に捉える」</p> <p>英コミII(1)イ「社会的な話題について、話される速さや、使用される語句や文、情報量などにおいて、一定の支援を活用すれば、必要な情報を聞き取り、概要や要点、詳細を目的に応じて捉えることができる」</p> <p>英コミII(2)ア「日常的な話題について、必要に応じて、話される速さが調整されたり、(…)対話やスピーチなどから必要な情報を聞き取り、話の展開や話し手の意図を把握する」</p> <p>英コミIII(1)ア「日常的な話題について、話される速さや、使用される語句や文、情報量などにおいて、支援をほとんど活用しなくても、必要な情報を聞き取り、話の展開や話し手の意図を把握することができる」</p> <p>英コミIII(1)イ「社会的な話題について、話される速さや、使用される語句や文、情報量などにおいて、支援をほとんど活用しなくても、話の展開に注意しながら必要な情報を聞き取り、概要や要点、詳細を目的に応じて捉えることができる」</p> <p>英コミIII(2)ア「日常的な話題について、インタビュアーやニュースなどから必要な情報を聞き取り、話の展開や話し手の意図を把握する」</p>
3	<p>Various</p> <p>EC I (2) A Accurately grasp an overview of information and ideas, details, and the speaker's intention on everyday and social topics.</p> <p>EC II (1) B Understand necessary information, gist, main points and details on social topics with some support in terms of the speed of delivery, lexical, phrasal and sentential complexity and the amount of information.</p> <p>EC II (2) A Understand the development of stories and the speaker's intention in speeches and dialogues on everyday topics, with some support in terms of the speed of delivery (...).</p> <p>EC III (1) A Understand necessary information and accurately grasp the development of stories and the speaker's intention on everyday topics, with little support in terms of the speed of delivery, lexical and phrasal complexity and the amount of information.</p> <p>EC III (1) B Understand necessary information, gist, main points and details on social topics with little support in terms of the speed of delivery, lexical, phrasal and sentential complexity and the amount of information.</p> <p>EC III (2) A Grasp how ideas develop and intentions of the speaker in interviews and news stories on everyday topics.</p>	<p>英コミII(1)ア「日常的な話題について、話される速さや、使用される語句や文、情報量などにおいて、一定の支援を活用すれば、必要な情報を聞き取り、話の展開や話し手の意図を把握することができる」</p> <p>英コミII(1)イ「社会的な話題について、話される速さや、使用される語句や文、情報量などにおいて、一定の支援を活用すれば、必要な情報を聞き取り、概要や要点、詳細を目的に応じて捉えることができる」</p> <p>英コミII(2)ア「日常的な話題について、必要に応じて、話される速さが調整されたり、(…)対話やスピーチなどから必要な情報を聞き取り、話の展開や話し手の意図を把握する」</p> <p>英コミIII(1)ア「日常的な話題について、話される速さや、使用される語句や文、情報量などにおいて、支援をほとんど活用しなくても、必要な情報を聞き取り、話の展開や話し手の意図を把握することができる」</p> <p>英コミIII(1)イ「社会的な話題について、話される速さや、使用される語句や文、情報量などにおいて、支援をほとんど活用しなくても、話の展開に注意しながら必要な情報を聞き取り、概要や要点、詳細を目的に応じて捉えることができる」</p> <p>英コミIII(2)ア「日常的な話題について、インタビュアーやニュースなどから必要な情報を聞き取り、話の展開や話し手の意図を把握する」</p>	<p>英コミII(1)ア「日常的な話題について、話される速さや、使用される語句や文、情報量などにおいて、一定の支援を活用すれば、必要な情報を聞き取り、話の展開や話し手の意図を把握することができる」</p> <p>英コミII(1)イ「社会的な話題について、話される速さや、使用される語句や文、情報量などにおいて、一定の支援を活用すれば、必要な情報を聞き取り、概要や要点、詳細を目的に応じて捉えることができる」</p> <p>英コミII(2)ア「日常的な話題について、必要に応じて、話される速さが調整されたり、別の語句や文での言い換えを聞いたりしながら、対話やスピーチなどから必要な情報を聞き取り、話の展開や話し手の意図を把握する」</p> <p>英コミIII(1)ア「日常的な話題や社会的な話題について、英語を聞いたたり(…)して、情報や考えなどの概要や要点、詳細、話し手(…)の意図などを的確に捉える」</p> <p>英コミIII(1)イ「社会的な話題について、話される速さや、使用される語句や文、情報量などにおいて、一定の支援を活用すれば、必要な情報を聞き取り、話の展開や話し手の意図を把握することができる」</p> <p>英コミIII(2)ア「日常的な話題について、必要に応じて、話される速さが調整されたり、(…)対話やスピーチなどから必要な情報を聞き取り、話の展開や話し手の意図を把握する」</p> <p>英コミIII(1)イ「社会的な話題について、話される速さや、使用される語句や文、情報量などにおいて、支援をほとんど活用しなくても、必要な情報を聞き取り、話の展開や話し手の意図を把握することができる」</p> <p>英コミIII(1)イ「社会的な話題について、話される速さや、使用される語句や文、情報量などにおいて、支援をほとんど活用しなくても、話の展開に注意しながら必要な情報を聞き取り、概要や要点、詳細を目的に応じて捉えることができる」</p> <p>英コミIII(2)ア「日常的な話題について、インタビュアーやニュースなどから必要な情報を聞き取り、話の展開や話し手の意図を把握する」</p>

Question	Item	Relevant descriptors in the CoS	資格・検定試験の問題と学習指導要領の関連項目 [Relevant descriptors in the CoS in Japanese]
1	<p>Various</p> <p>ECI (2) Module Content (I) Characteristics & Rules in English (Knowledge and Skills): [C] 'Words, Collocations and idioms' and [D] 'Sentence structure and grammar items'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 400–600 more words in addition to the vocabulary learned in elementary (600–700 words) and junior high (1,600–1,800 words) school levels • Frequently used sentence structures • Grammar items including: to-infinitives, relative nouns/adverbs, connectives, auxiliary verbs, prepositions, tense/aspect of verbs, subjunctives <p>[**The same applies to EC II and EC III]</p>	<p>英コミI(2)の(1)英語の特徴やきまりに関する事項(活用できる知識技能)ウ「語、連語及び慣用表現」:小中学校で学習した語に400～600語の新語を加えた語、連語、慣用表現</p> <p>エ「文構造及び文法事項」:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 文構造のうち、活用頻度の高いもの • 文法事項:不定詞、関係代名詞、関係副詞、接続詞、助動詞、前置詞、動詞の時制及び相、仮定法 <p>※英コミII、IIIもこれに準ずる</p>	
2	<p>Various</p> <p>EC I (1) A Understand necessary information and the writer's intention on everyday topics with substantial support in terms of lexical, phrasal and sentential complexity and the amount of information.</p> <p>EC I (1) B Understand necessary information, gist and main points on social topics with substantial support in terms of lexical, phrasal and sentential complexity and the amount of information.</p> <p>EC II (1) A Understand necessary information, organisation of the text and the writer's intention on everyday topics with some support in terms of lexical, phrasal and sentential complexity and the amount of information.</p> <p>EC II (1) B Understand necessary information, gist, main points and details on social topics with some support in terms of lexical, phrasal and sentential complexity and the amount of information.</p>	<p>英コミI(1)ア「日常的な話題について、使用される語句や文、情報量などにおいて、多くの支援を活用すれば、必要な情報を読み取り、書き手の意図を把握することができる」</p> <p>英コミI(1)イ「社会的な話題について、使用される語句や文、情報量などにおいて、多くの支援を活用すれば、必要な情報を読み取り、概要や要点を目的に応じて捉えることができる」</p> <p>英コミII(1)ア「日常的な話題について、使用される語句や文、情報量などにおいて、一定の支援を活用すれば、必要な情報を読み取り、文章の展開や書き手の意図を把握することができる」</p> <p>英コミII(1)イ「社会的な話題について、使用される語句や文、情報量などにおいて、一定の支援を活用すれば、必要な情報を読み取り、概要や要点、詳細を目的に応じて捉えることができる」</p>	
3	<p>Various</p> <p>ECI (2) Module Content (I) Characteristics & Rules in English (Knowledge and Skills): [C] 'Words, Collocations and idioms' and [D] 'Sentence structure and grammar items'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 400–600 more words in addition to the vocabulary learned in elementary (600–700 words) and junior high (1,600–1,800 words) school levels • Frequently used sentence structures • Grammar items including: to-infinitives, relative nouns/adverbs, connectives, auxiliary verbs, prepositions, tense/aspect of verbs, subjunctives <p>[**The same applies to EC II and EC III]</p>	<p>英コミI(2)の(1)英語の特徴やきまりに関する事項(活用できる知識技能)ウ「語、連語及び慣用表現」:小中学校で学習した語に400～600語の新語を加えた語、連語、慣用表現</p> <p>エ「文構造及び文法事項」:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 文構造のうち、活用頻度の高いもの • 文法事項:不定詞、関係代名詞、関係副詞、接続詞、助動詞、前置詞、動詞の時制及び相、仮定法 <p>※英コミII、IIIもこれに準ずる</p>	

Question	Item	Relevant descriptors in the CoS	資格・検定試験の問題と学習指導要領の関連項目 [Relevant descriptors in the CoS in Japanese]
3 continued	Various	<p>EC III (1) A Understand necessary information, organisation of the text and the writer's intention on everyday topics with little support in terms of lexical, phrasal and sentential complexity and the amount of information.</p>	<p>英コミIII(2)の(1)ア 日常的な話題について、使用される語句や文、情報量などにおいて、支援をほとんど活用しなくても、必要な情報を読み取り、文章の展開や書き手の意図を把握することができるようにする。</p>
4	Various	<p>EC I (2) Module Content (I) Characteristics & Rules in English (Knowledge and Skills): [C] 'Words, Collocations and idioms' and [D] 'Sentence structure and grammar items'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 400–600 more words in addition to the vocabulary learned in elementary (600–700 words) and junior high (1,600–1,800 words) school levels ● Frequently used sentence structures ● Grammar items including: to-infinitives, relative nouns/adverbs, connectives, auxiliary verbs, prepositions, tense/aspect of verbs, subjunctives <p>[**The same applies to EC II and EC III]</p> <p>EC II (1) A Understand necessary information, organisation of the text and the writer's intention on everyday topics with some support in terms of lexical and phrasal complexity and the amount of information.</p> <p>EC II (1) B Understand necessary information, gist, main points and details on social topics with some support in terms of lexical, phrasal and sentential complexity and the amount of information.</p> <p>EC III (1) A Understand necessary information, organisation of the text and the writer's intention on everyday topics with little support in terms of lexical, phrasal and sentential complexity and the amount of information.</p> <p>EC III (2) B Understand necessary information, organisation and details of the text and the writer's intention on social topics while minding the development of stories, with little support in terms of lexical, phrasal and sentential complexity and the amount of information.</p>	<p>英コミI(2)の(1)英語の特徴やきまりに関する事項(活用できる知識技能)ウ「語、連語及び慣用表現」：小中学校で学習した語に400～600語の新語を加えた語、連語、慣用表現</p> <p>エ「文構造及び文法事項」:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 文構造のうち、活用頻度の高いもの ● 文法事項：不定詞、関係代名詞、関係副詞、接続詞、助動詞、前置詞、動詞の時制及び相、仮定法 <p>※英コミII、IIIもこれに準ずる</p> <p>英コミII(1)ア「日常的な話題について、使用される語句や文、情報量などにおいて、一定の支援を活用すれば、必要な情報を読み取り、文章の展開や書き手の意図を把握することができる」</p> <p>英コミII(2)イ「社会的な話題について、使用される語句や文、情報量などにおいて、一定の支援を活用すれば、必要な情報を読み取り、概要や要点、詳細を目的に応じて捉えることができる」</p> <p>英コミIII(1)ア「日常的な話題について、使用される語句や文、情報量などにおいて、支援をほとんど活用しなくても、必要な情報を読み取り、文章の展開や書き手の意図を把握することができる」</p> <p>英コミIII(2)イ「社会的な話題について、使用される語句や文、情報量などにおいて、支援をほとんど活用しなくても、文章の展開に注意しながら必要な情報を読み取り、概要や要点、詳細を目的に応じて捉えることができる」</p>
5	Various	<p>EC III (1) A Understand necessary information, organisation of the text and the writer's intention on everyday topics with little support in terms of lexical, phrasal and sentential complexity and the amount of information.</p> <p>EC III (2) B Understand necessary information, organisation and details of the text and the writer's intention on social topics with little support in terms of lexical, phrasal and sentential complexity and the amount of information.</p>	<p>英コミIII(1)ア「日常的な話題について、使用される語句や文、情報量などにおいて、支援をほとんど活用しなくても、必要な情報を読み取り、文章の展開や書き手の意図を把握することができる」</p> <p>英コミIII(2)イ「社会的な話題について、使用される語句や文、情報量などにおいて、支援をほとんど活用しなくても、文章の展開に注意しながら必要な情報を読み取り、概要や要点、詳細を目的に応じて捉えることができる」</p>

Appendix D: Students' and teachers' insights into the need and use of each support

Types of support/materials + Summary	Students	Teachers
<p>(a) Practice test book with audio recordings of listening tests, together with answers and commentaries [Yes] Students = 92.9%, Teachers = 83.3%</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practice materials should be provided in different modes (paper, computer, mobile phone). Paper versions are essential. 	<p>S04: I'd like to get used to the tasks and item types and understand the trend in topics covered in the test. It'll give me peace of mind. S07: When I took TEAP, I couldn't do as many past papers as I wished as there were only a few available. Eiken instead had a great number of past papers. I like paper copies and books as I can write down my notes. For example, during the listening test, I'd like to take notes at least until I become familiar with the task types. S11: I want practice books because I've always studied with hard copies. I can underline relevant sentences and phrases while reading a reading passage. I don't usually use a computer for studying. S21: Practice materials are essential. I need practice materials in all 3 mediums: book, computer, mobile devices, so that I can choose one depending on when and where I study. In particular, I can study with practice books even when there is no internet connection. S23: I can learn better with books than with digital devices. A hard copy of a practice test book is a must.</p>	<p>T03: In our school, tablets will be available to students only from next year (at the time of the interview—i.e., 2022). This depends on individual schools, but practice test books are more familiar to my students and it must be a preferred option at least for now. T04: I believe that a certain number of students like hard copies. But most students do not have a CD player, I guess. T05: Paper copies are always the safest option.</p>
<p>(b) Practice test materials to be accessed on computer, together with answers and commentaries [Yes] Students = 75.0%, Teachers = 100.0%</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Past papers should also be provided on computer. 	<p>S01: Prior to taking the test this time, I actually looked for past papers, but couldn't find many. I'd want past papers on computer. S07: Once I get used to the task/item types using practice test books, I'd also like to practise on computer, as the actual test is delivered on computer. S21: Practice materials are essential. I need practice materials in all 3 mediums: book, computer, mobile device, so that I can choose one, depending on when and where I study.</p>	<p>T01: Teachers would prefer a computer version, as we usually bring a laptop to classrooms. Teachers have a digital copy of all textbooks and use them in classrooms. T03: All students at my school have a computer at home. Students would prefer to use practice test materials on computer. CBT tests should be practiced on computer. T04: It'd be easier to practise on computer. Our students have at least one computer at home. Most parents are educationally keen. T05: It'd be good for teachers to have practice test materials on computer. For example, teachers can download specific parts of the test and use them as a diagnostic test during classes.</p>
<p>(c) Practice test materials to be accessed by mobile phones and tablets, together with answers and commentaries [Yes] Students = 75.0%, Teachers = 83.3%</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mobile phone versions will give flexibility. Japanese educational companies usually offer all three modes. 	<p>S01: While I personally like a hard copy the best, if it's available on mobile devices, then it's useful to study on trains. S11: I'd download listening recordings on my mobile, but apart from that, I don't want to use a mobile as I can easily be distracted when using a mobile. S21: Practice materials are essential. I need practice materials in all 3 mediums: book, computer, mobile device, so that I can choose one, depending on when and where I study.</p>	<p>T01: Students would want a smartphone version. At my school, all students are asked to purchase a vocabulary learning and testing app. Some students also purchase a smartphone app for audio textbooks. T03: As mobile screens are too small to do a practice test, students would prefer to study on computer with a bigger screen instead. Students would get easily distracted, for example if they receive a LINE message while studying on a mobile phone. If they have a tablet and are used to be using tablet for studying, then it'd be different. T04: Students would find it most accessible to them. T05: A smartphone version would be liked by students. Japanese educational companies usually offer all 3 versions—books, computer-mediated and mobile-mediated versions. They usually come as a set, when we purchase one version, we get other two other versions for free.</p>

Types of support/materials + Summary	Students	Teachers
<p>(d) Example answers and commentaries for the Writing test [Yes] Students = 78.6%, Teachers = 83.3%</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students can learn how to structure responses from model examples. • Teachers can use them as a teaching guide. 	<p>S01: In Eiken tests, there are particular recommended formulaic expressions like 'I have two reasons, first, second'. Learning those expressions would make writing much easier.</p> <p>S04: Reviewing different examples would be useful.</p> <p>S07: I definitely need them. If there are many examples, I can develop different templates for writing. Eiken offers many example answers.</p> <p>S11: I'd use them if they're available.</p> <p>S21: I'm not sure if I'll use them as I usually like to come up with my responses without looking at others.</p> <p>S23: If there are model answers, then I can use them as templates and I can construct my writing accordingly.</p>	<p>T01: These would be useful as teachers' teaching guide.</p> <p>T02: It'd be handy if there are two versions: one for teachers and the other for students.</p> <p>T03: Students at my school are good at analysing and evaluating their own writing against model answers. They can identify what lacks in their responses. Teachers could do the same by collecting students' writing scripts, but we normally don't have the time to do that. With model answers and commentaries, students can self-study and learn from good examples. Teachers can also use them to further explain important points when required.</p> <p>T04: Most of my students prefer to get feedback on their own writing scripts rather than learning from examples. Students may not need model answers and commentaries, but teachers would like to see them as a teaching guide. Teachers will find it helpful when teaching if they have model answers for writing and speaking and detailed explanations.</p> <p>T05: They would be useful to both teachers and students. It'll take time to teach writing, but there are many teachers at my school who can evaluate students' writing scripts.</p>
<p>(e) Example answers and commentaries for the Speaking test [Yes] Students = 82.1%, Teachers = 83.3%</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students can learn how to structure responses from model examples. • Teachers can use them as a teaching guide. 	<p>S01: It'd be useful to get used to unfamiliar tasks.</p> <p>S04: I can compare my response against example answers, and check if mine is in line with those answers.</p> <p>S07: When I cannot come up with good ideas to speak about, example answers would be helpful to learn what and how to formulate my response.</p> <p>S11: I'd use them if they're available.</p> <p>S21: I'm not sure if I'll use them as I usually like to come up with my responses without looking at others.</p> <p>S23: If there are model answers, then I can use them as templates and I can construct my speaking accordingly.</p>	<p>T01: These would be useful as teachers' teaching guide.</p> <p>T03: Students at my school are good at analysing and evaluating their own speaking against model answers. They can identify what is lacking in their responses. Teachers normally don't have the time to give individual feedback on students' speaking practice. With model answers and commentaries, students can self-study and learn from good examples. Teachers can also use them to further explain important points when required.</p> <p>T04: Most of my students prefer to get feedback on their own speaking responses rather than learning from examples. We usually practise Speaking before students take Eiken tests, but teachers' availability is limited and it's very demanding to fit those practices. Students may not need model answers and commentaries, but teachers would like to see them as a teaching guide. Teachers will find it helpful when teaching if they have model answers for writing and speaking and detailed explanations.</p> <p>T05: They would be useful to both teachers and students. Not all teachers can evaluate speaking. This would be good for developing teachers' skills to assess and feedback on students' spoken performances.</p>

Types of support/materials + Summary	Students	Teachers
<p>(f) Speaking practice app [Yes] Students = 71.4% Teachers = 100.0%</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apps are accessible to students. • Feedback is desirable. 	<p>S01: If my speaking ability (e.g., intonation) can be judged objectively, I'd find it useful. In general, for students, an app on smartphones is the handiest tool for English learning.</p> <p>S04: If the app can record my new speaking response every time and evaluate it, that'd be great!</p> <p>S07: I had a speaking app provided by my preparatory school, and used to use it on trains. It was very convenient as I was able to use it whenever I had a moment to study. Everyone has a mobile phone all the time. Model answers in an app would be useful.</p> <p>S11: I don't like using a mobile phone for studying.</p> <p>S21: Apps are easy to use, and I used to use apps for Eiken (e.g., an app for Eiken Grade 2 past papers). I'd need automated scoring.</p> <p>S23: I'd rather practise speaking with people than on an app.</p>	<p>T01: Students will want an app if it is directly linked to the specific test preparation, and if they need scores for university admission purposes.</p> <p>T02: For self-study, students would use a mobile app for all four skills.</p> <p>T03: Teachers cannot tailor learning materials for each student at school, so if students can mainly use an app individually, and if teachers can provide support when needed, that'd be feasible.</p> <p>T04: Students would welcome an app, as I see many students using a mobile app for vocabulary learning.</p> <p>T05: Students would probably like it. It's not a priority, but it'd be convenient. Feedback should also be provided as part of learning with the app.</p>
<p>(g) Writing practice app [Yes] Students = 57.1% Teachers = 83.3%</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apps are accessible to students. • Feedback is desirable. 	<p>S01: Usually, model answers are very different from my own writing, so an app that can give individual feedback on my own writing would be very useful.</p> <p>S04: I'd want customised feedback on my own writing.</p> <p>S21: I'd like the app to auto-score and suggest how to improve my own scripts.</p> <p>S23: I'd rather practise writing with people than on an app.</p>	<p>T01: Students will want an app if it is directly linked to the specific test preparation, and if they need scores for university admission purposes.</p> <p>T02: For self-study, students would use a mobile app for all four skills.</p> <p>T03: Teachers cannot tailor learning materials for each student at school, so if students can mainly use an app individually, and if teachers can provide support when needed, that'd be feasible.</p> <p>T05: Students would probably like it. It's not a priority, but it'd be convenient. Feedback should also be provided as part of learning with the app.</p> <p>T06: The usefulness of an app would depend largely on its feedback function. It'd be good if the app could point out errors and how scripts can be improved.</p>
<p>(h) Listening practice app [Yes] Students = 75.0% Teachers = 83.3%</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apps are accessible to students. • Grouping of listening items according to difficulty is desirable. 	<p>S01: I can use my spare time and practise whenever and wherever possible.</p> <p>S04: Whenever I have a moment, I can study with an app.</p> <p>S23: It'd be handy to play listening recordings and practise by myself.</p>	<p>T01: Students would want an app if it is directly linked to the specific test preparation, and if they need scores for university admission purposes.</p> <p>T02: For self-study, students would use a mobile app for all four skills.</p> <p>T03: The app can be used during classes. Also, since the time we can allocate to listening practice is limited in classes, I'd want students to use the app outside the classroom too.</p> <p>T05: Students would probably like it. It's not a priority, but it'd be convenient. It'd be good if students could select and practise listening items with different levels of difficulty.</p>

Types of support/materials + Summary	Students	Teachers
<p>(i) Reading practice app [Yes] Students = 53.6%, Teachers = 66.7%</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small font size may be a problem. • A computer version may be preferable. 	<p>S01: I don't want to read small fonts on screen. S04: Whenever I have a moment, I can study with an app. S23: It'd be handy to study reading whenever I have a moment to do so.</p>	<p>T01: Students will want an app if it is directly linked to the specific test preparation, and if they need scores for university admission purposes. T02: For self-study, students would use a mobile app for all four skills. T03: The app can be used during classes. T05: Students would probably like it. It's not a priority, but it'd be convenient. They can practise individually as many times as they wish. T06: An app is not necessary. A computer version would be good enough if it was easy to use.</p>
<p>(j) Speaking feedback service (e.g., you record and submit your speaking samples and receive recorded feedback and/or have an online feedback session) [Yes] Students = 85.7%, Teachers = 66.7%</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback in Japanese may be more accessible to students. • Teachers can use the feedback given to students to develop their teaching skills and resources. 	<p>S01: I'd prefer an app than a speaking feedback service, as it'd sound complex, involving several steps to get feedback. S07: School teachers can also provide individual feedback instead. It sounds pricy to get the service. S11: I don't think I'll need it as I'm good at speaking. S23: I'd like to receive feedback in Japanese, as I may not understand feedback in English.</p>	<p>T02: Teachers would also want to know how to give feedback to students. T03: As we cannot tailor teaching content to individual students, if the feedback service can help students' self-study, and if teachers can just support them to supplement the feedback (e.g., interpreting the feedback if needed), that'd work very well. T04: Students in my school would prefer to receive feedback from teachers in person, rather than receiving feedback from external tutors. T05: There are many teachers who believe that such feedback services are essential. If school teachers can also view the feedback comments and recommendations that students receive, then that would be good learning resources for teachers too. Teachers can then develop a portfolio of how to give feedback to students.</p>
<p>(k) Writing feedback service (e.g., you submit your writing samples and receive written feedback and/or have an online feedback session) [Yes] Students = 89.3%, Teachers = 83.3%</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A feedback service is welcome. • Teachers can use the feedback given to students to develop their teaching skills and resources. 	<p>S01: I'd prefer an app than a writing feedback service, which would probably make me nervous, and I'd start using a dictionary when I should not be using a dictionary. I don't find it accessible. S07: School teachers can do the same. The external service sounds costly. S11: I'd welcome the service as I cannot identify my weaknesses. S21: I want the service as I don't know where errors might be and how I can improve my writing. S23: I'd appreciate feedback on my writing.</p>	<p>T01: If feedback comments can be accumulated, then teachers will find them very useful for their teaching. T02: Teachers would also want to know how to give feedback to students. T03: As we cannot tailor teaching content to individual students, if the feedback service can help students' self-study, and if teachers can just support them to supplement the feedback (e.g., interpreting the feedback if needed), that'd work very well. T04: Unlike speaking, students would be happy with written comments from external tutors. T05: There are many teachers who believe that such feedback services are essential. If school teachers can also view the feedback comments and recommendations that students receive, then that would be good learning resources for teachers too. Teachers can then develop a portfolio of how to give feedback to students. T06: We already use an online writing feedback service by Keirin-kan, but teachers feel that such services are pricy and not always useful as the feedback may not be precise enough, and cannot suggest wording in line with what students intended to communicate. Giving feedback while talking to students would be much more meaningful.</p>

Types of support/materials + Summary	Students	Teachers
<p>(l) On-demand service of Linguaskill test preparation video(s) [Yes] Students = 50.0%, Teachers = 50.0%</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is useful just to get to know the test quickly. 	<p>S01: I watched Linguaskill's Youtube video before taking the test, and I found it useful. If we get explanation in Japanese, then that would be even clearer. Videos are very accessible and useful. Indeed I watch Youtube in English to improve my English. S04: I like to know some useful tips before studying for the test. S07: I'd like to watch it once just to get to know what the test is like. S11: Studying online at home is not for me. S21: It's handy that I can watch a video that at home. S23: I've watched such a video for another test in my high school.</p>	<p>T01: It's good as students' self-study material, especially when students don't have much time to prepare for the test. T03: We don't recommend test preparation courses at our school, as students shouldn't study for tests. Tests should serve to evaluate their learning progress. Students may welcome the on-demand service, but our school will not recommend it. As a matter of principle, our school does not distribute any past test papers or any preparation materials specific to tests. T05: Teachers can watch the video to understand the test and they can then show it to students. T06: Teenagers would probably prefer to watch a video than reading an instruction.</p>
<p>(m) Online, interactive Linguaskill test preparation course (at home) [Yes] Students = 21.4%, Teachers = 33.3%</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not highly desired by the majority. 	<p>S01: I don't find it accessible. S04: I'm taking English conversation lessons, and I can ask my teachers instead. S07: I don't find it necessary. S21: Personally, I don't think I'm going to do that. S23: It'd be good if the course could focus on improving speaking skills.</p>	<p>T01: I don't particularly feel it's needed, but probably some students will take those courses if they are offered. But students would in general prefer in-person teaching. T03: We don't recommend test preparation courses at our school, as students shouldn't study for tests. Tests should serve to evaluate their learning progress. Students may welcome the on-demand service, but our school will not recommend it. As a matter of principle, our school does not distribute any past test papers or any preparation materials specific to tests.</p>
<p>(n) Linguaskill test preparation course in a face-to-face classroom (in high schools, preparatory schools etc) [Yes] Students = 28.6%, Teachers = 16.7%</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Face-to-face courses specific to Linguaskill only are not highly desired. 	<p>S01: I'd take a course for general English, but not just for Linguaskill. S04: I want opportunities for face-to-face communication. S07: If the course can be offered at school, then that's fine, but I don't think I'd bother to attend an extra course outside school time. If I'll have to do that, I'd prefer an online course. S21: I personally don't attend those extra courses. Time-consuming. S23: Studying at school and at home is enough for me.</p>	<p>T01: I think face-to-face courses would encourage students to engage in their studies. They can exchange information with friends, especially when there is only limited information about this new test. T03: We don't recommend test preparation courses at our school, as students shouldn't study for tests. Tests should serve to evaluate their learning progress. Students may welcome the on-demand service, but our school will not recommend it. As a matter of principle, our school does not distribute any past test papers or any preparation materials specific to tests. T04: I think students will find it more attractive if the course is to study General English rather than targeting a specific English test. T06: A summer intensive course may be good for students. But not all students would want it.</p>

Types of support/materials + Summary	Students	Teachers
<p>(o) A mock exam to be taken at home [Yes] Students = 50.0%, Teachers = 83.3%</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the real test is to be taken at home, doing a mock test at home is desirable. Not everyone finds it accessible. 	<p>S01: Prior to the Linguaskill test, I actually tried the Linguaskill online demo at home, but the website didn't work well. S04: I'd like a mock test. S07: I want to take a mock test just to give it a try. S11: I'd like to practice it myself. S21: At-home testing is not suitable for everyone. Some do not find it accessible. S23: I'll not do that as I wouldn't feel it's a serious test if I took it at home.</p>	<p>T01: If the real exam is going to be taken at home, then doing a mock test at home will make sense. Otherwise, it'd be better to do it at a test venue. T03: I do not want to recommend it to everyone, but it's good for those who want to do the test has the opportunity to practise it. T04: This will give students a good test-taking experience in preparation for the real exam. T05: Taking a mock test at home is better. At a test venue, there must be unnecessary noise during the speaking test as all test takers will be talking at the same time. We do GTEC at school, but students report that they get easily distracted by hearing others speaking.</p>
<p>(p) A mock exam to be taken at a test venue [Yes] Students = 42.9%, Teachers = 16.7%</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the real test is to be taken at a test venue, doing a mock test in a similar environment is desirable. 	<p>S01: It'll probably be useful. S04: I can experience the atmosphere of the test venue and get to know how I can perform when I'm nervous. S07: I don't mind either way. I could do a mock test at a test venue, but I'd also be happy if I could do a past paper. S23: I want to do a mock test in an environment similar to the real test.</p>	<p>T01: If the real test is going to take place at a test venue, then doing a mock test at a test venue will be more beneficial to students. T03: T03: I do not want to recommend it to everyone, but it's good for those who want to do the test has the opportunity to practise it. T04: It's probably not necessary. T06: The usefulness would depend on whether the real test would be taken at home or at a venue.</p>

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