

## **Critical Language Assessment: The Case of Social dimension of Iranian Universities Entrance Exam**

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### **Abstract**

Connecting language testing to a wider range of social considerations, Critical Language Assessment opens new arenas to the field of language testing and argues that language testing is a form of social practice and an agent of cultural, social, educational as well as ideological agendas (Shohamy 1997, 2004); paradoxically, however, the psychometrics of language testing have overshadowed this broader aspect which is the social dimension (McNamara and Roever, 2006). The English language section of the Iranian University Entrance Exam calls for a socially skewed consideration to unveil the implicit purposes and interpretations that it creates.

This article seeks the views of four groups of people including, teachers, parents, curriculum writers, and students to discuss critical issues like the power that test makers and test takers own, the rights of different ethnic groups, the values which embody the construct validity, the interpretations and uses that language tests receive, and the socio-psychological effects that tests may bring about.

Supported by the findings, the article points to the ignored rights of test takers and identifies the discrepancies and scant overlaps between different interpretations of each social group as stakeholders on the one hand, and the declared purpose of the test, as stated in official documents of Iranian ministry of education on the other hand.