



TETEC meets growing Saudi Arabian demand for English skills with Linguaskill



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Fadi Lababidi, Certificates Manager, TETEC

TETEC is one of the largest private qualification awarding bodies in Saudi Arabia, and has partnered with Cambridge Assessment English for over five years. It was looking for an easy-to-use, more accurate online test to enable its private and public sector customers to test English skills. By introducing Linguaskill it has been able to help customers speed up testing and reduce administration, supporting the growth of English skills in Saudi Arabia.

Supporting Vision 2030 through greater confidence in English

TETEC works together with a variety of organisations to deliver, develop and award qualifications across Saudi Arabia. Cambridge English is a key partner, with the two organisations working together since 2013 to offer a wide range of qualifications and tests.

Demand for English language skills is continually increasing in Saudi Arabia, both in education and business. The Kingdom's Vision 2030 strategy, which is built on themes of creating a vibrant society, a thriving economy and an ambitious nation, accelerates this need for English skills.

'Across the country, we are seeing an increasing demand to improve English language levels every day, supporting the remarkable business growth within Saudi Arabia,' says Fadi Lababidi, Certificates Manager, TETEC. 'At TETEC we work closely with our partners, such as Cambridge English, to meet this need and to successfully introduce and promote different international certifications to the Saudi market.'

A more accurate, faster online test

Given the need to test the English language skills of large groups of people, both within education and business, TETEC was an early adopter of the Linguaskill test in 2017 from Cambridge English. Linguaskill removes the need for paper-based testing, delivering a fast, adaptive online test, based on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) standard and our experience and reputation in language learning.

TETEC chose to promote Linguaskill due to its high level of accuracy, and the fact that it provides a detailed report covering CEFR levels and scores for individuals and groups. Additionally, the computer adaptive testing model it is based on means that questions are automatically tailored to the candidate's level based on their previous answer, giving a faster, more precise picture of their skill level.

About TETEC

The National Company for Training and Education Technologies (TETEC) is one of the largest private qualification awarding bodies in Saudi Arabia. Accredited locally and internationally, it supervises more than 400 centres across Saudi Arabia. TETEC's services are available to all government and private sector organisations, universities, colleges, institutes, training centres and schools.

tetec.com.sa

About Linguaskill

Linguaskill from Cambridge Assessment English is a quick and convenient online test based on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) standard. Designed to help organisations assess groups of candidates, it enables higher education institutions and employers to easily check English levels, providing fast, accurate results and clear individual and group reports.

cambridgeenglish.org/linguaskill

About Cambridge Assessment English

Cambridge Assessment English is a not-for-profit department of the University of Cambridge. It produces the world's leading range of qualifications and tests, for learners and teachers of English, including Cambridge English Qualifications, Linguaskill and IELTS. Taken by over 5 million people every year, these exams are backed by the work of the largest dedicated research team of any English language test provider.

cambridgeenglish.org

'Linguaskill delivers an accurate picture of every candidate's English language skills, with everyone able to take the same test, at the same time, regardless of their level,' continues Fadi Lababidi. 'Our customers appreciate that this reduces administration while delivering fast, detailed results that they can use to appropriately classify students at the beginning and end of courses.'

Flexibility and efficiency in testing

Since beginning to offer its customers Linguaskill, TETEC has worked with a number of organisations in the government and education sectors. Linguaskill's flexibility means it is being used as a placement test on entry to courses, to assess progress and as an exit test.

Notable Linguaskill projects include testing the English skills of potential entrants to the programmes run by 19 technical colleges within Saudi Arabia. Linguaskill is then used at the end of each programme as an exit test to show progress through the course. Over 5,000 tests have been carried out to date, covering reading and listening skills. Colleges are able to increase efficiency by testing large numbers of students at the same venue through a single session and getting fast results through Linguaskill. Feedback from students has been positive, and administrators like the fact that it is simple to run and quickly delivers detailed, accurate scores.

TETEC is now working with the Ministry of Education on a pilot project as part of the National Initiative for English Excellence in Schools of Saudi Arabia (NIEESSA). This seeks to boost the number of qualified English teachers in the country through an intensive one-year English language teaching development programme, and consequently to improve students' English language proficiency. Linguaskill is being used to test both teachers and students within NIEESSA. Firstly, the teachers' English language proficiency was tested by Linguaskill (Reading and Listening) as part of the selection process.

Linguaskill was then used to test students on their reading and listening skills before they began the course in October 2017, and in October 2018 students were tested again using Linguaskill. This provides a fast, effective means of understanding the English levels of students and monitoring their progress through the course, and at the end of the project in December 2018 they will undergo Linguaskill as a final achievement test.

'We are pleased with the impact that Linguaskill has had so far,' says Fadi Lababidi. 'We have found it easy to administer ourselves and it is popular with both students and our customers. We appreciate the speed of results and the adaptive nature of the test, and see the market growing in Saudi Arabia for this type of online solution.'

Extending the scope of Linguaskill

While TETEC has focused on the Reading and Listening modules of Linguaskill, it is also looking to offer Speaking and Writing to its customers. These are particularly important in the growing private sector market, where businesses are looking to test all four skills, both when recruiting new staff and as part of career progression for existing employees.

'Linguaskill's innovation has strengthened our relationship with Cambridge Assessment English and we look forward to working together to widen its reach in the Saudi Arabian market, with both public and private sector organisations,' concludes Fadi Lababidi.