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An argument-based approach to the KIMEP English entrance test validation

This research focuses on conducting a validation study of the KIMEP (the Kazakhstan Institute of Management, Economics and Strategic Research) English Entrance Test (KEET) by means of creating an interpretive validity argument. The methodology is based on Kane's (1992) model of an interpretive validity argument is developed by Chapelle and her colleagues (2008). It includes several stages of collecting evidence about test scores and integrating it into a validity argument, from score observations to score utilization. At each of these stages inferences or claims are made which link performance on the test to score based interpretations and decisions. Departing from the claims about the KEET's construct, specifications, the analysis of the test's quantitative and qualitative data by means of Classical Test Theory and classical item analysis, and challenging these claims with a set of rebuttals, or counter-claims, an overall conclusion about the KEET's score validity is reached. This paper highlights the challenges in conducting validation studies for test developers in those Eastern-European and Central Asian countries where validation practices are not commonly accepted or at the very beginning of their development.