Philosophy of Research in Language Testing: Investigating Papers Published in Iranian, Peer-reviewed, Domestic Journals from 2008 to 2018

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Research in language testing should ideally move in tandem with movements in philosophical paradigms of science. Some scholars maintain that research in language testing has been slow to catch up with paradigmatic changes in ontology and epistemology of knowledge. The current study addresses the philosophical underpinnings of research in language testing in Iran. To this aim, all language testing papers published online in Iranian domestic journals were gathered and studied. Paper titles, the abstracts, methods, and the theoretical frameworks of the studies were content analyzed. Their approach to the definition of validity and validation were also investigated. Results indicated that positivist and realist ontological assumptions underlie two thirds of the papers. Moreover, one third of papers were conducted within the constructivist philosophy and the pragmatic philosophy seems to be to a large extent absent in language testing research in Iran (only two papers). The implications for the pedagogy of language testing and assessment are further discussed.

Keywords: Philosophy, Language Testing, Constructivism, Positivism, Pragmatism, Epistemology, Realism.

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