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A Critique on Discourse of Language Tests

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Abstract

In the 21st century, with the rise of the popularity of standardized or large-scale tests, their high-stakes have started to be apparent. High-stake tests are not new, but in most cases, their current use as social practice tends to shape individuals' futures. Currently the new trend for their quality discussion aims to critically evaluate tests through the focus on their functions, use and power in their testing discourse, whereas traditionally what was included in this discussion was only their psychometric features. Regarding those tests as social practices, examining the functions, consequences and use of tests in their own discourses is at the heart of this new perspective. Driven by the tenet of such a critical perspective, this study aims to first provide a better understanding of 'discourse of test', and then describe the social dimensions comprising discourse of language tests. Finally, this study concludes with some suggestions for adapting a critical perspective to improve the discourse of tests and enhance their quality.

Keywords: Discourse of Tests, Functions of Tests, Power Relations

1. Introduction

In the 21st century, due to the spread of standardized or large-scale tests in modern societies, it is a bit difficult to find someone who has never taken a high-stakes test. Though high-stake testing is not something new, the use of tests to shape individuals' lives seems to become a fashion in modern societies. In many cases, the use of language tests has life-changing and high-stake consequences. Here, in this study, language tests that have the potential to result in high-stakes refer to large-scale standardized language tests applied in national or international contexts, but not the ones defined as classroom-based language assessment. LaCelle- Peterson (2000) defines standardized tests as the ones "based on the doctrine that identical treatment of what are assumed to be practically homogeneous learners will yield equally accurate and comparable data... treating all students fairly and gaining equally accurate information on all test takers" (p. 31). However, recently what is traced is that testing all individuals equally might bring some unequal treatment by opening the door for some and closing the door for others. It means introduction of standardized tests as reform to achieve equality and improvement is still far (LaCelle-Peterson & Rivera, 1994) Traditionally, such testing practices are tools to determine the current proficiency and knowledge of students, but in most cases they are also used to make high-stake decisions about individuals. Thus, with the advent of critical pedagogy some shifts can be traced in the field of language testing and assessment. In fact, the rootedness of tests in the lives of the test takers results in their impacts on individuals and society at large. Considering their high-stake functions and impact, language tests might have the potential to determine the educational, political,

economic and ideological perspectives of individuals and society (Shohamy, 2001b). Therefore, the current perspective in language testing literature views tests as the powerful tools imposing implicit knowledge, ideas, values and norms rather than just simply as vehicles testing knowledge, proficiency, progress or skills. The major point is that tests as powerful tools are not neutral and isolated practices, but social tools that play a central role in constructing, identifying and legitimizing some values, knowledge, agendas and social classes in social systems (Shohamy, 2013). This means tests can be introduced by politically and educationally empowered parties. Thus, in some testing contexts due to the discursive power which might not be shared equally among all test parties, some high-stake effects and unintended consequences of tests can appear in the testing discourses. That is why, the attention needs to be drawn to the social and cultural discourses of language tests in order to clarify the unintended functions and ‘real stories’ of the tests. However, very little has been done so far to question the discourse of tests to uncover their power, unintended functions and consequences. At this point, in order to ensure the quality of those tests, it is certainly worth understanding what is meant by discourse of language tests.

2. Background of the Study

In the literature on language testing, one of the popular arguments is to define the quality of tests for good testing in modern societies. And much work has been done so far on constituting quality and good tests that measure knowledge, performance or skills of the individuals accurately. However, considering that tests can be utilized as tools for promoting certain agendas, in the last decades the critical movement in language testing literature aims to question the consequences and impact of language tests in their own discourse (Taylor, 2005; Shohamy, 2013). The current line of research is driven by the idea that tests are embedded in cultural, educational and political discourses that they are constructed, and thus proposes a new line of research questioning the discourses of tests. The earliest studies (Cronbach, 1988; Messick, 1989) done on this issue have evaluated the social sides of language tests by the term of validity, and are criticized due to not being able to move the discussion beyond validity and validation (McNamara & Roever, 2006). In order to go beyond this limited discussion on the social nature of tests, what is required is to identify the social discourse and use of tests from a social critical perspective (McNamara, 2008; McNamara & Roever, 2006).

That is why, Shohamy (2013) expresses that in order to judge the quality of language tests “not only by how well they measure the language knowledge from a measurement perspective, but rather by the motivations of introducing these tests by the educational policy agents, and the consequences that these tests lead to for individuals and groups” (p.226) must be taken into consideration. This means that the quality of tests is also related to their social discourses and dimensions. It is because tests are social and powerful tools serving influential functions in education and society. Indeed, the studies (Cheng, 2008; McNamara & Roever, 2006; Shohamy, 2001b, 2006, 2013) originated in this critical perspective aim to uncover not only the political and ideological intentions and motivations to introduce tests, but also their impact and consequences on individuals, institutions, schools and language and language education policies in various contexts. During the critical examination of tests, the vital point is to reveal their uses to understand their impact on various social, political, educational, ideological and financial circumstances. In the origin of this examination, the power relations need to be questioned because tests are representations of “unequal discourse, that of power” (Shohamy, 2013, p. 227). This means the discourse of tests manifests itself both in the power relations that are embedded in it and in the unintended functions of tests.

3. The Present Study

Viewed from a social perspective, our study which is descriptive and critical in nature relates tests close to their social dimensions and uses in their own discourses. More specially, focusing on describing the term of the *discourse of language tests*, this study contributes to understanding some other variables and dimensions that need to be included to improve the discourses and quality of language testing practices. By the way, the present study aims to

- go over the studies on a social perspective for language tests as social practice in the field of language testing

- introduce the description of *discourse of tests*
- describe what can be included in *discourse of tests*.

Based on those purposes, this study contains two sections and a concluding part. The first section offers some explanations on the starting point of the critical discussion on discourse of tests and highlights the term of test as social practice. The second includes the critique on discourse of tests by giving some details about its dimensions: power relations and functions of tests. In conclusion, some suggestions for test users to improve the discourse of language tests are provided.

4. Starting Points: A Social Perspective for Language Tests as Social Practice

In the 21st century, to outline the current critical movement on language tests, what is required is to “make possible an understanding of the role of language tests in enforcing particular policies and in maintaining the identities and power relations that are characteristic of modern societies” (McNamara & Roever, 2006, p. 40). Indeed, language testing research should have a more critical perspective that can gain the sight of more than a technical field. Thus, in the effectiveness argument, the primary assumption is to examine both their technical quality and functions and power of language tests in wider social relations so as to go beyond the traditional conceptualization.

With a stark contrast to traditional views of testing, some conceptualizations (Bachman, 2005; Filer, 2000; Kunnan, 2005; Lynch, 2001; Shohamy, 1998, 2001a, 2001b, 2007, 2013, 2017a) on the social functions and power of tests dominate reasonable grounds in the current critical movement in language testing literature. One of the crucial conceptualizations is *Critical Language Testing* (CLT). CLT associates tests with their uses in their social, cultural, educational and political contexts, and identifies their consequences, roles and impact on individuals from a more critical and broader perspective. To do so, what is highlighted in this critical perspective is not tests, but their functions and power relations embedded in their contexts (Shohamy, 1998, 2001a, 2001b). Thus, tests are not neutral acts, but products related to complex ideological, political, educational and cultural situations. Another one is the conceptualization of Filer (2000) based on the term of *sociological discourse of tests* critiquing the ‘science’ of language testing due to power and functions of assessment actions. Considering these two conceptualizations contributing to the development of the backbone of the current critical movement in language testing, it is possible to state that tests are social practices serving undeclared functions in their unique discourses (Karataş & Okan, 2021a).

In fact, regarding language tests as social practice has been a controversial matter. Here, *practice* means “the construction and reflection of social realities through actions that invoke identity, ideology, belief, and power” (Young, 2009, p. 1). This means that while performing a practice, individuals construct their own truth. Practice which is the performance of people in certain contexts can be related to all actions and activities of individuals. Social practice constitutes a stronger concept of ‘practice’ that includes “analysis of social structures to be brought into connection with analysis of social (inter)action” (Fairclough, 2010, p.172). Thus, a social practice is not only what is produced by the participation of all participants (Young, 2012) but also what constructs social identities and circumstances (Fairclough, 2010). This means language tests as social practice have the potential to represent individuals and the world by positioning people and events in their respective situations and discourses. In other words, they are “a set of calculative practices that actively produce the social and organizational realities we live in and which are in turn constantly altered and reproduced by being en-acted in everyday practice” (Jordan & Putz, 2004, p. 347)

Therefore, the core of the critical and social approach to language testing and assessment is to identify the functions and uses of language tests in their own discourses (Filer, 2000). This paradigm proposes a new research line conducting a critical evaluation of language tests in their own contexts to determine the power and uses (Shohamy, 2001b, 2013, 2017a; Young, 2012). Being committed to this new perspective on language testing regarding tests as social practice clearly means dealing with not only the relationship among language tests, social context, tests’ consequences and power in the discourse of tests. The last is that language tests are related to their respective

discourses in social life; thus, they are not isolated. Tests need to be evaluated critically considering their strong effects on different social dimensions other than the declared intentions (Shohamy, 2001b, 2013). This means tests as social practice are associated with the identification and construction of individuals, society and discourses.

5. The Discourse of Language Tests

Here, the term of *discourse* generally refers to “a way of talking about a matter that frames what can be said about it” (Filer, 2000, p. 2). Discourses are highly associated with the ways of interacting, understanding, behaving, reacting, thinking, valuing, believing. This means “discourses are ways of being ‘people like us.’ They are ‘ways of being in the world’; they are ‘forms of life’; they are socially situated identities. They are, thus, always and everywhere social and products of social histories” (Gee, 2008, p. 3). In the extended meaning of *discourse*, it involves “societal meaning-making systems such as institutional power, social differentiation of groups, and cultural beliefs that create identities for individuals and position them in social relationships” (Young, 2009, p. 2). *Discourse* speculates on some outcomes, use and functions of social practices. It is due to the fact that the social practice approach is grounded in insights concerning discourse and social realities constructed within the discourse. Discourses can operate to sort, identify and represent individuals and society at large (Gee, 2008).

Therefore, the matter prioritized within the discourse of language tests is mostly based on detecting the impact and consequences of language tests. The major argument is to identify and question the use of those tests in relation to their “broad societal realities, ideologies, politics, economics, policy agendas, and diversity” (Shohamy, 2013, p. 226). Additionally, in the construction of discourses, language tests as social practice have great potential to result in profound social, intellectual, political, financial, emotional and ideological modifications in the individuals and the society at large (McNamara, 2001). Hence, the discourse of these tests should be clarified in terms of these shifts (Shohamy, 2001b). To uncover these shifts, the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders in discourse of tests must be clarified in relation to societal, political, financial, ideological and educational consequences (Shohamy, 2013). Language tests involve three main agents: tester, test takers and the stakeholders other than testers and test takers. Each of those agents can have a variety of roles and interactions in the discourse of tests (Karataş & Okan, 2021a). That is why, one of the major issues that can be discussed in testing discourse is the power relations among these three main agents. It is because the power of tests manifests itself by the power relations among different stakeholders in the discourse of tests.

In addition to power relations among the main stakeholders, another issue prioritized within the discourse of tests is to think over the functions, uses and outcomes of tests. At the centre, there are diverse outcomes and consequences of language testing practices other than the ones defined in their intentions (Shohamy, 2009). The declared intentions and undeclared consequences need to be compared in order to understand the real uses and functions of tests. In order to ensure the quality of tests, their undeclared use and functions should be highlighted. It is because tests can have a wide range of functions significantly influencing the lives of individuals and society. Additionally, using the test results for decision making, tests might have impact on the social systems they take part in (Saville & Khalifa, 2016). Thus, the last decades have changed the way how functions of language tests have been understood. Indeed, language tests are not only tools to measure language knowledge, performance or proficiency, but also instruments to serve various functions other than intended in their respectful discourses including hidden power relations.

5.1. The Power Relations in Discourse of Language Tests

Here, *power* cannot be simply expressed in a single definition, but can refer to social control, dominance and limit exercised by one group over the actions, knowledge and minds of another group. It represents a usual property of relationships among social groups, institutions and organizations, often causing social inequalities. Power shows itself in relationships and interaction. This means power is a form of social control based on socially valued resources (van Dijk, 2008). In most cases, power is used to control the access to precious social benefits such as jobs status, identities and the like. It is a key concept in various social contexts because it acts as a type of relation

between people and a complex issue that shapes others' minds, behaviors and actions. In fact, power can manifest itself in various practices and contexts.

Tests are among such social practices in the discourses of which power mechanisms and relations among three main stakeholders are at work. (Karataş & Okan, 2021a). In most testing discourses, testers or test creators are the first groups including everyone who contributes to the practice of testing. In most testing discourses, those who hold power are testers who have the right to keep the gate through controlling what, how, why, when, and whom to test. Testers pose questions, demand answers and set procedural rules. Thereby, tests have the potential to function as powerful tools to legitimize the desires and expectations of testers. In such discourses, what is expected from test takers who constitute another group in testing discourses is to provide answers and engage in performances that match testers' demands and expectations. Due to attaching great meaning to the doors that can open with doing well in tests, test takers have no other choice but to accept and comply with the agendas, demands and rules of tests. Test takers need to change their behaviors and attitudes along the demands of tests in order to maximize their scores. It was one of the unintended consequences of tests. The shifts in test takers' behaviors and attitudes are a set of the variables that contribute to the construction of the power of tests in the respective testing discourses (Young, 2012). High-stakes implications of tests, power of tester and the meaning attributed to tests by test takers result in the power of tests. Tests having such potential to change behaviors and attitudes of individuals, are nothing new to education, but they are not being questioned by many people. Thus, the others rather than testers and test takers also might make contributions to the development and continuity of tests' power by attributing unchallenged meaning and trust in the results of tests. They expect test takers to comply with the rules and standards set by testers and achieve the knowledge skills and proficiency required by the tests. In such testing discourses, they even judge test takers in accordance with whether they do well or bad in the tests. Therefore, test takers start to regard tests as tools not only to explain themselves to the others in the society but also to form their identities in societies. These power relations embedded in testing discourses make language tests become powerful tools serving various unintended functions (Karataş & Okan, 2019, 2021b).

Considering the power of tests emerging due to the described relationships, it is possible to state that tests as social phenomena are embedded in disciplinary power (Löwenheim & Gazit, 2009, Shohamy, 2001b). In modern societies, tests as social practice are important tools for the construction of power relations. This power is not something that can be a resource of some people, agencies or institutions. In fact, power is the result of "an ongoing relationship that is embodied, produced, and reproduced in various practices and regimes of truth, and these operate within a structure that includes agents who seek to control and construct individuals and populations, as well as those who are controlled and constructed" (Löwenheim & Gazit, 2009, p. 147). Thus, within social contexts, individuals are subjected to this power through the use of some powerful tools like language tests (Foucault, 1995; Shohamy, 2001b). This means understanding the power relations can show how the subjectivity of individuals are constructed and produced.

5.2. Functions of Language Tests

Tests holding power as expressed above might have severe, life-changing, high-stakes and life-ending consequences for individuals and society at large (McNamara & Roever, 2006). When the intentions of tests and uses of tests are compared, it implies that tests are introduced for various functions as stated above. In education systems, the deliberate use of standardized language tests is to collect evidence concerning individuals' language proficiency, performance or knowledge, but language tests might have the potential to change the form and content of the curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation as de facto policies (Menken, 2017).

In addition to such educational functions of tests, in the discourse of tests, they can serve political, financial, ideological and social functions in modern societies. Standardized language tests as one of the central practices of social life can have the power to make the sense of determining social, political and financial realities in the society. So, it necessitates the sociological analysis of language tests as social policy (Broadfoot, 1996; Shohamy, 2001b, 2007).

5.2.1. Educational Functions of Language Tests

Traditionally, the educational outcomes and consequences of tests were defined with the term of *washback* (Hughes, 2003). However, the last decade changed the way the educational functions of language tests have been understood. When the educational functions of tests have been identified, we should bear in mind that language tests are not only tools to measure language knowledge, performance or proficiency, but also instruments embedded in educational settings. Viewing from the current critical perspective on language tests as social practice, the educational experiences of individuals might include numerous high-stakes which are too strong to confine into *washback*. When education system is very test-oriented, standardized language tests held by the powerful body to get some educational outcomes like a license to practice a profession, a job, an entry to tertiary institutions or a diploma a scholarship etc., can have great potential to result in life-changing consequences on the part of test takers. In some cases, individuals constantly prepare for specific standardized tests to have better educational, social or financial circumstances at every level of their education lives. That is why, teachers are expected to prepare their students for tests because in most circumstances how well students perform on the tests might be utilized to determine the performance and effectiveness of the students, teachers and even schools. Thus, “high-stakes tests act as de facto language education policies” (Menken, 2017, p. 387). This means language and language education policies are implicitly embedded within language tests that shape what is happening at the classroom level (Menken, 2008, 2017; Shohamy, 2001b).

Considering the educational functions constituting one aspect of the discourse of language tests, they provide samples of how tests are closely associated with a shift in the educational system. Though language test takers take tests for a variety of purposes, what tests have in common in terms of their educational functions is that they can be used for life-changing decisions. After all, in most cases language tests are capable of creating a modification in the behaviors and attitudes of individuals who make special preparations for tests by covering specific contents and materials included on these language tests. In addition to imposing specific test knowledge, teachers might feel forced to engage in teaching ‘test-like’ materials and questions in the classroom to make the test takers prepare for these language tests. At this point, these tests hold the power to influence what happens in language classrooms. Those tests can create classes limited to the knowledge, skills and areas included in the tests and even affect the methods and pace of teaching language. For example, if language tests do not offer any sections, knowledge, skills or items for speaking, writing and listening, but grammar, vocabulary and reading with multiple choice question types, test takers tend to ignore the social use of language and follow traditional psychometric methods of measuring isolated pieces of grammar and vocabulary knowledge. Thus, considering the potential of tests to serve educational and national policy as *de facto policy*, it is vital to contextualize language tests in relation to educational language and language education policies by demonstrating how these language tests might be used as de facto language policy. It is because “the messages that are delivered via the testing policies enable testers to use the testing tools to shape language policies in terms of language teaching, learning and language priorities” (Shohamy, 2013, p. 229). This means tests can be used to trigger the system without the need to introduce changes in language and language teaching policies and curriculum by popularizing tests- like teaching and narrowing the curriculum to basic skills and knowledge with demands of tests. Additionally, the knowledge, skills and questions comprising language tests can give various implications about what learning, teaching, language are (Shohamy, 2017b, p. 585). Thus, in education context language tests can be regarded as de facto curriculum and policies (Menken, 2008; Shohamy, 2001b, 2017a).

5.2.2. Social, Ideological, Political and Financial Functions of Language Tests

In addition to the educational functions of language tests, they might serve some political, ideological, financial and social functions, which is among the hot point issues in the discussion of the discourse of language tests. It is due to the fact that some social, political and financial values, knowledge, agendas and ideologies might be embedded in language tests. Ross (2011) states that “different constituencies and stakeholders such as immigrants, government bureaucrats, politicians, citizens, teachers, parents, industrialists, publishers, and examination makers all play a role in influencing language education and language assessment policy” (p.786). Thus, apart from the educational functions of standardized tests, these language tests seem to have profound influences at macro level.

In some cases, these tests might be the sole indicators of language knowledge, skills and proficiencies of individuals. Therefore, these tests are utilized to classify and select people for certain jobs and education chances by stipulating criteria for success and failure of individual test takers. That is why, their results might have detrimental effects because of labelling and judging individuals “winners and losers, successes and failures, rejections and acceptances” (Shohamy, 2001c, p. 113). Even these tests have the potential to be regarded as the symbols of worth, quality and value. These tests have the potential to affect and change test takers’ lives for good or for bad. Not only test takers but also teachers, parents and the system itself can be judged by the very performances of the test takers on these tests. Thus, the messages delivered via the results of the tests have a strong impact on the identity of individuals. Thus, Douglas (2010) expresses:

Tests represent social standards and values determining who shall be allowed to teach, who shall be admitted to educational opportunities, who is making progress in learning, who shall be deemed to have completed educational requirements, and which schools are meeting established standards. Tests in schools clearly serve social, cultural, and political goals (p. 285).

In fact, tests might offer social policy by creating pressure and control; thus, individuals do change their behaviors to maximize test scores. In some discourses, people might deliberately take certain actions and make fundamental changes in the way they perceive themselves and the world along with the agendas included in those tests to get the benefits associated with test results. Tests might also influence their mind including their personal and social knowledge, opinions and social attitudes, ideologies, norms, values and culture. At this point, tests turn into social tools not only structuring modern societies by working for transformations of individual subjects but also capturing the embeddedness and invisibility of the issues of language, culture, race, gender and class in their testing discourse. Indeed, tests can implicitly define and construct a singular and standardized knowledge, culture, ideology and value. Additionally, in some circumstances, by excluding the ones who do not meet singular and standardized perspective criteria embedded in tests they serve gatekeeping functions. Individuals’ performance on a test can facilitate or hinder getting access to some various social domains such as education, workplace, institutions, profession. As gatekeepers, tests have the potential to observe, screen and standardize the population. In addition, in some discourses, language tests can promote the prestige and the status of languages in society and determine language priorities, language correctness and language status. Thus, in the discourse of language tests the functions of language tests such as social construction, discrimination, differentiation, judgments, punishment, classification and surveillance etc. must be questioned.

Additionally, in some discourses tests can be linked to different types of financial and political consequences and outcomes. Considering the financial issues embedded in the testing discourse of some language tests, a kind of financial marketing has come out to serve the needs of individuals to maximize their scores. In order to improve the results and scores, individuals spend money to take private tutoring and get some test-like teaching materials to be prepared for taking these tests. In addition to financial dimensions of testing discourses, some tests might be associated with the achievement of specific political actions and goals. Therefore, language tests as political instruments connected to political variables can have a strong impact on education and social order. If tests are introduced as acts of political struggle, they have the great potential to become political subjects in a political context. In such testing discourses, tests as powerful tools affecting language learning and the lives of individuals can be driven by complex political realities and controversies.

6. Conclusion: Suggestions for Improving the Discourse of Language Tests

This study is likely to convince test users – testers, test takers and the others- to question the discourse of language tests by adapting some critical perspectives to eschew high-stakes implications and functions of tests. In the spirit of this new critical perspective on language testing, the main focus is the attempt to achieve a holistic understanding of the discourse of tests originated from their use as social practice. Hence, the argument made above on discourse of tests can be conceptualized within language tests as social practice. The critical approach to language testing is primarily driven by the critical examination of the use and functions of testing practices in their own social and cultural contexts (McNamara & Roever, 2006; Shohamy, 2001b, 2013; Young, 2012). To do so, the new perspective heavily insists on investigating the social dimensions of tests in their own discourses to discuss

their social and socially constructed natures. To do so, “the purpose is not to eliminate tests but rather to see the values behind them as well as their hidden agendas in the area of accountability and the learning of languages and to reflect perspectives of languages in this day and age” (Shohamy, 2017a, p. 451). In fact, understanding the hidden policies, ideologies and power embedded in the discourse of tests is vital for the improvement of tests’ quality. It is because of the growing tendency to use language tests as social fabric and policies for the exclusion of some certain knowledge, individuals, values and ideologies, but also legitimizing the others. As Shohamy (2017b) states “tests serve the system; they are not based on how languages ARE used, but on how some think they SHOULD be used” (p. 591). Deeply bound with this tendency, it is possible to state that tests as powerful practices might explicitly or implicitly serve some functions causing various severe and profound impacts on systems. Additionally, tests might bring about rapid and profound change in individuals and society (McNamara, 2001).

As a conclusion, based on the tenet of the critical perspective on language testing regarding tests as socially constructed phenomena, here are some suggestions for test-users to understand and improve the discourse and quality of language tests. First, we need to critically question the uses and functions of tests and the power relations embedded in testing discourse. To do so, it is possible to ask some questions such as what do tests test (knowledge, proficiency, constructs, etc.), does test reflect the current and updated understanding of what is being assessed, how are tests being used, is the test used for regulating, competition, individual control, system control, operation of power relations, knowledge control, system control or gate-keeping function etc. The point is not only to question explicit and implicit reasons, intentions and agendas for introducing tests, but also to be aware of their consequences. Thus, the second suggestion is that to understand the existence of the power of tests in their discourses, test users need to pay attention to the interpretations, comments and experiences of the other stakeholders (Shohamy, 2001b). The third is to increase test users’ awareness and social reflexivity in terms of the effect of tests to determine their subject positions in the discourse of language tests. It is because of the fact that for the sake of objectivity, tests might be used as powerful and disciplinary tools to place subjectivity of individuals in a field of surveillance (Foucault, 1995). Thus, the fourth suggestion is to revise testers’ roles and responsibilities by asking them to investigate the unintended consequences that tests lead to for individuals and society at large. Testers should guide testing discourses by setting rules and standards that can minimize the misuse of tests and avoid falling into power mechanisms. The last and foremost suggestion is to change the way tests are used to set equal and balanced power relations among the stakeholders for the purpose of democratic testing discourses.

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