

UDC 378.016:004.774

DOI <https://doi.org/10.24919/2308-4863/59-1-54>

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THE USE OF LANGUAGE TESTS IN THE PROCESS OF TEACHING ENGLISH TO STUDENTS OF ECONOMIC SPECIALTIES

Following an examination of the many types of language tests, numerous aims and objectives are presented, which are connected to the traits or characteristics of various language tests. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent transfer of many higher education institutions to distant learning, the issue under research has become even more pertinent. Therefore, it is more important than ever to acquire precise information on students' advancement toward classroom competence, with tests serving as the medium for doing so. Another condition that makes the research issue more pertinent is the absence of resources for instructing English teachers on how to design tests. The analysis of the literature demonstrates that language tests and their aims differ depending on the environment, and that test designers, test takers, and test administrators deal with a wide range of practical obstacles. In order to account for the nuances of the subject, it was determined that tests for students studying economics should include some specific visual elements, like tables, graphs, diagrams, mathematical formulas. Examples of tests that might be utilized in the process of teaching English to students of economic specialties by drawing on our own teaching experience and analyzing tests designed by domestic and foreign writers were suggested. The conclusion of the paper offers recommendations that might be put into practice to increase English language educators' awareness of language tests. Another key finding is that tests should aim to do more than just calculate students' scores and determine whether they comply with standards: they should be viewed as a process rather than a completed result. Tests should instead concentrate on monitoring students' educational progress and offering assistance to help them succeed in their coursework.

Key words: *language tests, students' progress assessment, English language for professional purposes, multiple choice test.*

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ВИКОРИСТАННЯ ТЕСТОВИХ ЗАВДАНЬ У ПРОЦЕСІ НАВЧАННЯ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ ЗДОБУВАЧІВ ВИЩОЇ ОСВІТИ ЕКОНОМІЧНИХ СПЕЦІАЛЬНОСТЕЙ

У статті розглянуто особливості різних видів тестових завдань, які використовуються у процесі вивчення англійської мови здобувачами вищої освіти економічних спеціальностей. У зв'язку з пандемією COVID-19 та подальшим переходом багатьох вищих навчальних закладів на дистанційну форму навчання, тематика даного дослідження стала ще більш актуальною. Беручи до уваги вимушені зміни, які були внесені до навчального процесу, використання тестових завдань є особливо важливим для отримання надійної інформації про успішність формування навичок ініомовної комунікації здобувачами вищої освіти. Іншою обставиною, що зумовили актуальність теми дослідження, є відсутність або нестача ресурсів для навчання викладачів англійської мови методичних засад та особливостей розробки тестових завдань. У висновку статті представлено рекомендації, які можна застосувати на практиці, щоб підвищити обізнаність викладачів англійської мови з особливостями розробки мовних тестів. Аналіз літературних джерел вказує на те, що як розробники тестів, так і здобувачі вищої освіти, які їх виконують, стикаються з широким спектром практичних перешкод. Визначено, що тести для здобувачів вищої освіти, які вивчають економіку, повинні містити певні візуальні елементи, такі як таблиці, графіки, діаграми, математичні формули тощо. Запропоновано приклади тестових завдань, які можна використати в процесі навчання англійської мови здобувачів вищої освіти економічних спеціальностей на основі власного викладацького досвіду автора статті та аналізу тестів, розроблених вітчизняними та зарубіжними

авторами. Один з висновків дослідження полягає в тому, що виконання тестових завдань слід розглядати як процес, а не завершений результат, оскільки їхньою метою є розвиток іншомовної компетенції, моніторинг освітнього прогресу здобувачів вищої освіти, а не механічний підрахунок балів.

Ключові слова: мовні тести, оцінювання успішності здобувачів вищої освіти, англійська мова за професійним спрямуванням, тест з варіантами відповідей.

Introduction. The justification for the research topic is threefold. First, due to the pandemic, educators gave more tests to their students to keep track of their academic progress. Disparities among students in terms of fair educational access, opportunities, and outcomes have become more apparent amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Considering how difficult it is to regulate the circumstances in which students complete particular assignments, distance learning inevitably involves a trusting relationship with students. There are a number of strategies being investigated to assist educators in evaluating students performance, such as ceasing all assessment, concentrating on self-assessment, creating a portfolio of skills to be acquired by the end of a course, and creating online quizzes (accessible via smartphones, tablets, and computers) before a language course. Due to this circumstance, it is more crucial than ever to gather accurate data on students' progress toward classroom mastery.

Second, this issue affects educators of foreign languages since there aren't enough methodological guidelines and advancements that would instruct educators on how to design tests.

Although English educators are in charge of creating the test questions for university internal exams and preparing students for external exams, it has never been deemed crucial for English educators in the classroom to acquire the necessary assessment literacy.

And finally, the last reason which organically follows from the second one, tests for students of economic specialties have some specific features. While designing test one should bear in mind that students of economic specialties are accustomed to learning material being presented not just verbally but also visually through the use of tables, graphs, diagrams, mathematical formulas, etc. That is why using visual elements similar to those employed by economists in their foreign language test is advisable.

Literature review. The article by F. Saragih and F. Seni provides an examination of the terms «testing» and «assessment» as well as their use in teaching English as a second language. According to their research, although testing and assessment are frequently used interchangeably, assessment is an umbrella term for all types of measures used to evaluate students' progress, and test is a subcategory

of assessment. Assessment refers to a variety of ways collecting information on learners' language ability or achievement. To assess students' performance and growth, educators are accustomed to creating their own examinations. As a result, they produce discrete point traditional grammar-based items that don't fit the communicative nature of the learning materials or the guiding principles of instruction. It is intended that educators will be able to build or construct better testing and assessment for their students based on teaching principles after they have a better understanding of both testing and assessment (Saragih, Seni, 2016: 74).

M. Hossain and K. Ahmed define requirements that should be present in an effective testing system: it should result in accurate assessments of the skills we are focusing on; it should be beneficial for instruction; it should be time and financially efficient; it should be conducted properly. According to the authors, characteristics a good test should possess three qualities: validity, reliability and practicality. Validity is the capacity of a test to capture what it purports to capture. To establish the legitimacy, a number of producers are linked. The test's precise measurement of something, and its effectiveness as a measurement, are two different things. When a test consistently measures the variable being tested, it is considered reliable. Test reliability and scorer reliability are two types of reliability. A test must not be resilient in its measurement in order to be reliable. Regardless of how many different test versions a candidate takes, reliability should be focused on the students' scores, which should provide the same results. Management system serves as the practicality's main focus. It is not sufficient for a test to be extremely trustworthy and valid; it must also be simple and affordable to create, administer, score, and interpret. Therefore, practicality and time and financial cost-saving techniques are tightly associated (Hossain, Ahmed, 2015: 82).

The study by N. Sultana concentrated on two main issues: first, whether English educators in the nation are professionally and intellectually prepared to complete various testing tasks; and second, how educators view language assessment literacy in their instructional strategies. The findings shed light on how educators' limited experience in academic and professional testing impacted their performance in assessment-related tasks and limited their ability to

use exams to enhance teaching. The article finishes with recommendations that might be put into practice to increase English educators' awareness of language assessment (Sultana, 2019).

M. Ali and O. Hamid conducted a study in order to investigate the elements that contribute to a detrimental washback effect on English language teaching. It has been proposed that emphasizing a causal link between testing and teaching may be oversimplified because factors other than assessment may also have an impact on language learning, including social-psychological, political, economic, and data-driven accountability factors. In situations where language examinations are thought to negatively impact language instruction, these conclusions have consequences for researchers who study language testing and evaluation, policy makers, program designers, and managers (Ali, Hamid, 2020: 129-146).

The article by R. Sayyed, A. Hussain and A. Arshad examines the studies on the idea of testing and assessment in the context of English language teaching. The article also evaluated research on language evaluation in various EFL settings. Regardless of their circumstances, the outcomes of several investigations have demonstrated strong parallels. For instance, EFL educators lack the expertise and experience to administer language assessments, especially the speaking test. Another issue educators deal with is how to grade writing assignments. The literature research has, in general, identified practical limitations, administrative challenges, a lack of voice, and a lack of training in the process of designing and implementing language tests (Sayyed, Hussain, Arshad, 2019: 256).

The purpose of the article. Language assessment literacy is a crucial area for academics, researchers, and anybody else hoping to enhance the conditions in which languages are taught. Nowadays, knowledge of the fundamentals of testing and the capacity to carry out testing-related tasks become more important. As a result, language educators' main responsibilities are providing tests and getting students ready for exams with a lot on the line. The level of English education in the nation is determined by English educators' preparation and capacity to handle various test-related duties. In this regard, past studies looked into several aspects of teaching English as a second language. The examination of educators' literacy, though, has hardly ever been looked into in relation to language teaching. Hence, the purpose of this article is to demonstrate how the use of assessments is applied to language learning and teaching. Additionally, this study projects the testing and assessment method in the context of teaching English to students of economic specialties.

Presentation of the main material. It is necessary to define the language in order to further remove ambiguity before directly presenting the research findings. Since clarifying the differences between these definitions is not the goal of our study, we do not differentiate between the notions of «test» and «assessment» in our research and instead utilize them interchangeably.

Educators must consider backwash, or the impact of testing on teaching and learning, while creating tests. This might be detrimental or advantageous. A test is useful when it aims to accomplish predetermined goals; on the other hand, it is useless when it serves no purpose. Every instructional scenario sets a different test problem, making test building essentially a problem-solving exercise. And arguably the most typical application of language exams is to identify students' learning strengths and shortcomings, like in proficiency examinations when the language needs are measured.

A language test is a tool used to assess an English learner's achievement, performance, or progress in a particular situation. Its definition is not context-specific. Although there are many other types of language tests, aptitude tests, achievement tests, progress tests, diagnostic tests, and competence exams are the most popular ones. In a context of language education and learning, these various examinations serve a variety of functions that affect their design, administration, and content. Language tests can have a variety of formats and objectives, but they all share common traits including validity, objectivity, reliability, and usability (Ali, Hamid, 2020: 132).

The educators are aware that assessment in the classroom should be seen as a process rather than a final product, and that the goal of assessment should go beyond simply calculating students' grades and determining whether they meet requirements. Instead, it should focus on tracking students' learning progress and providing support so they can succeed in their studies. In addition to following the rules, not all English teachers are fully knowledgeable on how to implement appropriate classroom assessment techniques in classes for English studying. This is due to the fact that students of economic specialties often experience a variety of problems in the classroom and come from extremely diverse backgrounds (Saefurrohman, Balinas, 2016: 92).

The tests that are provided below as examples can be used to teach English to students of economic specialties. They are based on our own teaching experience and an examination of test assignments for students of economic specialties that were created

by Ukrainian and foreign educators. We think the top five test kinds out of all others are as follows:

1. *Multiple choices*

Match the synonym to the underlined word

1. The US federal government has a wide range of tools and resources at its disposal to avert a financial crisis.

- a) collapse; b) growth; c) prosperity.

2. A bank's revenue is primarily derived from the fees it charges. Both the interest it gets on its assets and the fees it asks for its services.

- (a) credit; b) debt; c) income.

3. Commercial banks started to shorten loan repayment terms and tack on more interest.

- a) credits; b) deposits; c) services.

4. Following the financial crisis, the UK government experienced its biggest budget deficit during a period of relative tranquility.

- a) budget surplus; b) deficit spending; c) revenue.

5. The government intervenes, acknowledges their financial plight, and covers the interest on their debt at that time.

- a) difficulty; b) labor; c) welfare.

2. *True/False test items*

Read the sentences and correct them if necessary:

1. Multinational banks are those with locations on at least three different continents.

2. The recession in developed nations contributed to the swift expansion of international banks in Eastern Europe.

3. If the bank does not follow its clients abroad, the client will not go abroad either.

4. Banks with higher capital costs are able to offer banking services at a lower price than their rivals.

5. Implementing tax policy and managing national and public finances are two examples of multinational banking activities.

3. *Short-answer items*

Replace the definitions of the active vocabulary words with appropriate alternatives: contagion, downward, hardship, implications, origin, profitable, prosperity, simultaneously, stock market, success.

1) a situation that brings about trouble or misery, such as not having a job or adequate money;

2) taking place or being done simultaneously;

3) moving down the ladder;

4) bringing about or likely to bring about a profit or benefit;

5) accomplishing desired results, or someone or something that produces fruitful outcomes;

6) the activity of buying and selling shares in specific companies, as well as the individuals and groups involved;

7) the origin or cause of something; the location where a person or object was created;

8) the long-term effects of a choice or action;

9) the process by which feelings, concepts, or issues spread from one place to another;

10) the condition of being prosperous and wealthy.

4. *Gap filling items*

Fill in the missing prepositions in the following text:

In contrast ... Japan and parts ... Latin America, where it was milder, the Depression was notably prolonged and severe in the United States and Europe. It may come as no surprise that a variety ... factors contributed ... the worst economic depression the world has ever known. The United States' economic output declined due ... declines in consumer demand, financial panics, and poorly thought out government policies. The gold standard, which connected nearly all nations in the world ... a network of fixed currency exchange rates, was crucial ... spreading the American downturn to other nations. The removal ... the gold standard and the subsequent monetary expansion were major contributors ... the Great Depression's recovery. The Great Depression had a significant impact ... the economy, resulting ... both severe human misery and significant shifts ... economic strategy.

5. *Tests with visual elements.*

Please calculate the GNP, national income, personal income, and disposable income of a country using the data in the table, then translate the economic terms into Ukrainian.

| | |
|---|--|
| contributions to social insurance = 13; | individual taxes = 14; |
| retained earnings of corporations = 11; | transfer payments = 17; |
| incomes of residents of the country earned abroad = 15; | export = 46; |
| income of the non-corporate sector = 23; | profit of corporations = 68; |
| indirect business taxes = 18; | unemployment benefit = 7; |
| rent = 22; | personal consumption expenditures = 165; |
| wages of hired workers = 126; | depreciation = 19; |
| net private domestic investment = 47; | corporate income tax = 12 |
| public procurement of goods and services = 32; | net percentage = 8; |
| import = 25; | income of foreigners earned in the country = 29. |

Conclusions. Consequently, it is both appropriate and necessary to employ tests while teaching a

foreign language to students of economic specialties. However, it is important to note that educators should design tests based on their educational purpose, as well as how effectively they improve students' language training and how objectively they assess their progress toward the English language proficiency. Further study is needed in areas such as defining the

criteria for the tests design, defining their structure, and determining the various forms that tests may take depending on the type of activity they are intended to assess. The investigation of new indicators that would directly determine the quality of the test is, however, promising from the perspective of language didactics, as can be seen from the analysis of literary sources.

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