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MODERN METHODS OF LANGUAGE TESTING AND EVALUATION OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY AS A SECOND LANGUAGE
СУЧАСНІ МЕТОДИ МОВНОГО ТЕСТУВАННЯ ТА ОЦІНЮВАННЯ ОПАНУВАННЯ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЮ МОВОЮ ЯК ДРУГОЮ МОВОЮ

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Abstract. This article aims to analyze the main variety of methods for testing and analyzing the level of English language proficiency that are necessary and indispensable elements of the educational process. Using historical and descriptive methods, the main characteristics of the most popular methods of testing and assessing English proficiency among teachers are given. The results of this scoping study can help educators choose the most effective testing methods depending on their goals.
Keywords: Language assessment, Language testing, Evaluation, English language proficiency

Introduction

The teacher needs various methods of checking the level of students knowledge, depending on the goals: assessing the level of knowledge and achievements before the start of training to determine the real level, in the learning process to understand the student's progress and the correctness of the chosen methods, and at the end of training to determine the level achieved. There are also methods for assessing student's level of knowledge to understand the possibilities of applicants for entering higher educational institutions or employment abroad [5].

The many different methods and achievements of assessment have presented teachers and students with the problem of choosing the most effective option, so it became necessary to in-depth acquaintance with the main testing methods and achievements, depending on the goals.

The rapid development of Internet technologies and online learning has led to the emergence of new methods, programs, approaches, and tasks. In this study, a general overview of the basic concepts of language testing and achievements was made, a historical retrospective of the development of the science of testing and assessing the knowledge of the level of students at different stages of learning and the use of English by non-native speakers, an overview of the most popular and effective testing methods, which will help the best choice of assessing the examiner's knowledge.

Language assessment or language testing is a part of the applied linguistics. Assessment refers to the act of collecting information and making judgments about a language learner's knowledge of a language and ability to use it [12]. The composition of a language assessment traditionally includes skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing, or a combination of them in different versions. The definition of assessment can include events, tools, processes, and decisions [11].

Review of the Literature

The history of language testing officially began in Great Britain in the mid-19th century at the universities of Oxford and Cambridge [7], the first serious scientific research and the creation of tests occurred in the USA in the 1950s at the University of Michigan by Lado [8]. With the development and expansion of interest in the subject under study, scientists have paid attention and studied various aspects of the assessment and assessment of language testing related to psychological, cognitive, technical, and other approaches, Wiseman studied the efficiency of examinations [14], Hughes worked on testing theory for language teachers [6], Davies developed demands of being professional in language testing [4]. Baumgardner was interested in ESP in the classroom, its practice and evaluation [2], technical and policy issues in measures school and student progress have been analyzed and studied by Linn and Herman [9], the washback concept thoroughly studied by scientists Alderson [1]. There were also many other concepts and areas of research in assessing students' language skills

With the advent of Computer-assisted language learning (CALL) in the 1960s, the language assessment field of study has expanded its boundaries [3]. In connection with online learning, research related to machine learning and testing has become very necessary [13].

At the same time, the most significant and well-known assessment tests were created: Test of English as a Foreign language (TOEFL) [15] and The International English Language Testing System (IELTS) [16].

Tests were created to assess the level of English language skills of students for further admission to colleges and universities as well as for employment and immigration. At the moment, many countries, educational institutions, and organizations have their own tests to check the language assessment level of students - the International Test of English Proficiency (iTEP), the College English Test (CET) in China, Canadian English Language Proficiency Index Program (CELPIP) Test and many other.

The main part

This research was aimed at exploring the main types of assessment and evaluation tests to facilitate the correct choice, depending on the circumstances, for the examiner. According to the latest research, these types of tests existed: Proficiency tests, Achievements tests, Diagnostic tests, Placements tests, Direct and indirect testing, Discrete point and integrative testing, Norm-referenced and criterion-referenced testing, Objective testing and subjective testing, Computer adaptive testing, Communicative language testing [6].

It was customary to use the proficiency tests during the educational process (at the beginning, middle, or at the end of the course); or for diagnostic purposes when difficulties were found in the learning process. Also, this type of test was used for placement purposes: dividing a group of students into smaller subgroups depending on their level of knowledge and needs.

Achievements tests were directly related to the main language courses, the main purpose of which is to determine the success of individual students, a group of students, and the achievement of the main goals of the English language courses.

There were two options for the examiner, final, and progress achievement tests, which he could use depending on the goals and overall situation. They helped with the definition of the final grade. These tests were associated with a teaching methodology based on curriculum content, books, and other materials used.

Formative assessments were created by analyzing the diagnosis of student assimilation of specific parts, modules, receiving feedback in the learning process, and detecting problems, which allowed for changes in teaching methods of English language and testing methods.

Summative tests were usually used at the end of an academic course or year. The main purpose of such tests is to test the achievements of students for an entire course or year, to certify and authorize students to move to the next level. In such tests, group participation or a project was allowed.

Computer adapting testing - according to the methodology in this type of testing, all examinees were given an average version of the tasks in terms of complexity, depending on the level of correctness of the answers, subsequent tasks were given in simplified or complicated forms.

Diagnostic tests and placement tests often became part of more general tests to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the examinees in order to find out what needs to be corrected in learning, to repeat or learn again, and also to distribute students into groups depending on the level of knowledge.

In direct testing, it was necessary for the student to directly demonstrate the skill being tested that we want to measure. Indirect testing was an attempt to measure the abilities that exist at the base of the skills being tested.

Most of the described types of testing the level of knowledge of a foreign language were used individually or in combination. We've overviewed one of the most common proficiency tests in the world here, the IELTS.

Students with a non-native English language were required to take a test before entering an English-speaking college or university. The proficiency test was supposed to confirm a sufficient level of knowledge of the English language among students: proficiency in academic writing (understanding and writing), effective communication skills (listening and speaking). This type of testing belongs to proficiency tests. The International English Language Testing System (IELTS) - the proficiency test - is one of the most famous and widespread in the world and popular among employers and educational institutions. There are two versions of the test - Academic for university and college applicants and General Training for different purposes [16]. The test provides an opportunity to assess such skills of the examinee as reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Each skill is assessed separately. The Reading and Writing blocks are different for examinees, depending on which type of test they take, Academic or General. One of the main differences from TOEFL was that the skills testing in the speaking section was carried out face-to-face with an examiner, and more varied question options were presented with multiple-choice, short and long answers, comparison and comparison, and sentence completion options. Test takers can take IELTS in more than 140 countries and in over 1,600 locations [17]. In the light of the analyzed assessment and evaluation tests methods, the teacher, before starting the educational process, was recommended to clarify the

goals set for him and the students, which helped to choose the most suitable options and apply them.

Conclusion and implications

In this article, using historical and descriptive methods, the history of the evolution of testing and the assessment of the level of proficiency in English as a second foreign language in various situations was examined.

The main works of scientists-methodologists, developing the theoretical and practical foundations of the use of language testing in different countries, were presented. The characteristics of the main types of testing of language skills were given: proficiency, achievements, diagnostic, placement tests, norm-referenced, and criterion-referenced testing, objective and subjective testing, computer adaptive testing, communicative language testing, direct and indirect testing, discrete point and integrative testing, and the ways of using them. A brief description of one of the most popular tests (IELTS) widespread around the world was also given.

Despite the relatively young age of the new branch of applied linguistics, Language assessment or language testing has gained great popularity and development due to the great demand both in schools, universities, and among employers, government, and private organizations. In connection with the integration with computer technologies, the field of language testing is rapidly developing and requires new research, study, and application in practice, which will help to more effectively learn the English language and apply it in practice.

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Анотація. Ця стаття має на меті проаналізувати основну різноманітність методів тестування та аналізу рівня володіння англійською мовою, які є необхідними та необхідними елементами навчального процесу. За допомогою історичних та описових методів наведено основні характеристики найпопулярніших методів тестування та оцінки рівня володіння англійською мовою серед викладачів. Результати цього масштабного дослідження можуть допомогти викладачам вибрати найбільш ефективні методи тестування залежно від їх цілей.

Ключові слова: мовне оцінювання, мовне тестування, оцінювання, володіння англійською мовою