

РІВНЕНСЬКИЙ ДЕРЖАВНИЙ ГУМАНІТАРНИЙ УНІВЕРСИТЕТ  
ФАКУЛЬТЕТ ІНОЗЕМНОЇ ФІЛОЛОГІЇ  
КАФЕДРА ПРАКТИКИ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ



# АКТУАЛЬНІ ПРОБЛЕМИ СУЧАСНОЇ ІНОЗЕМНОЇ ФІЛОЛОГІЇ

СТУДЕНТСЬКИЙ НАУКОВИЙ ВІСНИК

PHILOLOGY



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**Студентський науковий вісник**



**Рівне – 2019**

УДК 81'243

А 43

Актуальні проблеми сучасної іноземної філології: Студентський науковий вісник. – Рівне: РДГУ, 2019. – 202 с.

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Розглянуто й затверджено на засіданні кафедри практики англійської мови РДГУ (протокол № 4 від 11.04.2019).

Затверджено та рекомендовано до друку на засіданні Вченої ради РДГУ (протокол № 4 від 25.04.2019 р.)

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## **TYPES OF TESTS (PLACEMENT, DIAGNOSTIC, PROFICIENCY)**

After the obtaining of state sovereignty Ukraine took the way of renovation in all links of life. Democratic changes had considerable influence on the sphere of education. In connection with decentralization of the educational system there was a necessity for creation of the clear state checking system. A serious problem nowadays is also recognition of national certificates, which would be correlative and appropriate to world standards. One of the reasons of complications in determination of analogues of educational documents is an imperfection of the checking and evaluation system in the educational establishments of Ukraine. Control and evaluation remained to be subjective; methods of their realization are out-of-date. Thus, there is a necessity for introduction of the checking system of maximal objectivity and possibility of estimation by means of quality and quantitative indexes. Introduction of modern methods of control and estimation in practice of studies in Ukrainian educational establishments would provide the observance of requirements for control, allow doing the studies more effective and approaching it to the world standards.

Considerable results are achieved in studying of different methods of control. The analysis of the special literature shows that in methodology of studies of foreign languages many attempts were made for the solution of issue of knowledge assessment. Yet, the maintenance and task of control, in particular test, its functions in the process of studies were determined, the classification of tests was created, the basic requirements to the development of control tasks and the procedure of control were established; the features of organization of control for different types of speech activity were analysed and described; the specific features of control at the junior, and senior stages and higher educational establishments were considered by such scholars as V.L.Bankevych, M.S.Bernstain, M.Y.Breihina, Zh.V.Vitkovska, M.I.Volodin, V.O.Hordienko, O.Y.Horchev, H.V.Ivanova, V.O.Kokota, N.I.Krasiuk, O.A.Kunina, L.V.Lysenko, O.O.Leontiev, O.H.Poliakov, V.L.Rys, M.V.Rosenkrants, R.Selh, I.Sotter, M.S.Shtulman, J.Heaton, A.Hughes, M.Thompson, D.Hicks, H.B.Yudis.

In spite of the fact that in pedagogics and methodology many studies are undertaken on issue of control and assessment of knowledge, abilities and skills of students, the problem of organization of control at school remains actual. Moreover, the students are to face the tests in order to enter any foreign university or reveal the level of their English language skills for themselves.

### **Types of tests**

Different scholars (Alderson, Heaton, Underhill) in their researches ask the similar question – why test, do the teachers really need them and for what purpose. Further, they all agree that test is not the teacher's desire to catch the students unprepared with what they are not acquainted; it is also not the motivating factor for the students to study. In fact, the test is a request for information and possibility to learn what the teachers did not know about their students before. We can add here that the test is important for the students, too, though they are unaware of that. The test is supposed to display not only the students' weak points, but also their strong sides. It could act as an indicator of progress the student is gradually making learning the language. Moreover, we can cite the idea of Hughes [7, 150] who emphasises that we can check the progress, general or specific knowledge of the students, etc. This claim will directly lead us to the statement that for each of these purposes there is a special type of testing. According to some scholars (Thompson, Hughes, Alderson, Heaton, and Underhill), there are four traditional categories or types of tests: proficiency tests, achievement tests, diagnostic tests, and placement tests. The author of the paper, once being a teacher, can claim that she is acquainted with three of them and has frequently used them in her teaching practice.

#### ***1. Diagnostic tests***

It is wise to start our discussion with that type of testing, for it is typically the first step each teacher, even non-language teacher, takes at the beginning of a new school year. In the establishment



the author of the paper was working it was one of the main rules to start a new study year giving the students a diagnostic test. Every year the administration of the school had stemmed a special plan where every teacher was supposed to write when and how they were going to test their students. Moreover, the teachers were supposed to analyse the diagnostic tests, complete special documents and provide diagrams with the results of each class or group if a class was divided. Then, at the end of the study year the teachers were demanded to compare the results of them with the final, achievement test. The diagnostic test displays the teacher a situation of the students' current knowledge. This is very essential especially when the students return from their summer holidays (that produces a rather substantial gap in their knowledge) or if the students start a new course and the teacher is completely unfamiliar with the level of the group. Hence, the teacher has to consider carefully about the items s/he is interested in to teach. This consideration reflects Heaton's proposal, which stipulates that the teachers should be systematic to design the tasks that are supposed to illustrate the students' abilities, and they should know what exactly they are testing. Moreover, Underhill points out that apart from the above-mentioned the most essential element of the diagnostic test is that the students should not feel depressed when the test is completed. Therefore, very often the teachers do not put any marks for the diagnostic test and sometimes even do not show the test to the learners if the students do not ask the teacher to return it. Nevertheless, regarding our own experience, the learners, especially the young ones, are eager to know their results and even demand marks for their work. Notwithstanding, it is up to the teacher whether to inform his/her students with the results or not; however, the test represents a valuable information mostly for the teacher and his/her plans for designing a syllabus.

Returning to Hughes [7, 165] we can emphasise his belief that this type of test is very useful for individual check. It means that this test could be applicable for checking a definite item; it is not necessary that it will cover broader topics of the language. However, further Hughes assumes that this test is rather difficult to design and the size of the test can be even impractical. It means that if the teacher wants to check the students' knowledge of Present simple, s/he will require a great deal of examples for the students to choose from. It will demand a tiresome work from the teacher to compose such type of the test, and may even confuse the learners.

At that point we can allude to our experience in giving a diagnostic test in Form 5. It was the class the teacher had worked before and knew the students and their level rather good. However, new learners had joined the class, and the teacher had not a slightest idea about their abilities. It was obvious that the students worried about how they would accomplish the test and what marks would they receive. The teacher had ensured them that the test would not be evaluated by marks. It was necessary for the teacher to plan her future work. That was done to release the tension in the class and make the students get rid of the stress that might be crucial for the results. The students immediately felt free and set to work. Later when analysing and summarizing the results the teacher realized that the students' knowledge was purely good. Certainly, there were the place the students required more practice; therefore during the next class the students were offered remedial activities on the points they had encountered any difficulties. Moreover, that was the case when the students were particularly interested in their marks.

To conclude, we can conceive that interpreting the results of diagnostic tests the teachers apart from predicting why the student has done the exercises the way s/he has, but not the other, will receive a significant information about his/her group s/he is going to work with and later use the information as a basis for the forming syllabus.

#### English Diagnostic Test Sample Questions

Below are examples of the types of questions you can expect on the English Diagnostic Test.

I. Complete/Incomplete Sentences: Label each.

A. Complete    B. Incomplete

1. Working hard throughout your first two years of college.

2. Knowledge of grammar and word use is important to your success in the mass communications industry.

II. Word Use: Choose the word that best completes each sentence.

3. The \_\_\_\_\_ mistakes you make on the EDT, the higher your score will be.

A. less B. fewer

4. Some assignments might require you to push yourself \_\_\_\_\_ than ever before.

A. further B. farther

III. Punctuation: Choose the sentence that is punctuated correctly.

5. A. "Have you registered for your fall classes?" the adviser asked.

B. "Have you registered for your fall classes"?' the adviser asked.

C. "Have you registered for your fall classes," the adviser asked?

6. A. Juan spends at least three hours a day on news and social media sites, his friends call him a news junkie.

B. Juan spends at least three hours a day on news and social media sites his friends call him a news junkie.

C. Juan spends at least three hours a day on news and social media sites. His friends call him a news junkie.

IV. Verbs: Choose the verb or verb phrase that best completes each sentence.

7. The books \_\_\_\_\_ on the library table all day before anyone put them away.

A. lay B. laid

8. The media \_\_\_\_\_ accountable to the public.

A. is B. are

9. Each student must bring \_\_\_\_\_ book.

A. his B. their

## **2. Placement tests**

Another type of test we are intended to discuss is a placement test. Concerning Longman Dictionary of LTAL again [6, 279-280] we can see that a placement test is a test that places the students at an appropriate level in a programme or a course. This term does not refer to the system and construction of the test, but to its usage purpose. According to Hughes [8, 7], this type of test is also used to decide which group or class the learner could be joined to. This statement is entirely supported by another scholar, such as Alderson [2, 216], who declares that this type of test is meant for showing the teacher the students' level of the language ability. It will assist to put the student exactly in that group that responds his/her true abilities. Heaton adheres that the following type of testing should be general and should purely focus on a vast range of topics of the language not on just specific one. Therefore, the placement test typically could be represented in the form of dictations, interviews, grammar tests, etc. Moreover, according to Heaton [5, 135], the placement test should deal exactly with the language skills relevant to those that will be taught during a particular course. If our course includes development of writing skills required for politics, it is not appropriate to study writing required for medical purposes. At this point we can attempt to compare a placement test and diagnostic one. From the first sight these both types of tests could look similar. They both are given at the beginning of the study year and both are meant for distinguishing the students' level of the current knowledge. A diagnostic test is meant for displaying a picture of the students' general knowledge at the beginning of the study year for the teacher to plan further work and design an appropriate syllabus for his/her students. Whereas, a placement test is designed and given in order to use the information of the students' knowledge for putting the students into groups according to their level of the language. Indeed, they are both used for teacher's planning of the course their functions differ. A colleague of mine, who works at school, has informed me that they have used a placement test at the beginning of the year and it appeared to be relevant and efficient for her and her colleague's future teaching. The students were divided according to their English language abilities: the students with better knowledge were put together, whereas the weaker students formed their own group. It does not mean discrimination between the students. The teachers have explained the students the reason for such actions, why it was necessary – they wanted to produce an appropriate teaching for each student taking his/her abilities into account. The teachers have altered their syllabus to meet the demands of the

students. The result proved to be satisfying. The students with better knowledge progressed; no one halted them. The weaker students have gradually improved their knowledge, for they received due attention than it would be in a mixed group.

***English Placement Test***

This placement test is designed to give students and teachers of English a quick way of assessing the approximate level of a student's knowledge of English grammar and usage. The test should take around 45 minutes to complete. At the end of the test you will see your test result and be given a percentage. You will also be able to follow a link to a page which will estimate your level compared to several international English exams (PET, FCE, CAE, CPE, IELTS, TOEFL); and the Council of Europe language assessment scale. For a more accurate assessment of your English language skills, your listening, speaking and writing skills would also have to be assessed.

1) Did you ..... anywhere interesting last weekend?

- a) go
- b) going
- c) was
- d) went

2) I work as a teacher and my wife ....., too.

- a) do
- b) is
- c) work
- d) does

3) I think ..... taxi driver

- a) her job is
- b) she's a
- c) her job is an
- d) she'

4) What is your home town ..... ?

- a) situated
- b) age
- c) like
- d) located

5) I'm afraid I ..... here for your birthday party.

- a) have not to be
- b) am not being
- c) will be not
- d) can't be

6) How ..... are you?

- a) high
- b) wide
- c) long
- d) heavy

7) How long ..... married?

- a) have you been
- b) are you
- c) have you
- d) been

- 8) Would you like ..... help?  
 a) a  
 b) some  
 c) me  
 d) I

### 3. Proficiency tests

The last type of test to be discussed is a proficiency test. Regarding Longman Dictionary of LTAL [6, 292] proficiency test is a test, which measures how much of a language a person knows or has learnt. It is not bound to any curriculum or syllabus, but is intended to check the learners' language competence. Although, some preparation and administration was done before taking the test, the test's results are what being focused on. Hughes gives the similar definition of proficiency tests stressing that training is not the thing that is emphasised, but the language. He adds that 'proficient' in the case of proficiency tests means possessing a certain ability of using the language according to an appropriate purpose. It denotes that the learner's language ability could be tested in various fields or subjects (art, science, medicine, etc.) in order to check whether the learner could suit the demands of a specific field or not. Moreover, Hughes [8, 116] believes that the proficiency tests affect learners' more in negative way, than in positive one. The author of the paper both agrees and does not agree with the Hughes' proposed statement. Definitely, this test could make the testee depressed and exhausted by taking a rather long test. Moreover, the proficiency tests are rather impartial; they are not testee-friendly.

However, there is a useful factor amongst the negative ones. It is preparation to proficiency tests, for it involves all language material starting from grammar finishing with listening comprehension. All four skills are being practised during the preparation course; various reading task and activities have been incorporated; writing has been stressed focusing on all possible types of essays, letters, reviews, etc. Speaking has been practiced as well. The whole material has been consolidated for many times.

Example of proficiency test

Questions and Answers

1. What \_\_\_\_\_ when I called ?  
 A. Was you doing  
 B. Was you do  
 C. Were you doing  
 D. You were doing
2. Which word form is not correct?  
 A. Clotheful  
 B. Clothing  
 C. Clothed  
 D. Clothe
3. Nothing \_\_\_\_\_ done when the boss is away.  
 A. Becomes  
 B. Gets  
 C. Been  
 D. Got

To summarize, the research has achieved the initially set goals and objectives. We can claim that there are different types of tests that serve for different purposes. Moreover, they all are necessary for the teacher's work, for them, apart from a proficiency test, could contribute to successful material acquisition by learners. It dealt with the basic data about testing, where we had displayed the ideas what was the essence of tests, why the students should be tested, what consequences tests could produce and whom they would mostly influence. Afterwards, the reasons for testing were discussed, where we had gradually showed why tests were significant in the process of learning and the role of testing in the teaching process. After the basic data had been discussed, we came directly to types of testing. At that point we made an attempt to review various sources on the topic we were able to find.



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**TEACHING SPEAKING AS A PRODUCTIVE AND INTERACTIVE PROCESS**

Speaking is one of the most important parts of the language learning process. An ability to speak is an essential skill that helps to promote communication in real day life. Martin Bygate affirms that “speaking is an undervalued skill and it is often thought as a popular form of expression” [1, 7].

Consisting of two processes such as spoken production and spoken interaction, speaking is considered to be the most difficult skill to overcome for the learners. In order to be understood by the other people the learners have to speak in an appropriate way using correct pronunciation, stress and intonation. It also involves interaction and to do this, learners must be able to respond what other people say. At the same time, they need to be accurate and fluent enough for the other person to understand.

Teaching speaking has always been presented as a challenge to teachers; so they used to neglect such quite important skill at the lessons. There are three main reasons for getting students to speak in the classroom. Firstly, speaking activities provide opportunities to practice real-life speaking in the safety of the classroom. Secondly, speaking tasks, where students try to use all the gained knowledge, provide feedback for both teacher and students. Thirdly, all the students have opportunities to activate the various elements of language they have stored in their brains during the lesson.

The problem of promoting spoken production and spoken interaction in the classroom is presented in the works of such scholars as Rebecca Hughes [6], Scott Thornbury [9], Jack Richards [7] and Christine Goh [4] etc.

The aim of the article is to distinguish the difference between spoken production and spoken interaction by analyzing their peculiarities.

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АКТУАЛЬНІ ПРОБЛЕМИ СУЧАСНОЇ ІНОЗЕМНОЇ ФІЛОЛОГІЇ

Відповідальний за підготовку збірника до видання *Воробйова І.А.*

Комп'ютерна верстка *Воробйова І.А.*