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*I. Horbachevsky Ternopil National Medical University***TEST CONTROL IN TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES TO STUDENTS OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS****T. V. Саварин, М. Я. Кічула***Тернопільський національний медичний університет імені**І. Я. Горбачевського МОЗ України***ТЕСТОВИЙ КОНТРОЛЬ У НАВЧАННІ ІНОЗЕМНИХ МОВ СТУДЕНТІВ ЗАКЛАДІВ ВИЩОЇ ОСВІТИ**

Abstract. This article explores the key characteristics of tests as an effective method of knowledge assessment in the teaching of foreign languages at higher educational institutions. The article discusses the various forms of tests used at different stages of the educational process and highlights the advantages of their application. Tests provide valuable feedback to both students and teachers, aiding in the evaluation of language proficiency and monitoring of progress. They help maintain accountability, ensure quality education, and promote active learning. The article identifies the major forms of tests used in the educational process, which vary depending on the stage of language learning. These forms may include written tests, oral examinations, listening comprehension assessments, and even project-based evaluations. Each form serves a specific purpose in assessing different language skills and competencies. Moreover, tests promote active learning and engagement among students. The anticipation of upcoming tests motivates students to actively participate in their language studies, review and revise their knowledge, and seek further improvement. Tests also encourage students to take responsibility for their learning and set achievable goals, fostering a sense of ownership and self-motivation. In conclusion, the use of tests as a method of knowledge assessment in the teaching of foreign languages at non-linguistic higher educational institutions brings numerous advantages. These include structured evaluation, accountability, valuable feedback, and promotion of active learning. By incorporating tests into the educational process, educators can effectively evaluate students' language proficiency, monitor their progress, and provide a high-quality language learning experience. The article concludes that the use of tests in foreign language education at higher educational institutions is highly advantageous for both educators and students.

Key words: test; test control; assessment; monitoring; higher education institution; students; foreign languages; learning; educational process.

Анотація. У статті досліджуються ключові характеристики тестів як ефективного методу оцінювання знань у викладанні іноземних мов у закладах вищої освіти. Розглянуто різні форми тестів, що використовуються на різних етапах навчального процесу, та висвітлено переваги їх застосування. Тести забезпечують цінний зворотний зв'язок як для студентів, так і для викладачів, сприяючи об'єктивному оцінюванню рівня володіння мовою та моніторингу прогресу. Вони допомагають підтримувати підзвітність, забезпечують якість освіти та активне навчання. У статті визначено основні форми тестів, що використовуються в освітньому процесі, які варіюються залежно від етапу вивчення мови. Ці форми можуть включати письмові тести, усні іспити, оцінювання розуміння мови на слух і навіть оцінювання на основі проектів. Кожна форма слугує певній меті в оцінюванні різних мовних навичок і компетенцій. Крім того, тести сприяють активному навчанню та залученню студентів. Розв'язування тестів мотивує студентів брати активну участь у вивченні мови, перевіряти та переглядати свої знання, а також прагнути до подальшого вдосконалення. Тести також заохочують студентів брати на себе відповідальність за своє навчання і ставити перед собою досяжні цілі, розвиваючи почуття відповідальності та самомотивації. Отже, використання тестів як методу оцінювання знань у викладанні іноземних мов у закладах вищої освіти має численні переваги. Серед них – структуроване оцінювання, підзвітність, цінний зворотний зв'язок та сприяння активному навчанню. Впроваджуючи тести в навчальний процес, викладачі можуть ефективно оцінювати рівень володіння мовою студентів, відстежувати їхній прогрес і забезпечувати якісний досвід вивчення мови. У статті зроблено висновок, що використання тестів у навчанні іноземних мов у закладах вищої освіти є надзвичайно вигідним як для викладачів, так і для студентів.

Ключові слова: тест; тестовий контроль; оцінювання; моніторинг; заклад вищої освіти; студенти; іноземні мови; навчання; освітній процес.

Introduction. Qualitative knowledge of foreign languages is a necessary condition for entering the open information space and society, for communication, for facilitating the process of sociologization in the modern market environment. One of the main tasks of education modernization is to provide knowledge at the level of functional literacy in at least one foreign language. For many years, curricula and standards in the field of foreign language teaching reduced this level only to reading proficiency at the level of international standards of functional literacy, with much less attention paid to speaking, writing and listening. The new approach to foreign language teaching emphasizes the importance of not only knowledge of the language, but also perfect mastery of the language material, communicative skills, and the ability to use this knowledge and skills to solve specific communicative tasks in communication situations.

Tests are an essential component of the education system, and they play a crucial role in assessing students' knowledge and understanding of a particular subject. In the context of foreign language learning, test control serves as an effective tool to evaluate students' language proficiency and track their progress over time.

The aim – to explore the importance and benefits of test control in teaching foreign languages to students of higher education institutions.

First and foremost, test control provides valuable feedback to both students and teachers. Through regular testing, students can assess their language skills and identify areas that require improvement. This feedback allows them to set realistic goals, monitor their progress, and make necessary adjustments to their learning strategies. Similarly, teachers can use test results to evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching methods and modify their approaches to better cater to students' needs.

Moreover, test control helps to maintain accountability and ensure the quality of education. By assessing students' language proficiency through standardized tests, educational institutions can establish benchmarks and standards for language learning. This helps to maintain consistency across different courses and ensures that students receive a high-quality education. It also allows institutions to track the overall performance of students and identify areas where additional support or resources may be needed.

Another benefit of test control is its role in motivating students and promoting active learning. Tests provide students with a sense of achievement and serve as milestones in their language learning journey. They encourage students to actively engage with the mate-

rial, review and revise their knowledge, and strive for better results. Additionally, the anticipation of upcoming tests can motivate students to stay focused and dedicated to their language studies, ultimately leading to improved language skills.

Test control also promotes fairness and objectivity in the evaluation process. Standardized tests provide an equal opportunity for all students to demonstrate their language proficiency, regardless of their background or personal circumstances. It eliminates bias and subjectivity, ensuring that students are assessed solely based on their language abilities. This fosters a sense of equality among students and encourages healthy competition, as everyone is evaluated using the same criteria.

Theoretical framework. The transition of non-language higher education institutions to the system of credit-modular learning has led to considerable attention of educators to tests of performance as a means of assessing students' learning achievements. This interest is quite justified, since testing is an effective means of control and gives an opportunity to form an idea of students' knowledge in a fairly short time. Thus, the test allows you to test all students of the group at the same time; the test takes a little time, which makes it possible to conduct it at almost any lesson; when performing the test, all students are in equal conditions - they work at the same time with the same volume and complexity of the material; also the test makes it possible to control not only the assimilation of the material, but also the possession of individual skills of its use. These characteristics of tests certainly indicate the expediency of their use in the educational process [6].

The problem of using tests in non-linguistic higher educational institutions in the process of learning foreign languages is insufficiently studied today.

The aim of our study is to analyze the essential characteristics, types, main advantages and disadvantages of test tasks in the process of learning a foreign language in non-language higher education institutions.

Domestic researchers (O. Vakulenko, D. Gilchuk, O. Kovalenko, V. Kokkota, S. Nikolayeva, O. Petrashchuk, A. Rapoport, N. Sayenko, T. Tovkes, O. Kholod, N. Chorna, etc.) devoted a lot of works to the study of the problem of using tests. This issue is paid much attention in the studies of foreign scientists (J. Alderson, R. Arends, M. Ash, L. Bachman, M. Canale, E. Hagen, R. Ebel, E. Goetz, R. Thorndike, M. Swain, J. Heaton, H. Madsen). Modern researchers study theoretical and practical aspects of test application, analyze the peculiarities of test control organization, etc. However, ex-

cessive enthusiasm for testing in the educational process without appropriate critical reflection on its various aspects can lead to an insufficiently objective assessment of its educational value and thereby instead of benefit to harm the practical teaching of a foreign language [6]. Thus, in Latin classes, the object of study is not only the elements of this language (phonetics, graphics, morphology, syntax of phrases, lexical and word-forming materials of classical languages), but also the principles of terminology, in particular anatomical, histological, clinical and pharmaceutical nomenclatures, writing simple clinical diagnoses in Latin. In other words, the terminological orientation of the entire learning process was clearly defined, since the term occupies a special place at all stages of medical education, as it acts both as an instrument of cognition and as a verbal sign that fixes the result of this cognition. Therefore, according to the requirements of the course of Latin language and the basics of medical terminology, students should develop the skills of competent use of Latin anatomical, histological, clinical, pharmaceutical, medical and technical terminology, Latin chemical nomenclature and understanding of the names of drugs and nomenclature names, the ability to write the Latin part of the prescription, translate into Latin the clinical diagnosis in the scope of the generally accepted tradition. In order to navigate this huge amount of Latin terminology, to understand the meaning of individual terms and phrases, students must learn the rules of Latin grammar, its regularities and exceptions to the rules, methods of term formation, principles of translation of two- and multi-word terms and clinical diagnoses, etc. To achieve this goal, Latin teachers use not only test control, but also written control, which more effectively helps to check students' ability to write a particular diagnosis, prescription, etc.

Therefore, various forms, methods and techniques of control are used to diagnose the success of learning. The most common form of control in the field of foreign language teaching today is test control. Testing is widely used at all levels of education, from training control to self-study.

Performance tests must meet a number of requirements. They should be: relatively short-term, i.e. do not require significant time costs; unambiguous, i.e. do not allow free interpretation of the test task; correct, i.e. exclude the possibility of formulating multiple answers; be relatively short; convenient, i.e. suitable for quick mathematical processing of results; standard, i.e. suitable for wide practical use [2].

There are norm-oriented and criterion-oriented tests [4].

Depending on the stage of the didactic process at which tests are used, they effectively provide preliminary, current, thematic and final control of students' knowledge and skills [2].

The main indicators that characterize the test are validity and reliability. Validity is an indicator that the test really assesses the knowledge and skills it is designed to test. If experts agree that a test assesses knowledge and skills well on a particular topic for which it is designed, it can be considered valid. Reliability is a measure of the accuracy and consistency of test results when administered repeatedly. It refers to the likelihood of students obtaining the same test scores in a variety of testing situations, including when scored by different experts. A test is considered reliable if different teachers evaluate its performance by a student in the same way [4].

The situation is somewhat more complicated with "speech" tests, the development of which began not so long ago. The complexity of the problem is due to the fact that it is still unclear how to use the test to check the level of proficiency in a particular type of speech activity. There are two approaches, according to which the mastery of a particular type of speech activity is established indirectly by assessing speech behavior in the process of performing the speech activity itself and directly by checking the students' mastery of certain language material (for which "language" tests are used) or any other types of speech activity [6].

Thus, testing has a number of advantages: the ability to cover a large number of students (the whole group or course), using the same material and the same conditions of the testing procedure; saving classroom time, which is very important in non-linguistic universities, where the time for language learning is limited; focus on modern technical means of teaching and the use of computer-based learning and control systems; increasing the objectivity of pedagogical control, minimizing the subjective factor in assessing answers [1].

The flexibility and versatility of modern computers, the ability to retrieve, search, store and provide at an extremely high speed and in an extremely short time any kind and content of information have long raised the question of the possibility of its use in the study of foreign languages. The rapid advancement of technology, particularly in the field of computers, has revolutionized the way we access and process information. The flexibility and versatility of modern computers have opened up new possibilities for language learning and have raised the question of their potential use in the study of foreign languages.

At the present stage, it is advisable to conduct testing using computer technology. Computer-based testing plays an important role in controlling knowledge of a foreign language and therefore is of particular interest. Tests began to be used several decades ago. And only in recent years computer tests have been introduced into mass practice and officially recommended by programs of studying various foreign languages. However, the problem of computer-based testing in foreign languages has not been studied enough. In fact, there are no serious publications on this issue by both foreign and domestic authors. According to researchers, the danger of language testing is that any unreasonableness, carelessness or haste in conclusions can lead to incorrect recommendations, unforeseen results and dubious pedagogical consequences [4]. In this regard, computer-based tests inevitably become a tool not only to assess the quality of learning, but also an effective means of influencing the content of learning, a source of judgments about the student and teacher.

One of the key advantages of using computers in language learning is the ability to access a vast amount of information. With just a few clicks, learners can access online dictionaries, grammar resources, and authentic language materials, such as articles, videos, and podcasts. This immediate access to authentic language content enhances learners' exposure to real-life language use and helps them develop a more comprehensive understanding of the target language.

In addition, computers offer interactive and engaging learning experiences. Language learning software and applications provide learners with interactive exercises, multimedia materials, and instant feedback, which can significantly enhance the learning process. These interactive tools not only make learning more enjoyable but also promote active engagement and participation, leading to improved language acquisition.

Computers also facilitate personalized learning experiences. With the help of adaptive learning technologies, learners can receive customized content and exercises that cater to their individual needs and learning styles. This personalized approach ensures that learners receive targeted support in areas where they require additional practice, ultimately accelerating their language learning progress.

Furthermore, computers enable learners to practice language skills in a simulated immersive environment. Language learning platforms often offer virtual language exchanges, where learners can interact with native speakers through video calls or chat applications. This virtual immersion experience provides learners

with an opportunity to practice their speaking and listening skills in a realistic context, without the need to travel abroad. It also helps develop cultural awareness and sensitivity, as learners engage with people from different cultural backgrounds.

However, it is important to acknowledge the challenges associated with the use of computers in foreign language education. One such challenge is the potential overreliance on technology, which may lead to a lack of human interaction. Language learning is a social activity, and human interaction plays a vital role in developing communicative competence. Therefore, it is essential to strike a balance between computer-assisted learning and face-to-face interaction with teachers and peers.

Another challenge is the need for digital literacy skills. Not all learners may have equal access to computers or possess the necessary technological skills to navigate online language resources effectively. It is crucial for educators to provide guidance and support in developing digital literacy skills to ensure that all learners can benefit from computer-assisted language learning.

In conclusion, computers offer immense potential in the study of foreign languages. The ability to access vast amounts of information, interactive and personalized learning experiences, and simulated immersive environments are just a few of the benefits that computer technology brings to language education. However, it is important to strike a balance between technology and human interaction and provide support in developing digital literacy skills. By leveraging the advantages of computer technology while addressing the associated challenges, educators can enhance the language learning experience and empower learners to become proficient in a foreign language.

P. K. Babinska identifies the following methodological recommendations for taking tests:

1. Determine the goals and functions of the test, that is, whether it is intended for current, thematic, periodic or final control.
2. Analyze the objects of testing and determine the skills and abilities that are subject to control.
3. Analyze the training material and determine the nature of the test.
4. Select the language material to be used in the test tasks.
5. Analyze the typical mistakes of learners and select the most typical cases to use as alternatives.
6. Determine the type and scope of the test. Keep in mind that the scope of the test depends on the time allocated, the stage and the material itself. The final test can be completed in 10–30 minutes. An equal number

of tasks (for example, 20, 50, 100, etc.) is assumed for the convenience of scoring.

7. Make up the test tasks. Remember that each test task contains an informational part (it can be either a sentence or a small text), which needs to be worked out, and an operational part, which includes questions or tasks.

It is necessary to take into account the following basic requirements for computer-based test tasks:

a) conformity of the form and nature of the test items to the objectives and objects of testing, as well as to the language material to ensure the highest possible test validity;

b) accessibility in form, content and level of difficulty of the tasks for the given contingent of test takers;

c) adherence to the principle of one difficulty;

d) taking into account the optimal average length of sentences (7 ± 2 words without gaps) in the basis of the test task [5].

8. Make alternatives. When selecting them, it is necessary that all distracting options and the correct answer contain the same part of speech. Use the following typology of alternatives in order of their effectiveness:

1) contextual distractor, 2) antonym of the correct answer, 3) incorrect synonym, 4) affixal distractor (prefix or suffix added or subtracted from the correct answer), 5) phonetic-graphic distractor, such as interfering with the native language, 6) graphic distractor (one or two letters added to or subtracted from the correct answer), 7) syntactic-semantic distractor, 8) random word.

9. Make sure that the test items are arranged so that the first 20 % of the items are the easiest, the next 70 % are of medium difficulty, and the final 10 % are difficult.

10. Review your test again and make corrections if necessary [1].

It is worth noting that test tasks allow you to check only a limited part of knowledge and can not

completely replace other forms of testing, although they open up many new opportunities for the teacher.

Conclusions and Prospects for Research. Thus, the use of tests in the process of teaching a foreign language in non-linguistic higher education institutions is quite appropriate and necessary. Tests serve as valuable tools for assessing students' language proficiency, tracking their progress, and providing feedback for both students and teachers. They help maintain accountability, ensure the quality of education, and promote active learning. Furthermore, tests promote fairness and objectivity in the evaluation process, providing equal opportunities for all students to demonstrate their language abilities. By embracing test control in language education, non-linguistic higher education institutions can enhance the learning experience for students and support their language development effectively. However, it should be noted that teachers should develop tests depending on the stage of learning a foreign language they are used at, their educational purpose, it is also necessary to evaluate how tests improve students' language training and how objectively they assess the level of development of students' knowledge, skills and abilities. Further research is needed on aspects related to the definition of requirements for the development of tests, clarification of their structure and possible forms depending on the type of activity they are aimed at checking.

Further research can contribute to the development of effective assessment strategies, explore the impact of test control on language learning outcomes, develop specialized assessment tools, investigate the role of technology in assessment, and inform instructional practices. By expanding our understanding of the use of tests in language education, we can enhance the quality of teaching and learning in non-linguistic higher education institutions.

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