

Modern Types of Tests and Testing system in Uzbekistan

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Abstract--- *This article categorizes language tests according to their purpose, function and important distinguishing characteristics as well as demonstrates the representative samples of each kind of test processes in Uzbekistan.*

Keywords--- *Achievement, Diagnostic, Placement Tests, Proficiency, Improving Language Skills.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Teaching has always been a process of helping learners to discover «new» ideas and «new» ways of learning. Whether this process took place through systematic teaching and testing, or whether it was through a discovery approach, testing was, and remains, an important integral part of every teaching and learning experience. Well-made tests of English can help students in at least two ways. First of all, such tests help create positive attitude toward learning.

A second way that tests can benefit students is by helping them master the language. Tests can foster learning, by their diagnostic characteristics: they confirm what each person has mastered, and they point up those language items needing further attention. Good English tests help students learn the language by requiring them to study hard, emphasizing course objectives, and showing them where they need to improve.

Tests can be categorized according to their purpose and the type of information they provide. The five major types of tests are proficiency, achievement, diagnostic and placement, and selection tests.

A proficiency test is designed to measure people's ability in a language, regardless of any training they may have had in that language. Proficiency tests are used to measure how suitable candidates will be for performing a certain task or following a particular course. The content of a proficiency test is not based on the content and objectives of language courses that people taking the test may have followed. Rather, it is based on a specification of what candidates have to be able to do in the English language in order to be considered proficient. Proficiency tests are not concerned with comparing the abilities of various candidates, but are aimed at finding out the degree of success someone might have in doing something.

Thus, these tests are considered to be criterion-referenced tests.

II. METHODS OF RESEARCH

An example of this kind of test would be a test administered by the British Council to overseas students intending to study in universities in Great Britain. This test has different parts which candidates can choose to do according to their different purposes. It is possible for the test to measure candidates' proficiency in different

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specialized fields such as medicine, life sciences, social studies, physical sciences or technology. However, there are other proficiency tests that do not have any occupation or course of study in mind; for them the concept of proficiency is more general. The function of such tests is to show whether candidates have reached a certain standard in the language.

The examples of these tests would be International English Language Testing System (IELTS), Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), the Cambridge First Certificate in English Examination (FCE), and the Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency in English Examination (CPE). The function of such tests is to show whether candidates have reached a certain standard with respect to a set of specified abilities. Proficiency tests should have detailed specifications saying what it is that successful candidates have demonstrated that they can do. Despite some differences in content and level of difficulty, all proficiency tests have one common feature: they are not based on the courses previously taken by the candidates. An important thing to remember is that “a test that is aiming at being a test of proficiency needs to be analytical, communicative, and integrative, among other things” (Davies, 2003).

The content of the new TOEFL test reflects the language that is used in real academic settings. The Speaking and Writing sections of the test include some tasks that integrate or combine several language skills. Specifically, the writing section of the TOEFL measures the candidates’ ability to use writing to communicate in an academic environment.

III. RESULTS

There are two writing questions, where the first one is an integrated while the second is an independent writing task. In question one, a candidate reads a passage, listens to a lecture and then, answers questions based on what they have read and heard. However, in question two, candidates have to use their own knowledge and experience.

An example of TOEFL writing question 2:

Some people think that we learn our most important lessons in school. Others think that the knowledge we acquire outside of school is the most useful. Which view do you agree with? Use specific reasons and examples to support your opinion.

Writing time - 30 minutes

Most teachers are unlikely to be responsible for proficiency tests. It is much more probable that they will be involved in design and administration of another type of test that is achievement test. Different from proficiency tests, achievement

Specimen Grammar Test

1. *I'll see you tomorrow at ten o'clock.* +
2. *Sue and Dave live here for over a year.* -
3. *The happiness is more important than money.* -
4. *Can you guess who I saw yesterday?* +

5. *That's the person who called yesterday.* +
6. *Is there a chemist's shop beside the bank?* +
7. *Mr. Law gave ten dollars to the fund for a poor.* —
8. *I scored 9 out of 10 on the test.* +
9. *Mr. and Mrs. Dobson have left an out ago.* —
10. *I that the girl of whom pens you borrowed?* —

Correct Answers

1. *at*
2. *have lived*
3. *Happiness (without the)*
4. *saw*
5. *who*
6. *beside*
7. *the poor*
8. *out of*
9. *left*
10. *whose*

Marks (Grouped together) Score

Prepositions (Q 1, 6, 8): 3/3

Tenses (Q2, 4, 9): 1/3

Articles (Q3, 7): 0/2

Relative pronouns (Q5, 10) 1/2

Diagnosis

Preposition: No Problems

Tenses: problems with present perfect v present simple contrast

and with present perfect v past simple contrast

Articles: problems with articles before uncountable (abstract)

nouns and before adjectives used as norms to signify

groups: e.g. the blind, the young

Relative pronouns: some problems e.g. who, of whom

It is not necessary for diagnostic tests to test grammar; they can be used in a similar way to diagnose difficulties in handling functions, notions and concepts as well as difficulties involving various language skills and sub-skills. Also diagnostic tests are essential if teachers wish to evaluate their teaching, the syllabus, the course book and the materials used in the course.

Unfortunately, there is a lack of good diagnostic tests. Tests of this kind still need a huge amount of work to produce; however, there exists at least one very interesting web-based development, DIALANG that offers diagnostic tests in fourteen tests are directly related to the language courses taken and their main purpose is to establish how successful individual students, groups of students or even courses have been in achieving objectives of the course. There are two kinds of achievement tests: progress and final achievement.

IV. CONCLUSION

Progress achievement tests, as their name suggests, measure the progress students are making. Such tests including quizzes, pop-quizzes and mid-term tests contribute to formative assessment. The most important reason for giving a progress test is to find out how well the students have mastered the language areas and skills which have just been taught. Class progress tests are usually the most important kinds of tests for teachers. These tests reflect the particular route that an individual teacher is taking towards the achievement of course objectives. Although progress achievement tests should be given regularly, teachers should avoid over-testing. Too many progress tests can produce a harmful backwash on students' attitudes to learning.

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