

## TESTING AS A METHOD OF TEACHING ENGLISH GRAMMAR TO TECHNICAL STUDENTS

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Grammar teaching experiences a variety of influences, points of view and innovations. The author pays attention on advantages of testing usage while teaching English language for non-linguistic students, obtaining technical education. General classification of tests, their application for training specific language skills, results of conducted tests are presented in the article. A test is the main and efficient tool in foreign language teaching of non-linguistic students. Moreover, the statements of different scientists, practitioners and methodologists, corresponding literature are presented in this article. Test explanation of grammar topic was checked practically by non-linguistic students of the National Technical University of Ukraine “KPI” (NTUU “KPI”) at the Faculty of Physical Engineering. Testing is considered to be one of the effective means of control of knowledge and skills. Multiple-choice test was practically used by the author to teach non-linguistic students the grammar topic “Simple Tenses”. Each part of test teaches specific peculiarities of the grammar topic. Each tense is explained in a separate part of the test. The final part of the test combines all previous grammar items and provides control of material understanding. Obtained results were compared with the results of grammar explanation by conventional methods.

**Keywords:** test; students; grammar topic; Simple Tenses; practical experience; control; differentiated learning

In this article, the author concentrates on grammar teaching by means of a test. Testing is used by teachers of all subjects to identify the level of learners’ performance. At any studying process, one must confirm the previous or already obtained knowledge level to continue the study [4, 24]. In our research, we propose to teach non-linguistic technical students English language using tests. Grammar test on the topic “Simple Tenses” is practically checked and results are presented in this paper.

**The aim of the article** is to describe different types of tests as a method of English grammar teaching; to develop multiple choice tests for teaching non-linguistic students; to check the efficiency of such method on a group of students of the Faculty of Physical Engineering at the National Technical University of Ukraine “KPI” (NTUU “KPI”); to present results of its investigation. The ultimate aim of this article is to identify the efficiency of a test in teaching and to obtain reliable data for comparison with standard teaching methods. It is important to mention that we do not propose to change one method by another. The attempt lies in the possibility of successful teaching of non-linguistic students by all available methods. It is also important to note test usability in teaching non-linguistic students – the possibility of carrying them out online.

**Theoretical background.** Tests as the tool of knowledge checking were studied, classified, developed and examined by many scientists. Among them are V.S. Avanesov, A.N. Majorov, M.B. Chelyshkova, T.A. Kabanova, V.A. Novikov, N.F. Efremova, L. Kroker, and others. In the foreign literature on the methodology of teaching foreign languages, the various theoretical and practical aspects of testing (such as validity, reliability) are investigated [2, 226].

Scientists recognize the importance of testing in the process of teaching, especially of foreign language teaching. The first scientific works on the test theory appeared in the early twentieth century. Classical test theory was described in the works of F.M. Lord, M.R. Novick (1968), M.J. Allen, W.M. Yen (1979 / 2002). There are several classifications of tests [1, 4].

Tests can be developed according to the aim (educational, motivational, certification, etc.); taking into account the method of task formation (for grammar, vocabulary checking); according to technology (test can be on-line, machine, printed, etc.); according to the level to be tested (start, progress, final, module, etc.). According to other classification, tests can be diagnostic and prognostic, proficiency and achievement tests [1, p. 214].

It is important to clarify the definition of a task. The literature on tasks, both research-based and pedagogic, shows that tasks are directed at all kinds of skills, including writing, speaking,

reading [12, p.7]. According to J. Lee, a task can be described as “a classroom activity or exercise that has an objective obtainable only by the interaction among students, a mechanism for structuring and sequencing interaction, and an emphasis on the meaning exchange” [10, p.32].

Language testing is the way teachers identify the level of language mastering and so determine “what has been already learnt and what needs to be improved in further teaching” [7, 72-75]. Reliable test results will accurately reflect each student’s understanding of whatever is being tested [7, 85]. The classical test theory (CTT) is deeply described by Fulcher and Davidson [8, 234].

Any test is used to monitor students’ achievements, which makes possible to identify the advantages and disadvantages of new training methods, to establish the relationship between the planned, implemented and achieved levels of education, to compare the work of different teachers, to assess students’ achievement and identify gaps in their knowledge. For the head of the institution, a test helps to obtain unbiased information to make management decisions and to perform a number of other important tasks.

The test method of foreign language teaching belongs to differentiated learning. In turn, the differentiated learning is a form of organization of educational process, implemented on the basis of the division of students into different-sized groups with their characteristic features for the selection of specific methods and techniques of working with each group of trainees [9, 142-144]. For example, a group of students may be formed according to the level of language mastering. Hence, differentiated learning is an education technology, aimed at creating optimal conditions for detecting students’ inclinations, interests and abilities.

Testing as a special form of language skills assessment has some advantages. Testing as a method of learning a foreign language, first of all, helps to overcome psychological stress. If testing is being used continuously, students no longer perceive it as a tool for monitoring and evaluation, thus, they begin to respond testing without stress (in psychological aspect) and show better results. Furthermore, regular tests conducted by a teacher, organize and co-ordinate the training process, which certainly helps to master the new material. In addition, when students complete a test successfully, they often have an opportunity to see their own achievements, which gives them a certain sense of job satisfaction. According to A.N. Mayorov, “test items should correspond the content of the curriculum, be compiled taking into account the rules, be tested in practice, be understandable to the student” [4, 77-78].

In this research, we consider a test as a grammar teaching tool. According to S. Ju.Nikolayeva, in the methodology of teaching a foreign language, teaching tools have specific requirements. Thus, “teaching tools should act in a tangible form and perform its basic function; be focused on learning objectives; be instruments of implementation of methods and techniques used in the educational process; meet the current achievements of language teaching methodology” [5, 55-56].

Tests are developed by teachers in accordance with the curriculum. ESP (English for Specific Purposes) teachers develop foreign language tests using the specific vocabulary referring to students’ specialty. Thus, an ESP teacher trains students in grammar and vocabulary in the specialty.

**Test types.** There exist multiple choice, gap-filling, matching, transformation, true/false tests, etc [3, 43]. Each of these types has its own advantages and disadvantages. All of them are designed to evaluate the students’ knowledge of a foreign language. Gap-filling tests are those where students must complete the sentence with the missing information. These tests are suitable for grammar and vocabulary control. Moreover, they are often used for checking listening comprehension, when students have to complete the sentences with the previously heard information. Tests on matching are developed by teachers to estimate students’ vocabulary knowledge on a definite topic or studied material. There are several variants of this type of test tasks. First – matching notions with their definitions. It is practical for vocabulary accumulation, because all the information is given in foreign language and students perceive the information in English. Second – matching English words with their translated into native language equivalents. This type of a test is directed on the vocabulary increase.

Transformation type of tests is extremely helpful for grammar teaching. Completing such type of exercises students must rephrase the sentence, using other grammatical or lexical devices. In order to save the same meaning of the initial sentence, students should find synonyms or similar grammar constructions to express the idea of the sentence.



Set C is concerned with the Past Simple Tense. Here, the teacher explains the students the formation of this tense form and the difference between regular and irregular verbs. These five items of test task are:

*Set C*

2. Yesterday, my friend and I \_\_\_\_\_ to the workshop.  
 a) to go                      b) go                      c) went                      d) gone
3. Last week you \_\_\_\_\_ me a pencil.  
 a) give                      b) to give                      c) gives                      d) gave

Future Simple Tense is explained and practiced in the set D. In this part of the test students work with the sentences in the future form. There are five items of test task where students should use correct verb in the correct tense form.

*Set D*

2. Tomorrow we \_\_\_\_\_ a report together.  
 a) will make                      b) will cook                      c) will made                      d) will do
3. Students \_\_\_\_\_ the test tomorrow.  
 a) will write                      b) write                      c) wrote                      d) to write
4. He \_\_\_\_\_ at University on Sunday.  
 a) will                      b) will not                      c) will not to be                      d) will not be

The last part E contains variants of time identification. In this case, students ought to identify the tense of the sentence and find the verb in the proper tense form. Sentences of this part have precise words of time expression (for instance – now, today, yesterday, every day, tomorrow, last week, etc.). These tasks are also rather simple but students have to track not only the tense of the sentence (with the help of time expressions), but also assort the correct verb from the given below.

*Set E*

4. \_\_\_\_\_ we \_\_\_\_\_ to the English lesson?  
 a) Were \_\_\_ go                      b) Are \_\_\_ go                      c) Is \_\_\_ go                      d) Shall \_\_\_ go
5. He never \_\_\_\_\_ up until 9 o'clock.  
 a) to get                      b) get                      c) got                      d) gets

There are five parts in the test. They embrace all features of simple tenses and give an opportunity to teach students all the peculiarities of this grammar topic. Moreover, each student can pass to the next part of the test only when he or she completely understood and mastered the previous one. In each group differential approach could be used and students and may obtain different home tasks. For example, if a number of students cope with first three parts more or less successfully, they can do sets “D” and “E” at home. If the last set is too difficult, they should make at least the set “D”. From the other hand, during the lesson some students can understand only the very basic level of this grammar topic so their homework would be sets “B” and “C” and only after checking this level with the teacher these students can complete more difficult tasks from set “D” or even “E”.

Finally, the students must be able to complete all the tasks of the multiple-choice test and understand all tips and hints of this grammar topic. One more advantage of this teaching method is the possibility to rewrite the test. Students can complete each part of the test until they obtain the best result and understands the topic completely clear.

**Test estimation.** The test consists of five parts (A-E). Each part includes five items of multiple-choice tasks with four answer-variants. The complexity of tasks increases from set A and set E is the most difficult one. The total score of this test is twenty-five.

**Analysis of the results.** Comparing both groups of students, we can conclude that each group has coped with the assignment of this grammar topic. But the students who studied grammar with the help of the test showed better results. The first group which was taught and explained grammar topic “Simple Tenses” using traditional methods and teaching means represented a good level of comprehension. This group consisted of fifteen students. Three of them obtained twenty-three points (out of twenty-five), ten students got from sixteen to twenty points and two students did not cope with the task and received less than eight points. These students completed the test as a homework and the

teacher announced test results without any subsequent explanation. The second group of eighteen students represented better results. All students gave more than eighteen correct answers out of twenty-five (there was one student with such result). Other students of this group obtained higher marks with some negligible mistakes. They wrote the test at the practical lesson under the guidance and control of the teacher. This group of students showed better results due to the teacher's constant control and simultaneous explanation of the material.

**Conclusion.** Testing is one of the components of the learning process and is considered to be one of the objectives and effective means of control of knowledge and skills. Many linguistic scholars along with other specialists express their interest to the testing as a method of teaching of foreign languages and as a scope of interdisciplinary research. Thus, foreign language teachers have the wide range of tools for training, and to monitor the knowledge and skills acquired proficiency. At the same time when you create different kinds of test, it is necessary to take into account the conditions, compliance with which will bring about a qualitative test: reliability, representativeness, equity, validity and authenticity. Clearly, the availability of high-quality tests in the training and supervision in the practice of teaching a foreign language is extremely important, both for teachers and students.

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**Н.С. Никитина. Тестирование как метод преподавания грамматики английского языка студентам технических специальностей.**

В данной статье рассматривается тестирование, как метод и инструмент преподавания иностранного языка студентам высших учебных заведений, неязыковых специальностей. Проанализированы виды и цели тестов, а также актуальность их использования.

Эта статья представляет собой попытку обзора преимуществ использования тестирования в процессе обучения английскому языку студентам неязыковых специальностей. Показаны общая классификация тестов, их применение для тренировки конкретных языковых навыков, результаты проведенных испытаний. Тест в этой статье рассматривается в качестве основного и эффективного средства для обучения иностранному языку студентов неязыковых специальностей. Кроме того, анализ литературы различных ученых, практиков и методистов представлены в этой статье. Автор представляет результаты сравнения стандартных методов преподавания иностранного языка и в форме обучения с использованием тестов. Этот метод был проверен практически на студентах неязыковых специальностей инженерно-физического факультета Национального технического университета Украины "КПИ". Тесты проводились в двух группах студентов первого курса в соответствии с учебным планом. Всего тридцать четыре студента принимают участие в этом процессе. Во-первых, одной группе студентов объяснили грамматическую тему с использованием стандартных методов и средств обучения (заметки на доске, распечатки, правила из учебника и т.д.). Тест студенты выполняли в виде домашнего задания, что дало возможность оценивания полученных результатов, но не корректировки навыков в самом процессе обучения. Другая часть экспериментальных студентов изучали ту же грамматическую тему, но материал первоначально подавался с использованием тестов. Полученные результаты дали возможность сравнивать, проверять и анализировать различные способы преподавания грамматики студентам неязыковых специальностей.

**Ключевые слова:** тест; студенты; грамматическая тема; простое время; практический опыт; контроль; дифференцированное обучение

**Н.С. Нікітіна. Тестування як метод викладання граматики англійської мови студентам технічних спеціальностей.**

У час взаємоінтеграційних процесів міжнародних відносин, а також появи міжнародного попиту на висококваліфікованих спеціалістів, здатних вільно підтримувати спілкування іноземною мовою для досягнення своїх професійних цілей важливим стало якісне викладання іноземної мови.

У даній статті розглядається тестування, як метод і інструмент викладання іноземної мови студентам вищих навчальних закладів, немовних спеціальностей. Проаналізовано види і цілі тестів, а також актуальність їх використання.

Ця стаття являє собою спробу огляду переваг використання тестування в процесі навчання англійській мові студентам немовних спеціальностей. Показані загальна класифікація тестів, їх застосування для тренування конкретних мовних навичок, результати проведених випробувань. Тест в цій статті розглядається в якості основного і ефективного засобу для навчання іноземної мови студентів немовних спеціальностей. Крім того, аналіз літератури різних вчених, практиків і методистів представлені в цій статті. Автор представляє результати порівняння стандартних методів викладання іноземної мови та в формі навчання з використанням тестів. Цей метод був перевірений практично на студентах немовних спеціальностей інженерно-фізичного факультету Національного технічного університету України "КПИ". Тести проводилися в двох групах студентів першого курсу відповідно до навчального плану. Всього тридцять чотири студенти брали участь в цьому процесі. По-перше, одній групі студентів пояснили граматичну тему з використанням звичних методів і засобів навчання (заметки на дошці, роздруковки, правила з підручника і т.д.). Тест студенти виконували у вигляді домашнього завдання, що дало можливість оцінювання отриманих результатів, але не коригування навичок в самому процесі навчання. Інша частина експериментальних студентів вивчала ту ж граматичну тему, але матеріал одразу подавався з використанням тестів. Викладач мав змогу одразу оцінювати результат, виправляти помилки та покращувати результати. Викладач виправляв помилки, не вказуючи правильну відповідь, а говорячи про те, що певне завдання зроблено не правильно. Студенти самостійно шукали правильну відповідь серед запропонованих, практикуючись та закріплюючи дану тему. Отримані результати дали можливість порівнювати, перевіряти і аналізувати різні способи викладання граматики студентам немовних спеціальностей.

**Ключові слова:** тест; студенти; граматична тема; простий час; практичний досвід; контроль; диференційне навчання