

## **Factors Influencing the Assessment of English Language Learners**

The article deals with the factors influencing the assessment of English Language Learners. Different linguistic backgrounds ELLs possess a wide range of linguistic backgrounds.

**Keywords:** assessment, learner, factor, language, education

В статье рассматриваются факторы, влияющие на оценку знаний изучающих английский язык.

**Ключевые слова:** оценка, учащийся, язык, образование

Different linguistic backgrounds ELLs possess a wide range of linguistic backgrounds. While the majority of ELLs come from Uzbek- or Karakalpak-speaking backgrounds, it has been estimated that approximately 400 different native languages are spoken by ELLs nationally. This is particularly important to keep in mind when considering the use of native language testing accommodations, since it may not be possible to provide assessments in all native languages represented in a large school district or a state. Varying levels of proficiency in English – ELLs vary widely in their level of English language proficiency, and furthermore, ELLs may have varying levels of oral and written English proficiency. Do not assume that students who can converse easily in English will have the literacy skills necessary to understand the written directions for a standardized test. Some ELLs may be proficient in the English used for interpersonal communications but not in the academic English needed to fully access content-area assessments. Studies show that the level of language proficiency has an influence on processing speed. In other words, compared with native speakers, ELLs generally take longer on tasks presented in English. This is important to keep in mind when designing and scoring the assessment, as well as when making decisions about testing accommodations. Varying levels of proficiency in native language – ELLs also vary in their levels of proficiency and literacy in their native languages. Therefore, do not assume that speakers of other languages will be able to understand written test directions in their native languages. In fact, a large proportion of ELLs were born in Uzbekistan and may not have had any formal schooling in their native language. This is important to keep in mind when considering the use of native language accommodations [1].

Varying degrees of formal schooling in native language – As mentioned previously, ELLs vary widely in the level of formal schooling they have had in their native languages. The degree of native-language formal schooling affects not only native

language [www.ets.org](http://www.ets.org) Guidelines for the Assessment of English Language Learners proficiency—specifically, literacy in the native language—but also the level of content area skills and knowledge. For example, students from refugee populations may enter the Uzbekistan educational system with little or no formal schooling in any language. These students must learn English and content-area knowledge simultaneously, while also being socialized into a school context that may be extremely unfamiliar. Other ELLs may come with more formal schooling and may have received instruction in the content areas in their native languages. The primary challenge for these students is simply to transfer their existing content knowledge into English. Again, these factors come into play when making decisions about appropriate accommodations.

ELLs also vary in the number of years they have spent in schools where English is the language of instruction. A distinction may also be made between students who have studied English as a foreign language while in their home countries. Furthermore, ELLs differ in the type of instruction they have received. Bilingual, full English immersion, and English as a second language are but three of the many existing instructional programs for non-native English speakers, and there are great variations in how these programs are implemented.

It should not be assumed that all ELLs have had the same exposure to the standardized testing that is prevalent. Students in some countries may have had no exposure to multiple-choice questions, while those from other countries may never have seen a constructed-response question. Even ELLs from educationally advantaged backgrounds and with high levels of English language proficiency may not be accustomed to standardized, large-scale assessments and may be at a disadvantage in these testing situations [2].

Cultural factors can also be potential sources of construct-irrelevant variance that add to the complexity of appropriately assessing ELLs. Varying degrees of acculturation to U.S. mainstream – ELLs come from a wide range of cultural backgrounds, and cultural differences may place ELLs at a disadvantage in a standardized testing situation. Lack of familiarity with mainstream American or British culture, for example, can potentially have an impact on test scores for ELLs. Students who are unfamiliar with American and British culture may be at a disadvantage relative to their peers because they may hold different assumptions about the testing situation or the educational environment in general, have different background knowledge and experience, or possess different sets of cultural values and beliefs, and therefore respond to questions differently. Students from cultures where cooperation is valued over competition, for example, may be at a disadvantage in those testing situations in the United States where the goal is for each individual student to perform at his or her best on his or her own. Students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds may

also respond to questions differently and may have background knowledge and experiences that are different from those presumed by a test developer.

### *References*

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### **Лакуны в английском, русском и каракалпакском языках**

В статье исследуется проблема лакун в английском, русском и каракалпакском языках. Лакуна рассматривается как национально-специфический элемент культуры.

**Ключевые слова:** лакуна, лингвистика, эмоция, экстралингвистика, этнография

Лакуна представляет собой национально-специфический элемент культуры, нашедший соответствующее отражение в языке и речи носителей этой культуры, который либо полностью не понимается, либо недопонимается носителями иной лингвокультуры в процессе коммуникации.

Лакуна (в узком смысле, так называемая языковая лакуна) понимается как отсутствие в лексической системе языка слова для обозначения того или иного понятия.

Выявленные и теоретически возможные лакуны подразделяются на синхронические и диахронические, лингвистические (языковые, речевые) и экстралингвистические (текстовые и культурологические).

В центре внимания авторов настоящей статьи находятся лингвистические лакуны, которые характеризуются с точки зрения современного состояния языка (или языков), т. е. в синхронии. «Лакуны, встречающиеся при сопоставлении языков, называются языковыми, или лингвистическими, – пишет И. В. Томашева, – которые в свою очередь, могут быть лексическими, грамматическими и стилистическими, полными, частичными или компенсированными» [6, с. 53]. Лингвистические лакуны помимо этого могут быть интерязыковыми (межъязыковыми) и интраязыковыми (внутриязыковыми), уникальными и частными,