

## Impact of Testing Washback on ESL Teaching and Learning

В статье рассматривается влияние тестирования на процесс обучения английскому как второму иностранному. Представлен анализ возможных путей оптимизации образовательного процесса за счет обновления и улучшения методов оценивания и качества системы тестирования, а также повышения мотивации у студентов для наибольшей эффективности.

**Ключевые слова:** тестирование, методы оценивания, мотивация, английский как второй иностранный язык, подходы к преподаванию иностранного языка

This study examines the impact of testing washback on ESL teaching and learning processes and correlation between educational process and testing system that intends to be modified to enhance educational results. The article analyzes possible ways to improve ESL testing for students' better efficiency and higher motivation.

**Keywords:** impact of testing, methods of assessment, motivation, ESL students, approaches in teaching language

The study examines the impact of L2 testing washback in educational process and enhances understanding of the washback effects on teaching and learning. Tests are a crucial part of an efficient ESL teaching and learning program. Test results have a direct and measurable impact on the way students think, feel, and interact with the language being taught. This phenomenon is known as test washback. Through assessing students' knowledge of English based on their performance in tests, test washback can provide valuable insights into the success of a course or curriculum. It also helps teachers to tailor their lessons to be more effective for their learners.

**Introduction.** Currently, ESL examinations are used to measure students' abilities and understanding of course content. Most crucially, examination play a critical role in educational enhancement. In this regard, tests improve accountability and reinforce the teaching and learning processes [2, p. 8]. The use of tests as part of an ESL teaching program can help in identifying gaps in student's comprehension that need to be addressed and gives teachers an opportunity to fill those gaps by personalizing lessons to best meet the needs of the students. Tests can also serve as powerful motivators for both students and teachers alike, leading to greater engagement with the learning material and better overall performance in class. Language tests have effects on people's lives and on society and build the general system of how we teach and how we learn. Taking into account the notion "washback" it is worth mentioning that washback mechanisms are best described through several frameworks [2, p. 8]. They focus on three critical aspects: process, participants include administrators, tutors and publishers whose approaches and views toward their work may be affected by exams.

The process involves any actions undertaken by the participants to enhance studying [2, p. 9]. Studies of washback have used high-stakes tests in research conducted in different countries, yielding different results. In this case, the more significant the test is, the higher the consequence of the test on testers and test-takers. For example, language proficiency tests, such as LOBELA, the TOEFEL and the IELTS, have strong washback [1, p. 2]. These tests are used to make critical decisions about test-takers.

**Research problem and the aim of the study.** The aim of my research is to study the existing testing and evaluation methods and to modify them for better efficiency. The main objective is to define the most appropriate test items to construct a well-targeted, level-based language testing system to coordinate teaching and learning activities and assessment tasks with the learning outcomes, to find new solutions how to create tests properly in the up-to-date reality, to improve the impact of tests on teaching and learning.

**Research question.** How to modify L2 testing and assessment systems to make strong positive impact on ESL teaching and learning?

**Methods.** The study focuses on:

- summative evaluation
- instructional feedback to help learners process
- encouraging self-directed learning
- meeting accountability demands
- motivating students
- personnel decisions
- professional development

In the research I intend to closely examine diverse *approaches in teaching language* in different teaching areas with different students' levels of knowledge and their connection to the assessment and *core aspects of assessment* such as writing, speaking, listening and reading. Tests should have the following criteria: **solidity** as the plausibility and consistency of measurement; ensuring that the results of the test are objective. If we take writing as an aspect for assessment, we might use tasks formats like gap filling, sentence building, multiple choice of grammar forms. These tasks will show evident knowledge of particular grammar rules and vocabulary. Students have less opportunities to For reading we might take tasks like "true/false/not stated", paragraph matching to see real level of understanding of the text. Listening test should embrace tasks like matching. The next criteria is **stringency**. It implies the tasks to be very close to situations in real life. The best example of tasks like this can be demonstrated in the aspect of speaking. Low level students can practice question-answer format of a dialogue for better understanding of the real situation when this phrases can be used and at the same time they memorize forms and phrases for their further use while talking. High-level students can practice debates tasks in the classroom. A class debate can be a fun and challenging way to encourage class interaction,

review vocabulary, and develop speaking fluency. With a solid lesson plan and good moderating skills, your debate will be a success and well-appreciated by students. The third criterion is **pragmatism**. This criterion is taken into account when evaluating the progress is needed. Key items of assessment are going to be: short constructed response, extended constructed response, chronological sequence and completion, multiple-choice, matching, critical thinking and problem solving, true-false-not given tasks, choosing tasks and rubrics, factors affecting listening, dimensions of difficulty, selecting texts, developing item sets. Also I intend to observe and analyze *standards of current tests* and main strategies to find the solutions how to avert the imperfections and drawbacks while modifying them according to main objectives of assessment. The standards are: scale, test design, structure, prestige factors, test factors, people factors, curriculum factors, current methods of creating tests.

My study also analyzes **mixed methods application to assessment** that are the most appropriate in my view to modify the structure of testing system. Mixed methods are defined as one in which “the investigator collects and analyzes data, integrates the findings and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches and methods in a single study or program of inquiry. Separately these approaches do not work in a proper way. Methodological pluralism is the main issue of mixed methods, it provides deeper and varied perspective versus a single research methodology. These both methods assess externally and internally at a time, measure knowledge, teaching and learning. If the findings conflict, the researcher has greater knowledge and can modify interpretations and conclusions accordingly. Mixed methods is a challenging approach. My task is to investigate how language is learnt and acquired in the variety of contexts. The objective is to capture both external and internal assessment that measure teaching, learning, knowledge in a natural setting and manner and to analyze modern practices and techniques that link assessment data in a socially interactive environment. While testing some features should be noticed and analyzed- one of the main things shifting from a focus on teaching to a focus on learning, from achievement to proficiency, from textbooks to authentic texts.

- assessing a specific language skill to evaluating language more holistically;
- comparing student’s results with another to comparing it with established criteria;
- creating assessment independent of curriculum and instruction to those aligned with curriculum and instruction;
- viewing students as objects of assessment to viewing them as active participants in the process;
- making inferences based on single restricted evidence to those based on multiple sources.

*The impact of language testing* on established practices, beliefs, attitudes, and the rationale behind testing is also under consideration. The method is to analyze impact of any test on different levels [3, p. 51]. This helps to determine the impact that

testing has on the educational system. The impact is important to be understood and to be analyzed from the scientific point of view to be able to construct a scientifically adopted and rationally built language testing system to make educational process more effective.

The cases when students feel challenged and demonstrate interest in passing tests, and when they are under pressure make me examine *the influence of language assessment*, whether beneficial or damaging it is. Language assessment helps to identify a person's strengths and weaknesses in L2. It also provides valuable insights into how well students are able to communicate and use language effectively [4, p. 12]. By using appropriate language assessment tools and techniques, universities can ensure that their students are able to use language appropriately and pass particular tests and exams. The impacts of language assessment are far-reaching and have a large influence on how people learn. By examining the results of assessments, educators can adjust their teaching strategies accordingly to ensure better learning outcomes for students. It is clear that the influence of language assessment is significant and pervasive across multiple settings. With its help, educators are able to measure progress more accurately. Here we should pay attention to **motivation**. Earning a second language certification through an ESL exam is an important step on the path to success. It can open up new avenues for career growth, boost self-confidence, and create valuable opportunities for international exposure. With the availability of efficient online testing systems, more and more people have been encouraged to pursue their goals in passing ESL exams. Not only does this provide access to new opportunities and advancements, it also boosts motivation through acknowledgment of the hard work that goes into mastering a language skill. By taking an ESL exam, test takers can create a higher level of professional proficiency and prove their abilities to employers around the world. In order to evaluate student learning and obtain a reliable assessment of the acquired knowledge, testing is an essential part of the education system. There are various types of tests that are used in education today. From adaptive assessments to paper-based tests and online exams, each type provides valuable insights into student learning, knowledge acquisition and skills mastery. In this article, we will look at the different types of assessments available and how they can improve an efficient testing system in education. Level of stress for teachers and learners while testing is one of the most crucial issues than can be overcome via new methods of creating tests.

More issues raised in the study with extended explanations and ways of solutions:

The extent to which L2 testing matters to learners, language professionals and the university as a whole. The reasons why teachers are not interested and involved in the assessment. The ways how language testing can help language professionals work on their own personal development and seek opportunities for teaching and enhancement in their careers.

**Results.** Tests, especially those related to second language acquisition and usage, play an important role in the development of language skills for potential and current students. However, many of the tests can lack accuracy or are too challenging for students when it comes to the goal of language proficiency. To address this issue, measures need to be taken to modify the current ESL testing system in order to allow greater efficiency while assessing language ability. Modifications could include using a more diverse range of topics and offering greater context within each test, as well as ensuring that tests are tailored more specifically towards individual progress levels at various institutions. With these modifications in place, an efficient testing system can be established that will better prepare students for their respective academic goals. The study outcomes will empower language professionals with useful knowledge about washback on learning and learners to improve teaching methodology [1, p. 1]. Moreover, the university will gain considerable benefit from a well-developed language policy that can move English language teaching from “linguistic” approach to a “language use” approach. Assessment can truly reap benefits for education if it is conceptualized as having the ultimate purpose of ensuring quality education.

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## **Использование технологии подкастинга в процессе обучения иностранному языку**

В статье рассматривается технология подкастинга в обучении иностранному языку. Указаны основные задачи, которые решают технологии подкастинга. Приводятся основные типы подкастов, анализируются их преимущества и недостатки, рассматриваются методы работы с ними.

**Ключевые слова:** подкастинг, аутентичный подкаст, видеоподкаст, аудиотекст, видеоматериал