

THE USE OF AI IN EDUCATION AND INTERNATIONAL ASSESSMENT SYSTEMS. AI-BASED EXAMS – LINGUASKILL CAMBRIDGE: FAST, SIMPLE, CONVENIENT, BUT EFFECTIVE?

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Abstract: The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in education and international assessment systems is transforming how students are evaluated. The Linguaskill Cambridge exam, an AI-driven English proficiency test, stands out as an innovative approach to language assessment. Unlike traditional exams, Linguaskill offers flexibility, as it can be taken remotely with minimal technical requirements. The AI system evaluates results quickly and efficiently, making the test available 24/7 without human intervention. Linguaskill assesses four language skills—reading, listening, writing, and speaking—through an adaptive testing method that personalizes questions based on candidates' abilities. The automated grading system ensures immediate and unbiased evaluation, reducing the time required for results. The test is divided into General and Business modules, allowing the candidates to choose the most relevant format for their needs. Despite its advantages, Linguaskill faces challenges in widespread adoption, particularly in developing countries where accreditation remains an issue. Many institutions and employers still prefer traditional assessment methods, questioning the reliability of AI-driven evaluations. However, as technology advances, AI-based exams like Linguaskill have the potential to revolutionize international education by making assessments faster, more accessible, and highly efficient.

Keywords: *AI, Education, International Assessment, English Language.*

JEL Classification: I 26, J10, J26, M15, O32

INTRODUCTION

In today's world more and more people tend to live in the fast lane, having their day scheduled down to the minute. Such lifestyle has made people think of the ways that can significantly improve the level of living by simplifying some of the manual processes, using Information Computer Technology. With the appearance of Artificial Intelligence many realms have been dramatically revolutionized and educational system is not the exception. In recent years, the integration of AI into educational frameworks has not only enhanced teaching methodologies, but also transformed how students are assessed. Traditional forms of assessment, which typically rely on human examiners, are increasingly being supplemented or even replaced by AI-driven systems. Among these innovations, Linguaskill Cambridge exam, an AI-based English language proficiency test, stands out as a notable example of the growing reliance on technology in international assessment systems.

Cambridge Examination System has been extremely popular with a great variety of test-takers over the last few decades as it is recognized by major institutions all over the world. It also provides

the world's leading range of qualifications and tests for learners and teachers of English that suit every walk of life depending on their needs. The only drawback is certainly the time that takes the results to appear. To address this issue, the department of the University of Cambridge, responsible for International Cambridge Exams has recently elaborated a brand-new testing system, fully based on AI - Linguaskill Cambridge exam [1].

This article aims to critically explore the use of AI in education, focusing particularly on the Linguaskill Cambridge exam. It will evaluate the system's effectiveness in comparison to traditional language testing methods, examining both its strengths and potential limitations.

MAIN CONTENT

1. Materials and Methods

Linguaskill Cambridge exam has been developed by a dedicated team of experts. It has been trialled by speakers of over 40 languages from 50 countries to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the results. The origins of Linguaskill go back to the mid-1990s when Dr Nick Saville began working on the idea of online, automated, modular tests. The aim was to democratise testing, making it quicker and more efficient. Since then, Linguaskill has developed to provide a generic, multilevel test that serves the needs of all audience, from education to business. Linguaskill is used to measure what has been learned, as opposed to score-driven alternatives, which can measure how well the candidates have practiced for the test. Since the huge demand has appeared on receiving special qualifications in English language, nowadays the research and development team is based and conducted by five most qualified professionals in Applied Linguistics, Psychology and Technology that are constantly improving the program to meet the needs. Dr Ardeshir Geranpayeh, the Head of Automated Assessment and Learning at Cambridge English is involved at the design stage for the technical model, creating the Computer Adaptive Test (CAT) for Reading and Listening. He is also responsible for preparing the automated assessment engine for marking Linguaskill's Writing and Speaking components. Dr Geranpayeh marks, that Linguaskill exam is adaptive as each candidate receives a different set of test items, personalized to their true ability level. Also, using AI technology helps deliver immediate marking of the Writing and Speaking tests, that certainly simplifies the way of assessment in terms of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Martin Robinson, Dr Jing Xu and Dr Kevin Cheung are involved in communicating with customers, addressing threats that they can face while using the platform, giving feedback and maintaining the correct interpretation of the results [2].

Linguaskill is a modular online test which assesses all four language skills: reading, listening, writing and speaking. Linguaskill is available as two options: General and Business. It gives candidates the ability to choose the sort of language that will be tested, based on their objectives. Linguaskill General tests the language used in daily life, making it ideal for university admission or exit, and recruitment for roles in a non-business-specific environment. For example, when an employee needs strong English skills to perform their role effectively, but will not need specific business terminology. This makes the test suitable for a broad spectrum of organizations. Test topics include studying and working, making future plans, travel and technology.

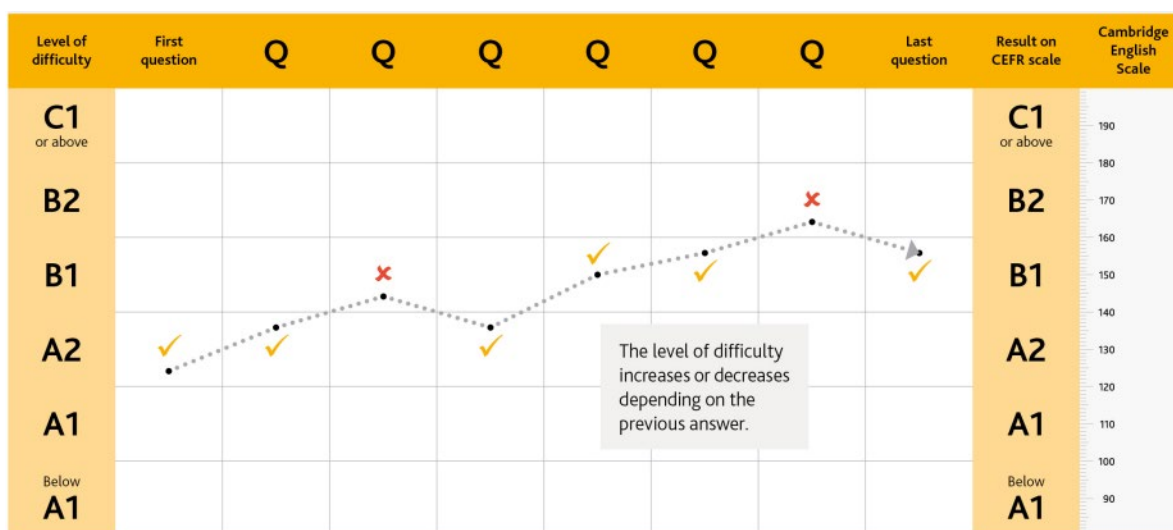
Linguaskill Business tests English used in a business and corporate setting, which is most appropriate for recruitment in organisations where employees are expected to be familiar with the language of business. It is suitable for large or small organisations, which may be operating on an

international level. Test topics include buying and selling of products or services, the office, business travel and human resources.

The Reading and Listening module is adaptive, so there is not a fixed number of questions. Each question the candidate answers helps the computer to understand their level better. The test finishes when the candidate has answered enough questions for Linguaskill to identify their level accurately. It takes approximately an hour to test the candidate's abilities to work with different types, use their critical thinking skills to manage with open-gap fill exercises and quickly find the right answers in extended reading and listening sections. The results are presented on the screen within several minutes after the test is finished and the candidate can move onto the next module. The Writing module asks candidates to input answers using a computer keyboard and consists of two parts, which do not take more than 45 minutes. In the first part the candidate is asked to write a short reply on a message, corresponded to the given task. The second part tests the ability to formulate a longer and structured text based on the presented scenario and the three bullet points. Linguaskill General candidates will write at least 180 words to a wider audience and may be asked to produce a variety of text types (e.g. review, article, web post). Linguaskill Business candidates will write a letter or report of at least 180 words, often to a manager or staff within the company or to external clients. The Speaking module is taken using a computer with a microphone and headphones. Questions are presented to the candidate through the computer screen and headphones, and their responses are recorded. There are five parts that assess a candidate's ability to express thoughts clearly, coherently, and logically, depending on the task type, either it is a long turn or some short answers. The results are assessed by market-leading auto-marking technology and are released within 12 hours together with the writing part [3].

2. Results and discussions

The main benefit is certainly the fact, that Linguaskill exam may be taken from home just using a laptop with headphones, a camera and a microphone. Moreover, due to the AI-based assessment system, the test is checked quickly and the results are available within 12 hours. Last, but not least, it is a flexible test in which the candidate can choose the skills they need to certify: Reading and Listening (combined), Writing or Speaking, because not all job positions require expertise in all three modules, so the testing system is adaptive on demand of each individual [4].



Line graph 1: How adaptive testing works in Linguaskill

Source: cambridgeenglish.org

CONCLUSION

The integration of Information Computer Technologies and Artificial Intelligence in particular in education and international assessment systems has significantly transformed the way students are evaluated. Top-notch AI-driven exams, such as Linguaskill, demonstrate the potential of advanced technology to enhance assessment processes, making them faster, more accessible, and efficient. By introducing AI, these exams offer a more personalized and adaptive testing experience, reducing bias and improving accuracy in language proficiency evaluation comparing to human judgement. As technology continues to evolve at lightning speed, such kind of exams can revolutionize future education when such fast results are needed and expected.

This area of international assessment is quite promising due to its accessibility. Taking such an exam requires minimal technical equipment, and it can also be taken from home with the appropriate permission. The results are fully checked by AI, making the exam available 24/7/365 and independent of national holidays and weekends.

The limitation of this exam lies in obtaining accreditation by developing countries, as well as its widespread adoption. Since this is a relatively new approach, not all countries, universities, and companies recognize the reliability of its results, as they prefer to trust traditional assessment methods, believing that robots cannot yet fully replace humans.

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