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2 **The assessment competence of university**
3
4 **foreign language teachers: A Ukrainian**
5 **perspective**
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8 **Abstract:** This article considers the assessment challenges and prospects faced by
9 foreign language teachers in Ukrainian universities in the context of the country's
10 joining the Bologna Process. A major problem relates to adapting higher educa-
11 tion to a common framework designed to facilitate comprehension and compari-
12 son of the content and outcomes of degree programmes and devising methods of
13 quality assurance in foreign language teaching. The implementation of reforms
14 in the area includes the improvement of assessment standards, the creation of
15 new assessment instruments, and ensuring that teachers' professional reper-
16 toire includes skills in accurately measuring students' performance. Given the
17 increased role of assessment in Ukrainian language education and the challenges
18 this new demand poses to teachers, we investigated university foreign language
19 teachers' readiness to carry out complex and multifaceted functions related to
20 formative and summative assessment. Specifically, we replicated the European
21 Survey of Language Testing and Assessment Needs and carried out a survey of
22 our own design to identify specific strengths and weaknesses in the assessments
23 performed by university foreign language teachers. The surveys yielded results
24 that are broadly comparable with the European data, but with minor variations
25 that mostly have to do with newly introduced forms of assessment. Our study
26 shows that Ukrainian university foreign language teachers are quite test-wise and
27 prepared to do a good job in language testing and assessment. The insights drawn
28 from the data can contribute to developing syllabi for pre- and in-service teacher
29 training in the area.

30 **Keywords:** language testing and assessment (LT), language assessment literacy,
31 training needs, university foreign language teachers
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1 Introduction

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1.1 General

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Over the last few decades, increased attention has been given to the assessment of learning outcomes in higher education, which entails documenting students' progress in completing study modules and reporting that progress to stakeholders. The demand for accountability has put special emphasis on summative assessment and thus focused foreign language (FL) teachers' efforts on developing tests, analysing test scores, and reporting test outcomes. As a result, the balance of their workload inside and outside the classroom has steadily shifted from teaching to assessment. In the context of a general reduction of contact hours, the increased amount of time that teachers must devote to summative assessment is a cause of much concern.

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This situation may indicate that assessment *of* learning plays a dominant role, while assessment *for* learning is neglected, which is considered undesirable. Emphasizing the social nature of formative assessment and its role as “a site where both teacher and student identities are constructed and performed”, Pryor and Crossouard (2008:6) calls it assessment *for becoming* (Pryor 2010). Nowadays, educationalists generally agree that summative and formative assessment should be integrated with teaching and learning, complement each other, and provide important information about student progress in order to promote efficient instruction. Viewed traditionally, effective instruction requires that teachers have content knowledge and classroom management skills. However, the current centre-stage position occupied by assessment means that teachers' professional repertoire should also include assessment skills.

The question “How prepared are FL teachers to carry out language testing and assessment?” was focal to a number of studies initiated by the European Association for Language Testing and Assessment (EALTA) carried out in the last decade (Hasselgreen et al. 2004; Vogt et al. 2008; Vogt and Tsagari forthcoming). A large-scale European Survey of Language Testing and Assessment Needs (Hasselgreen et al. 2004) set out to establish the actual assessment competence of teachers, teacher trainers and experts, and to identify specific training needs. The survey identified considerable gaps in teachers' and teacher trainers' assessment literacy and defined priority tasks to remedy the situation. An adapted version of the survey, administered more recently, focused on classroom-based assessment practices in parts of Europe. It yielded insights into current trends of in-service teacher training (or rather, its lack) in language testing and assessment (LTA) and discussed the prospects of enhancing FL teachers' assessment literacy (Vogt et al. 2008).

1 Given the increased role of assessment in Ukrainian language education
2 and the challenges this new demand poses to teachers, it was clearly relevant to
3 investigate university FL teachers' preparedness to carry out complex functions
4 related to formative and summative LTA.

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7 **1.2 The Ukrainian context**

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9 At present, FL education in Ukraine is mostly focused on English, with 90% of
10 students taking it as a first FL. This is in line with the current trend around the
11 world. Other European languages (generally German, French and Spanish) and
12 oriental languages (Chinese, Japanese etc.) are learnt by only 10% of students as
13 a first FL, although they are quite popular as second and third FLs. A policy of
14 multilingual education has been implemented in Ukrainian secondary schools
15 since the late 1990s; while learning two or three FLs at tertiary level has long
16 been a feature of FL teacher training. Fluency in one or two FLs has become a
17 requirement for professionals in a variety of fields. On the whole, the prospect
18 of Ukraine's integration with the EU has increased the social value of FL compe-
19 tence and the importance of aligning our system with European standards.

20 Since joining the Bologna Process in 2005, Ukrainian tertiary education
21 has made clear progress towards European standards of education that seek to
22 improve the quality and competitiveness of universities and to foster student
23 and teacher mobility across the continent. In recent years, the country has wit-
24 nessed the implementation of the key objectives of the first Bologna Declaration
25 (1999): the introduction of ECTS-compatible credit schemes and the adoption of a
26 three-cycle system (bachelor, master and doctoral levels). In addition, participa-
27 tion in multilateral international projects (Tempus, Erasmus Mundus and others)
28 has to some extent promoted student and teacher mobility. However, Ukrainian
29 higher education, including the teaching of FLs, has still to overcome problems
30 connected with its adaptation to a common framework of comprehensible and
31 comparable degrees and the development of reliable criteria for and methods of
32 quality assurance.

33 Ensuring the quality of FL education is a matter of concern both to policy
34 makers and to those directly involved in the instructional process, FL teachers. In
35 Ukraine, they are traditionally trained in two types of higher education establish-
36 ment: teacher training universities (TTUs) and classical universities (CUs). The
37 core curricula in both types of university include a course of FL teaching method-
38 ology which covers a fairly unified set of issues (fundamentals of theory, teaching
39 FL skills, classroom planning, management and assessment), but they may differ
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both in the ratio of lectures to tutorials and in the number of units/credits allotted to the course.

Besides the basic course, TTUs offer a wide range of elective courses on FL teaching, engage their students in extensive teaching practice in secondary schools, and require them to write research papers. In some TTUs, instead of writing research papers, student teachers are required to take an oral examination designed to elicit and assess their competence in these issues. Unlike the TTUs, Ukraine's CUs have traditionally focused on theoretical rather than applied studies, and therefore offer programmes in which the study of FL teaching methodology occupies a secondary position (a two-credit course). However, a considerable number of CU graduates are employed as university FL teachers and face the challenge of performing the multifaceted functions of a FL teacher.

Today, Ukrainian university FL teachers are adapting their courses and their content to the new system. At the same time they are creating new assessment instruments that should relate to the new curricula and yield an accurate picture of student achievement, thus making it possible to monitor the implementation of educational reform. It is thus important that they have a good grasp of LTA theory and practice. In order to identify the actual assessment skills of university FL teachers we conducted a study which was carried out in two stages, Survey 1 (2010) and Survey 2 (2013). The present article reports the outcomes of these surveys and the conclusions we drew from them.

2 Research instruments

Survey 1 (Assessment Literacy of FL Teachers in Ukraine) replicated the survey by Vogt et al. (2008) in the summer of 2010 (Kvasova 2011a). The procedure was as follows: 1) the European questionnaire was completed by 25 non-expert respondents; 2) 10 young teachers were interviewed after they had completed the questionnaire; 3) the questionnaire was completed by an expert group comprising 10 teachers. The interview with young teachers was intended to identify their perception of such concepts as "basic" and "more advanced" training. The purpose of eliciting answers from a group of experts was to provide a basis for comparing and contrasting the perceptions of LTA literacy of teachers with different assessment skills so that we could draw more informed conclusions about training needs in the field.

Survey 2 (Developing Assessment Literacy of University FL Teachers) was based on a two-part original questionnaire and administered electronically via *surveymonkey.com* to 53 university teachers of English in May–July 2013. The questionnaire consisted of 16 questions grouped thematically. Possible answers were

1 attached to each question, and respondents could tick more than one if appropri-
 2 ate. They were also invited to provide their own answers and comment on them.
 3 This survey was intended to obtain information about the current situation of
 4 LTA in Ukrainian universities and identify FL teachers' most typical training needs.
 5 The limitations of the study lie in the subjective character of surveys as a
 6 research method.

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9 **3 Survey 1 (Assessment literacy of FL teachers in** 10 **Ukraine)**

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13 **3.1 Structure of Survey 1**

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15 The original survey (Vogt et al. 2008) contains four sets of questions. The first
 16 collects background information about respondents (qualifications, work experi-
 17 ence, formal training in LTA, etc.). The other three sets are organized thematically:

- 18 1) Conducting classroom-focused testing and assessment – preparing class-
 19 room tests; using ready-made tests from textbook packages or other sources;
 20 giving feedback to students based on information from tests/assessment;
 21 using peer and self-assessment; using informal, continuous, non-test types
 22 of assessment; using the European Language Portfolio, an adaptation of it or
 23 some other portfolio.
- 24 2) Purposes of testing – giving grades; identifying what needs to be taught/
 25 learned; placing students in courses or programmes; awarding final certifi-
 26 cates from school or programme at local, regional or national level.
- 27 3) Content and concepts of LTA – testing/assessing receptive skills (reading and
 28 listening), productive skills (speaking and writing), and integrated language
 29 skills; testing/assessing microlinguistic aspects (grammar/vocabulary) and
 30 aspects of culture; establishing the reliability and validity of tests.

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32 Respondents answer each question twice, first to record the training they received
 33 in LTA, and secondly to identify their perceived training needs by selecting one of
 34 three options: “None”, “Basic training”, or “More advanced training”.

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37 **3.2 Participants**

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39 Survey 1 was first administered to a group of teachers of English who participated
 40 in a TESOL Ukraine summer institute. The respondents came from all parts of

the country, represented a variety of educational settings (from secondary comprehensive to non-linguistic and linguistic tertiary institutions) as well as different generations of teachers with practical experience ranging from three to over twenty years. Generally, participants with this kind of profile can hardly be referred to as mainstream or grass-roots teachers due to their high level of FL proficiency, strong motivation for professional development, and regular participation in conferences, workshops, webinars and various educational projects.

As our research interests lie in the domain of higher education we focused exclusively on the answers elicited from university teachers (25 respondents). A semi-structured interview with 10 young teachers (3–5 years of working experience) from this group of respondents followed the completion of the questionnaire. Later, we invited an additional group of 10 teachers to complete the questionnaire in order to obtain a more objective picture of the training received and needed in different aspects of LTA.

The fact that this sample of respondents (35) was not fully representative must be regarded as a limitation. However, we believe that we managed reasonably well to identify current trends in LTA literacy among teachers of English working in Ukrainian universities. In the next section we present the most significant findings.

3.3 Findings and discussion

Our analysis of the data follows the tripartite structure of the questionnaire.

3.3.1 Questionnaire data elicited from 25 university FL teachers

71% of the teachers reported that they had received training in classroom-focused LTA, 46% at a basic and 25% at a more advanced level. Surprisingly, about a third of the respondents reported having received no training whatsoever in classroom-based assessment. This can be interpreted in two ways: 1) teachers thought the survey referred to in-service training only; 2) teachers took their pre-service training into account but did not consider it proper training. The first case implies that there are problems in the management of some university teachers' refresher training, while the second may reflect the two different approaches to FL teacher training in the country. This matter, however, needs further investigation.

53% of teachers reported that they had been trained in developing classroom tests and using ready-made tests from textbook packages, and 65% reported that they had been trained in conducting informal, continuous, non-test types of

1 assessment. Only about 40% of respondents said they had been taught how to
 2 use self- and peer-assessment and a language portfolio. A similar lack of train-
 3 ing in innovative and alternative forms of assessment was indicated by the data
 4 obtained from the the original (2008) European survey.

5 The percentage of teachers reporting that they had not been trained to give
 6 learners feedback on test scores (41%) was unexpectedly low. This might be a
 7 result of teachers' awareness that timely and efficient feedback can maximize
 8 learning combined with their dissatisfaction with its implementation in practice.
 9 We can only assume that the provision of feedback is hindered by the general ac-
 10 ademic overload of Ukrainian university teachers compared with their European
 11 colleagues and by increased pressure due to the adoption of new approaches to
 12 teaching and assessment.

13 On the whole, despite the above-mentioned high level of professional compe-
 14 tence reported by the respondents, the overwhelming majority of them expressed
 15 a need for more advanced training in LTA. 53%of respondents, for instance, pri-
 16 oritized the need for advanced training in developing classroom tests, thus giving
 17 credence to this form of assessment and the need to make it reliable and valid.

18 Respondents seemed to be most familiar with progress and achievement tests
 19 – 88% said they had received basic (59%) or more advanced (29%) training –
 20 and least familiar with proficiency tests. These figures seem to be an accurate
 21 reflection of teaching practices in Ukrainian universities, since measuring stu-
 22 dents' progress is carried out continuously to inform teaching and promote ac-
 23 countability. Regrettably though, developing and administering proficiency tests
 24 generally lies outside the province of mainstream university teachers. However
 25 test-wise the respondents may be, they seem doubtful about the quality of home-
 26 made progress and achievement tests; hence the need most of them articulated
 27 for more advanced training.

28 The percentage of respondents who indicated a lack of training in testing
 29 and assessment of language skills and aspects of culture ranged from 12% (both
 30 testing and assessment of productive skills and microskills) to 41% (testing and
 31 assessment of integrated skills) and 47% (testing and assessment of aspects of
 32 culture). This last percentage is broadly comparable with, though somewhat
 33 lower than, the 41% obtained by the 2008 European survey. The observed need
 34 for further research into developing methods of assessing complex and relatively
 35 new aspects of FL instruction is also relevant in the Ukrainian context.

36 Generally, the assessment of intercultural competence (ICC), which interests
 37 researchers worldwide, still belongs in the realm of the untestable (Paran 2010:
 38 2–6). As Sercu has suggested (2010: 17–34), ICC poses more questions than it pro-
 39 vides answers. In Ukraine, some techniques to measure ICC have been used in
 40 a number of studies of teaching language and culture, but as yet they have not

found broad application in instructional practice. Interestingly, while the majority of respondents (65%) expressed a desire for further training in the testing and assessment of language skills and microlinguistic knowledge (the percentages referring to different aspects ranged from 53 to 64.7), only 41% wished to be better equipped to measure ICC. Do these data imply that teachers underestimate the value of ICC in the modern world, or do they believe ICC cannot be measured? Further investigation is required.

It is commonly assumed that mainstream teachers are not required to be particularly knowledgeable about such specific concepts of LTA as reliability and validity or to understand statistics. As Alderson (1999) says, “it may be because the field is indeed arcane: testing journals are not accessible to the average classroom teacher, but are aimed at specialists who are comfortable with statistics and theorizing, and they rarely address practical classroom concerns”. However, understanding of the key concept of test usefulness (Bachman and Palmer 1996) promotes teachers’ test awareness and helps them to prepare classroom tests and carry out assessment procedures. Accordingly, the high percentages of respondents indicating a lack of training in validity and reliability (53% and 59% respectively) are quite predictable, as is the absolute absence of advanced training received. Rather unexpectedly, though, the majority of respondents, including those trained in the concepts of validity and reliability (47%), expressed a need for additional training – 35% at a basic and 59% at a more advanced level. These figures suggest that the FL teachers in our sample were strongly motivated to do a good job in an area that they considered to be of great importance for successful FL instruction.

The survey provided evidence that a relatively high percentage of respondents were quite test-wise. The fact that they expressed a need for special training in LTA can be attributed to the pressures of assessment responsibility which university teachers currently hold and/or the quality of the sample. Obviously, if the survey were administered to a more representative sample, a somewhat different picture would be likely to emerge of LTA training received and needed.

3.3.2 Data elicited via follow-up interviews

The survey data may also have been affected by respondents’ incomplete understanding of the questions due to terminological and methodological differences between Ukraine and Western Europe. To counteract this, we adopted the procedure followed by the designers of the survey and conducted semi-structured interviews with a limited number of respondents. Our interview was primarily intended to clarify how teachers perceived the difference between basic and

1 more advanced training. By interviewing ten teachers with 3–5 years' experience
 2 we established that they mostly perceived basic training as pre-service training
 3 comprising two hours of lectures on LTA followed by a tutorial on the topic. In
 4 the case of TTU graduates, student teachers had an opportunity to develop as-
 5 sessment tools under the guidance of their supervisor. This procedure, though,
 6 is much more limited in CU due to their different curricula. The interviewees ad-
 7 mitted that during teaching practice at school they depended on their intuition
 8 rather than making grounded judgments of learners' performance. Indeed, they
 9 assessed learners as they themselves used to be assessed by their teachers. As for
 10 “more advanced training”, the interviewees perceived it as mostly in-service edu-
 11 cational activities such as presentations or workshops conducted by assessment
 12 experts visiting Ukraine. For instance, participation in a one-day event as well as
 13 6-hour presentation workshop was viewed by six out of 10 young interviewees
 14 as advanced training, whilst four others thought they advanced considerably by
 15 doing independent reading on LTA. To conclude, teachers' personal perceptions
 16 of the scope of training (basic vs. more advanced) as well as its character (formal
 17 or guided vs. independent) suggested that additional information should be elic-
 18 ited in order to bridge certain discrepancies in perceptions.

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21 3.3.3 Survey data elicited from 10 “expert” teachers

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23 In the third phase of our research, the survey was administered to another group
 24 of teachers who had received special training in LTA through their regular partic-
 25 ipation in British Council Ukraine and TESOL-Ukraine sessions (1–6 weeks, up to
 26 100 hours). We refer to this small group of teachers (10) as “experts”, and to the
 27 25 teachers in the original survey as “non-experts”. This categorization is relative;
 28 however, it proved quite helpful in revealing the in-depth perceptions that the
 29 two groups of respondents had of the aspects under investigation. The differences
 30 between the two groups' readiness to carry out LTA and their perceived need to
 31 raise their competence also provided a clearer picture of the actual level of com-
 32 petence as well as the need for further training.

33 Against our expectations, one third of the “experts” did not consider them-
 34 selves fully equipped to engage in formative assessment, compared with a quar-
 35 ter of the “non-experts”. This may reflect a too formal attitude towards training
 36 on the part of the “experts” (“we were not taught this”) or a heightened critical
 37 awareness due to the additional training they had received.

38 The “experts” reported that they were quite confident about such fundamen-
 39 tal LTA concepts as reliability and validity, and the low rating that they gave their
 40 knowledge of LTA concepts is, in fact, an indicator of their lack of confidence

in evaluating the quality of a test when statistics is required. It should be mentioned, however, that the latter, as a specific aspect of LTA, is beyond the competence of many educationalists in the field. The percentage of “non-experts” lacking awareness of the above-mentioned aspects (55%) seems quite normal given the complexity of the concepts in question.

The “expert” and “non-expert” groups had different perceptions of their need to improve their LTA skills. One third of the “non-experts” and a much lower percentage (11%) of “experts” stated that they were quite satisfied with a basic training, whilst advanced training was favoured by 50% of “non-experts” compared with 79% of “experts”. As the data showed, “experts” appeared to be more test-wise and thus had no misleading perceptions of their competence. On the other hand, “non-experts” who claimed to be quite knowledgeable about the area were nevertheless inclined to overestimate their LTA literacy.

To conclude, the results of the survey carried out in Ukraine are broadly comparable to those obtained by European researchers when it comes to pinpointing the major areas of LTA training received and needed. According to our data, about 70% of teachers perceived themselves as trained in LTA, compared with 75% of European FL teachers. However, 83 % of the Ukrainian respondents expressed the need to enhance their assessment literacy and receive more training, preferably at an advanced level (50%). These findings imply that the LTA training provided for FL teachers in Ukraine should be more consistent at the pre-service level in all institutions of higher education and more regular and varied at the in-service level.

4 Survey 2 (Developing the assessment literacy of university FL teachers in Ukraine)

4.1 Background

By replicating the European survey of LTA literacy in Ukraine we were not able to arrive at a comprehensive view of the actual level of Ukrainian FL teachers’ assessment competence. However, interest in LTA issues has been increasing. Two doctoral theses defended recently gave insights into the assessment of speaking (Ukrainskaia 2009) and reading (Korol’ 2012), and several more studies are in progress. A book on fundamentals of LTA aimed at students and practising teachers (Kvasova 2009) and articles featuring aspects of good testing practice (Kvasova 2011b; Kvasova 2011c) are now available to a wide readership. These publications prompted a series of workshops conducted by their author in several

1 Ukrainian universities. Finally, an increasing number of studies concerned with
 2 different aspects of LTA are being presented at national and international con-
 3 ferences held in the country. But how have these progressive trends affected the
 4 overall assessment literacy of mainstream university FL teachers? Are there any
 5 improvements in their performance of classroom assessments?

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8 **4.2 Structure of Survey 2**

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10 With the above research questions in mind, we devised a survey which was di-
 11 vided into two parts, *Assessment literacy of university teachers* and *Developing*
 12 *tests and test tasks*. There were 16 questions, each offering a range of possible
 13 answers to choose from (more than one answer could be chosen). Respondents
 14 were also invited to supply their own answers and/or comments. In our view,
 15 the structure of the questionnaire, though not open-ended, guided the respon-
 16 dents' thinking on the one hand and allowed flexibility in eliciting information
 17 about the LTA practices of individual respondents on the other. Both parts of the
 18 survey were administered electronically via *surveymonkey.com* in May–July 2013.
 19 53 teachers responded to the first part and 35 of them (those with more experi-
 20 ence) responded to the second part.

21 The chief aim of the first part of the survey was to identify the state of lan-
 22 guage assessment literacy, and specifically its possible enhancement in recent
 23 years. The questions in this part focus on 1) progress and problems in LTA (formal
 24 training received in the last 3 years; progress made through self-study and col-
 25 laboration with colleagues); and 2) language assessment practices (forms of for-
 26 mative and summative assessment; use of ready-made and self-made tests). The
 27 questions in the second part of the survey were intended for respondents with ad-
 28 vanced LTA skills and aimed to reveal 3) whether and to what extent they adhered
 29 to the testing cycle rules (test construction, administration, analysis, feedback);
 30 and 4) what tests and test tasks they developed and which testing techniques
 31 they made use of.

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34 **4.3 Participants**

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36 Survey 2 was specifically aimed at university teachers of English, who were in-
 37 vited to participate via *surveymonkey.com* and several social networks. Although
 38 we do not know which parts of the country and which institutions all 53 respon-
 39 dents represented, we elicited background information on the 35 respondents
 40 who answered the entire questionnaire. Of this latter group 14 % had been teach-

ing for between 3 and 5 years, 20% for between 6 and 10 years, 37% for between 11 and 20 years, and 28% for more than 20 years.

4.4 Findings and discussion

4.4.1 Progress and problems in LTA

To avoid the misunderstanding of the concept “training” that emerged in the results of Survey 1, we formulated the question related to formal training in LTA in a more precise way, listing specific training opportunities (pre-service, in-service, refresher courses, e-courses, summer schools). The answers to this question helped to clarify the areas of LTA in which most respondents had been trained: presentations, self-made test papers, written tasks, projects, and ready-made tests. Although the range of training received seems quite promising, the percentages of teachers reporting that they had been trained in these five areas are rather discouraging if not alarming: 57%, 55%, 53%, 48% and 48% respectively. Even more serious are the percentages that reported lack of formal training in such LTA areas as portfolio (75%), oral tests (34%) and peer/self-assessment (34%). The data suggest that a) little attention was being paid to LTA in in-service teacher training and b) more attention should be given to recently developed forms of assessment.

The responses indicated that for the overwhelming majority of teachers (85%), learning from their own experience and student feedback was the only way to improve language assessment skills. 70% of respondents reported that they enhanced their LTA literacy by using and analysing ready-made tests, while 60% said that reading works on testing and assessment published abroad and in Ukraine had provided them with a good self-study option. The experience of colleagues and demonstration classes appeared to be another effective means of enhancing assessment literacy for about 60% of respondents. The least reported options were formal training (refresher courses, e-courses, summer schools) and e-courses (31% and 34% respectively).

When we asked about the problems encountered while assessing students’ progress and achievements, the most frequently reported deficiencies were the lack of an e-platform to support the development of testing skills (49%) and lack of practice (47%). 40% of the respondents said they lacked the theoretical knowledge necessary to carry out assessment effectively. Only 13% mentioned a lack of relevant literature, so that seems not to be a problem encountered frequently by Ukrainian FL teachers. The overall impression we gained from the responses was that practitioners would really welcome a well-structured and accessible

1 e-course or forum that could supply the necessary scientific sources and offer
2 practical tasks with feedback from experts in the field.

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5 **4.4.2 Language assessment practices**

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7 Conducting informal, non-test types of assessment has traditionally been a strong
8 point of Ukrainian FL teaching methodology, so the answers to the question
9 about formative assessment practices contained no surprises. 88% of the respon-
10 dents said that they followed students' progress towards the required learning
11 outcomes by regularly setting and checking homework assignments. According
12 to 83% of respondents, a second highly reliable assessment tool was written work
13 (essays, reports, etc.). Other types of informal assessment mentioned were the
14 observation of individual, pair and group work (69%), oral presentations (66%),
15 and self-made vocabulary and grammar quizzes/tests (64%). In their comments,
16 teachers also mentioned such tools as individual tasks set to check students'
17 work, error correction, discussion, projects, diagnostic tests, graphic organizers
18 and "writer's notebook" (the teacher who used this expression may have been
19 referring to a portfolio).

20 The data suggest that Ukrainian FL teachers tend to carry out formative as-
21 sessment using a variety of techniques, among which checking homework occu-
22 pies the leading position. The fifth-priority rating given to self-made vocabulary
23 and grammar quizzes might indicate either that teachers lack the confidence to
24 construct tests of this kind or that they consider them unreasonably time- and/or
25 effort-consuming compared to other methods of assessment.

26 When it came to summative assessment, the majority of teachers (73%) ex-
27 pressed a preference for self-made examination papers – in our view because of
28 the perceived practicality of this test format. Oral presentations were the second
29 most popular assessment tool (69%), with written work (essays, reports, etc.) fol-
30 lowing close behind (67%). Oral tests were favoured by only 46% of respondents,
31 which might be due to the current transition from the previously very popular
32 "topic-retelling" technique to more formal tests of oral proficiency. According to
33 the data from Survey 1, quite low percentages of Ukrainian teachers had received
34 any training in the assessment of speaking skills or the use of portfolio, peer- and
35 self-assessment. A similar trend emerged from the earlier European survey and
36 in Ukraine, regretfully, the trend continues. However, answers to the open-ended
37 part of the question revealed a positive, innovative trend: some respondents had
38 extended the range of summative assessment tools by using web quests and stu-
39 dents' research papers.

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The importance of FL teachers' familiarity with standardized language testing and the possibility of using ready-made tests in their practice was noted by Vogt et al. (2008), so the next set of questions was aimed at establishing FL teachers' use of ready-made tests/test tasks.

First of all, we wanted to find out which skills teachers set out to assess in mid-term and end-of-term written tests. 94% said they focused on reading, 90% were concerned with language in use, and 84% with writing. Although favoured by more than two-thirds of the respondents, listening seemed not to be a priority when it came to compiling test papers (66%). Does this reflect a tendency to neglect the assessment of listening skills, recognition that the development of listening tests is a complex process, or simply a lack of technical opportunities to play audio recordings in the classroom?

Respondents were also asked to indicate how useful they found the progress and achievement tests included in course book packages written by native speakers of English. 78% considered these tests to be teacher-friendly, practical and convenient to use; 53% thought them a reliable means of measuring learners' progress; and 49% considered their scoring fair. Only 4% thought that their scoring was unfair, which might be taken to imply that these course books have high assessment standards. Nearly every third teacher, however, considered some parts of the tests too easy for Ukrainian students. Additionally, a number of teachers claimed that the tests did not always match the local curriculum and needed to be adapted to a particular situation of target language use, a particular group of students, etc. The implication from the above is that familiarity with and use of quality assessment tools offered in the course book packages helped the teachers foster their critical awareness of ready-made tests.

The further responses indicated insignificant preferences for ready-made test tasks (11%) or self-made test tasks (17%). The tendency to develop their own test tasks might possibly imply the teachers' willingness to develop assessment tools which are better tailored to particular classroom needs and yield more accurate picture of learners' progress.

Most respondents thought that it was important for ready-made tests to correspond to learners' level of target language proficiency (88%) and to correspond to the topics covered (78%). The importance of alignment with the syllabus (including a focus on particular skills) was emphasised by 71% of the respondents, while the lowest index fell on availability of suitable ready-made tests (31%). 41% of the respondents were concerned that tests should have interesting content and/or an appropriate format. In the comments, one respondent emphasized "suitable format and timing", which we too consider important. On the whole, the good news here is that teachers seem not to seize the opportunity to use any available

1 ready-made test that can be printed out and administered in the classroom with-
2 out further thought.

3 We were also concerned to investigate teachers' use/development of tests of
4 oral and written production and their approach to using/developing assessment
5 criteria. Surprisingly, 54% of the respondents reported that they used ready-made
6 test tasks but developed their own rating scales. One respondent made a more
7 specific point, writing: "I usually adapt ready-made test tasks and assessment
8 scales to a particular context of language use." But do we know how reliable the
9 measurement outcomes of this kind of procedure are likely to be? Obviously, the
10 question of using/developing criteria and rating scales which yield reliable test
11 scores is too important to be ignored in teachers' LTA training.

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14 4.4.3 Testing cycle

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16 It is well-known that the efficient use of tests depends on strict adherence to the
17 rules and procedures of test development. We were thus interested to discover
18 what exactly teachers did when they developed their own tests. Of the 32 respon-
19 dents who answered this question, fewer than half said they discussed the test
20 structure (46%) and checked the key (37%) or the time allotted to the test (37%)
21 with colleagues. Only 41% reported that they piloted test tasks with the help of
22 colleagues and/or students, and slightly more than half of those who piloted their
23 tests/test tasks (54%) said that they went on to modify them. Some respondents
24 commented that they could not depend on cooperation from colleagues and had
25 to do everything themselves when developing their tests. Team-work skills are
26 well-developed in Ukrainian society, so this situation is a sign of poor manage-
27 ment rather than lack of cooperation or LTA literacy.

28 71% of the respondents said that they commonly prepared several variants of
29 a test, while 66% said that they familiarized their students with the objectives of
30 the test, the rating criteria and the scores awarded. In our view this latter percent-
31 age is not high enough, given the importance of test transparency, which could
32 also be enhanced if teachers involved students in developing rating criteria. How-
33 ever, only 20% of the respondents said that they did this, while 56% reported
34 that they involved students in peer- and self-assessment, which indicates lack of
35 training in the topical and fast-developing area of LTA.

36 Of the 33 respondents who answered the question on test administration, 85%
37 said that they started the test on time and 55% said that they made sure everyone
38 was seated alone. Half of the respondents reported that another test was provided
39 for students who were absent or who failed, while 42% allowed late-comers to
40 take the test. Some respondents commented that they did not allow students to

crib. Overall our data revealed quite lenient approaches to the administration of mid-term and end-of-year written papers in many Ukrainian universities.

Respondents were also asked to specify how they marked, graded and provided feedback once they had administered a test. Of the 34 teachers who answered this question, 85% said that they marked and graded test papers immediately or shortly after the test had been taken, and 62% said that they informed students of their scores immediately or shortly after they became available. It should be noted, however, that a significantly lower percentage of respondents (38%) reported that they set their students remedial tasks and collected and analysed student feedback on the test paper.

4.4.4 Self-made tests

The final set of questions was concerned with teacher-made tests and test tasks. Of the 34 teachers who answered these questions, 71% emphasized language in use and 62% emphasized reading. This latter focus has been traditional in English language teaching in Ukraine for many years thanks to the widespread availability of reading materials and the practice of boosting language skills through extensive reading as a compensation for the lack of an authentic target language environment. Over time, society's demands have changed, yet lack of training in LTA is still evident, particularly in certain areas. It is therefore not surprising that only 50% of the respondents favoured the testing of writing, which involves the development of assessment criteria, and only 41% favoured the testing of listening, which presents serious technical challenges. It should be stressed, however, that 56% of the respondents expressed a preference for integrated tasks, which tend to combine either reading and writing or listening and writing. In their comments, respondents said that the skills they focused on when developing tests depended on the test type they were using and the aims of the assessment.

We also wanted to find out about the scope and range of testing techniques used by our respondents in constructing their self-made tests and test tasks. All 33 teachers who answered this question favoured multiple-choice questions. Also favoured were tasks that involved filling gaps in text with clauses (61%) or sentences (55%). 52% of the respondents reported using the technique of matching texts to questions or headings to parts of a text. The other formats mentioned were: short-answer questions (48%); completion of tables (39%); filling gaps in a summary of a reading text by selecting words from a list provided (30%); filling gaps in text with paragraphs (27%); and note-taking (24%). In the comments, some teachers stated that they used test formats that focus on grammar, including filling gaps in text with words in their correct grammar form, error correction,

1 and translation. Ordering, discussion, sentence completion and essay writing
2 were also popular test formats with the respondents.

3 The range of testing techniques employed by Ukrainian university FL teach-
4 ers suggests that they are familiar with the most popular techniques used world-
5 wide today. Their preference for multiple-choice questions may be due to their
6 dominance in the native-speaker-published course and exam preparation books;
7 alternatively, it may reflect a lack of awareness of the pitfalls in developing
8 high-quality multiple-choice items. In any case, teachers should become more
9 familiar with a variety of test types and their application and should be better
10 trained in developing specific test types for specific testing purposes.

11 Overall results obtained from Survey 2 may be interpreted as follows: the im-
12 plementation of ECTS in Ukrainian higher education has made it necessary for
13 university FL teachers to enhance their assessment literacy in order to promote
14 smooth and efficient teaching and learning. They seem to be quite competent
15 in using ready-made tests, adapting them to the needs of the target population
16 of test takers, administering tests appropriately, and providing timely feedback
17 to learners. The data show that teachers willingly learn from their own experi-
18 ence and by sharing it with colleagues, and increase their competence by read-
19 ing widely in the theory of language testing and applying what they learn to the
20 design of their own tests. Respondents were virtually unanimous in their desire to
21 learn more and undertake training, particularly by taking advantage of existing
22 and newly developed e-platforms. To conclude, university FL teachers in Ukraine
23 are professionally prepared to participate in large-scale educational projects de-
24 signed to enhance literacy in LTA provided they receive significant support from
25 decision makers.

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28 5 Conclusion

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30 A comparison of the data elicited by the two surveys suggests that however over-
31 worked Ukrainian university FL teachers may be, they are on the whole up to date
32 with the latest developments in classroom-based assessment. Their knowledge
33 seems to differ only slightly from that of their European colleagues in certain as-
34 pects of LTA. Given that the transition of Ukrainian FL education to European
35 standards has only just begun, it is to be expected that overall assessment liter-
36 acy has not yet reached an appropriately high level. However, enthusiasm and
37 willingness to do a good job in teaching and assessing seem to be characteristic
38 of Ukrainian university FL teachers, which suggests that the prospects for the
39 positive development of LTA are distinctly encouraging.

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