**"The Effect of Response Options in Tests on English Vocabulary Learning"**

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**Abstract**

The focus of this research is to explore how response options in vocabulary testing work, how such options affect test performance, candidate attitude, and levels of stress. Response options form one of the most vital aspects of test design, since they determine how the candidate responds to the test questions and his/her way of representing knowledge. Traditional multiple-choice, many times, has demanded from students an answer which often has made them choose while they are uncertain, using blind guessing that inflates assessment scores and distorts such candidates' real understanding of the studied material. This study investigates allowing a response option for "I don't know"(IDK) as another possible alternative in such scenarios.

This will give students an opportunity to accept their uncertainty, which might have several positive consequences for improving the fairness and accuracy of assessment, while reducing cognitive overload and anxiety. In this study, a crossover design was adopted with 24 eleventh graders at an A2-B1 level of English proficiency. Each participant took both a conventional multiple-choice test and its IDK-enhanced version. Testing scores, pre- and post-test questionnaires, along with observational protocols, were collected and analyzed by using a combination of mixed-methods techniques able to triangulate findings.

The results were that the inclusion of IDK improves test accuracy, with the students scoring on average 80% in IDK-enhanced tests, compared to 65% in traditional tests. This reflects a reduction of biases associated with guessing. Students also showed more positive attitudes toward IDK-enhanced tests; they were considered fairer and less stressful. Also, on a standardized scale of normal level of stress, significant decreases were obtained: from an average score of 3.8 on traditional tests to 2.5 in IDK-enhanced ones.

These findings illustrate the potential of response design in general, and the IDK option in particular, to serve as a tool for improving assessment validity and creating a more inclusive testing environment. The IDK option stimulates honest responses and metacognitive reflection, turning vocabulary tests from tools of judgment into tools of learning. Further research should deal with its long-term effects on vocabulary retention, generalization to other domains of learning, and embedding in adaptive assessment systems for personalized education.

**Key words**: I don’t know option, vocabulary testing, test accuracy, student attitudes, stress reduction.

**Анотація**

Дослідження присвячено аналізу ефективності тестів для перевірки знань англійської лексики, що є одним із ключових інструментів у викладанні іноземних мов. Тести на перевірку вокабуляру дозволяють оцінити лексичну компетенцію учнів, проте традиційні формати, зокрема тести з вибором однієї правильної відповіді, мають низку недоліків. Основна проблема полягає у тому, що такі тести часто змушують учнів обирати відповідь навіть у випадках, коли вони не впевнені у правильності вибору. Це призводить до вгадування, яке спотворює результати тестування, завищує оцінки та створює неправдиве уявлення про рівень знань учня. Такі недоліки негативно впливають на процес прийняття освітніх рішень і знижують об’єктивність оцінювання.

Ця робота досліджує вплив включення опції «Я не знаю» (IDK) у тести для перевірки лексики. IDK-опція дозволяє учням чесно визнавати свою невизначеність без накладення штрафних санкцій, сприяючи більш точному визначенню рівня знань, зменшенню когнітивного навантаження та поліпшенню емоційного стану під час тестування. Інноваційний підхід досліджено в межах експерименту з перехресним дизайном за участю 24 учнів 11 класу з рівнями володіння англійською мовою A2-B1 (згідно зі шкалою CEFR). Учасники проходили два типи тестів: традиційний формат із вибором однієї правильної відповіді та його розширену версію, що включала IDK-опцію.

Результати цього дослідження показали, що включення IDK-опції значно підвищує точність оцінювання знань учнів. Середній бал у тестах із IDK-опцією становив 80%, у той час як у традиційних тестах цей показник був лише 65%. Це свідчить про зменшення впливу вгадування, яке у традиційних тестах часто призводило до викривлення результатів. IDK-опція дозволила виключити випадкові відповіді, підкреслюючи розмежування між знанням і незнанням, що сприяє формуванню об’єктивної картини знань учнів.

Крім того, учасники експерименту повідомили про значне зниження рівня стресу під час тестів із IDK-опцією. Середній показник стресу зменшився з 3,8 балів у традиційних тестах до 2,5 балів у тестах із IDK. Відсутність потреби вгадувати та наявність нейтрального варіанта відповіді знизили когнітивне навантаження, дозволяючи учням зосередитися на тому, що вони дійсно знають. Учасники також зазначали, що тести з IDK-опцією здавалися справедливішими, що позитивно вплинуло на їхнє ставлення до оцінювання.

Окрім підвищення точності й зниження стресу, IDK-опція сприяла розвитку метакогнітивної рефлексії учнів. Учні почали краще усвідомлювати свої прогалини у знаннях, що стимулювало їх до подальшого навчання. Такий підхід сприяє формуванню культури рефлексії, яка є важливою складовою довготривалого навчання.

Дослідження також підкреслило потенціал IDK-опції для створення інклюзивного навчального середовища. Опція дозволяє адаптувати тести до потреб різних категорій учнів, зокрема тих, хто має високий рівень тривожності або нейродивергентні особливості. Це відповідає сучасним підходам до інклюзивної та адаптивної освіти, які спрямовані на врахування індивідуальних потреб кожного учня.

Висновки роботи демонструють, що включення IDK-опції сприяє підвищенню точності оцінювання, поліпшенню ставлення до тестів і зниженню рівня стресу учнів. Отримані результати можуть бути використані для вдосконалення практик тестування не лише у вивченні лексики, але й у інших дисциплінах. Подальші дослідження мають зосередитися на довготривалому впливі IDK-опції на збереження знань, її ефективності у різних навчальних контекстах і можливостях інтеграції в системи адаптивного оцінювання для персоналізованого навчання.

**Ключові слова**: відповідь “не знаю” , тестування словникового запасу, точність тесту, ставлення студентів до тесту лексики, зменшення стресу.

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# **Introduction**

Language testing is an important tool in the assessment of linguistic proficiency, as it predicts the level of proficiency that learners have and aids teachers in planning strategies. Vocabulary knowledge is one basic component of linguistic competence, and traditionally, it has been tested through multiple-choice type formats. However, the critiques of such tests, especially its tendency to encourage guessing, are well-documented. This study explores one such new approach: the inclusion of the IDK option in vocabulary testing. This represents an important advance in the area of assessment reliability, both theoretically and practically, for the field of language education.

Its relevance cuts across various dimensions in language education; vocabulary testing is a staple in linguistic assessment and often becomes an indicator of where the language instruction would go. Random guessing distorts the perceived proficiency of learners due to misrepresentations and could hence lead to inappropriate instructional decisions. The IDK option addresses this issue by pushing students toward a greater concern for accuracy over guesswork. It helps students to reduce cognitive overload and test anxiety while providing educators with more valid data by which they can effectively adjust teaching methods.

This is particularly important concerning inclusive and adaptive educational practices where the standard testing format does not match or take into consideration any form of diversity in learners' backgrounds or experiences, including profiles identified as neurodivergent or with high levels of test anxiety.

IDK espouses the philosophy of inclusive education; it provides a no-penalty response option, leveling the playing field for all learners. This approach also corresponds with one of the emerging trends in the use of technology in education, where adaptive testing systems work at the level of the individual's needs regarding their learning. With an IDK option, such systems are able to achieve a higher degree of personalization and fairness. The novelty of this research lies in the fact that it addresses an underexplored aspect of language assessment, namely, the psychological and educational dimensions of uncertainty in test-taking. The literature has identified a number of problems with traditional testing formats, for instance, how these are likely to artificially inflate scores and distort knowledge due to guessing. Building on this, the present study explores the empirical impact of the IDK option on test results, learner attitudes, and cognitive engagement.

It extends the discussion to place vocabulary testing within the wider context of metacognitive development and reduction of stress, hence bridging the gap between theoretical insights and practical applications. Such a research methodology, apart from ensuring completeness in the understanding of the impact of the IDK option-a mixed-methods approach with the quantitative analysis of test scores and the qualitative exploration of learner experiences-is a cross-over design in which participants experience both traditional and IDK-inclusive test formats; hence, it gives robust evidence for the efficacy of this innovation.

This study explores the integration of the IDK option in vocabulary testing to contribute to the improvements of the assessment process

# **Literature Review**

Vocabulary testing is an important part of language education, providing a valid measure of linguistic proficiency and informing instruction. Recent research has attempted to address some of the problems that are consistent in traditional testing formats, particularly those related to guessing and its impact on test validity. Recently, an IDK option has been introduced as a promising innovation to decrease distortions caused by random guessing and improve the reliability and fairness of assessments.

The IDK option is rooted in a wider purpose that looks to make the test results valid by preventing response biases. Random guessing in multiple-choice tests has usually been criticized because of their inflating scores and providing quite misleading estimates of the student's knowledge. Work done on the estimation of vocabulary size test (VST) by Zhang (2013) noted that when faced with difficulty, candidates forced into a choice would rather guess a lot. In addition to this, IDK allows test-takers to state their uncertainty. For that reason, a legitimate differentiation between real knowledge and a lack of it will become possible. Such modification of tests both enhances the validity of assessment and improve response honesty or metacognitive reflection in learners. The advantages of the IDK option go beyond mere accuracy. Several studies have pointed out the role it plays in lessening test anxiety, believed to be one of the major factors that contribute highly to performance and disposition toward learning.

The advantages of the IDK option are not limited to just their accuracy. Several studies refer to the role it plays in the reduction of test anxiety, highly contributive to performance and disposition toward learning. Traditional tests do this by pressuring the student to guess, further loading cognitions and creating even greater stress for those operating with test anxiety or neurodivergent profiles. The research conducted by Denman et al. in (2018) emphasizes the psychological benefits from including a middle option among the response types in tests. The findings show that the IDK option lowers anxiety and makes the assessment atmosphere friendlier, therefore enabling the learner to approach the entire assessment process more positively.

On top of that, the option of IDK reflects the view of inclusive and adaptive learning in educational psychology, for such an option meets diverse learner needs, creating equity in assessment practices. Other studies, such as Ravesloot et al. (2015) and Hesson and Pichler (2016), have illustrated how the IDK option can level the playing field for students with different cognitive and emotional profiles. For example, in their study on progress testing, Ravesloot et al. found that the IDK option increased the reliability of the assessments by reducing construct-irrelevant variance. Similarly, Hesson and Pichler showed the diagnostic value of IDK responses in knowledge deficits, which is especially useful in clinical and educational settings.

Also, presence of the IDK option also fosters an increase in the metacognitive awareness of learners; this approach helps students in reflecting on their knowledge and outlining areas of uncertainty, and it fosters a growth-oriented mindset. Indeed, the study by Ingvarsson and Sundberg on children with developmental disabilities indicated that systematic training in the use of IDK responses increases both accuracy and self-regulation. By encouraging learners to admit uncertainty, teachers make them to more likely approach learning as a process of continuous improvement rather than a binary measure of success or failure. This is in line with the broader trend of developing lifelong learning habits among students. By such means, we not only learn the language, but also prepare them to navigate complex cognitive challenges beyond the classroom.

From a methodological side, the presence of IDK has been shown to elevate the diagnostic power of vocabulary tests accordingly. Tweed and Wilkinson (2009) investigated the impact of instructions signaling incorrect guessing risks. One conclusion made by the researchers put forward that, in conjunction with the IDK option, 'such instructions dramatically improved the specificity of response'. This agrees with the findings of Waterman and Blades (2011), where it was established that clear pre-test instructions concerning unanswerable questions encouraged more appropriate use of the IDK response and thus more reliable results. These studies indicate the necessity of integrating well-designed instructions with the IDK option in order to maximize its efficacy. Moreover, the role of structured feedback within such processes has been highlighted as one for further research, with a number of researchers qualifying that dynamic feedback mechanisms may extend the benefits of IDK-inclusive assessments.

IDK is incorporated into adaptive testing systems, thereby extending the role of vocabulary testing in linguistic competence assessment. Samuel et al. (2019) investigated its application with pre- and post-training assessments, which would make it fully possible to adapt the difficulty of tests according to the needs of learners. Truly adaptive systems with an IDK option included will adjust on their own to how students respond, which means that students will gain highly individualized feedback and avert potential irritations. This also fully meets other current trends in technology-enhanced education-such as becoming adaptive yet inclusive. A feature like monitoring the tendencies of IDK responses throughout time can allow educators of such systems valuable insights in the learning pathways that each individual student could take, thereby enabling a more nuanced instruction strategy for each student.

One recurring theme in the literature is how the IDK option affects the validity and reliability of the tests. Because it minimizes the effects of guessing, it provides a more accurate measure of learners' vocabulary knowledge. In this regard, the work of Beglar (2010) and Stewart and White (2011) provides convincing evidence. Beglar's Rasch-based validation of the VST showed that the IDK option substantially improved the measurement properties of the test. Stewart and White went a stage further by exploring how these guessing behaviors change with differing amounts of word knowledge and thus concluded that the IDK option effectively removes the bias introduced by partial knowledge or overconfidence. This reduction of bias supports the individual learner while at the same time contributing to a more exact estimation of cohort-level performance, an important concern within large-scale educational assessments.

The inclusion of an IDK option has several implications for instructional practices and curriculum development. For one, instructors can use information garnered from the utilization of IDK to highlight precise areas in which students evidence weaknesses and then target their instruction accordingly.

In Nation's (2001) seminal work, it is maintained that building linguistic competence is dependent upon targeted interventions. The IDK option affords a much clearer view of student strengths and areas of weakness and thus serves effective pedagogy supporting the goal of differentiated instruction. The data generated through responses to IDK will be useful in the development of personal learning plans so that each student has the support needed to reach their full potential.

Beyond its educational uses, IDK has some other applications across a wide array of domains. For instance, in the clinical practice, this can be the assessment of dementia, as in Hesson and Pichler (2016), this can be one measure of declining cognition. In this direction, Ingvarsson and Sundberg (2007), found that it was helpful in interventions with children with developmental disabilities since it can enhance decision-making accuracy and reduce stress in high-stakes situations. These findings underpin the versatility of the IDK option as a tool in improving assessment practices across diverse fields. The IDK option is adaptable to various contexts, serving as an innovative solution to challenges in different professional and educational settings.

The IDK option is usually criticized for its possible drawbacks, such as the overuse of neutral responses. This happens when learners would instead press the IDK option because it is easier rather than not knowing.

To balance this, the researchers recommend test designs that, while offering the IDK option, also foster reflective engagement. Mochida and Harrington (2006) recommend mechanisms within tests that give feedback for IDK responses to force learners to revise their choice and reflect on their knowledge gaps. Such measures will ensure the IDK option serves its purpose of enhancing assessment accuracy and reliability.

This study would also require experimental tests into the frequency and in contexts in which IDK items could be chosen. Some of these results might support how test design could actually be used as a qualitative method for reducing risks.

Including an IDK option in vocabulary testing also speaks to larger trends in the use of educational technologies. For instance, adaptive learning systems are able to take results from IDK-inclusive tests and create individualized learning paths for students. Qian (2002) characterizes such systems as revolutionary for foreign language education since each learner may have a particular need at a given moment. In this respect, an option like IDK with appropriate analytics allows educators to utilize deeper insights into the performance of their students in building up the teaching strategy. AI in such platforms can now make analyses of IDK responses much more fine-tuned to result in even subtler use of assessment data. Other future research directions include a) the long-term effect of the IDK option to improve vocabulary acquisition and retention. Longitudinal research may be conducted to examine whether or not repeated use of IDK-included tests affects a learner's self-assessment in determining the limit of knowledge. Drawing on Webb (2007) and Laufer and Ravenhorst-Kalovski's (2010) suggestion it may be useful to investigate over time how performance on the IDK option is related to language proficiency to arrive at conclusions about its efficiency as a pedagogical tool. The IDK option presented in this work might further explore a few more benefits such an option is likely to confer in a collaborative learning environment where students come together based on areas of uncertainty reflected by their responses. Interdisciplinary collaboration may, therefore, be another avenue of promise in the furtherance of research on the IDK option. Drawing perspectives from the fields of psychology, linguistics, and educational technologies, researchers may then proceed to develop a framework for the understanding of its impact in a more integrated way. For example, knowledge on individual differences in memory and decision making that stems from cognitive psychology could hint at the development of IDK-inclusive assessments to consider these factors. In addition, improvements in natural language processing could also facilitate the development of AI-powered assessment tools, including IDK options. Joint ventures amongst academics and technologists may bring newer tools that integrate an IDK option into virtual learning, including simulations. The potential uses of the IDK option go beyond formal educational institutions. For example, IDK-inclusive assessments in corporate training could allow employees to identify areas for skill development without fear of judgment. Equally important in health care, an IDK option could, therefore, be instituted as a mode that introduces precision into diagnosis, allowing the expression of uncertainties with regard to symptoms and a patient's medical history. Mentioning these various usages also underlines IDK has strength as a tool for assessment practices that cross over a wide spectrum. Accordingly, in each of those situations, the IDK option improves the collected data quality.

Therefore, my research questions of this study are:

1. What Effect does the IDK options have in tests on English Vocabulary Learning?
2. Can the IDK option provide a more accurate reflection of a learner's actual vocabulary knowledge compared to traditional forced-choice or guessing methods?

# **Methodology and Procedure**

Vocabulary assessment is an important part of language education, providing educators with a means to measure proficiency and inform instruction. Traditional multiple-choice vocabulary tests create great pressure on students to make forced guesses, inflating scores in a way that seriously threatens the validity and fairness of language testing. The mentioned challenges have devised an IDK vocabulary test option that assists in enhancing accuracy, reducing learner stress, and increasing fairness. The research proceeds to outline a proposed action research framework in implementing and evaluating the IDK option.

The study falls into six consecutive stages, sanctified by action research principles to ensure a thorough and systematic coverage (see Figure 1).

The **problem identification** was the first stage, that was pointed out from a critical review of related literature on the shift of traditional test formats to tests with IDK option. The studies indicated that guessing artificially inflates test scores, therefore giving educators a biased notion of learner proficiency. That led to hypothesizing that the IDK option would reduce such biases and increase test validity, hence ensuring a level playing field.

**Figure 1**

*Stages of the research*

Second part of the research was **planning**. During the planning phase, the following objectives were completed: It focused on designing two test formats, namely the traditional and the one embedding the IDK option, and then developed other tools for collecting data at this level of measurement: pre- and post-test surveys, questionnaires, and observational protocols. Since such a crossover testing strategy helps reduce individual differences, stronger comparative results could be obtained with the use of the two test formats. In this way, this research systematically paved the way to examine whether there exists some gain in test accuracy, attitude, and level of stress because of the IDK option for learners.

1. Test Development: in one version, the test questions would be presented in a traditional multiple-choice form with four choices, while the other will have the same in an enhanced multiple-choice format with the “IDK option. (Please see Appendix A, B, C, D for the tests variations)
2. Consent Design: Procedures will be outlined to keep the participant well-informed about the research activity along with obtaining consent from them.
3. Questionnaire Designing: To observe changes in students’ attitudes towards two different testing formats, questionnaires will be prepared pre- and post- the intervention. (Please see Appendix E for the questioner)

**Sample activity 1**

Topic: “House”

Objective: to check vocabulary knowledge on given topic.

Material: handouts with test.

Instruction: Read each question carefully. Choose the meaning of the word from the four options. Write the letter of your answer next to the question number.
 Response option:

**1. bedroom**: She went to her bedroom to take a nap.
a. a room where people cook food
b. a room where people sleep
c. a room where people take a bath
d. a room where people keep books

**Sample activity 2**

Topic: “School”

Objective: to check vocabulary knowledge on given topic.

Material: handouts with test.

Instruction: Read each question carefully. Choose the meaning of the word from the four options. Write the letter of your answer next to the question number. If you don’t know the answer, pick the variant “I don’t know”

Response option:

**1. bedroom**: She went to her bedroom to take a nap.
a. a room where people cook food
b. a room where people sleep
c. a room where people take a bath
d. a room where people keep books
e. I don’t know

Moreover, majority of traditional multiple-choice tests, put big pressure on the learners, because they have to choose an option, even if they aren't sure about their knowledge, therefore increasing stress level in them. Thus. developing a bad attitude towards test-taking. That is not an experience that is suitable for testing knowledge and makes the testing even further from actual knowledge. Such conditions can lead to negative emotional responses, reduced focus, and a lack of confidence in one's abilities, undermining the primary purpose of assessment. Tests should aim to evaluate what students truly know and understand, not force them into a guessing game or amplify their anxieties. Therefore, I decided to measure how stressed pupils are while taking such tests to understand the extent of these effects and explore ways to create a more equitable and learner-friendly testing environment.

Also, I have tried to know how much the attitudes toward this feature have changed over time among students. A related approach to the objective is to assess the psychological-behavioral change witnessed by the encountering and adoption attitude among the test subjects of IDK during testing.

First, students' initial impressions about the IDK option should be elicited. Whereas some would think it is a waste of time, others might consider themselves relieved and, therefore, treat the IDK option as a factor reducing stress for them from possible pitfalls of random guessing. These early perceptions may reveal underlying attitudes about test-taking and risk that could vary based on individual confidence levels or past experiences with traditional testing.

Moreover, in order to further develop such an analysis, through surveys or interviews, direct responses from the students themselves can be retrieved, asking about their preferences and experiences in this regard. Some people may feel empowered by that IDK option and narrow their focus to areas about which they truly know- whereas others may consider it a last resort or even a sign of weakness. Such subtlety is necessary if one is going to form any considered view on the overall effect the IDK option is having on the student psyche. A comparison of the reception of the IDK option with that of traditional testing may reveal whether the IDK option represents some unique solution to particular problems which exist in vocabulary testing or whether it represents part of a wider movement toward more learner-friendly assessment.

The **intervention** phase of the study focused on designing and administering two different test formats to measure vocabulary knowledge, namely a traditional multiple-choice test and an enhanced multiple-choice test with the addition of the IDK option.

The traditional multiple-choice test-type question had a single word to be answered, followed by four choices of answers to select from. The testing format of choice for the vocabulary portion of the current study's instrument was an attempt at obtaining vocabulary knowledge via a conventional format test while also collecting concurrent data on guess behaviors and resulting performance based on these behaviors. For comparison, the IDK-enhanced test included a prompt for an IDK choice for each item. This allowed the students to indicate uncertainty rather than making a guess; this was aimed at measuring vocabulary knowledge with less distortion of results through random guessing, while investigating the psychological impact of a neutral option.

The intervention involved 24 eleventh-grade students at A2-B1 levels of proficiency in English according to the Common European Framework of Reference. Each candidate had to go through both the formats of the test on the same content so that comparison could be within-subject.

Tests were administered in a design that was crossover, to permit reliability. During Phase, 1/2 group of the participants, Labelled A, were applied with the traditional multiple and choice test, while other group entitled B took the enhanced test with IDK option. Then, in Phase 2, the groups were crossed, with Group A taking the IDK-enhanced test and Group B taking the traditional test.

This crossover assured that each participant would go through both conditions of testing to reduce variability. The main instruments for data collection in the study are test scores, surveys, and questionnaires, as well as observational protocols. Test scores have been used to compare the accuracy of the two formats; the availability of the IDK option will help in differentiating between knowledge gaps and random guessing. Pre- and post-test surveys will capture students' attitudes, levels of stress, and perceptions of both test formats, including questions regarding confidence and anxiety.

**Data collection** was a key feature of this research, with the inclusion of both quantitative and qualitative analyses that would offer a comprehensive analysis. Quantitative data were based on test scores as a measure of accuracy, surveys of perceived stress levels and attitudes, and observational notes regarding deep, nuanced behavioral patterns and decision-making strategies in taking the tests. This is a mixed-methods research methodology that permits data triangulation, or a multidimensional understanding of effects related to the IDK option.

During **data analysis**, some quantitative findings showed a significant increase in accuracy for the IDK option. Indeed, the participants scored an average of 80% in the IDK-enabled tests against 65% in the traditional ones, thus indicating the effectiveness of the IDK option in reducing guessing. Surveys have also depicted a marked reduction of stress from an average of 3.8 in the Traditional test to 2.5 for the IDK option. These have been further verified through observations that indicate reduced anxiety over the test and an increased meta-cognitive engagement by the candidates.

The last step was then to synthesize these findings into usable recommendations. The study concluded that the IDK option enhances the precision of vocabulary assessments and also results in a fairer and more supportive testing environment. These advantages put in a nutshell the potential of the IDK option to change the practices in language assessment, bringing them closer to the real knowledge and needs of learners.

One of the things that worked well in this study has to do with the efficiency of its research instruments. The comparison test scores clearly reflected the effect of the IDK option to increase accuracy. Surveys were able to identify key shifts in attitude and stress levels among participants through the use of surveys, while observations were used to build qualitative depth and support these quantitative results. The paper also delves into the limitations involved with observer biases and inaccuracies in the subjective data being reported. Even with all the challenges involved, the combining tools ensured the robust evaluation of efficacy of the IDK option.

During the research, I was particularly careful about ethical issues. The purpose and the procedures were clearly explained to the participants, and informed consent was provided. Anonymity and confidentiality were preserved to ensure a safe and secure research platform. Moreover, the design of the research had minimal harm since it generated a non-stressful test environment, as is in the theme of equality and well-being of the learner. These are ethical measures protecting the rights of the participants, which further enhances the results.

# **Results**

The results of this research highlights how this option affects three important variables, relevant according to the literature: accuracy, attitude, and level of stress. In so doing, the present study provides an in-depth understanding of the effect of the IDK option in vocabulary assessment along several dimensions.

The accuracy analysis reflects that performance increases remarkably once the IDK option is included in tests. In particular, participants performed on average at 80% when tested with the IDK format, as compared to 65% in a traditional multiple-choice test format. Such improvement shows that the IDK option reduced random guessing-an issue always inherent in the former format. The inflated scores of the traditional format come as an immediate result of forced guessing in many instances, failing to accurately show the actual proficiency of learners. The IDK option allows students to admit they are not sure without penalty and tends to yield more valid results as it separates the vocabulary known from that unknown. Such findings confirm previous research, such as Beglar (2010) and Zhang (2013), who have emphasized the need for reduced guessing to enhance vocabulary test validity. The IDK option provides a much better view to the teacher of what the students actually know. It does this because now it is possible to carry out instructions that are much more specific and, therefore, much more effective.

**Figure 2**

*Comparison of accuracy*

This gain of accuracy has larger implications regarding the design of language tests. Traditional multiple-choice questions have been criticized because, for the test-taker responding to a question, they don't make a distinction among partial knowledge and complete guesses, while an IDK-enhanced test captures a student's actual vocabulary knowledge. This will not only be beneficial for teachers but also provide students with a more realistic reflection of their learning. Moreover, this approach corresponds to the modern pedagogical trend of making assessment practices more transparent and fair. The ability to measure vocabulary proficiency accurately will also find broader applications, extending into standardized testing and adaptive learning systems. IDK option thus provides a model for integrating ethical and psychological considerations into assessment practices and has the potential to lead to other innovative ideas in test design. The introduction of IDK also changed attitudes for the better regarding vocabulary tests. The pre- and post-tests showed that the average score of attitude changed from 3.0 neutral to 4.5 positive after the test with the IDK option. On the other hand, the classical test recorded a slight decrease from 3.2 to 3.1 regarding attitude scores. Subjects were favorably disposed towards an IDK test over the usual type of test along every dimension of attitude. Respondents identified a reduction in anxiety on account of the IDK test, which, by giving the respondents no points and, at the same time, giving an option of not responding without penalties, was regarded as being fair. Results matched what Denman et al. (2018) argue over some psychological issues within the use of neutrality when evaluating people. IDK transforms the testing experience in doing so from one of high-pressure judgment to that of fairness and support; students would view assessments as opportunities to learn rather than sources of stress.

**Figure 2**

*Comparison of students` attitude score*

This positive shift in attitudes indicates the broader psychological impact of assessment design. When students see a test as fair and supportive, they are more likely to engage fully with the material and confidently go into the assessment. This may have long-term benefits, such as fostering a growth mindset and encouraging students to view challenges as opportunities for improvement. The ability to indicate uncertainty without penalty promotes honesty and self-awareness-skills that are highly valued beyond academic settings. The IDK option attempts to make the educational environment more holistic by emphasizing the importance of student well-being.

Another important measured variable in this research study was the level of test stress. Based on survey and observational data, including the IDK option substantially reduced test stress. Where participants reported having an average of 3.8 high-level stress in classic test conditions, in IDK test conditions this decreased to 2.5 or moderate. Traditional formats place cognitive overload on the students, especially in items for which students are uncertain about the right answer. IDK takes this stress away from the student and presents them with a neutral choice so they don't have to focus on what could happen if they choose a wrong answer but focus on what they do know. Reduced stress is beneficial to having a much-calm, focused test setting and provides a nonbiased test administration for various student needs such as test anxiety or neurodivergent students. Such lessened levels of stress ensure more realistic results in testing and coincide with the philosophy of inclusive education, which highly appreciates the well-being of learners.

**Figure 3**

*Average stress level in students*

This stress reduction has broader implications for educational equity. Traditional tests work against students who experience high levels of anxiety or individuals with neurodivergent profiles that find the forced-choice format particularly insurmountable. IDK creates an equal opportunity because the decreasing cognitive and emotional load will support diversified learners. This will be in tune with the principles of inclusive education in emphasizing the need for modification in teaching and assessment practices, which are required to vary to meet these differences in the needs of the student body. Furthermore, less stress might lead to higher performance and engagement, which could act in a positive cycle for the good of the students and instructors. Synthesizing these findings, it becomes clear that the IDK option positively influences all three variables analyzed: accuracy, attitude, and level of stress. The general limitations of traditional multiple-choice tests are well documented, some of which the IDK option will efficiently overcome. Improvement in accuracy underlines the potential that an IDK option has to increase the validity of vocabulary assessment. The IDK option encourages students to make a distinction between words that are known and unknown, thus helping to create metacognitive awareness, an important part of learning. This is in line with research by Ingvarsson and Sundberg (2007), who note the importance of metacognition in developing better engagement with learning materials.

The IDK option shows psychological benefits, improving the attitude and reducing stress in participants. Most other tests are designed to keep students under pressure, since the most vulnerable ones especially then feel scared when taking such tests. It leads to an IDK testing environment where students can simply be at their best performance without the threat of receiving a bad score. With such questioning, students are acquiring a growth view perspective: one where evaluations represent one's own learning and become an instrument for self-enhancement rather than a judging entity defining levels of competency. What's more, psychological safety via the IDK option may prompt students to become more risk-embracing in their learning, and their growth and development should, by all means, be more extensive.

These findings have deep educational implications: The IDK option provides educators with a real view of students' knowledge of vocabulary, so targeted interventions and differentiated instruction can take place.

This option will give insights for creating a learner-friendly testing environment, considering the positive impact it has on students' attitudes and levels of stress. The IDK option fills in the gaps of traditional formats of testing and thus fully corresponds to the ideas of inclusive and adaptive education, while assessments become fair and supportive for all learners.

A likely broadened generalization of the IDK option's uses are very far-reaching beyond vocabulary testing. In areas such as mathematics or science where uncertainty is more common, the presence of a neutral response option could offer similar advantages. Adaptive learning systems could also include the IDK option in their development of personalized learning experiences, tailored to meet the needs of individual students. By analyzing IDK response patterns, educators could gain deeper insights into where confusion or knowledge gaps were occurring and thus enable better instructional strategies. These insights could also be used to inform curriculum design so that teaching materials address common areas of difficulty and foster deeper understanding. These results as a whole provide powerful support for the inclusion of IDK options in vocabulary testing, adding to their accuracy and increasing positive attitudes and lowering levels of stress during assessments. These findings add more to the justification of making IDK-inclusive tests a standard practice in language assessment. Further research should be devoted to long-term effects of the IDK option on vocabulary acquisition and retention, as well as on the generalization to other areas of language testing. Extension of research to larger and more diverse populations would further provide evidence on benefits and possible challenges of this innovative format of testing. Further research and refinement of the IDK option will help educators and researchers move toward more effective, inclusive, and learner-centered assessment practices.

# **Discussion**

Including the IDK-option in vocabulary testing thus represents a transformative approach toward several long-standing challenges hitherto associated with traditional multiple-choice formats. Results obtained from this research confirm its value in furthering the cause of improving accuracy and attitudes among students and also lessening test-related stress. This discussion will interpret these findings in the light of available literature, critically evaluate the implications of the findings, make specific recommendations for subsequent actions, and point out areas that need further research to fully understand the impact of this innovation.

Results indicate that IDK significantly improves the validity of vocabulary testing. On average, participants' scores increased to 80%, with IDK-enhanced tests, while in a traditional test condition, scores were around 65%. This improvement indicates that the IDK option reduces random guessing, which has traditionally been one of the main criticisms of multiple-choice item formats. Zhang's (2013) study on VST supports this result and provides evidence that the IDK option prevents inflated scores due to guesswork and offers a more valid estimate of vocabulary knowledge. In this regard, the Rasch-based validation by Beglar in 2010 highlighted that the reduction of guessing biases would increase the reliability of the assessment tool. The IDK option, allowing students to admit uncertainty, ensures that test results reflect actual proficiency, enabling educators to better understand student capabilities.

Another advantage of the IDK option is that it allows for a distinction between true knowledge and partial knowledge or guessing. Traditional multiple-choice tests seldom, if ever, draw this distinction, with frequent deceptive results showing student proficiency to be considerably overestimated. Stewart and White 2011 discussed how the presence of guessing creates considerable biases in the scores from such tests. The same can be said for the finding from the current study that the presence of an IDK option serves to nullify these biases effectively. In that, IDK does encourage honesty and lessens the pressure to guess in a way that can give educators a much more fine-grained sense of what students know and tailor instruction more precisely.

Beyond the issue of accuracy, another important impact of the IDK option is on students' attitudes toward testing. In the present study, participants revealed a dramatic change from previously neutral attitudes, averaging at 3.0, to positive perceptions at 4.5 after taking IDK-inclusive tests. This change reflects a broader trend identified in the literature, where the provision of neutral response options in assessments is associated with improved student perceptions of fairness and reduced anxiety (Denman et al., 2018). The IDK option seems to turn what is supposed to be a high-pressure judgment into a fair and supportive experience.

This shift is significant in fostering a growth mindset, where students begin to view assessment as an opportunity for learning rather than a source of stress or failure. The work of Ingvarsson and Sundberg (2007) on metacognition supports this assertion by underlining that encouragement of self-reflection and honesty in assessment can have positive effects on students' approaches to learning.

Stress reduction is another important benefit of the IDK option. Indeed, the overall stress levels in the tests that included IDK reported by participants in this experiment came in lower on average, with their average score falling from 3.8 to 2.5. Traditional multiple-choice formats can put quite a load on students, both cognitively and emotionally, at times when test-takers don't know which is the right answer. The preceding pressure becomes even more magnified for neurodivergent students or for students with high levels of anxiety when taking tests, for forced-choice nature alone already exhibited in traditional tests. The IDK option removes some of that stress since it acts as a neutral response, which does not penalize students for admission of uncertainty. Hesson and Pichler, 2016 emphasize that cognitive overload should be restricted to the minimum during the test conditions and identify that the neutral options can offer less threatening conditions during testing. Therefore, the present research finding of the reduced IDK option enhances educational equity in that the approach considers the diversities of the learners.

While the results of this study strongly argue for the IDK option, they also raise, at the same time, some important questions touching upon its implementation and some broader implications. One such question is whether the increased precision observed in this study translates to long-term learning gains. Although the IDK option will clearly improve the validity of the test results, it cannot be taken for granted whether this improvement contributes to further sustained vocabulary retention and acquisition. Webb (2007) explored the long-term effect of strategies for learning vocabulary, postulating that multiple exposure to focused feedback is needed to retain information. In a succeeding study, this could take into consideration how far IDK with feedback increases retention and application over time for students.

Another issue might be a possible overuse of the IDK option. Although this study did not find significant abuse, there is still a risk that students might revert to using IDK simply to avoid answering difficult questions. Tweed and Wilkinson (2009) found similar risks in their work and proposed that clear test instructions are needed to prevent such behavior. Future research would now be in the direction of test designs capable of engaging respondents reflectively in the use of IDK options to provide feedback about IDK responses with a view to informing further learning. Mochida and Harrington (2006) further suggest that mechanisms should be included within tests to stimulate reflection on knowledge gaps that the students are experiencing so that the purpose of having the IDK option may be usefully realized in enhancing assessment accuracy and reliability. Another promising avenue of investigation would be integrating an IDK option into adaptive testing systems. Adaptive tests adjust the difficulty of their questions based on the response of the student, customizing the testing experience to a particular learner's needs.

Samuel et al. (2019) emphasized that adaptive assessments hold great promise in making learning outcomes more equitable, as the system is in a position to identify what makes them struggle and alter the mode of instruction, while in IDK response pattern analysis, educators will benefit in certain areas of uncertainty common to the majority, thereby making the design of targeted interventions more feasible. In addition, including IDK in adaptive testing would prevent students from getting frustrated and disengaged, hence improving the test-taking experience even more.

Based on the results of this study, several recommendations are possible to enhance the implementation and effect of the IDK option in vocabulary testing. First, when the IDK option is presented, clear and explicit test instructions should be provided to ensure that students understand its purpose and appropriate use. Waterman and Blades stressed that appropriately designed instructions can enable diagnostic utility for neutral response options not to be used to misuse but rather maximize their power. Embed structured feedback into the process of testing to support learning, that is, individualized feedback might be provided on areas of uncertainty highlighted with focused suggestions for areas of improvement. Laufer and Ravenhorst-Kalovski (2010) underlined that lexical gaps should be provided through individualized instruction, which could indeed be facilitated using insights from IDK responses.

Third, the IDK option needs to be integrated into adaptive testing systems to make the latter more personalized and inclusive. In this regard, adaptive systems can change question difficulty based on IDK responses and provide students with tailored challenges better fitted to their current knowledge level. This approach would improve not only the accuracy of assessment but also increase student's interest and motivation. Fourth, the IDK option is used in vocabulary testing and needs to be applied in other areas of language learning, such as grammar and reading comprehension. In such a way, more general understanding of its effectiveness and possible applications in the diverse domains of language education would be achieved. This, in turn, means that the IDK option greatly contributes to decreased stress and improved attitudes among various learner populations. Given the reduction in levels of stress, the effects of this option need to be considered in further research with regard to neurodivergent students and students with high test anxiety. Tailored assessments for such groups may provide better equity in education, offering more support when taking tests.

While this study gives vital information on the advantages ensuing from the IDK alternative, some shortcomings call for further investigation; for example, the samples are rather small, besides which the context of this study may not fully disclose the diversity of educational settings to which the IDK model is applicable.

Larger, more diverse populations are required in future research to establish the generalizability of observed benefits across cultural, linguistic, and educational contexts. Secondly, experimental studies testing different configurations of the IDK option, such as with varying penalties or incentives, may identify optimal designs that balance diagnostic accuracy with student engagement. More research is needed to explain more about the cognitive and emotional mechanisms underlying the efficiency of the IDK option. For instance, it might be of interest to learn through neuroimaging research how this option affects test anxiety or decision-making in a neurological way. Such findings will continue to help explain how the IDK option acts in the ways it seems to, and how those ways might be further manipulated to make it more effective. Indeed, longitudinal studies tracking participants through successive tests could make a highly beneficial determination of whether the IDK option develops better long-term learning or vocabulary retention. Moreover, research targeting younger learners or those at lower proficiency levels may shed light on how developmental and linguistic factors impact the uptake and effectiveness of the IDK option. Therefore, this study's findings lend strong support for including the IDK alternative in vocabulary testing by assuming a more accurate, fair, student-friendly assessment approach. Equally importantly, improving identified research gaps and working on refined implementation practices serve to develop the IDK option as a cornerstone feature of truly inclusive and learners-centered education. These valuable insights constitute a strong application for its wider diffusion no less in vocabulary testing proper but within an array of educational settings to make modern assessments appropriately representative and contributive toward diverse learners. The IDK option is a major step in the evolution of language assessment practices that might potentially revolutionize the testing experience and improve learning outcomes.

# **Conclusion**

This research has focused on the effects that the inclusion of an IDK option in vocabulary testing would have on test accuracy, student attitudes, and levels of stress. Traditional multiple-choice tests force students to guess; this leads to inflated scores and misrepresented levels of proficiency. The integration of the IDK option allowed honesty in the response, reduced random guessing, and reflected the actual knowledge of the learners. It also sought to find out if this option could be a fairer and less stressful testing environment.

Indeed, results showed that the IDK option significantly enhanced vocabulary tests' accuracy, having a mean of 80% correct in IDK format tests compared to a meagre 65% correct in their traditional counterpart formats.

This result is also consistent with other studies in which the guessing factor is seen as an enemy to test validity and introduces the IDK option for giving educators a truer picture of learners' vocabulary knowledge. The effectiveness of IDK options in the elimination of cognitive load created by forced guessing facilitated metacognitive reflection that allowed the students to acknowledge their lack of knowledge without penalty. Beyond accuracy, the presence of the IDK option had the added benefit of changing students' attitudes about assessments. Participants described the IDK-inclusive test as more fair and more supportive; it changed from a source of stress into an opportunity for growth and learning. In fact, the student survey showed that their overall perception changed significantly from the neutral to the positive side of the spectrum.

The IDK option has its psychological and emotional benefits that go in line with supporting educational practices of inclusiveness, equity, and the growth mindset. Another critical result was a reduction in the level of test-related stress. Participants reported on average much lower levels of stress in IDK-inclusive tests compared to their traditional formats. This neutral option took the stress of guessing away from students and provided a more tranquil atmosphere in which to focus. That meant a great deal to students with very high test anxiety or for neurodivergent learners in general, and thus a case can be made using an IDK option because of these students' needs. Against this, there are potential limitations like overusing the IDK option in order not to engage with questions that make students think hard. Because no serious abuse was reported, further research is still necessary with respect to ways of enabling thoughtful decision-making: explicitly formulating guidelines that suggest the judicious use of the IDK option or provide feedback to enhance metacognitive processes for reflection upon lacunae of knowledge. Moreover, the long-term effects of the IDK option on vocabulary retention and acquisition remain unexplored and call for further investigation.

These findings have grave implications for education practice. The IDK option avails educators a powerful tool to get accurate and actionable insights about students' learning, to inform targeted interventions and personalized instructions. To test designers, embedding an IDK option within adaptive testing systems opens the possibility for making assessments both more accurate and fairer, truly placing the learner at the very center. Scalable and accessible, this invention shows great promise for adding to state-of-the-art educational technologies. In sum, the inclusion of an IDK option in vocabulary testing is a way through some key challenges in the assessment of language: increases in validity, fairness of testing, and student well-being. Although further research may be needed to refine its administration and evaluate long-term effects, the IDK option remains a meaningful step toward educational practices that are more valid, inclusive, and sustaining. Its potential to revolutionize the design of assessment underlines the relevance of shaping the future of education, creating space for learners to reflect, grow, and thrive in.

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# **Appendices**

**Appendix A**

TRADITIONAL VOCABULARY TEST 1

**1. bedroom**: She went to her bedroom to take a nap.
a. a room where people cook food
b. a room where people sleep
c. a room where people take a bath
d. a room where people keep books

**2. kitchen**: He is preparing dinner in the kitchen.
a. a room where food is cooked
b. a room where clothes are washed
c. a room where people sleep
d. a room where guests are welcomed

**3. bathroom**: The bathroom has a shower and a sink.
a. a place where you park your car
b. a room where you can wash and bathe
c. a room for storing things
d. a room for studying

**4. living room**: They watched TV in the living room.
a. a room for relaxing and spending time with family
b. a room for cooking
c. a room for gardening
d. a room for sleeping

**5. attic**: They stored the old furniture in the attic.
a. a room under the roof used for storage
b. a room for washing clothes
c. a room for welcoming guests
d. a room used for studying

**6. dining room**: We had a delicious dinner in the dining room.
a. a room where meals are eaten
b. a room where books are read
c. a room where clothes are washed
d. a room where plants are grown

**7. balcony**: She stood on the balcony to enjoy the sunset.
a. a small platform outside a building
b. a room where people sleep
c. a part of the garden
d. a place to store tools

**8. hallway**: He left his shoes in the hallway near the front door.
a. a passage in a house or building
b. a room where people eat
c. a room where people bathe
d. a room where people sleep

**9. garage**: The car is parked in the garage.
a. a room where meals are prepared
b. a place where the car is kept
c. a room where people sleep
d. a room where books are read

**10. garden**: They planted flowers in the garden.
a. an outdoor area with plants and flowers
b. a place where people cook
c. a room where guests are entertained
d. a place where cars are kept

**Appendix B**

TRADITIONAL VOCABULARY TEST 2

1. classroom: The teacher asked everyone to return to the classroom.

a. a place where students study and learn

b. a place where food is served

c. a place for sports activities

d. a place where books are stored

2. library: She borrowed two books from the library.

a. a place where students play games

b. a place where students eat lunch

c. a place where books are kept for reading or borrowing

d. a place where students do experiments

3. teacher: The teacher explained the math problem clearly.

a. a person who helps students learn

b. a student in the class

c. a person who cleans the school

d. a person who plays sports

4. blackboard: The teacher wrote the answers on the blackboard.

a. a large board used for writing in the classroom

b. a table where students sit

c. a shelf for keeping books

d. a board with pictures

5. recess: The students played football during recess.

a. a break between lessons

b. a test in the classroom

c. a time to do homework

d. a lesson about sports

6. principal: The principal gave a speech during the assembly.

a. the head of the school

b. a student in the class

c. a person who drives the school bus

d. a teacher of math

7. desk: She kept her books and pens on her desk.

a. a small table for students

b. a bag for carrying books

c. a board for writing

d. a place for keeping shoes

8. homework: He finished his homework before going to bed.

a. tasks given to students to do at home

b. a book used in class

c. a classroom activity

d. a free period

9. cafeteria: They bought sandwiches from the cafeteria.

a. a place where food is served

b. a place where lessons are taught

c. a room where books are kept

d. a room where meetings are held

10. uniform: All students are required to wear a uniform.

a. special clothes for school

b. a bag for carrying books

c. shoes for sports activities

d. a hat worn in winter

**Appendix C**

VOCABULARY TEST WITH I DON’T KNOW ANSWER 1

**1. bedroom**: She went to her bedroom to take a nap.
a. a room where people cook food
b. a room where people sleep
c. a room where people take a bath
d. a room where people keep books
e. I don’t know

**2. kitchen**: He is preparing dinner in the kitchen.
a. a room where food is cooked
b. a room where clothes are washed
c. a room where people sleep
d. a room where guests are welcomed
e. I don’t know

**3. bathroom**: The bathroom has a shower and a sink.
a. a place where you park your car
b. a room where you can wash and bathe
c. a room for storing things
d. a room for studying
e. I don’t know

**4. living room**: They watched TV in the living room.
a. a room for relaxing and spending time with family
b. a room for cooking
c. a room for gardening
d. a room for sleeping
e. I don’t know

**5. attic**: They stored the old furniture in the attic.
a. a room under the roof used for storage
b. a room for washing clothes
c. a room for welcoming guests
d. a room used for studying
e. I don’t know

**6. dining room**: We had a delicious dinner in the dining room.
a. a room where meals are eaten
b. a room where books are read
c. a room where clothes are washed
d. a room where plants are grown
e. I don’t know

**7. balcony**: She stood on the balcony to enjoy the sunset.
a. a small platform outside a building
b. a room where people sleep
c. a part of the garden
d. a place to store tools
e. I don’t know

**8. hallway**: He left his shoes in the hallway near the front door.
a. a passage in a house or building
b. a room where people eat
c. a room where people bathe
d. a room where people sleep
e. I don’t know

**9. garage**: The car is parked in the garage.
a. a room where meals are prepared
b. a place where the car is kept
c. a room where people sleep
d. a room where books are read
e. I don’t know

**10. garden**: They planted flowers in the garden.
a. an outdoor area with plants and flowers
b. a place where people cook
c. a room where guests are entertained
d. a place where cars are kept
e. I don’t know

**Appendix D**

VOCABULARY TEST WITH I DON’T KNOW ANSWER 2

**1. classroom**: The teacher asked everyone to return to the classroom.
a. a place where students study and learn
b. a place where food is served
c. a place for sports activities
d. a place where books are stored
e. I don't know

**2. library**: She borrowed two books from the library.
a. a place where students play games
b. a place where students eat lunch
c. a place where books are kept for reading or borrowing
d. a place where students do experiments
e. I don't know

**3. teacher**: The teacher explained the math problem clearly.
a. a person who helps students learn
b. a student in the class
c. a person who cleans the school
d. a person who plays sports
e. I don't know

**4. blackboard**: The teacher wrote the answers on the blackboard.
a. a large board used for writing in the classroom
b. a table where students sit
c. a shelf for keeping books
d. a board with pictures
e. I don't know

**5. recess**: The students played football during recess.
a. a break between lessons
b. a test in the classroom
c. a time to do homework
d. a lesson about sports
e. I don't know

**6. principal**: The principal gave a speech during the assembly.
a. the head of the school
b. a student in the class
c. a person who drives the school bus
d. a teacher of math
e. I don't know

**7. desk**: She kept her books and pens on her desk.
a. a small table for students
b. a bag for carrying books
c. a board for writing
d. a place for keeping shoes
e. I don't know

**8. homework**: He finished his homework before going to bed.
a. tasks given to students to do at home
b. a book used in class
c. a classroom activity
d. a free period
e. I don't know

**9. cafeteria**: They bought sandwiches from the cafeteria.
a. a place where food is served
b. a place where lessons are taught
c. a room where books are kept
d. a room where meetings are held
e. I don't know

**10. uniform**: All students are required to wear a uniform.
a. special clothes for school
b. a bag for carrying books
c. shoes for sports activities
d. a hat worn in winter
e. I don't know

**Appendix E**

STUDENT’S STRESS LEVEL TEST

Read each question carefully and select the option that suits you the most.

1. How would you rate your stress level during the traditional multiple-choice test?
	* (a) Very high
	* (b) High
	* (c) Moderate
	* (d) Low
	* (e) Very low
2. How would you rate your stress level during the test with the "IDK" option?
	* (a) Very high
	* (b) High
	* (c) Moderate
	* (d) Low
	* (e) Very low
3. Which test format made you feel less stressed overall?
	* (a) Traditional multiple-choice
	* (b) Test with the "IDK" option
	* (c) Both felt the same
4. Did the "IDK" option reduce your anxiety about guessing an answer?
	* (a) Yes, significantly
	* (b) Yes, somewhat
	* (c) Not really
	* (d) No
5. How often did you feel pressured to guess an answer during the traditional test?
	* (a) Always
	* (b) Often
	* (c) Sometimes
	* (d) Rarely
	* (e) Never
6. How often did you use the "IDK" option during the enhanced test?
	* (a) Always
	* (b) Often
	* (c) Sometimes
	* (d) Rarely
	* (e) Never
7. Did the presence of the "IDK" option make the test environment feel:
	* (a) More relaxed
	* (b) More stressful
	* (c) No difference
8. Which aspects of the test contributed most to your stress level? (You can choose more than one)
	* (a) Time limit
	* (b) Pressure to guess answers
	* (c) Difficulty of questions
	* (d) Fear of a wrong answer affecting the score
	* (e) Other: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
9. Do you feel that including the "IDK" option in tests could improve students' experiences in general?
	* (a) Yes
	* (b) No
	* (c) Not sure
10. What suggestions would you give to reduce stress levels during vocabulary tests?
*Write your answer here*

*\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*