

READING SKILLS FORMATION: CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE IELTS MATERIALS

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Summary

In this article, we focus on the description and analysis of the IELTS material used for preparation and testing reading receptive communication skills. Two IELTS test formats, General Training and Academic are studied. This research studies educational materials and evaluates them by the scheme described above by means of comparative analysis.

The findings are presented in two parts, in descriptive and quantitative forms. The descriptive part presents the topics of the texts, forms of narration, and sentence structures. The morphological word structures and vocabulary of the texts and exercises and/or test tasks are compared.

Since the key words in the questions to the texts of the reading section are paraphrased, the authors analyzed these questions and texts using the approach that comprises the personal elements if it is challenging or not.

The quantitative part includes the number of questions that refer to vocabulary and grammar, namely, to morphological and syntactic characteristics of speech in each section of the Reading Module. The usage of specific British, American, Canadian, Australian, New Zealand expressions and facts in the texts as evidence of differences in their cultures is described. The result of the analysis is classified and analyzed according to quantitative and qualitative characteristics.

Keywords: sociolinguistics, World Englishes, European English, Lingua Franca, English variants.

DOI <https://doi.org/10.23856/5313>

1. Introduction

This article is devoted to the studying of the World Englishes Paradigm and methods of teaching the English Language (EL). The polycentricism of EL in the late XX – early XXI century caused the appearance of a new field in sociolinguistics such as the World Englishes Paradigm which foundations were laid by the Indian-American sociolinguist Braj Kachru's theory. He suggested dividing English variants into three circles on the basis of territories. The first circle is Inner Circle that includes countries where English is a native language; the second circle is Outer Circle that includes post-colonial countries, where English is the second language and the third, Expanding Circle, belongs to the countries where the English language is studied as a foreign language (*Kachru B. B., 1985:12-14*).

Due to the long-term rapprochement of Ukraine with the European Union where English is used as a language of communication, European English (EE) became in Ukraine a second language. As a result, the importance of this research is caused by the widespread EE in Ukraine. This studying is actual because the problems of the regional EE variant and the Ukrainian variant coexistence are not covered in holistic and systematic ways in the works of Ukrainian and foreign authors that are known. The scientific novelty of the studying is in the fact that the current preparation materials for the Reading modules of the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) have not been analyzed and systematized by researchers based on the notion of regional diversification of EL.

The aim of this analysis is to confirm the significance of national diversification of the language competence in English as a second language in accord with the tendencies of its functioning in the European linguistic continuum using the critical analysis of practice materials for IELTS takers. In order to achieve this goal it is essential to solve the following tasks:

1) To specify variantological and functional-pragmatic features of the methodological approaches in the IELTS test.

2) To analyze factual materials of the General Training Reading and the Academic Reading Module of the IELTS test.

The methods of the research are a comparative-typological method (the literature about research problems of the Global English and the regional European English variant is analyzed to define and systematize the concepts; the structures of EL variants are studied and compared with each other in order to identify their specificity), and a benchmarking analysis (the content of preparation materials is analyzed in a qualitative and quantitative way to identify statistical patterns in the usage of lexical and grammatical structures and the change of their complexity from the beginning of the preparation material to the end).

2. Determination of the methodological approaches

Since English has become a contact language in the European Union countries, therefore, it is viewed as the regional European English variant. Studies of the assessment of using English in European countries demonstrate that the majority of Northern European countries' population uses EL as a Lingua Franca unlike the people from Eastern and Southern European countries.

Since geographically Ukraine is part of Europe where English is used as a Lingua Franca, the international relationships between the European Union and Ukraine are spreading rapidly. The evidence of this is the promotion of the English language in Ukraine in all social spheres. English is the most popular foreign language among learners from Ukraine. Considering a language as a dynamic process and English as a global contact language, its impact on Ukrainian is obvious. In its turn, the Ukrainian language affects English.

The basis of the IELTS test was set in two versions (Academic and General Training) and four modules (Listening, Reading, Writing, and Speaking) for each part of the test. The Listening and Speaking IELTS tests were the same for General Training and Academic modules, Reading and Writing tests were different for both modules. A test team created the Academic Reading and Academic Writing in three versions of these modules (science and technology, life science, and social science) in order to make an assessment as objective as possible for those candidates who intend to study abroad (Manhattan Review).

The content of IELTS has not been significantly changed since its formation. In 1995 specific writing and reading modules were assimilated into a single module for each. There were structural and administrative changes as well. Students were allowed to take the speaking

portion on a different day. Later, in 2001, the speaking part of the test included examiner scripts and a smaller number of tasks which were assessed by more certain criteria. In 2005, the fourth area of assessment was added –the writing section (manhattanreview.com).

According to the information posted on the official IELTS website, over 3 million candidates took IELTS tests last year. More than 1,200 test centres are located in over 140 countries providing IELTS examination services (takeielts.britishcouncil.org).

Over the last years the tests have been offered to take up to four times a month. IELTS is recognized and accepted by over 10,000 organizations worldwide, including universities, employers, professional bodies, immigration authorities and other government agencies (ielts.org).

The IELTS test is applicable for those candidates who intend to emigrate to English-speaking countries, e.g., the UK, Canada, Australia or New Zealand. All candidates who aim to study or work abroad can take the IELTS test as evidence of English language proficiency. An emigration to Canada, Australia or New Zealand is for well-to-do people wishing to invest in the economy of those countries. Old Believer, Pentecostals emigrated to the United States because of their religious convictions and Jews who have a close family relationship. A small amount of Ukrainians emigrate to English-speaking countries comparatively to the average people.

According to the information on the official website, there are both IELTS Academic and General Training. The Academic module is accepted by institutions, universities or various international organizations for undergraduate or postgraduate degrees, and for professional registration. General Training is suitable for those wishing to work outside their native country at positions without the necessity to demonstrate professional skills, to emigrate or to study at below degree level. This type of test focuses on necessary survival strategies in broad social and workplaces (ielts.org).

The certificate that proves the English level is required at many workplaces and universities in Ukraine as well, that is why this test remains popular among Ukrainians.

3. The General Reading Training Module

Firstly, in order to justify the need for diversification, the structure of the module will be presented. The General Training module consists of three reading excerpts. Each of the two first sections includes two texts, average in size, and the third part includes one longer text. The total number of questions to this Reading Module is forty, which corresponds to the number of questions at a real test. The preparation materials end with an answer list.

In this section the author is going to analyse the study material of the “Road to IELTS” General Training Reading Practice Test1 by the British Council.

The texts are presented in a range of topics e.g., instruction for school evacuation, business education, working conditions and calisthenics history.

Education, business and history are discussed using different types of sentences e.g.: Simple sentences: “Teachers will take the class rolls.” (Abdullah M.: 2), “Take the fear out of talking to large gatherings of people.” (Abdullah M.: 4).

Compound sentences: “A fair dismissal is legally and contractually strong and it means all the necessary procedures have been correctly followed.” (Abdullah M.,:8), “This expression has travelled through centuries and continents, and the source of this envy and admiration is the calisthenics method.” (Abdullah M.,: 10).

Complex sentences: “It is vital that the employer pays attention to the physical setting such as workplace design, the office environment, and placement of monitors as well as the

organization of the work and individual work habits.” (Abdullah M.,: 7), “These body builders also relied on free weights and machines, which allowed them to target and bloat the size of individual muscles rather than develop a naturally proportioned body.” (Abdullah M.,:11).

There are following parts of speech which are used in this texts e.g., the category of number of the Noun e.g., “rings”, “bags”, “obligations” (Abdullah M.,:2,4), the category of Comparison of the Adjectives and/or Adverbs e.g., “unsatisfactory”, “accommodated”, “proportioned”, “most physically” [Abdullah M, p. 7, 11], different types of Pronouns e.g., Relative: “who” (Abdullah M.,:11), Demonstrative: “this” (Abdullah M.,:8), “that” (Abdullah M.,:10), Reciprocal: “another” [Abdullah M, p. 8], Reflexive: “itself” (Abdullah M.,:10).

The verbal category of Tense (Present, Past, Future) e.g., “informed” (Abdullah M.,:10), the verbal category of Voice (Active, Passive) e.g., “has improved” (Abdullah M.,:8), “is called”, “is made”, “was comprised” (Abdullah M.,:8,10), The verbal category of Perfect e.g., “has improved”, “have been shifting” (Abdullah M.,: 8, 11), the verbal category of Aspect (The Common Aspect and The Continuous Aspect) e.g., “Bodybuilding approaches”, “were building” (Abdullah M.,:10, 11), Non-finite verb form (the Participle, the Gerund, the Infinitive) e.g., “to appear”, “to have taken”, “hearing”, “have been followed” (Abdullah M.,:8).

The texts of this module consist of morphological word structures (Simple, Derived and Compound stems) e.g.: “think”, “historical”, “public-speaking”, “widely-regarded” (Abdullah M.,:4,10).

These texts are presented in everyday vocabulary. There are some specific terms that correspond to the topics. E.g., “employer obligations” (Abdullah M.,:4), “visual display unit” (Abdullah M.,:7), “a formal appeal hearing”, “an improvement note”, “a breach of contract”, “a written warning” (Abdullah M.,:8), “athleticism” (Abdullah M.,:10), “bodybuilding”, “sophisticated calisthenics”, “anabolic steroids”, “synthetic hormones” (Abdullah M.,:11). A word may be used in a full or short, e.g., “quadrangle – quad” (Abdullah M.,:4).

On the average there are 6-7 questions to each text but 12 questions are given to the fifth text in comparison with the first four texts. The questions to this module can be classified by their types. There are three types of questions presented in this practice test. A candidate should complete sentences or the summary choosing no more than two or three words depending on the task. The total number of questions of such a type is 15 and they are to be put in the reading sections 1, 2 and 3. Next, the True/False/Not Given type refers to the six questions of section one. The third type is a variety of matching tasks with headings or statements. There are 19 questions of this task type and they are asked in sections 2 and 3.

On comparing the tasks to these texts, we can observe the increase of number of questions to the last text.

First, the sentences have to be completed in the first eight questions of section 1. It is possible to select no more than three words. These questions reflect the information given in the text. That is why there is no challenge in understanding the content; however, there are questions where information is paraphrased e.g. a phrase “vacate the premises” in the text corresponds to “leave the building” in the third question (Abdullah M.,:2-3). Most of the tasks are easy to understand, though the fifth question combines two items from the text that may cause some kind of confusion.

This first text of section 1 includes 15 items that are preceded by a paragraph. The total number of simple sentences is 15, that is the highest number. By contrast, there are only two compound and six complex sentences. Since this is an instruction, the first paragraph consists of the information targeted at everybody on the school campus.

Second, there are six statements (questions 9-14) referring to the second text and expressed by the simple sentences and a candidate should write True/False/Not given depending on the information that is given in the text. To a certain extent, question thirteen is challenging because it says: “a specific website” but the expression in the text is: “web technologies”. Candidates may think that “web technologies” is the same as “a specific website”; however, the answer is False.

Since the expression “web technologies” is a specific term people who are not familiar with the computer field may be puzzled by that statement and select an incorrect answer (Abdullah M.,:4-5). This second text of section 1 is presented in five short informational paragraphs about different business courses. The paragraphs are not connected to each other by linking words or phrases. There are three simple and two complex sentences unlike the compound sentence that is only one in this text.

Third, seven questions (questions 15-21) follow the third text. They are presented in the form of simple sentences. The text is divided into seven paragraphs A-G and a candidate should select the correct heading for each section from the given list of headings. However, there are ten headings on the list, which is more than the number of sections in the text. The complex sentences are in the majority unlike the simple and compound sentences that are in equal numbers.

Fourth, the questions to this excerpt are divided into two types (questions 22-23 and 24-28). A candidate should complete two complex sentences and select no more than three words from the text for the answer. The second question type of these questions is the description of the ways of the dismissal, composed by compound and complex sentences. A candidate should match the correct description that is an equivalent to A-E (Abdullah M.,:8-9).

The questions to this text are challenged by non-finite forms of verbs. The text consists of two subsections with three paragraphs in each including one big paragraph. This reading passage consists mostly of simple and complex sentences.

Fifth, the questions to the third reading excerpt consist of two task types (questions 29-35, 36-40). The text has eight paragraphs and each of them is marked by letters A-H. In the first part of the question types, a candidate should determine which of the paragraphs contains the information that is given in the statements. There is stable growth of the question length from 29 to 35 numbers. An answer to question 31 is not easy to find in the text. Candidates may only guess that the correct answer is having the keyword in the question (Abdullah M.,:13).

The second type of questions in this section is completing the summary. No more than two words from the text should be selected. There are some words in the questions different from the words used in the text e.g. the word “poor” from the question corresponds to “weak” from the text; “progress” – “graduate”; “those recovering” – “people recuperating”, “an attractive-looking body” – “physical beauty” respectively. Understanding of the word “recuperating” might be challenging as not used frequently though it can be grasped from the context. (Abdullah M.,:10-14).

The text consists of one short, four average and three long paragraphs. The types of sentences in this text are presented in simple (10), compound (4) and complex (26) sentences. Thus, this reading excerpt is obviously challenging.

The texts in the first section consist of a greater number of simple sentences than compound and complex. By contrast, the texts in the second and third reading sections mostly consist of complex sentences, compared to simple and compound sentences.

This preparation material from the Reading module was composed mostly on the basis of the British English variant because the three out of five texts of this preparation material

are British. Apart from that, there are two texts that are written in American English. This is demonstrated through the following examples: “ext.99”(Abdullah M.,:2) – 999 is the official emergency number for the United Kingdom, “Ms Randall” (Abdullah M.,:2) – an English surname occasionally Scottish.

“Community Education” prices of courses are in ‘\$’ which is American; “GST” – means sales tax which is used in the USA (Abdullah M.,:4), “VDU (visual display unit)” is a British term (Abdullah M.,:7), “dismissed from work” (Abdullah M.,:8) is a British term because the US expression of this meaning is “fired”. There are some names of famous Americans in this text, e.g., “Angelo Siciliano – Charles Atlas”, “Arnold Schwarzenegger and Sergio Oliva” (Abdullah M.,:11).

As one can see, a challenge presents from the first reading section to the last one. That is marked in the morpho-syntactic structures and lexical meanings used in all five reading excerpts. It may be seen in a lot of non-finite forms and modal verbs which are included in the second section.

The reading excerpts in the second section do not have many compound words; however, these texts contain more derived Adjectives and Adverbs. The last text contains many specific sports terms and advanced vocabulary.

4. The Academic Reading “Practice Tests with Key”

This preparation material of the Academic Reading Module contains six tests with three excerpts in each test.

The topics reflect such types of non-fiction thematic sphere as Music, Children’s Literature, History and Archaeology, Social Issues, Science, Cultural Life, Language, Medicine, Nature, Art, Humanity, Psychology, IT and computer science, Business, Sports, Family and Relationships.

There are different types of sentences in the texts of this module e.g., Simple sentence: “This will be hotly debated at the British Association for the Advancement of Science” (*Harrison M. et al., 2006: 100*). Compound sentences: “There is an awful lot of bad science going on in alternative medicine and the general public has a hard time to distinguish between scientific myth and fact.” (*Harrison M. et al., 2006: 101*), “They worked in collaboration and each offered the other editorial help” (*Harrison M. et al., 2006: 116*).

Complex sentences: “Less than a quarter thought that therapies such as aromatherapy, homoeopathy and spiritual healing should get any funding” (*Harrison M. et al., 2006: 101*), “Let me know what you think of it and be honest because any other kind of opinion would be of no value to me.” (*Harrison M. et al., 2006: 116*).

There are various parts of speech used in these texts e.g., the category of number of the Noun e.g., “clouds”, “stages”, “names”, “children” (*Harrison M. et al., 2006: 105-106*), the category of Comparison of the Adjectives and/or Adverbs e.g., “earlier”, “more scientifically minded”, “better”, “most”, the simplest” (*Harrison M. et al., 2006: 105-106*), different types of Pronouns e.g., Interrogative: “which, what, whose, why, how” (*Harrison M. et al., 2006: 105-106*), Demonstrative: “that, this” (*Harrison M. et al., 2006: 105-106*), Reflexive: “itself”, “herself” (*Harrison M. et al., 2006:33, 105*).

The verbal category of Tense (Present, Past, Future) e.g., “Howard devised”, “Howard then went on” (*Harrison M. et al., 2006: 106*), the verbal category of Voice (Active, Passive) e.g., “had been speaking”, “clouds continually unite”, “clouds were formed”, “had been reached”,

“their forms, though shapeless and unresolved, had at last, it seemed, been securely grasped” (Harrison M. et al., 2006: 105-106). The verbal category of Perfect e.g., “has caused”, “have studied” (Harrison M. et al., 2006: 121,124), the verbal category of Aspect (The Common Aspect and The Continuous Aspect) e.g., “feel”, “are doing”. Non-finite verb form (the Participle, the Gerund, the Infinitive) e.g., “to insist”, “had this been the case” (Harrison M. et al., 2006: 105-106).

There are different morphological word structures in these texts (Simple, Derived and Compound stems) e.g.: “provide”, “seriously”, “intermediate”, “lifespan”, “thumbprint”, “nimbostratus” (Harrison M. et al., 2006: 105,120).

Abbreviations: “6.5 C” (Harrison M. et al., 2006: 105), some more examples: “NBC (National Broadcasting Company)” (Harrison M. et al., 2006: 25), “Nasa’s, BBC” (Harrison M. et al., 2006: 72), “American Psychological Association (APA), APA conference” (Harrison M. et al., 2006: 124), “R&D stands for Research and Development, PhD, Intel (short for Integrated Electronics)” (Harrison M. et al., 2006: 144), “UK” (Harrison M. et al., 2006: 157), “BOOT (Building, Own, Operate, and Transfer)” (Harrison M. et al., 2006: 162).

The lexical means of these texts correspond to the topics. Taking as an example the text on “Classification of clouds” one observes that the vocabulary is rich. Special terminology derived from Latin such as “Cirrus”, “Cumulus”, “Stratus”, “Nimbus” are used (Harrison M. et al., 2006: 106). The choice of words depends on several facts like genre, theme, purpose, audience. There are examples of literary terms like “motive”, “novel”, “tales”, “adult fiction”, “juvenile fiction or romance”, “classic children’s fiction”, “archetype” (Harrison M. et al., 2006: 33-34).

In the textbook, there are six test variants of Academic Reading Module units for practice that are similar to the real IELTS test. Each test contains three excerpts that are taken from the books written by specialists in their field, from newspapers and journals. For example, the text on “Emigration to the US” is taken from historical work by Hugh Brogan (Harrison M. et al., 2006: 66-67,121).

This claim, however, is open to doubt because the texts are complex for the average participant. This pattern of the challenge of the text is observed for all the texts from the beginning to the end of the textbook. The authors of this textbook adopted texts for a wider audience taking out specific details of professional interest from the original texts. For example, the text on “Psychology and personality assessment” was adopted in order to suit the wider audience (Harrison M. et al., 2006: 141-142).

Taking into consideration that practice material consists of six typical IELTS tests, a table is presented in order to give an overall view of the principles of text construction (Table 1).

Table 1

The principles of the text construction in the Academic Reading

Number of excerpts	Number of paragraphs	Number of simple sentences	Number of compound sentences	Number of complex sentences	Total number
1.1	7	5	17	14	36
1.2	7	4	7	24	35
1.3	6	4	9	21	34
2.1	4	7	11	15	33
2.2	8	17	6	22	45

Table 1 (continuance)

2.3	4	1	4	24	29
3.1	8	5	10	33	48
3.2	10	3	11	22	36
3.3	6	0	3	25	28
4.1	6	4	9	26	38
4.2	8	9	5	24	38
4.3	8	3	8	31	42
5.1	4	4	11	17	32
5.2	7	1	2	24	27
5.3	8	8	11	28	47
6.1	8	11	12	31	54
6.2	5	5	11	27	43
6.3	5	2	9	25	36
Total	119	93	156	433	681

The table demonstrates that there is no dynamic inside a single test and in a set of tests. The average number of paragraphs is either six or seven and it does not depend on the order of excerpts inside the test. Most of the texts consist primarily of compound and complex sentences. The data prove the challenging of the content of the texts in the Academic Reading Module.

In each test, there are 40 questions to three long and complex texts and one hour is allowed for accomplishing all the tasks. The number of questions is allotted to three excerpts in the following manner: 13 questions (1-13) to the first passage, then again 13 questions (14-26) to the second excerpt and 14 questions (27-40) to the third excerpt. There are 14 tasks that are used 49 times in different combinations. The list of task types for the Reading Module differs from the task types in the Listening Module.

New tasks for the Reading Module are as follows: matching information to a paragraph, matching heading to a paragraph, True/False/Not given, Yes/No/Not given. The tasks on note/flow chart completion, labelling a diagram, classification, multiple choice, matching statement to the opinion, and a short answer are the same. The number of tasks varies from two to three tasks in each test with the exception of the third test for the second excerpt of which four tasks are allotted.

The tasks on matching are used twelve times, then the sentence completion task is assigned six times. Summary completion, True/False/Not given, Yes/No/Not given, and labelling diagram tasks are used four times respectively.

The tasks test the examinee's ability to express the main idea, opinions, facts and to demonstrate full understanding of the complex sections of the text. For example, the matching of statements to the opinion is given in test 1; excerpt 1 where the text has seven paragraphs marked by letters A-G. An examinee has to complete five sentences by selecting five correct letters from these seven available options in order to complete these sentences (*Harrison M. et al., 2006: 28*).

The order of sentences and their vocabulary differ from the order of information and vocabulary given in the text and it makes the task challenging. Thus, there are such words in the task as "doubted, reason, effectiveness, suitable, scepticism, reluctance" that are not used in the text (*Harrison M. et al., 2006: 24-25*).

Another example is a multiple-choice task. In test five, excerpt two, an examinee is to select three correct letters from six statements that are paraphrased. Thus, the text says: "Psychologists would disclaim the possession of any superior skills in judging their fellow-men" the incorrect statement states that "many of them accept that their conclusions are unreliable" (Harrison M. et al., 2006: 141,143).

It is an inevitable situation in such task types as multiple choice, matching, Yes/No/Not given, True/False/Not given and even in sentence completion where paraphrases are widely used. Vocabulary in these sentences or options of these tasks is different from what is used in the text, with a rare exception. In the completion summary task, the task requires to use the words from the given text only in one case (Harrison M. et al., 2006: 26).

But in other three cases the task requires to select words from the given box that contains twenty words and almost all of them are not used in the given texts, with three exceptions (Harrison M. et al., 2006: 80,126,147). For example, one rare exception is in the text on "Think happy." One word "cost" out of twenty in the box of the task is used in the text and in the summary for answer (Harrison M. et al., 2006: 147).

In some cases the tasks require to use the words from the text in such a task type as sentence completion (Harrison M. et al., 2006: 72,99,126,167), flow chart / note completion (Harrison M. et al., 2006: 98,118), short answer questions (Harrison M. et al., 2006: 40,123,138), labelling diagram (Harrison M. et al., 2006: 76,107,123,163), and classification (Harrison M. et al., 2006: 118).

The tests are accompanied by keys that help learners. In a few cases, unfortunately, the given answers may be misleading. Thus, in test 5, excerpt 2, the letters of paragraphs are mixed up in the answers to questions 21, 25 and 26 p (Harrison M. et al., 2006: 232).

The texts from this study material include different variants of English, e.g., the names of historical places, events, dates and terms like "steamers and steam trains, Industrial Revolution, feudal dues" (Harrison M. et al., 2006: 66-67). "Classification of clouds" describes the event that took place in London, in 1802 (Harrison M. et al., 2006:105-106).

Among eighteen texts from the Academic Reading Module there are four texts (22.2 %) where events took place in the USA or the texts written by authors from the USA; one text (5.56 %) describes Australian a historical event, one text (5.56 %) is written by a Canadian author. Twelve texts (66.6 %) are written by British writers or about events that took place in the UK. So, most of the texts are written in British English.

To sum up, this training material is appropriate for the learners who would be able to understand the content of the test, see the principles of structuring and use their knowledge to prepare for the examination. However, these samples of the tests are not compiled according to the regional European English variant.

5. Conclusions

The study findings show variability of themes, grammatical constructions especially in the Academic Module and a wide range of vocabulary.

The tests of both the General Training and the Academic Reading Module are examples of original IELTS tests and are presented in the same format as the IELTS test. Therefore, the analyzed materials are useful for preparation for the IELTS test.

The overall focus of real tests is to prepare students for the IELTS test and to help them to assess how well they can demonstrate understanding of ideas, opinions, and arguments,

evaluate the content, organize and express answers using language according to the tasks in a correct form and meaning.

The results of these studies demonstrate that the majority of listening and reading practice materials is selected on the basis of the British English variant. That is why we claim that the composition of IELTS tests needs to be modified in the context of the World Englishes Paradigm. This modification should be adopted according to the features of the regional English variant. Variations of IELTS test in accordance with socio-ethnic and socio-professional attributes may help the task takers achieve the highest test results. The current patterns may not meet the students' needs. However, this research argues that the needs of students have to be met.

So, looking at the IELTS tests from the perspectives of a functional-pragmatic approach, one may realize the need for changes of the IELTS approach to the testing of international students.

Considering the concept of the World Englishes Paradigm, it is suggested that the content of the Reading module of the IELTS test should include not only the content of the EL variant but also the regional European English variant. The materials of the Reading Section should be composed taking into consideration the European reality or those countries where the Ukrainians most likely will go to.

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