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**ON THE WAY TO ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES COURSE
MODULE TESTS IMPROVEMENT**

The article objective. Taking into account that studying a foreign language (and not only in a higher education establishment) has to develop all sorts of language activity, the module tests are expected to contain, Speaking, Reading, Listening, Writing and Use of English tasks. In real life though (and it is frequently even declared in academic programs) the structure of the tests usually lacks the parts aimed at assessing all these activities. The author tries to back up the promotion of differentiating the language activities appropriately by designing relevant and valid tests for scaling students' skills against the accepted criteria.

Listening tasks. CEFR introduces can-do statements for the assessment of listening skills and following the Ukrainian authorities' requirements for university graduates achievements in foreign language skills to be not lower than at B2 level, we suggest that the CEFR B2-C2 scales should be considered when adjusting to our the assessment of our students' listening skills [1:Table 2.26].

Other internationally recognized exams experiences: the tasks check comprehension of only authentic and out-of-textbooks materials, such as soundtracks from radio or TV shows, internet podcasts, etc. (this factor is also important for testing reading skills); the availability of the model (the example of the expected answer) prevents the students' misunderstanding before they perform the task. With simplification of administering listening through the multimedia usage another point of discussion which arises is the opportunity to listen to the text more than twice or just once (saving the time for other tasks).

Reading tasks. According to CEFR the basic principle for reading skills assessment is supposed to be the text type, which helps the testee to choose the approach to reading, the choice of strategy – consciously or subconsciously – while performing the task [1:Table 2.27].

It is also important that the tasks in reading part of the test would be directed at the assessment of different types of reading (scanning, skimming, search reading, reading for details, for a gist, etc.).

Use of English tasks. The main difference of these tasks from the reading ones is that they are not aimed at checking reading skills or strategies, therefore putting the task into the context which is comparatively easy for understanding, without any unknown words, if they are not directly tested. So the task implies reading and comprehension of the context, at the same time the context is supposed to be considerably easier than in Reading task, as it is not the text being the main part for testing, but a grammar structure, word form or lexical unit.

Writing tasks. Grading the students' writing skills and thus elaborating clear criteria seem to be the issue of eternal concern. The task formulation complexity (in fact, Reading and especially Use of English skills are also important while the performance) should be taken into account. For the provision of appropriate interpretation of the language skills level the respective recommendations are stated by CEFR [1:61].

The standardized Writing task format can be of great help for rating the task achievement. That is, for instance, the clear definition of two main parts widely used in the task itself: a rubric and a prompt that basically perform different functions. In some cases though they coincide, therefore becoming the combinations of instructions, and bringing additional problems for the rater.

Speaking tasks. As it has been mentioned, testing ESP speaking skills appears to be both the most challenging point for the discussion in methodological literature. We suggest that the well-known “presentation methodology” should be saved for the summative speaking assessment, where the audience (students) can actually help an instructor to assess the presenter. But how “to sit on two chairs”

playing a role of both an interlocutor and rater while testing speaking at the modular control? Having more and more students with sufficient English-speaking background, the author tries to implement Western experience of pairing students for the interaction according to the instruction.

Conclusions. Even superficial analysis of the methodological literature demonstrates the utmost importance of the coordination the efforts for at least structural agreement on modular tests tasks. The so-called “wash-back effect” of the test would motivate instructors and students to pay attention to all the kinds of language activities appropriately. We have a strong belief that suggested changes are to be encouraged under an agreement with the Ukrainian Ministry of Education. Our task is to gain experience in producing test specifications, guidelines for item writers and sample test tasks. The outcomes produced along the project (Reading, Writing, Listening, Use of English and Speaking tasks) are supposed to be tested on large samples of students similar to those who would take the tests in the future. The project would also plan to train raters of students’ spoken and written performance, and develop in-service training courses for instructors of English, to help them become aware of the demands of modern European tests of English, and how best to prepare their students for such tests. To support the test stake-holders (participants of the testing process, and other people concerned) the authorities have to publish the tasks developed and/or piloted, followed by appropriate recommendations.

Literature

1. Council of Europe Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. - Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. – 260 p.