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UNCLOAKING IELTS

INTERNATIONAL TEST OR EXCLUSION THREAT?

Huong Ngo¹

Abstract: *Within recent decades, the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) has enjoyed a soar in popularity, culminating in its current dominant power in the language proficiency testing market. Although IELTS claims to be international and inclusive, research has shown that it can unfairly disadvantage learners of non-native backgrounds. Jenkins (2006), and McKinley and Thompson (2018), among others, have voiced about how high-stakes examinations like IELTS favour candidates who conform to native-like norms over competent users of World Englishes. That is, students are tested not on their real communicative competence, but rather, on how accurately they can imitate the idealized native English forms. Given that IELTS has been the gatekeeper to so many people's learning and work opportunities, this research seeks to add weight to the fight for fairness and legitimate rights of English as a lingua franca (ELF) speakers in the IELTS test. It first looks at IELTS from a critical, World-Englishes perspective, followed by a detailed analysis of how each component of the test might discourage international test takers. The realities of IELTS available materials and preparation practices in Vietnam are also taken into account, accompanied by suggestions to make the test more inclusive.*

Keywords: *IELTS, English as a lingua franca, inclusivity, linguistic justice.*

INTRODUCTION

Within recent decades, the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) has enjoyed a soar in popularity, culminating in its current dominant power in the language proficiency testing market. Indeed, statistics reveal that IELTS is probably the most widely accepted global English-language test. Despite the inherent limitations associated with such standardized tests, IELTS is still considered the most robust and fairest of its kind (O'Sullivan, 2018). Unfortunately, my personal experience and a growing body of literature on the validity of this test have led me to question its degree of fairness and its possible threat to put international candidates at a disadvantage.

In my humble 5-year working experience as an IELTS tutor, I have coached both high school students, almost all of whom possess quite native-like accents (those of standard accents such as American or British) thanks to their early exposure to English, and adults who are perfectly capable of daily as well as professional interaction, yet typified with their Vietnamese variety

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accent of English. Understandably, the highly educated adult group usually demonstrates far better speaking performance than their younger counterparts regarding both familiar and abstract academic topics. However, the IELTS speaking results often fail to do justice to their abilities, with the former questionably scoring lower or equal points to the latter and consequently ending up with a frustrating jagged score profile. Similar complaints and confusion are also voiced and felt among colleagues and other adult test takers, as reflected in the substantial number of social media posts about enquiry on the IELTS result (Pearson, 2019). This leads me to assume that IELTS is not international and inclusive as it claims to be.

My doubts are confirmed by the ongoing research revealing how high-stakes examinations like IELTS favour candidates who conform to native-like norms over competent users of World Englishes (Jenkins, 2006; McKinley & Thompson, 2018; Jenkin & Leung, 2019; Michell, 2021). In other words, students are tested not on their actual communicative competence, but rather, on how accurately they can imitate the idealized native English forms. This is distressing, given that IELTS is now one of the powerful gatekeepers to global mobility opportunities, meaning that numerous English learners of the Expanding, Outer or even within the Inner circle are being deprived of their chance for study, work or immigration.

Therefore, with this research paper, I seek to add weight to the relentless fight for fairness and legitimate rights of English as a lingua franca (ELF) speakers in the IELTS test. To this end, I will first look at IELTS from a critical, world-Englishes perspective, followed by a detailed analysis of how each test component might discourage international test takers. The realities of IELTS's available materials and preparation practices in Vietnam are also taken into account, and suggestions are accompanied.

IELTS AND WORLD ENGLISHES

The power of IELTS

Being accepted by over 9000 institutions in over 140 countries and with over 2.5 million tests taken globally (statistics as of 2015 from IELTS official website, now has risen to 3.5 million), IELTS is the most “powerful test of a powerful language” (Hamid, 2016). Over 40 years of development, IELTS has extended from its original role of assessing language skills appropriate for tertiary study (its predecessor ELTS), and acquired other functions (O’Sullivan, 2018). Specifically, apart from regulating the international flows of people for migration and academic study, IELTS also shapes the destinies of those searching for domestic jobs or wanting to be promoted in their professions, for example. One salient example of the dominant status of IELTS over other proficiency tests is seen in the Australian government’s decision to make IELTS the sole language assessment test for prospective migrants, leading to a double in its candidature the following year (Ahern, 2009). That is to say; this single test has amassed a huge influence on the life chances of millions, a significant influence on the life chances of millions and, gradually monopolised the language testing landscape, especially in Asian countries.

Along with this exponential rise in popularity, proportional attention should be paid to the wide-ranging detrimental effects of IELTS. For one thing, Shohamy (2001) raises concerns that tests are often “not used to measure knowledge but rather as a key to some bureaucratic agenda, such as gate-keeping the very people that the bureaucrats wish to exclude”. If placed in a broader field of linguistic imperialism, IELTS can be considered a part of the neo-liberal agenda (Phillipson, 2008). To put it simply, IELTS has been widely entrenched and served as a tool for the neoliberal empires to accept or reject people, on the grounds of their test results which do not necessarily reflect their performance. In the following sections, further issues will be discussed to support such claim about this test.

The English language proficiency in IELTS

According to Humphreys *et al.* (2012), IELTS is an international test of English language proficiency that is typically based on native speakers’ standard English (Brown, 2020). However, with a test designed to measure each language skill separately and out of context like IELTS, it is doubtful that the results can genuinely reflect test takers’ proficiency. To elaborate, it is first necessary to be especially clear about the term *proficiency*. Brown (2020) contends that there are two essential components or requirements that a person is expected to meet to be considered proficient in a skill. That is, knowledge and skill (competence), and the ability to combine the two (performance). In this sense, a proficient user of English should not only be familiar with the English language system, but is also capable of applying that knowledge in real-life situations.

Regarding IELTS, it is certainly true that the competence part is present, since the tester measure many discrete skills, both receptive (listening and reading) and productive (speaking and writing), and the results can be compared with a prescribed band descriptor, indicating 9 different levels of competence. In contrast, performance – the ability to deal with real-life interactions, cannot be captured in standardized, proficiency tests like IELTS (Davies, 2007). The effective communication process can only be observed in real-life, or at least in simulated situations, when interlocutors are motivated to respond, negotiate meaning and maintain the conversation. In IELTS, the writing tasks, especially Task 1, are imposed on test takers without creating the need for them to act out of a dialogue. Similarly, the speaking test is also pressurized with examiners taking the superior role, interrogating candidates, and thus leaves no room for real communication.

The predictive validity of IELTS

Since IELTS does not necessarily demonstrate the English language proficiency of students, its predictive validity could be better (Dooley & Oliver, 2002; Pilcher & Richards, 2017). Especially regarding the IELTS test for Academic purposes, the academic aspect has not been properly examined. The correlation between scores and academic performance is low, which led Pilcher and Richards to challenge IELTS as a predictor of educational preparedness. They argue that language and content are not separate entities, and it is irrational to equate the English of IELTS to the English needed for higher education. For one thing, the vocabulary in standardized tests only represent the neutralized, dictionary definition, and do not likely carry the connotations associated with a particular profession. Knowing the word ‘labor’, for instance, in its general sense does not mean knowing the word in obstetrics major. This explains why some of the best students on the

field are stuck with the worst IELTS scores, from the researchers' observation. The test itself would be assessing elements that penalized potential experts in their field. Interestingly, Davies (2007) also notes that IELTS tells more about students' pre-study ability, than the in-study performance. All this evidence is to highlight the fact that IELTS is not inclusive, as it can inadvertently veto people who rightly deserve the study or work opportunities and who, given a chance, can succeed in their career.

The norms in IELTS

Another thorny issue which exerts profoundly unfavorable impacts on international test takers is the native speaker bias in the test. In the real world where most of the English communication takes place among non-native speakers, learners are highly likely to find themselves interact with multilingual English users from other first languages. Even in tertiary education institutions in America, England or Australia where one might expect to blend in with the natives, the chance of them encountering international students are more likely, due to the intensified globalization and commercialization of education in these countries. In this context, testing should take a pluralistic view of English that rejects the outdated monolithic L1 speaker norms (McKinley & Thompson, 2018). However, the norm-referenced IELTS exam does not portray the rich body of English varieties spoken and used globally, as students are being assessed against traditional English-speaking countries standards (Hamid, 2014). As Khan (2009) suggests, high-stakes test such as IELTS are inclined towards 'colonial Englishes', and show favoritism for test takers who have been primarily exposed to the mainstream American or British versions of English – a view shared by Davies, Lyons and Kemp (2003). McKinley and Thompson (2018) are also critical of the mechanism that deliberately puts users of World Englishes at a disadvantage, while reward students who can imitate native-like norms. This is fueled by the prevalent second language learning practices which misguide students to believe that the ideal end destination in their English learning journey is to reach native speaker standards, typically the inner-circle models. Millions of learners, therefore, have to cut feet to fit in the shoes of these privileged speakers.

However, the problem here is that, as Brown (2020) argues, the established aim of proficiency tests towards Standard English or native speaker model is unrealistic, as both of the targets are idealized, and it is therefore, futile to expect learners to reach such ideals. Even the term native speaker is elusive and has not yet been concretely defined. Brown even emphasizes in the 2018 paper that, IELTS and other English Language Proficiency tests should *never* be used as international language tests. He lists a number of convincing reasons, one strong example being that "they are currently mostly focused on the ability of students to understand and produce the English of native speakers of the inner-circle Englishes, especially British and North America".

Learners' rights

The next evidence that shows the non-negotiable power of IELTS is the limited, if any, performance feedback to test takers. In fact, after approximately two weeks waiting for the test, all that candidates receive is a piece of paper showing the outcomes condensed into a single set of scores matched to brief prescribed descriptions of proficiency, which should be considered a violation to learners' right (O'Sullivan, 2012). Those clear-cut numbers do not offer students any

insight into their performance or the way they have been evaluated during the test, especially for the Speaking and Writing skills where there is a degree of subjectivity involved. Thus, they can end up feeling confused or frustrated, not knowing where and how to improve their performance, whether a single aspect contributes to their underperformance or there are other inherent wider issues at play. This is unjust as test takers should have the rights in receiving a more detailed feedback or to retake a test (O'Sullivan, 2012). There should be more transparency for the marking procedure, so as to make sure no candidate is unfairly marked based on their cultural or social backgrounds. Pearson (2019) further argues that test takers themselves are consenting victims to the dominant power of IELTS, thus calling testers to take the voice and input of the examinees into consideration when building the test.

DETAILED ANALYSIS OF THE FOUR TESTED COMPONENTS OF IELTS

Having presented certain issues with the test overall, I now delve further into the four skills in the IELTS test, viewed also through the lens of World Englishes. Despite the aforementioned criticism towards IELTS as being elitist and prejudiced against users of non-prestige varieties of English, positive changes for a more pluricentric test in IELTS policy in recent years should be acknowledged and praised. Specifically, Hu (2012) has applauded IELTS for its attempt to employ more proficient examiners from non-inner circle countries. Another step away from the strict norms of native speakers, though not too radical, is that IELTS compilers have incorporated materials that represent social and regional variations of the inner-circle varieties, aiming to widen the norms used in test materials (Taylor, 2002). In addition, McKinley and Thompson (2018) also points out that IELTS has deliberately left out some (not all) mentions of L1 or L1-like use of English in the band assessment in an attempt to shift the focus on to the operational language command. However, there is still a long way until IELTS can truly carry the international spirit, as a move away from the Anglophone inner circle hegemony necessitates the participation of partners from New Zealand, Africa and other World English communities, beside the incumbent UK and Australia IDP (Davies, 2007).

The good intention and awareness are there, but the explicit demonstration is questionable. First, as for the speaking test, IELTS and other standardized English proficiency tests still implicitly assume that L2 speakers will only interact with either native speakers or other L2 speakers who themselves adopt a native speaker variety (Jenkins & Leung, 2017). The test is designed in a top down structure, from 0 to idealized native standards at both ends. Right at the public speaking band descriptor (see Appendix 1), there are statements such as *produces consistently accurate structures apart from slips characteristic of native speaker speech* (Grammatical Range and Accuracy-band 9), and is *easy to understand throughout, L1 accent has minimal effect on intelligibility* (Pronunciation – band 8). This clearly reflects the entrenched non-native speaker prejudice and the unfair treatment towards those in the Outer or Expanding circles as illegitimate users of English. Besides, although I appreciate the effort to recruit more non-native examiners, I would argue that this just scratches the surface of the problem, not to mention that it can even give rise to many more complicated issues. It remains unknown whether IELTS examiners have been trained or at least aware about the issue of World Englishes, as the recruitment and training process published on its official page (<https://www.ielts.org/for-teachers/examiner-recruitment-and-training>) has no single

reference, and focuses instead on TESOL-related qualifications and experiences. At the same time, not much literature is available to the public about the multi-competence of examiners or how they rate different varieties of English. Supposed that IELTS examiners are informed of global English varieties, there is still no empirical evidence or guarantee that test takers' performance is judged fairly. An Indian examiner who have little exposure to the Vietnamese local varieties of English is bound to have difficulties understanding the candidate's accent, which inevitably leads to failure in communication and fair judgment.

My conviction is backed up by the latest research of Michell (2021). In her study, one of the seven experienced IELTS examiners from the UK confessed that even native speakers from North of England could not be rewarded high score since the examiner participant *felt* that the candidates' accents were quite strong. Another examiner, also a native speaker of English but based in China, commented that the intelligibility of one's accent depends enormously on how familiar examiners are to that accent. The interviewer with 10 years in China will mark differently from one with only 1 or 2 years' experience. Michell also criticizes that those with a higher prestige accent are often unfairly favored, as examiners can be impressed with the accent and ignore other linguistic deficiencies. This discrimination wrongfully disadvantages high-level English users from the outer-circle countries who are completely understandable and proficient but inclined to use expressions of their local norms. Furthermore, one aspect that shows cultural bias in the IELTS speaking test is that, candidates are asked about topics which are not familiar or relevant to their culture. For example, in Bangladesh, candidates are asked about pets, while it is unusual for the Bangladeshis to raise pets, which can hinder them from answering the questions (Michell, 2021).

Regarding the Writing skill, it is argued that a time-constrained IELTS essay test is minimally representative of academic writing as it features notable idiosyncrasies (Moore & Morton, 2005). As with the speaking topics, some writing task requirements are quite absurd, and not at all common for some cultures. For example, in the published Cambridge series, one writing task is to describe the evolution of the horse, with particular emphasis on the changing foot structure (see Appendix 2). Vietnamese people, for example, are admittedly not familiar with horses, and this kind of task can pose significant hindrance to the Viet test takers. Notably, there exists a discrepancy between culture-related writing styles, as demonstrated in the study of Nguyen & Nguyen (2022) in which the Vietnamese learners find it hard to switch to or adopt to the English academic writing discourse.

Turning to the receptive skills of Reading and Listening, the test format designed with only closed test questions is directed towards lower order thinking skills, that is, understanding and remembering factual knowledge only (Baghaei & Yamini, 2020), and therefore result is a weak predictor of academic success. The reading construct is rather limited in IELTS, since all three sections assess global comprehension at a local level (O'Sullivan, 2018). The listening test, as Uysal (2019) indicates, tends to boast the norms and contents of inner-circle Englishes. In an exploration of the IELTS carrier content, Noori and Mirhosseini (2021) have identified a number of representational biases for test takers in the outer-circle countries, such as the distant notions or unfamiliar cultural features, and an overwhelming majority of names and geographical places are Anglophone-centric.

IELTS PREPARATION MATERIALS AND TEACHING PRACTICES IN VIETNAM

Within the context of Vietnam, it can be said that IELTS has become an exponentially rising trend, with a staggering number of students in mushrooming IELTS preparation courses. The youngest candidates are in primary schools, which is ironic since this test is intended mainly as a screening tool for acceptance in higher education institutions' academic studies. Numerous shows (including even official TV programs like IELTS Face-off), channels, and websites have been created following the enormous attraction and economic potential of IELTS. Altogether - parents' choice, social expectations and especially the media - contribute to portraying IELTS as an indispensable step towards further academic or employment success, thus accentuating and perpetuating the imperial power of this test in Vietnam.

However, the washback effect, which is the influence of language testing on curriculum design, teaching practices and learning behaviors, should be investigated, so as not to further the monolithic power and, in a broader context, the linguistic imperialism in Vietnam. As observed by Andrew, Fullilove, & Wong (2002), the textbooks for specific skills and exam-oriented formats are favored for not only the preparation stage, but also the whole process of learning English. This is true in Vietnam context, where it is observed that some of the English centers and teachers turn to IELTS-oriented materials, even for beginner-level students. However, the language input and instruction in these books are insufficient and uninterestingly presented. More worryingly, teachers tend to abandon instructional goals in favor of test preparation, which puts more strain on learners (McKinley & Thompson, 2018). This will take tolls on learners' language skills, as the strain and poorly designed textbooks can discourage them from having any meaningful learning. In my view, some students are stuck in a vicious circle of learning English, attending class after class with no demonstrable improvements, partly due to the materials. This leads them to have a fear for IELTS, and eventually conflate the test with more power.

Besides, the content carrier of IELTS textbooks also largely conform to the native speakers' norms. The listening audios feature mostly accents of inner-circle speakers, and the sections of pronunciation or grammar follow strictly the prescribed English standards. Moore (2007) notices that books with titles such as 'Common mistakes at IELTS Advanced and how to avoid them' are getting popular. Such kinds of books provide prospective candidates with tips, advice on how to make their English not only understandable but also acceptable to the native speaker. Indeed, speaking English like an American or British has become so desirable that more and more, not only books but also other channels such as Youtube videos, forums,...are springing up at a remarkable rate, providing countless suggestions on how to speak or use English naturally like native speakers. Unfortunately, this all adds fuel to the rage of IELTS and its imperial power.

Another factor contributing to the rise of IELTS is the teachers themselves. Speaking session is often dedicated to one-on-one personal interrogation to simulate the IELTS test, which is understandable for intensive preparation for the test, but is not beneficial for long-term teaching since no real communication takes place in such interaction. From my observation, some students are also encouraged to learn by heart certain structures, or modal answers in the belief that these could be useful to raise their band score, leading them to rely on superficial memorization for the test. Furthermore, teachers tend to correct students' pronunciation if it deviates from the dictionary

version. However, it should be highlighted that as long as students' pronunciation does not affect their intelligibility, successful communication depends largely on accommodation when students can engage in meaningful negotiation with their partners (Jenkins, 2009).

In Nguyen's (2018) assessment of English as an international language, several common 'innovation' features ELF learners have been identified, including the tendency to drop the third person present tense –s, omit definite and indefinite articles. These are often shared among ELF community and are believed to rarely hinder communication. Nonetheless, most teachers of IELTS in particular, and EFL in general, still have the habit of correcting such 'mistakes', largely due to their unawareness towards World Englishes. This heightens students' impression that they are norm-dependent, and that they will be penalized if going off the beaten track.

SUGGESTIONS FOR A MORE INCLUSIVE IELTS TEST

IELTS has, and certainly will be dominating the language learning and testing landscape in the future. Therefore, despite the aforementioned criticism, it is irrational to abandon the test completely. Instead, if greater and broader awareness about World Englishes were to be raised, it is advisable that the test be modified in a way that promotes and celebrates the varieties of English. Hu (2012) has proposed certain changes in the assessment of ELF, in what he called a weak and strong approach. The weak approach is already happening in the current international standardized English proficiency tests, especially IELTS. Specifically, with this approach, although inner-circle varieties still make up the majority of the test's content carrier, some adjustments are in place to accommodate non-native speakers. These include the recruitment of highly proficient interlocutors from non-inner-circle countries and include their voice in the standard-setting exercises, or the removal of any possible culturally-biased elements in the test. However, Brown (2020) argues that such modifications can backfire and only continue the hegemony of native-speaker norms. As a result, stronger attempts must be considered. One proposal is to redefine the test construct so that it can be oriented towards ELF (Hu, 2012). This entails the contextualization of assessment to assess candidates' effectiveness in using English in a specific discourse community, rather than just their general English ability. Power should be reallocated to subject specialists, and measurement-related device should be combined with assessment-related tools to reflect the true functional ability of candidates (Sadeghi & Ghaderi, 2018). The speaking test, for example, can be set up so that examinees can take up various communicative roles, and rating should be based on fulfilment—whether the negotiation has been successful (Elder & Davies, 2006). Another recommendation for stronger performance assessment is to favor non-native test items over an idealized native speaker Standard English. For example, linguistic features shared by all standardized varieties of English like subject-verb agreement can be accepted in the test.

Additionally, Pearson (2019) also calls for a more democratic, humanistic and formative IELTS test. He advises that IELTS co-owners conduct routine global research to investigate learners' needs, concerns and feedback. IELTS should empower their candidates by offering more quality, free-to-access preparation materials, and regulate the test fees so that those who are economically underprivileged can attend the test.

Aside from changes within the test, changes in external factors should also take place simultaneously. That is to say, the media, language policy makers, textbook designers, and IELTS teachers, especially, should be made aware of the current international nature of English and validate the variants of non-inner-circle Englishes. In this way, IELTS learners can feel more confident, knowing that they are legitimate users of English and that their English is not 'broken' or inferior.

CONCLUSION

The heterogeneous reality of international English is an inevitable development, and a test with such dominant power and influence like IELTS should take the lead in changing to suit the current tides. Indeed, it is predicted that in the next 50 years or so, Asian people will take up the most significant number of English language users, rightfully determining the course of English (Graddol, 2006). Should IELTS or any other proficiency test wish to compete and survive in an increasingly diverse landscape, they must adapt themselves to be more inclusive and truly international. I believe this will do great justice to the relentless effort of World Englishes communities in the past four decades.

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APPENDIX 1. IELTS SPEAKING BAND DESCRIPTOR ([HTTPS://WWW.IELTS.ORG/-/MEDIA/PDFS/SPEAKING-BAND-DESCRIPTORS.ASHX](https://www.ielts.org/-/media/pdfs/speaking-band-descriptors.ashx))

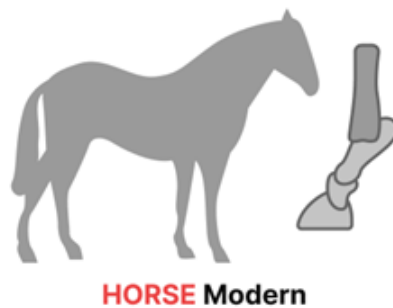


SPEAKING: Band Descriptors (public version)

Band	Fluency and coherence	Lexical resource	Grammatical range and accuracy	Pronunciation
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> speaks fluently with only rare repetition or self-correction; any hesitation is content-related rather than to find words or grammar speaks coherently with fully appropriate cohesive features develops topics fully and appropriately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses vocabulary with full flexibility and precision in all topics uses idiomatic language naturally and accurately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a full range of structures naturally and appropriately produces consistently accurate structures apart from 'slips' characteristic of native speaker speech 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a full range of pronunciation features with precision and subtlety sustains flexible use of features throughout is effortless to understand
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> speaks fluently with only occasional repetition or self-correction; hesitation is usually content-related and only rarely to search for language develops topics coherently and appropriately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a wide vocabulary resource readily and flexibly to convey precise meaning uses less common and idiomatic vocabulary skilfully, with occasional inaccuracies uses paraphrase effectively as required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a wide range of structures flexibly produces a majority of error-free sentences with only very occasional inappropriacies or basic/non-systematic errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a wide range of pronunciation features sustains flexible use of features, with only occasional lapses is easy to understand throughout; L1 accent has minimal effect on intelligibility
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> speaks at length without noticeable effort or loss of coherence may demonstrate language-related hesitation at times, or some repetition and/or self-correction uses a range of connectives and discourse markers with some flexibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses vocabulary resource flexibly to discuss a variety of topics uses some less common and idiomatic vocabulary and shows some awareness of style and collocation, with some inappropriate choices uses paraphrase effectively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a range of complex structures with some flexibility frequently produces error-free sentences, though some grammatical mistakes persist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> shows all the positive features of Band 6 and some, but not all, of the positive features of Band 8
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is willing to speak at length, though may lose coherence at times due to occasional repetition, self-correction or hesitation uses a range of connectives and discourse markers but not always appropriately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> has a wide enough vocabulary to discuss topics at length and make meaning clear in spite of inappropriacies generally paraphrases successfully 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a mix of simple and complex structures, but with limited flexibility may make frequent mistakes with complex structures, though these rarely cause comprehension problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a range of pronunciation features with mixed control shows some effective use of features but this is not sustained can generally be understood throughout, though mispronunciation of individual words or sounds reduces clarity at times
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> usually maintains flow of speech but uses repetition, self-correction and/or slow speech to keep going may over-use certain connectives and discourse markers produces simple speech fluently, but more complex communication causes fluency problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> manages to talk about familiar and unfamiliar topics but uses vocabulary with limited flexibility attempts to use paraphrase but with mixed success 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> produces basic sentence forms with reasonable accuracy uses a limited range of more complex structures, but these usually contain errors and may cause some comprehension problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> shows all the positive features of Band 4 and some, but not all, of the positive features of Band 6
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> cannot respond without noticeable pauses and may speak slowly, with frequent repetition and self-correction links basic sentences but with repetitious use of simple connectives and some breakdowns in coherence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is able to talk about familiar topics but can only convey basic meaning on unfamiliar topics and makes frequent errors in word choice rarely attempts paraphrase 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> produces basic sentence forms and some correct simple sentences but subordinate structures are rare errors are frequent and may lead to misunderstanding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a limited range of pronunciation features attempts to control features but lapses are frequent mispronunciations are frequent and cause some difficulty for the listener
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> speaks with long pauses has limited ability to link simple sentences gives only simple responses and is frequently unable to convey basic message 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses simple vocabulary to convey personal information has insufficient vocabulary for less familiar topics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> attempts basic sentence forms but with limited success, or relies on apparently memorised utterances makes numerous errors except in memorised expressions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> shows some of the features of Band 2 and some, but not all, of the positive features of Band 4
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> pauses lengthily before most words little communication possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> only produces isolated words or memorised utterances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> cannot produce basic sentence forms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> speech is often unintelligible
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no communication possible no ratable language 			
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> does not attend 			

APPENDIX 2. WRITING TASK 1 HORSE

The diagrams below show the development of the horse over a period of 40 million years. Summarise the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.



The evolution of the horse with particular emphasis on the changing foot structure

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Chịu trách nhiệm nội dung:

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Biên tập chuyên môn: PHẠM HỒNG VÂN

Biên tập xuất bản: PHAN HẢI NHƯ

Chế bản: ĐỖ THỊ HỒNG SÂM

Trình bày bìa: NGUYỄN NGỌC ANH

Đối tác liên kết: Phân hội nghiên cứu và giảng dạy Tiếng Anh VietTESOL

SÁCH LIÊN KẾT

VIETTESOL INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION 2023

ELT FOR 21ST CENTURY EXCELLENCE

Mã số: 2L-137ĐH2024

In 50 cuốn, khổ 21x29,7 cm tại Công ty TNHH In - Thương mại và dịch vụ Nguyễn Lâm

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Số xác nhận ĐKXB: 2358-2024/CXBIPH/09-220/ĐHQGHN, ngày 03/7/2024

Quyết định xuất bản số: 1266 LK-XH/QĐ-NXB ĐHQGHN, ngày 16/8/2024

In xong và nộp lưu chiểu năm 2024