

## **On the use of American English in preparation for the Unified State Exam in a foreign language**

Ivanova Oksana Yevgenyevna

*Candidate of Pedagogic Sciences, Associate Professor, Pyatigorsk State University*

Chechel Svetlana Viktorovna

*Candidate of Philological Sciences, Associate Professor, Pyatigorsk State University*

**Abstract:** Today, there is a lot of controversy about the admissibility of mixing regional variants of the English language in the preparation and delivery of the Unified State Exam in English. There is a contradiction between the requirements of regulatory documents and the reality associated with the language situation in the modern world. This article attempts to substantiate the need to allow the mixing of British and American English in the preparation and delivery of the Unified State Exam in English, and also suggests ways to solve the problem of using American English in the process of teaching English in secondary schools.

**Keywords:** English, Unified State Exam, American English, International Tests.

The history of using integrated systems for testing foreign language language and speech abilities goes back to the beginning of the last century. So, in 1908, the SAT examination format was first introduced, which assessed the grammatical and writing skills necessary for study in US universities. This testing system is still used today and is known under several names: SAT Reasoning Test, Scholastic Aptitude Test, etc. It was followed by numerous variations of testing systems proposed by both the ESOL division of the University of Cambridge (KET, PET, CAE, CPE) and alternative formats PTE, IELTS, TOEFL, etc.

The selection of testing materials and criteria for evaluating any system should be based on the concept of a language norm - a historically established set of elements of all three language levels (phonetic, lexical and grammatical) and the rules for their selection, determined by the communication situation, as well as by the codified standard of a certain historical period. A linguistic norm is a complex set of standards developed by a specific community under the influence of numerous extralinguistic factors. The language norm has the following characteristics:

1. the generally accepted and obligatory nature of the basic norms as a condition for the regulation of the linguistic activity of the community;
2. the relative stability of norms over fairly long historical periods of time;

3. the presence of a literary basis as a standard of codification for a given historical period;

4. dynamic character, which is based on the inevitable development and change of the language in the diachronic sense;

5. close correlation of linguistic and cultural-aesthetic processes taking place in society;

6. the potential for the emergence and development of so called "linguistic pluralism", which is based on divergent processes of a historical, political or other kind.

The last thesis makes it possible to substantiate the emergence of numerous variants of the English language that exist today. This "linguistic pluralism" is a reflection of the global immigration processes that led to the emergence of British English, American English, Australian English, Canadian English, New Zealand English, etc. language norm for the preparation of materials for tests in English? " This question is especially relevant for the Russian USE exam. In order to figure out which of the options: American or British is acceptable for the USE in FL exam, let us turn to the methodological materials intended for the chairmen and members of the subject commissions of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation to check the fulfillment of tasks with a detailed answer of the USE exam papers in 2021. This document notes that currently in the world there are a number of national variants of the English language, each of which has its own characteristics, including spelling, grammatical, lexical; different traditions of the design of written speech. In the normative documents of Russian education, the orientation towards any specific national variant of the English language is not fixed. That is why (although in our country, traditionally, teachers and authors of textbooks are guided rather by the British version of the English language), it would be wrong to consider the American spelling of words as erroneous. Thus, both British and American norms of the English language at all levels should be considered acceptable. Note that in tasks with short answers 19–25 and 26–31 of the "Grammar and Vocabulary" section, in cases that allow two spellings of a word, both options are counted as correct, for example, *traveller* or *traveler* etc. In the "Letter" section in task 39 (writing a personal letter), you should not, for example, consider writing the date in the American manner as an error: 11/30/2021 (month, date, year). [1:19]

In the oral part of USE, the following information can be found on this issue. The assessment criteria for assignment 1 (reading aloud) of the oral portion of the USE do not include requirements for choosing British or American pronunciation. Even in the writing part in the short answer tasks, the developers give two spelling options for words such as *colourful/colorful*, allowing for the norm of American spelling. It is advisable that the USE

participant does not confuse the two options, i.e. so that he pronounces all the words according to the norms of a particular version of the English language. If he reads mostly "British", but in one word (for example, dance) suddenly switches to the American version, this could be considered a mistake. [2:32]

From the above, we can conclude that the choice of one or another option is advisory in nature, but in practice the situation looks different. Unfortunately, there are cases when you have to file an appeal because of the "incorrect" use of one or another variant of the English language. Therefore, in order to avoid problems in USE grading, most teachers prepare students for USE in English, focusing only on British English. In our opinion, such a decision is not advisable. Orientation of a student to only one version of the English language limits his ability to perceive the surrounding linguistic reality in all its diversity. In addition, in the modern world of multimedia, the global market, the student is more likely to face exactly the American version of the sound and spelling of words. Therefore, by limiting the use of other variants of the English language, in particular, American, we take away from the student the ability to understand, compare, analyze, memorize and then output into productive forms of speech what he reads and hears every day. This approach seems counterproductive. What can be done already at this stage to correct the current bias towards British English, which is perceived as a standard in Russian linguodidactics? Speaking about teaching English in secondary schools, we consider it appropriate to offer several options for solving the problem of insufficient emphasis of students' attention on the use of British and American English. As for the study of other variants of the English language, it seems to us promising to study them in the case of an increase in the number of hours allocated for the study of a foreign language at school, as well as in the case of the introduction of a unified state exam (USE) in a foreign language as mandatory.

First, it is necessary to expand the didactic base, including samples of different dialects of the English language. Modern school English textbooks mainly use samples of British English. As for the American version, it is presented only sporadically. There are practically no other dialects.

The next step may be to include reading materials that include examples of different variants of the English language, with appropriate stylistic and historical annotations that could help students become familiar with the diversity of language variants and cultural phenomena.

In addition, it is necessary to create separate additional teaching materials in the form of attachments to textbooks in English. These materials could contain different types of training

tasks aimed at differentiating different variants of the English language. So, students can be offered tasks for:

- linguistic differences in British and American English in the field of phonetics, vocabulary and grammar;
- contrastive listening in order to identify these differences;
- the use of the acquired skills and abilities in the use of the British and American variants of the English language in productive types of speech activity;
- sociocultural differences.

Thus, the recommendation of “not mixing” American and British English during the USE English test seems to be irrelevant from a theoretical and practical point of view. We consider it possible to allow the use of both variants of the English language: American and British, focusing on the practice of conducting international examinations, which recently recognize the reality in which modern English functions, and allow a mixture of regional variants of the English language.

#### References:

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