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English in Asia and Asia in English. The Role and the Usage of English in Asian Countries

Work is executed on the department of foreign languages of faculty of international relations Volhynia national university of the name of Lesya Ukrainian

In the article the features of usage and varieties of English in the some Asian countries are showed. The general attitude of Asians from Singapore, Japan, Malaysia, Thailand and Philippines is described, the numbers of people who speaks English in Asian countries is analysed and the ways of teaching English is mentioned. The necessity of being acquainted with modern development of English language is explained. English must be familiar with their respective specific and local variety without abandoning the general and global nature of English. The article is a informative feature article relevant to the changing role of English in the Asia Pacific region.

Key words: English language, Asian countries, ASEAN, varieties of English language.

Федонюк О. С., Петровська Н. М. Англійська мова в Азії та Азія в англійській мові. Роль та використання англійської мови в країнах Азії. Проаналізовано особливості використання англійської мови та її різновиди у деяких країнах Азії. Описано загальне ставлення жителів Сингапуру, Японії, Малайзії, Таїланду та Філіппін, також показано загальну кількість людей, котрі розмовляють англійською в цих країнах, та згадано про способи та рівень навчання англійської мови в школах та вищих навчальних закладах. Пояснено необхідність того, щоб бути ознайомленим із сучасним розвитком англійської мови, її конкретними та

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місцевими різновидами без відмови від глобального та загального характеру мови. Стаття являє собою інформативний нарис про роль англійської мови, яка постійно змінюється та набуває нових значень.

Ключові слова: англійська мова, країни Азії, АСЕАН, різновиди англійської мови.

Федонюк О. С., Петровская Н. М. Английский язык в Азии и Азия в английском языке. Роль и использование английского языка в странах Азии. Проанализированы особенности использования английского языка и его разновидности в некоторых странах Азии. Описано общее отношение жителей Сингапура, Японии, Малайзии, Таиланда и Филиппин, также показано общее количество людей, говорящих на английском в этих странах, и упомянуто о способах и уровне обучения английскому языку в школах и высших учебных заведениях. Объяснена необходимость того, чтобы быть знакомым с современным развитием английского языка, его конкретными и местными разновидностями без отказа от глобального и общего характера языка. Статья представляет собой информативный очерк о роли английского языка, который постоянно меняется и приобретает новые значения.

Ключевые слова: английский язык, страны Азии, АСЕАН, разновидности английского языка.

The problem statement and its importance. English plays a very important role as an Asian and international working language, the means of communication in tourism, a reading language for technical subjects, and a token of modernity. It is well-known that a wide array of English varieties are spoken and used worldwide; therefore, knowing and using only American English or British English will not always be effective in many international contexts. Currently the number of Asian population who uses English has reached 350 million people.

That's why the actuality of the article is that ASEAN provides a particularly interesting site for the study of English as a lingua franca because the member states, following Kachru's «circles» classification (1985) [5], fall into distinct categories. Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines and Singapore can be classified as «outer circle» countries, where, because of their colonial past, English continues to play a major role and it is possible to talk about the Brunei, Filipino, Malaysian and Singaporean varieties of English.

An analysis of recent research studies. All the new Englishes in some Asian countries have their own contexts of function and usage, and they also, in their turn, might affect the attitude of foreign language learners of English toward the native varieties of English, such as British and American English. This article provides a short overview of accounts of English in Southeast Asia based on current research by leading scholars in the field. The most famous researchers are David Prescott [5], S. Gramley [6], Honna Nobuyuki [2], J. Jenkins [4], A. Kirkpatrick [7]. The most popular aspects of this question were English language teaching, English language media, English in ASEAN. We are going to combine all knowledge about evolution of English, its usage in daily life and surveys' data to make a summary about what is English for Asians.

The aim of the article. The aim of the article is to show the diversity of English in the Asia, to show language's evolution and Asians' attitude to learning English. That's why the tasks are following:

1. To analyse the numbers of people who speaks English in Asian countries (as their first language and as second language).
2. To show people's attitude to such forms of English as Malaysian English (MyE), Singaporean English (SE) and Philippine English (PE). Malaysian English (MyE).
3. To analyse the usage of American English and British English in Asians' life.

General materials and results of research. The countries that made up the French colony of Indo-China, namely Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam have become member states. These countries have witnessed an urgent shift from French to English, but levels of English even among the elite – particularly in Laos and Cambodia – remain comparatively low. English in these countries is therefore at different stages of development.

The numbers of people, who speaks English in different Asian countries can be illustrated in such way:

1. Singapore: 80 % (4 822 865), 1 097 443 – as a first language.
2. Philippines: 78,53 % (76 177 000), 3 427 000 – as a first language.
3. Hong Kong: 35,9 % (2 500 000), 200 000 – as a first language.
4. Malaysia: 20,54 % (5 580 000) 380 000 – as a first language.
5. Japan: 11,75 %, > 93 500 – as a first language.
6. Thailand: 27,16 % (17 121 187).
7. China: 0,83 % (10 000 000).

Foreigners and tourists can be surprised by different varieties of English and of unusual usage of its words and phrases. The non-native varieties of English appeared because it is likely that people have more

chances to engage in English communication with non-native speakers of English than with native speakers. Moreover, all the new Englishes have their own contexts of function and usage, and they might affect the attitude of foreign language learners of English toward the native varieties of English, such as British and American English.

Actually, Asians use both American English and British English during their studying or during their whole life. But, the unique environment and specialities of populations facilitated the rise of special forms of English such as Malaysian English (MyE), Singaporean English (SE) and Philippine English (PE). Malaysian English (MyE), formally known as Malaysian Standard English (MySE) [5] is spoken in Malaysia as a second language, also there are some other varieties of English in Malaysia, for example, Manglish, which is an English based creole spoken in Malaysia. The vocabulary of Manglish consists of words originating from English, Malay, Hokkien, Mandarin, Cantonese, Tamil, and to a lesser extent various other European languages [4].

Chinese, Malay and Tamil, which are the official languages of Singapore (including English), have influenced the form of «English» into a new variety which is currently employed as the interethnic lingua franca among the ethnic groups in Singapore. It is known as Singapore Colloquial English or Singlish. For Singapore English, it has long been observed that there is a tendency for speakers to have no distinction between the long/short pairs of vowels /i:/~/I/, /O:/~/Θ/, /A:/~/ϕ/, and /u:/~/Y/ as well as the two non-close front vowels /e/~/æ/ [4].

The way of teaching English in schools and universities made an impact on people's attitude to it, but the English is not used universally and in all places. A report by the Educational Testing Services (ETS) based on data from Jan–Dec 2010 shows that Singapore came in third in TOEFL (The Test of English as a Foreign Language) [1] scores out of 163 countries. It is the only Asian country in the top three. English occupies a unique position in Singapore. It is one of four official languages – the other three being Mandarin, Malay, and Tamil – but unlike these three languages, English is viewed as a first language in the school and it is the de facto working language of the nation, while the other three languages are often referred to as Mother Tongue languages occupying a secondary status in the school curriculum [1].

In 2000 a Speak Good English Movement (SGEM) was launched by the government, but the SGEM policy has not been successful [1].

However, students in Singapore are taught in British English, or 'the Queen's English, since elementary school. Apart from national government initiatives to increase English proficiency, there is widespread interest in developing English skills by local governments, for example, in Jeju Province (Korea), there are plans to build an entire city where the lingua franca, including the medium of instruction, will be English. The English Education City on Jeju Island could transform the island into an education hub [3].

People can know their special English (Singlish or Manglish) as well as British and American English, but when do they use them? It depends on the situation and on intentions. It is used when one is speaking with intimate persons; while, when talking to superiors and most foreigners, he or she uses SSE (Standard Singapore English). The image of Singlish, especially in public seems to have suffered in the last decade due to the pressure applied by the government.

Malaysia and Singapore are Asian countries with the highest level of English and it is an example of how the English language can be used to overcome language barriers between different communities within the same country. Malaysian government considers English as an important means for gaining information and industrialization and also for existing in international world.

There is no foundation for the use of English in official or public life in Indonesia, because this country has not been a colony of either the U.K. or the U.S.A. So, English is given only a special status in education field and widely used in business field.

There was a survey, which shows the general tendency of using English.

Korean university students' had a preference for American English [3]. Some students stated that there was no need to understand Indian, Singaporean, or Philippine English and they could not distinguish these varieties. English, which is used in Japan and Korea is usually focused on its American version and is not always accurate. A low overall level of English knowledge in Japan and significant deviations from its rules is often noted. English language proficiency among the adult population was below the average 58,58 to the OECD [2]. This is particularly not clear considering the fact of strikingly high achievement in mathematics and reading skills in these countries, which they consistently demonstrate in international tests. Excessive

emphasis on rote memorization, the relatively low level of communication with foreigners in everyday life and accepted model of teacher-student communication, imposes limits on conversational practice.

Besides, the most favourable attitude is obtained by AE in Indonesia. Indonesian students might tend to favor more AE since there are a lot of exposures of AE through the television and movies. AE compared to BE «It is easier to understand in pronunciation»? «I like speaking AE», «AE is a language worth learning», «Learning AE enriches my cultural knowledge» [5].

What about Manglish or Malasyan English? People said: «ME is a difficult language to learn». Another favoured item is, «There are more useful languages to learn than ME».

The most favoured item about Singaporean English was: «Learning SE enriches my cultural knowledge», the others were «I would not mind marrying a SE speaker», «I like hearing SE spoken».

78,5 % of the Filipinos are reported to be able to understand spoken English. However, there are more people who use English as a second language than those who speak it as a first language. The people tend not to show a positive attitude toward PE. There is only one item of PE that gained a mean score and it was «PE is a difficult language to learn». Anyway, Philippines hold the first position in the list of English-speaking population using English as an additional language [6].

China is trying to make a linguistic revolution. It simultaneously promotes learning of Chinese citizens as a national language and at the same time activates the English language in order to obtain benefits from its current position in the global market. In China, English language learning, more people than in any other country. Currently 100 000 speakers of English taught in China [7].

The real example of how English has played a great role as a lingua franca in these countries and some other countries in Southeast Asia is its use as the only working language of ASEAN since its foundation. At the ASEAN Summit in November 2007, the ASEAN Charter was introduced. Article 34 «Working Language of the ASEAN» reads: «The working language of ASEAN shall be English».

Summary and perspectives for future research. In conclusion, the status of English in Southeast Asia can be classified into two groups: as a second language and as a foreign language and also English is changing. The new varieties of English might have to go through a number of phases to be accepted and, in some cases, this may take many years. Furthermore, since language attitude studies significantly contribute to an understanding of sociolinguistic phenomenon and language learners' feelings, stereotypes, expectations and prejudices of the target language. We should know more about different kinds of English and what varieties are widespread in Asian countries, which are developing very fast today and are taking leading role in international communications.

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