

ФІЛОЛОГІЧНІ НАУКИ

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PROSPECTS OF INTERNATIONAL ENGLISH IN UKRAINIAN EDUCATIONAL SPACE

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The article deals with the problem of definition of Ukraine's place in the English speaking world. For this purpose the history of teaching foreign languages has been analyzed. Certain problematic issues concerning variants of English were raised including a relatively modern and controversial phenomenon of International English. The article attempted to find approaches to the definition of the latter's place in the system of teaching foreign languages in Ukraine. The spheres of International English application were propounded.

Keywords: Three Circle Model, World Englishes, International English, English lingua franca (ELF), English for law students.

Depending upon the authority quoted, from 570 million and up to 1.7 billion people of the world speak some English making it the major instrument of international and intercultural communication. It should be mentioned that close to three quarters of them are non-native speakers.

One of the consequences of this world spread of English is that the language acquired numerous variants and functions in different countries. It also gave rise to the relatively new phenomenon International English.

The topicality of the article is determined by its correlation with the study of International English and necessity to define its place in the system of teaching foreign languages in Ukraine since its importance and the very existence is largely ignored.

Therefore, the **problems** dealt with in this article concern evolution of International English and the place it may occupy in Ukraine's educational space.

The article **aims** at substantiating the authors' position in the discussion related to the essence of international English and its role as well as the Ukraine's position with regard to the Three Circle Model.

The analysis of research work and publications. In 1985, Braj B. Kachru proposed his model to classify the English speaking world [5]. According to him, all countries where English is used can fit three circles: the Inner Circle (IC) includes countries where English is historically spoken as mother tongue, such as Great Britain, Australia, the USA; the Outer Circle (OC) embraces Britain's former colonies where English is important in politics, judiciary and is often spoken as the second language, e.g. South Africa, Nigeria, India, etc. ; and, finally, the Expanding Circle (ExC). The latter includes countries «where English is becoming an important language in business, science, technology and education» [7, p. 2]. Although more sophisticated models have been propounded since then, e.g. Conical Model of English by Pung in 2009 [15], Kachru's three-circle model remains a useful tool for understanding the mechanism of expansion of English

simultaneously allowing estimation of a country's position with regard to the English language.

It appears obvious that according to this classification, Ukraine cannot be included in either Inner or Outer Circles and the question of whether this country may be attributed to the Expanding Circle remains debatable. China, Japan, Greece and Poland are most frequently mentioned as countries of the Expanding Circle [2, p. 15] Aya Matsuda mentions Brazil, China, Germany and Japan where according to her English «serves the instrument of intercultural communication» [11, p. 178]. Some researchers name Ukraine as an ExC country providing no substantiation, taking the fact for granted [10, p. 3]. However, the answer to **the question whether Ukraine is actually an ExC country does not appear that simple and has not been finally solved.** The definition of an Expanding Circle country as a country «where English is becoming an important language in business, science, technology and education» seems quite vague unlike definitions of Inner and Outer Circle countries, which may be used for making and exhaustive list of such countries [5, 22]. In fact it leaves more questions than answers: «How important should English become?» «Should it become equally important in all the above mentioned spheres?» In addition, should Ukraine be regarded as an ExC country, since what time could it be included in this group?

Another definition does not, unfortunately, throw more light on the problem. «Expanding Circle refers to territories where English is learnt as a foreign language. The territories do not have a history of colonization by members of the Inner Circle and English does not have an institutional or social role. English is taught as a foreign language as the most useful vehicle of international communication» [6, p. 3]. It draws a distinct line to separate ExC countries from IC and OC countries; however it leaves the impression that any country where English is taught as a foreign language and is considered an important tool of international communication may be regarded as an Expanding Circle country.

Importance of the English language for science, technology and business is obviously subject to arbitrary interpretation although the growth of such importance of English for Ukraine – no matter how subjective evaluations of it may be – appears doubtless.

Since teaching of English as a foreign language appears an important characteristic for an ExC country it seems expedient to review the history of teaching foreign languages in Ukraine in the 20th – early 21st centuries.

Since union republics of the USSR did not actually pursue independent policy in any sphere including education, the government of Ukrainian SSR actually copied that of the central government and therefore the policy of teaching foreign languages in Ukraine was fully in line with the general policy in this sphere in the USSR until the 1990s. E.V. Shelestyuk notes that although the necessity to learn foreign languages was declared in the early Soviet period this objective actually remained a pure declaration due to many reasons, particularly due to special attempts to develop national languages including organization of teaching in these languages [13, p. 74]. Optional foreign language was introduced from 5th to 11th years since 1925. In most cases, this foreign language was German taking into account the fact that there were substantial groups of people in the USSR who spoke the language as a mother tongue and possibly with the view of increasing relations with Germany where a socialist revolution was anticipated. Educational programs were approximate and were supposed to be developed locally, which resulted in uneven practice of teaching foreign languages; in a number of regions it was not taught at all. The situation, however, changed in 1927 following a large-scale campaign for studying foreign languages. This policy was in line with the ideology of «proletarian internationalism» and the course aimed at world proletarian revolution pursued by Leo Trotsky's group. Since 1929, the teaching of foreign languages in general secondary schools, technical schools and higher educational institutions became compulsory with 3-2 hours allocated for foreign languages per week (13 hours during all years of instruction). In the 1930s, the work directed at improvement of teaching foreign languages was continued. 25 August 1932 Decree of the Communist Party Central Committee demanded from the bodies of education to provide the knowledge of one foreign language by school leavers. German occupied the priority position with approximately 70 per cent of schools teaching it, whereas English and French shared the rest.

In the same years, specialized secondary schools were organized, including specialized language schools where teaching of a foreign language occupied up to 35 hours per week during all years of instruction.

In 4 October 1947 Council of Ministers of the USSR Decree No3488, it was stated that the goals set forth by the 1932 Communist Party Central Committee decisions had not been achieved. In particular, foreign languages were not taught in a considerable number of schools at all. German was studied at most schools (e.g. in the Russia Federation, English was taught in 16 per cent of schools, whereas French in only 7 per cent).

Under this Decree, the Ministries of Education of the Russian Federation and Ukrainian SSR were allowed to establish four secondary schools where some subjects were to be taught in a foreign language. Two such schools were established in Moscow and one in Leningrad and Kiev respectively. Foreign literature, geography of foreign countries, modern history and biology was taught in the corresponding language. Relevant manuals and literature was supplied to the libraries. Scientific and methodological journal the «Inostranniye Yazyki v Shkoloye» («Foreign Languages in Schools») was published since 1947, eventually becoming the leading periodical in the sphere. By 1 September 1968, there were 1,026 specialized schools in the USSR where 325,000 school children were educated; close to one half of them were language schools, most of which were English.

Specialized language schools as well as emphasis on learning foreign languages were designed with the purpose of training professionals in the sphere of translation and international communication. E.V. Shelestyuk marks that education in specialized language schools was considered especially prestigious [13, p. 75].

Further, by the 1990s, English had occupied the leading position in Ukraine (and presumably in many other post-Soviet countries), leaving some place only for German. French and Spanish were neglected; for example, the only specialized Spanish secondary school in Odessa was reshaped into English in the 1990s.

Nevertheless, it appears that despite high prestige of English and its wide spread as an educational subject in the Soviet Union the country could not be regarded as an ExC country. The instruction was largely formal; the overwhelming majority of the students did not see any prospects and/or practical application for their knowledge. Even educators at universities could spend years teaching English, writing and defending theses and never meeting a native speaker. Most of common people were not able to associate their knowledge with any practical purpose.

In the first decade of its existence, Ukraine largely followed the Soviet model of teaching English as a foreign language although Ukraine's admission to European and world international organizations and the country's euro integration ambitions on the national level alongside the substantial growth of international tourism and via Internet communications on everyday level were gradually changing the attitudes of both the authorities and the public towards the importance of English. Unlike the situation of 20-30 years ago, many parents and students now regard English as a key subject, which naturally increases interest and motivation to mastering it. Moreover, the importance of English has been officially recognized on the national level – 2016 was proclaimed the Year of English in Ukraine. However, no noticeable change in the amount of hours allocated for instruction of English has occurred either at schools or Universities due to both financial reasons and certain inertia in thinking of those in the academy. In particular, English has not become a medium of instruction in Ukrainian Universities. The project of teaching legal disciplines in English

at the National University «Odessa Academy of Law» has become the only noticeable exception. The project was launched in 2006 and among other things allows students to continue their education in European universities. In addition, the course is followed by foreign students who study at the university.

Given the above said, it can be concluded that within the recent 20 years Ukraine has joined the countries of the Expanding Circle although such admission should not be regarded as a fact but rather as a process and degrees of a country's involvement may differ with Ukraine being on one of the initial stages.

Presently, the growing number of researchers feels that characteristics of English in different situations and backgrounds vary so seriously that they have to speak about many Englishes. The idea found international recognition resulting in the formation of the International Committee of the Study of World Englishes by TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) [16]. In 1992, ICWE formally launched the International Association of World Englishes (IAWE), which issues a scientific journal.

These Englishes include national variants spoken in the countries of the Inner Circle, developing variants of English, which are apparently in the process of formation in the countries of Outer Circle and a relatively new phenomenon International English [14, p. 17].

Given the growing demand for teaching English the natural question is which of them is the most suitable for Ukraine?

Traditionally the British variant has been studied at educational institutions of the USSR and post-Soviet countries. The recent years saw certain attempts to introduce American variant in the educational space most of which did not gather momentum in particular due to active operation of the British Council in Ukraine, availability of high quality educational manuals published by leading British Universities and higher prestige and applicability of IELTS examinations as compared to TOEFL or TOIEC on the European employment markets.

Nevertheless, prospect of use of International English also referred to as international, global, world, etc. English for educative purposes alongside or even instead of any single national language appears attractive since its formation and the very existence owes to international communication.

Generally, the terms «global language», «world language» have not been officially defined; nevertheless it is generally understood as a language that «is learned and spoken internationally, and is characterized not only by the number of its native and second language speakers, but also by its geographical distribution, and its use in international organizations and in diplomatic relations. A global language acts as a «lingua franca», a common language that enables people from diverse backgrounds and ethnicities to communicate on a more or less equitable basis» [4, 558]. Historically *lingua franca* comes from Arabic «*lisan-al-farang*» – intermediary language used for communication by Arabic speakers with Western merchants and travelers [4, p. 557].

It appears that International English has come closest to being a global language ever as compared to historical examples of conversational Greek and Latin in the ancient world or French in the late 18th century.

If the analogy of a free market could be used in this situation, demand for international language and supply of a suitable tongue coincided. Global trade, travel, communication increasingly require a global language. Under the conditions of globalization, a lingua franca has never been so important. Operation of a large number of international organizations including the UN and its agencies, World Bank, World Health Organization, numerous EU bodies including the Venice Commission, European Court of Human Rights, OSCE – the list goes on and on – increases pressure to establish a global language. Economic reasons add given high costs of translations: e.g. up to one-third of the administrative expenses of the European Union is taken up by translations into the various member languages. Moreover, Juliane House believes that that the functions performed by the EU commission's translation bureau are rather political than purely linguistic. «The value of translation is that of a living symbol of the high ideal of equality, that is, it is important that the translation exists, not what it is like and what it does» [4, p. 560]. In practice, most documents are read in English since by the time the translations are completed the information may become out of date. In addition there are always fears that such translations may be inaccurate and, therefore, English texts are more reliable.

Historically, the solution was seen in development of an artificial (AKA – planned or constructed) language; numerous attempts (at least 53) were made in the late 19 century, the most noticeable of which was Esperanto.

It should be noted that development of «universal artificial languages» did not pursue communicative goals only. The creators of these languages, in particular Esperanto, were guided by romantic ideas of achieving world peace and concord through establishment of one universal world language. These expectations appear somewhat doubtful since human history provides only too many examples of civil wars between people sharing the same language as well as opposite examples, although fewer in number.

Whereas the «demand» i.e. the need of a global communication tool is clear the choice of the source of «supply» may need some explanation. Certain researchers believe that particular linguistic characteristics of English played a decisive if not the main role in its choice as a global language. Among these they mention the richness and depth of English vocabulary (the 1989 revised Oxford English Dictionary lists 615,000 words; if technical and scientific term were added the number would exceed a million). The world's largest lexicon produces numerous synonyms allowing to express fine shades of distinction unavailable in other languages. Wealth of English idioms and phrases together with the language's flexibility is often quoted as yet one more advantage. Add to this the fact that English grammar is generally simpler than most languages (no noun and adjective genders, no dis-

inction between familiar and formal address, only five verb forms at maximum, etc.).

English is also reasonably concise compared to many languages, as can be seen in the length of translations, for example it is usually 10-15 per cent shorter than Russian equivalent.

Nevertheless, many students of English hold an opposite opinion and would mention a comparatively numerous tense forms (12 for Active and 8 for Passive), complex spelling including silent letters and phonetic inconsistencies. There are sounds, which are notoriously difficult for foreigners to pronounce such as «th», which also comes in two varieties. In addition, some sounds have a huge variety of possible spellings such as [ou], which can be spelled as in go, show, beau, doe, though, depot, etc.

The arguments in the competition for the easiest and most convenient for learners language may go on and on, yet most researchers disregard linguistic features (or mention them as secondary) in describing the factors, which allowed the English language's rise as a world language. After all, artificial languages like Esperanto were specially designed for easy learning and communication and yet they failed to even come close to being world languages.

The prevailing viewpoint is that although «the intrinsic structural qualities of a language, the size of its vocabulary, the quality of its literature throughout history, and its association with great cultures or religions are all important factors in the popularity of any language. But, at base, history shows us that a language becomes a global language mainly due to the political power of its native speakers, and economic power with which it is able to maintain and expand its position» [3, p. 240].

Since it is International English that occupies the key position in world communications, the practical question that arises is, should International English (IL) or English as lingua franca (ELF) substitute national variants of English at educational institutions of Expanding Circle countries, particularly in Ukraine? What standards should be applied when deciding what is correct or wrong? What culture (s) should be represented in the educational process?

Interestingly, similar questions arise in other countries of the Expanding Circle. For example, Aya Matsuda tries to solve the same problem for Japan [11, p. 181].

The word «language» can be misleading here. Although ELF possesses «the most important ingredients of a lingua franca: negotiability, variability in terms of speaker proficiency and openness to an integration of forms of other languages» basically it still remains «English». Gramkow Andersen notes that «each combination of interactants seem to negotiate and govern their own variety of lingua franca use in terms of proficiency level...» [8, p. 108].

A similar position was expressed by Selinker when he characterized «interlanguage». He referred to it as «the observable output resulting from a speaker's attempt to produce a foreign norm, i.e. both his errors and non-errors ... it must be dealt with as a system, not an isolated collection of errors» [9, p. 220].

Therefore, IE is flexible and cannot provide norms or standards against which students' progress can be judged. In fact, each student will produce IE in the process of international communication, notably in interaction with other non-native speakers according to his/her proficiency.

In addition, no literary works have been created in IE so far; this inevitably makes learning of a language deficient (although we can expect appearance of such works in national Englishes of OC countries).

The above said leaves no alternative in training English teachers or professional translators. For this purpose a national variant, be it British English or American English, should be used. Aya Matsuda notes that «These variants of the English language cause far less arguments and doubts as compared to other variants of Inner and Outer Circles; they are frequently used in the course of international communication and correspond to various communicative contexts. Given the above said advantages the choice of these variants appears expedient especially for the unknown context of international communication» [11, p. 182].

However, many English teachers note that the British educational products widely spread in Ukraine (Headway, Cutting Edge, etc.) contain excessive quantity of information related to Britain, its traditions, customs, culture, etc. Quite frequently, Britain and British lifestyle are propagated be it voluntarily or involuntarily. Historically and traditionally the course of English as a foreign language in Ukraine has been largely oriented at Great Britain and the USA. Since the notion of an «English speaking country» has expanded the cultural component of the educational material should be widened. The target of the course is international communication and therefore the development of intercultural competence should be promoted. The students should be acquainted with cultural traditions of their future interlocutors who can represent Inner, Outer and Expanding Circle countries. «Knowledge of cultures of other countries prevents the formation of widely spread erroneous opinion, where the notion «international» becomes equivalent of the notions «American» or «Western» [11, p. 179]. Given internationalization of the English language it seems expedient to shift to more culturally neutral educational materials.

In addition, cultural traditions of the people who study English can and probably should become part of the cultural content of the course, which was characteristic of most English manuals formerly published in the USSR.

It appears possible and desirable that manuals and other educational materials for the students studying English as a foreign language in European countries, particularly Ukraine, be developed by relevant European organizations. This may also lift suspicions and possible accusations of language imperialism. The knowledge of the vast array of European cultures will form with the students the image of English as International, European and ultimately *their* language.

There are spheres, however, where International English can and should be included in the educational process. English for professional communication of businesspeople, seafarers and lawyers

is to a large extent international, which should be reflected in the academic process.

Legal English used in European institutions and organization can be justly regarded as legal English lingua franca – International (or more precisely European) legal English (ELE). For many thousands of officials and clerks of European institutions it serves «a contact language between persons who share neither a common native tongue nor a common national culture, and for whom English is the chosen foreign language of communication» [3, p. 240]. It is with these people and in this language that Ukrainian officials and business people have to communicate. Many researchers note that there are significant differences in this European legal English as compared to British and American legalese, which are able and actually cause misunderstandings. Secretariat General, Translation Directorate has issued the publication «Misused English words and expressions in EU publications» specially dedicated to the issue. For example, many Europeans use «control» to mean «monitor» or «assist» meaning to «attend». More-

over, Jeremy Gardner notes that not only lexical units can be misleading but certain grammatical norms are used by International English speakers unconventionally in an attempt to reconcile grammatical norms of their native tongues and those of English (e.g. countable and uncountable nouns) [17, p. 3].

Hence, the following **conclusions** can be drawn:

– Ukraine can be regarded as an Expanding Circle country;

– For English teachers' and interpreters/translator's basic training a national variant of English (British or American) remains indispensable;

– For basic language education at secondary schools and universities a national variant of English remains essential; the standards of these variants are to serve as criteria for evaluation of the students' success; creation of culturally neutral or multicultural manuals is highly desirable;

– International English is applicable and desirable in teaching English for professional purposes in the spheres where international communication is anticipated, particularly, law.

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ПЕРСПЕКТИВИ РОЗВИТКУ МІЖНАРОДНОЇ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ У НАВЧАЛЬНОМУ ПРОСТОРІ УКРАЇНИ

Анотація

Стаття розглядає проблему визначення місця України в англomовному світі. Аналізується історія викладання іноземних мов в Україні. Підіймаються деякі проблемні питання стосовно варіантів англійської мови включаючи відносно новий, дискусійний феномен «міжнародної англійської мови». Автори намагаються знайти підходи до визначення місця останньої у системі викладання іноземних мов в Україні. Запропоновані сфери де застосування міжнародної англійської мови буде доцільним.

Ключові слова: модель трьох кіл, світові англійські мови, міжнародна англійська мова, англійська lingua franca, англійська для студентів-юристів.

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ПЕРСПЕКТИВЫ РАЗВИТИЯ МЕЖДУНАРОДНОЙ АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА В УЧЕБНОМ ПРОСТРАНСТВЕ УКРАИНЫ

Аннотация

Статья рассматривает проблему определения места Украины в англоговорящем мире. Анализируется история преподавания иностранных языков в Украине. Поднимаются некоторые проблемные вопросы, касающиеся вариантов английского языка, включая относительно новый, дискуссионный феномен «международного английского». Авторы пытаются найти подходы к определению места последнего в системе преподавания иностранных языков в Украине. Предлагаются сферы, где применение международного английского будет целесообразным.

Ключевые слова: модель трех окружностей, мировые английские языки, международный английский, английский lingua franca, английский для студентов-юристов.