

CHALLENGES IN TEACHING ENGLISH AS LINGUA FRANCA

Nowadays Ukrainian integration presupposes various changes in different areas including education system. It has started already. What happens now is that teachers and their students face new methods and approaches of both studying and teaching. This article is devoted to some problems which appeared in modern world while figuring out the role of English as Lingua Franca (ELF) in it.

ELF is for communication between and among speakers of different nationalities. It does not mean the mixing of languages in interactions or the retaining of influences from the different L1s that make up ELF (accent, vocabulary and syntax) for they are not “inherently wrong”. In short, ELF is not primarily a vehicle for the thousands and thousands of multilinguals in the world to communicate with the “native others” only. Rather, it is a language for communication with “one another” if their native languages differ. It is not an interlanguage and its speakers are not viewed as having a deficit with regard to the standard of native speaker varieties. Jenkins’ (2007, p. 17-18) words reflect this new view of the role of English in the world at the present time:

“I believe that it is important to point out that ELF is not only an entirely natural development and thus worthy of recognition as a legitimate branch of modern English, but that also sits more comfortably within a World Englishes (henceforth, WE) framework than the alternatives, such as World Standard Spoken English [3], International English [3], and World Standard English (MCARTHUR, 1998). The problem with all these is that they promote a unitary and essentially monolithic model based on idealized norms, with little scope for either local variation”.

A topic of crucial importance for Applied Linguistics (henceforth, AL) and English Language Teaching (henceforth, ELT). The proponents of English as a Lingua Franca or ELF argue for a divorce of the teaching of English from its marriage to native speaker standards, particularly British and American English(es). Jenkins’ (2000) groundbreaking proposal for a specific phonology of English as an International Language (EIL) represents an uncoupling of the language from native speaker pronunciation (British, American, Canadian or Australian Englishes). Gone are the days when all learners of English would unquestionably use one language pattern. The new paradigm in the area of teaching English in the classroom has, on the one hand, presented an alternative for learners and, on the other, has led to some debate about its feasibility in all classroom situations (DAUER, 2005). The appearance of Lingua Franca English has contributed to rethinking the role of language assessment and testing (ELDER; DAVIES, 2006) along with reasoned debate (TAYLOR, 2006) with Jenkins (2006a, 2006b). In addition, the field of Second Language Acquisition has also been questioned with regard to its dependence on native speaker standards as the measuring rod that determines successful learning. Finally, House (2003, p. 575) calls for continuing research on ELF in Europe and elsewhere, but concludes that it is “(...) not, for the present time, a threat to multilingualism”.

Indeed exciting ideas for research in AL are available, on the one hand, and some revolt and resistance, on the other, are in the winds, for those who advocate ELF argue for language standards to be negotiated by those who learn English and not those who, by accident, happened to be born into the language [1].

One of the drawbacks of ELF is that there is a need for more data, both spoken and written by its many, many users in the world. However, at the present time VOICE consists of “(...) 1 million words of spoken ELF interactions from professional, educational and leisure domains”. The organizers envisage a large scale and in-depth description (their emphases) of English that will probably influence the definition of objectives for teaching the language in different parts of the world [4].

While exocentric norms (e.g. British and American English) informed by a second language acquisition perspective are prevalent in the Outer Circle, there is a growing recognition of local varieties of Englishes belonging to the world Englishes paradigm. However, what constitutes an error or a varietal feature is hard to decide, particularly in the absence of codification of non-native Englishes in many Outer Circle contexts. Distinguishing between errors and varietal features is a pedagogical requirement for correcting learners' errors and nurturing their linguistic creativity. Although the WE literature suggests criteria to determine the status of neologisms, these have their limitations. On the other hand, insufficient attention has been given to the agency of English teachers who are in a critical position to mediate language standards and their variations.

LITERATURE

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