ENGLISH AS AN INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE AND ITS VARIETIES

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ABSTRACT

In the last decades, the term "English as a Lingua Franca" (ELF) has emerged as a way of referring to communication in English between speakers with different native languages. ELF is considered as a contact language between speakers who share neither a native tongue nor a national culture, and for whom English is the chosen foreign language of communication. (Firth 1996). Consequently, a lingua franca is a third language that is distinct from the native language of both parties involved in the communication and sometimes as the language becomes more widespread, the native populations of an area will speak the lingua franca to each other as well.

The article analyzes the linguistic processes which are termed contact or interference varieties. The contexts in these varieties are formed blending two or more language's features. Interference varieties were mostly appeared in Africa and Asia and brought to English the contexts colored with multilingual and multicultural features. These varieties have special characteristics in linguistic levels such as pronunciation, grammar, lexis and discourse. The results showed that the use of certain features in ELF which is regarded as "errors" in Standard English are not considered as problematic and do not disturb communicative success.

Key words: lingua franca, ENL (English as a Native Language), ESL (English as a Second Language) and EFL (English as a Foreign language), Singlish, Babu English, Japlish, culturally nativized.

As a result of diffusion and stabilization of English across cultures and languages involve "new Englishes" and "international", "global", "world English". The term "New Englishes" mostly refers the varieties whose features do not coincide with British and American varieties. The concept of "world Englishes" dates back to the 1960s. After long discussions, the conference which was held in USA in 1978 concluded that "English used as an international and auxiliary language has led to the emergence of sharp and important distinction between the uses of English for international (e.g., external) and and intranational (e.g., internal) purposes." (Kachru 1997). Meierkord (2000) differs between ELF used internationally (e.g., between two English speakers who come from different countries, as between the Spanish L1 and Uzbek L1 speakers) or intranationally (e.g.,between two speakers of English as a foreign language of the same nationality in the same country, who speak different languages within that country, as between the Urdu L1speaker and Panjob L2 speaker).

McArthur (1993) states about world Englishes to logo-acronym of the journal World Englishes the concept "serves to indicate that there is a club of equals here". By this statement he meant that "the democratization of attitudes to English everywhere on the globe" and to equalize ENL(English as a Native Language), ESL(English as a Second Language) and EFL(English as a Foreign language) nations. Moreover, international language result the linguistic processes which are termed contact or interference varieties. The contexts in these varieties are formed blending two or more language's features. Interference varieties were mostly appeared in Africa and Asia and brought to English the contexts colored with multilingual and multicultural features. These varieties have special characteristics in linguistic levels such as pronunciation, grammar, lexis and discourse. The names of contact varieties are quite often called by blending of English and the name of subvariety (e.g., Singlish in Singapore English, Bazaar or Babu English in Indian English, Japlish in Japanese English). In these contact situation English is considered is a medium which is pragmatically, culturally nativized.

Athough lingua franca users in the Kachru's Expanding Circle with several various language backgrounds and represent different levels of English competence, processes of accommodation could result in a new variety, even with appearing unmarked features.

Many interactions in ELF occur among participants who do not pay attention to standard grammar, pronunciation and whose speeches are not appropriate to register. It is reported that approximately eighty percent of verbal exchanges in ESL and EFL don not correspond in ENL. Taking into account of the increasing numbers of Expanding Circle speakers Graddol concludes "native speakers may feel the language 'belongs to them, but it will be those who speak English as a second or foreign language who will determine its world future" (Graddol 2006).

Meanwhile, linguists focus on how ELF's grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation differ from the rest of varieties. Several scholars deal with ELF and work out the grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, rate of speaking, volume, gestures, eye contact that help to interact the messages to achieve specific task. To illustrate with this, researches based on linguistic features of ELF have been undertaking since several years. The results showed that the use of certain features in ELF which is regarded as "errors" in Standard English are not considered as problematic and do not disturb communicative success. There are the following common grammatical peculiarities of ELF:

1. Deletion of the third-person singular morpheme –s in Present Simple;

2. Interchangeable use of the relative pronouns who and which;

3. Not use of definite and indefinite articles in places where they are compulsory in E-L1, and even using them in places which, according to Standard English, would be considered ungrammatical e.g. All members of the group are going to Ø cinema

4. Incorrect usage in tag questions e.g. isn't it? or no? for all modal or auxiliaries

5. Usage of useless and unnecessary prepositions e.g. We have to study about;

6. Frequent use of the following verbs: do, have, make, put, take;

7. Using that-clauses instead of infinitive constructions e.g.He admit that;

8. Overdoing explicitness e.g. green color rather than green

Moreover, word order in natural spoken language, speakers reduce certain important parts of information in the process of speech and include as afterthoughts but this does not mean that the speaker's linguistic competence is broken. The data for this research show that natural spoken ELF is also halting and ungrammatical. This occurrence is quite often observed by the speakers of ELF whose native language is based SOV (subject + object+ verb) construction. On the contrary English as an SVO language involve some difficulties in speech. Sometimes, they use the part of the sentence initially which should be placed finally according to Standard English. In the circumstances the process of nativization appears.e.g., For inhabitants' health the fumes of the factory affect very much. (instead of The fumes of the factory affect very much on inhabitant's health). Meierkord analysed the syntactic variations in ELF. He worked on a data recorded with naturally-occurring conversations of speakers from various countries (within Kachru's Outer and Expanding circles) with different levels of ELF competency. Analysing syntactically, the author concluded that the syntactic features in the ELF interactions are depend on the speakers' linguistic background. And estimated that speakers from the Expanding Circle countries demonstrated a great deal of less established features.

All New Englishes stated above are considered to be new varieties of English which differ from the standard ones appeared as a result of nativization. Although several linguists argue with the use of New Englishes, they are surrounding the world dynamically, even wider than native English.

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