**The Phenomenon of Linguistic Globalization: English as the Global Lingua Franca (EGLF), 2014 (readapted)**

**(806 words)**

The ongoing processes of globalization have made an impact on the most different aspects of life of contemporary society. In the information society of the globalized world, there is a pressing need for a common language of communication, which would make it possible to overcome interlingual and intercultural barriers standing in the way of integrating nations into a common economic and cultural area. Due to its widespread in the world, English is such language, and English language skills alongside with skills in one’s native language become a norm.

The English language has turned into a widely accepted means of international communication, with the number of speakers of English as a second language (L2) considerably exceeding the number of native speakers of the English language. In this connection, it is appropriate to speak about English used in the function of a vehicular language to connect people with different language backgrounds as the global lingua franca (EGLF).

The term “lingua franca” is usually used to refer to a language functioning as a means of interethnic communication. The most widespread languages of the world (apart from English, this group of languages also includes French, German, Spanish, Mandarin Chinese, Russian, Arabic and Hindi) are the languages of international and interethnic communication that have traditionally played the role of regional “lingua francas”. However, at present the English language has acquired the status of a language of global communication, and as such it presents a unique phenomenon that has no parallel in the history of the world languages. English as the Global Lingua Franca (EGLF) has become a means of universal communication not only between the native speakers of English and speakers of English as the second language, but also between people with different native languages. In spite of interest in the nature of global English and the changes that must be made in teaching English in conditions when it is no longer regarded as a foreign language, English is still taught around the world as one of the major national standards.

The notion of “English as the Global Language” reflects a completely new phenomenon, even though many researchers of the use of the English language for international communication had undertaken a series of research studies of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) as distinct from research of the English language usage by native speakers themselves yet long before it acquired the global status at the turn of the 20th century.

In early 21st century, as Anna Mauranen writes in the foreword to the collection of articles “English as a Lingua Franca” published in 2009, research into the use of the English language as ELF became one of the most vibrant fields of studies. Mauranen describes the changes that have taken place in less than two decades from the start of studying the peculiarities of the English language use in international communication: “The English language has without doubt established itself in a position of a global lingua franca. Alongside with this status, it has become a symbol of our times together with globalization, social networking, economic integration and Internet”.

At present, when English in its role of the global language as a new phenomenon is becoming one of the major components of globalization, there are numerous attempts in the research community to determine its place among different linguistic variants and varieties as well as to single out its characteristic peculiarities making it the universally accepted means of worldwide communication (Seidlhofer, 2001). In view of the fact that the change of the world system of languages as a result of which the English language has acquired the global status has been brought about in a tempestuous process, defining English as a global language, and describing its peculiarities is still a matter of heated debates among researchers.

Within the framework of the Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English (VOICE) project, initiated by Barbara Seidlhofer and Anna Mauranen in 2005, different aspects of English as a lingua franca (ELF) have been considered, with particular emphasis on its grammatical, lexical and phonetic forms. ELF is regarded here as a “contact language” used as a means of communication between people speaking different native languages. A characteristic feature of ELF is emphasis on its function, that is its use as a means of intercultural and interlingual communication rather than on its form (the grammatical and phonetic correctness), which is subject to the influence of the speaker’s native language.

Therefore, ELF may be regarded as a variety of English simplified to some degree, but not primitive or defective since ELF speakers are able to express their thoughts (starting with simplest utterances and ending with complicated arguments), effectively using the available language forms and functions.

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