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## EUROPEAN ENGLISH AN APPROACH TO THE DEFINITION

**Summary.** The article deals with the phenomenon of European English, which has been and remains a matter of active discussions and research both in academia and among general public within the recent several decades. Although the fact of European English is rarely challenged at present, its nature remains a matter of dispute. The description of the characteristic features and the definition of the phenomenon, therefore, have received special relevance. In addition, the solution of this problem will undoubtedly have a profound and lasting effect for European communication, political and educational spheres.

Given special importance, which is being attached to the study of English in Ukraine and recent important governmental initiatives in the field, this study has special relevance for this country.

The role that English plays in European communication has been studied. This allowed to conclude that English is rapidly becoming the primary language of communication on the political, business, educational and every day levels. The current European policy regarding languages and language education has been analyzed on the basis of "Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching assessment". Certain inconsistencies in the document were noted.

The article provides a number of examples of the use of European English demonstrating particular features of the vocabulary and new grammar models. Many of the recent examples concern conversational usage whereas the older ones belong largely to the professional area of the European bureaucracy and judiciary,

The current standpoints regarding the nature of European English, namely a) European English is a set of learners mistakes; b) European English is a professional jargon of European bureaucracy and judiciary; c) European English is the mixture of the first two options; and European English is a new variant (dialect) of the English language have been studied. The arguments pro and contra have been analyzed.

Since the basic difference between Euro English and other recognized variants of this language is the duration of its evolution it may be reasonably assumed that European English is an emerging new dialect (variant) of the English language at the initial stage of its formation.

**Key words:** European English, definition of European English, dialect (variant), professional jargon, world Englishes, language education, three circle system.

Presently, the existence of the phenomenon of European English is generally accepted both in academia and in the circles associated with the European policy. The term was first introduced into the scientific turnover in 1986 by German linguist Broder Carstensen, who said:

"The English these people use is also a kind of Euro-English, and it is obvious that it will be rather different from the real present-day English usage that was its original model" [1, p. 2].

Moreover, this issue has received wide interest among general public, a notable number of publications in leading periodicals in EU countries [2; 3] testifying to the fact. Brexit only added speculations on the topic.

However, the nature of the above mentioned phenomenon remains the matter of dispute among researchers, who uphold a number of frequently contradicting viewpoints. The grounded solution of the above said issue and a generally agreed definition of European English does not present solely academic interest; rather this would be regarded as a starting point for many political decisions in the EU communicational, cultural and educational fields. Ukrainian European aspirations add importance to the issue for this country given the growing support of English as the means of international communication on the governmental level. The latest initiatives of Ukrainian authorities in the area of language education support the fact.

The above mentioned considerations explain the **relevance** of the research topic.

**The problems** dealt with in this article concern understanding of the European English's nature, which involves the study of its characteristics at the present stage of its evolution. "Euro English seems to be something that exists more in reality than in theory ..." [3], hence the theoretical substantiation has become topical. The lack of clear definitions in this sphere does not only hinder further research, it may also prevent from making correct practical decisions in the sphere of teaching English as a foreign language in this country. Therefore, the comparative analysis of the existing positions appears especially expedient in achieving the **aim** of substantiating of the author's position in the discussion concerning the essence of European English and finding its place in the system of world Englishes.

The growing interest in the issue resulted in disclosing the increasing number of examples of what is regarded as Euro-English. Whereas about a decade ago, Jeremy Gardner in the guide

of “Misused English words and expressions in EU publications” mentioned a comparatively short list of words that did not exist or were relatively unknown to native English speakers outside the EU institutions e.g. *planification*, *to precise* or *telematics* and words that are used with a meaning, often derived from other languages, that is not usually found in English dictionaries e.g. *coherent* – being a case in point, [4] modern researchers into the topic provide a much wider list of new vocabulary, which is characteristic of European English. For example, Courtney Withrow adds *possibility* (for opportunity), *actual*, *actually* (for current, currently), *propose* (for offer), *finally* (for in the end/after all), *punctual* (for occasional or periodic), *eventually* (for maybe), *caution* (for deposit); [5] Marko Modiano adds *subsidiarity* (the principle that legal decrees should be enacted as close to people as possible), *berlaymont* (for bureaucracy), *conditionality* (for conditions), and *semester* (for six months) [6].

Most of the abovementioned words were born in EU institutions and belong to the official style but new examples have been found in the conversational language:

*SMS* = text;

*I'm here* = I'm coming/I'll be right there;

*Like that* = that way (Example: Let's finish the dishes now, like that it's done and we can relax);

*As you want* = it's your choice;

*Lately* = recently;

*What day are we?* = What day is it?

*To candidate* = to apply for a job;

*Colander* = filter;

*Paper* = paper towels or toilet paper or Kleenex [1]

Many of the above mentioned examples seem to have developed in the recent few years. Furthermore, researchers provide examples of changes in the grammar, namely a new paradigm of tag questions: instead of the normative formation – She came home late, didn't she? – the paradigm with “non?” is used – *She came home late, non?* [5] Interestingly, tag questions also fell victim in the process of formation of another English dialect – Indian English, although a different construction was chosen – “isn't it?”, which is used as a tag in all cases: *She came home late, isn't it?*

Most researchers mention incorrect formation of plurals – actually application of the plural form with the nouns that are treated as uncountable (mass) nouns in the traditional English grammar: *informations*, *expertises*, *competences*, *aids*, etc. as a distinct trait of European English [5; 6].

The use of “*We were*” instead of “*There were*” can be regarded as a relatively new peculiarity of conversational Euro English grammar, e.g. “*We were two at the party*” in lieu of “*There were two people at the party*” [1; 7].

“*How do you call it?*” instead of “*What is it called?*” is another example of the changes in the normative English grammar alongside the unconventional use of the Present Continuous Tense where both British and American variants prescribe Present Simple: “*I am coming from France*” to mean “*I come from France*” [7].

The above mentioned examples are generally viewed as evidence of the existence of the phenomenon of European English also referred to as Euro English/Euro-English.

The nature of European English, however, remains a matter of dispute. Four main hypotheses have been propounded, namely:

1. European English is a set of learners' mistakes;
2. European English is a professional jargon of European bureaucracy and judiciary;

3. European English is the mixture of the first two options;

4. European English is a new variant (dialect) of the English language.

It is probably not surprising that the former position is generally advocated by the British variant speakers among academics and practical linguists, also inside the EU institutions.

“Euro English is the everyday, pidgin version of the language, as spoken by the people working in the EU's institutions – an amalgam of jargon, British English, the English spoken by non-native speakers with all its inherent quirks and common mistakes, and terms borrowed from the 23 other official languages from across the bloc” [1].

Jeremy Gardner writes:

“A number of the errors ... can be ascribed less to a question of meaning than to an aspect of English grammar that seems to have gone relatively unnoticed in the English teaching in European schools – the distinction between countable and uncountable (or mass) nouns...” [4].

The practical conclusion, which may be drawn out, can be expressed in a simple proposition to learn English better. Despite the fact that this position is being criticized for being “purist” and “prescriptivist”, it seems grounded from the perspective of practical linguistic education. Indeed, given the absence of codified European English vocabulary and grammar, language teachers require standards, against which their students' success can be judged. However, the natural question to ask in this situation is whether it should be the standard of British, American or any other variant of English. It can further be added that the standard English is not the only variant spoken in GB.

Many researchers note the features that allow classifying European English as a professional jargon, which is frequently referred to in a derogatory or satirical way as *Euro-speak*.

Jeremy Gardner notes, “Over the years, the European institutions have developed a vocabulary that differs from that of any recognized form of English” [4, p. 2].

“It started with the politicians and bureaucrats from all over Europe who come together at the EU institutions in Brussels. Filled with delegates and staffers from all over Europe, they have come to rely on English over the years” [4, p. 2].

“Euro English migrated from the EU institutions to the rest of Brussels to the rest of Europe. Words or phrases that would never be used by a native speaker – or words that are simply made up – are acceptable ways of communicating in English across Europe” [4, p. 3].

Presently, documents of numerous European institutions are the only source, where examples of European English can be found in the fixed form, although they reflect the common way people speak in these organizations. Interestingly, a number of native speakers working in EU institutions note that they pick up this vernacular working for those organizations, which supports the idea of European English being a professional jargon. This is similar to other professional languages where conventional pronunciation of words is changed or the stress is moved to another syllable, and the words themselves acquire new meanings.

Moreover, it has been noted that this “insider language” is used as an “identity marker” denoting the speaker as belonging to a group, [7] a characteristic feature of professional jargons, e.g. Legalese.

German MEP Terry Reintke, of the Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance combines the two previous positions:

European English “is a little bit of a messy use of English. It's people trying to express themselves in English but very often taking direct translations from their native languages, plus adding to that a kind of technocratic language that comes from the European institutions” [1].

In short, the idea is that Euro English is a professional jargon resulting from accumulation of common mistakes. There is, however, evidence that this particular way of speaking is not limited to the European institutions' personnel; rather it is actively spreading among other strata of the European community, particularly in the sphere of business, tourism and education. Some of the above mentioned examples undoubtedly refer to the conversational, everyday language. The problem in this case is that this usage is generally not fixed in the written form and the researchers have to rely on the examples collected by native speakers who live and work in the EU [7]. It is, therefore, problematic to decide on how widely these grammar models and words are spread among the speakers. Hence, European English may have initially appeared as a language for European bureaucracy communication (“Within the halls of the EU institutions, Euro English was born” [1]) but it has gone far beyond within the last decades. Business, tourism and academic mobility are justly mentioned as the motor of this process.

A special issue here is the use of English as the language of communication in continental Europe, and the figures are impressive: In a 2012 report by the European Commission, it was found that English was the most widely-spoken foreign language in the EU, understood by 38% of respondents to a survey. Moreover, approximately two-thirds of Europeans regarded English the most useful foreign language; and four in five believe it is the most important for their children to learn with 95 per cent of students studying English as a second language (by 2018, the latter figure had increased to 96 per cent). Furthermore, English allowed Europeans not only free communication within the limits of the bloc; rather, it made possible a much wider, practically global, communication. A common language, in addition, may give the feeling of consolidated identity as being a European rather than an Italian, German, Polish or Norwegian. This effect is actively demonstrated at the political level during European summits.

Since European English is not solely directed at use inside the EU, it contacts not only recognized variants of English – British, American, South African, Indian, etc.; rather it encounters what is referred to as ELF (English as lingua franca). The idea of English as the language of global communication has received wide support among both academics and practical English teachers, to which the publication of the journal “World Englishes” can serve as indirect evidence. According to some researchers the features of ELF include:

- Dropping the 'S' when using the third person singular, e.g., 'she run' instead of 'she runs';
- Using the relative pronouns 'who' and 'which' interchangeably;
- Omitting articles 'a' and 'the';
- Using the tag questions 'isn't it?' or 'no?';
- Using extra prepositions, e.g., 'we have to study about...';
- Using that-clauses instead of infinitive constructions, e.g., 'I want that we go to the cinema' instead of 'I want to go to the cinema';
- Explicitness, e.g., saying 'red colour' rather than 'red' [8].

Interestingly, some of ELF features coincide with those of European English, which most probably reflects common learners' difficulties.

Of special interest in this respect is the European policy on language education in particular and linguistic issues in general. “Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning,

teaching assessment” (hereinafter, European Framework), in particular, provides:

“... it is only through a better knowledge of European modern languages that it will be possible to facilitate communication and interaction among Europeans of different mother tongues in order to promote European mobility, mutual understanding and co-operation, and overcome prejudice and discrimination” [9, p. 1].

In order to “maintain and further develop the richness and diversity of European cultural life” it is deemed necessary to achieve “greater mutual knowledge of national and regional languages, including those less widely taught” [9, p. 2]. For this purpose, the European Framework envisages the necessity of lifelong language education. Moreover, the European Framework introduces the concept of “plurilingualism” as opposed to that of “multilingualism”.

“Plurilingualism differs from multilingualism, which is the knowledge of a number of languages, or the co-existence of different languages in a given society. Multilingualism may be attained by simply diversifying the languages on offer in a particular school or educational system, or by encouraging pupils to learn more than one foreign language, or reducing the dominant position of English in international communication” [9, p. 4].

Although the “dominant position of English” is admitted, especially taking into account the fact that the document itself was drafted in English, the existing situation seems to dissatisfy the authors. Instead they offer lifelong study of many European languages. The question of whether the knowledge of several European languages can substitute English as a common medium of communication remains unanswered. The fact that knowledge of several languages is always better than the knowledge of only one does not account for certain controversial issues found in the European Framework, namely: given 24 EU official languages, the criteria for selection of the languages for study remain vague since it is hard to imagine many people who could master all or at least more than four foreign languages, especially if linguistics is not their profession. In fact, most language teachers would agree that mastering even one foreign language is a serious challenge for a considerable number of students. Furthermore, some languages (e.g. Hungarian or Finnish) are notably more difficult for students than the others (note that the overwhelming majority of interpreters and translators to and from Hungarian are Hungarian nationals). For an Italian student French, Spanish, Portuguese or Romanian would be much easier to learn than Czech, Greek or Finnish. The above mentioned facts create the natural basis for language discrimination, which the EU Framework would like so much to avoid. On the other hand, the availability of a common language of communication can give considerable advantage, especially since the Brexit, which stripped English of its political component.

There is also a notable group of researchers who tend to view European English as a variant (dialect) of the English language although this viewpoint still faces serious opposition. Some reject the idea outright referring to Euro-English simply as “foreigner speak” or “bad simple English”. Their arguments are, however, based on disputable grounds of what should be regarded as a norm and a mistake in a language. Moreover, all dialects started with deviation from the generally accepted rules of a given language. A more problematic issue is the answer to the questions: When do these deviations stop being a set of unacceptable mistakes and become characteristics of new dialect? What number of these deviations is

sufficient for the formation of a dialect? For instance, Heath Rose believes that European English falls short of being a dialect, and is simply another example of the flexibility of English as a language, rather than a separate dialect of it.

“Euro English is a term that's a very neat idea, that some people have gotten attached to, but I haven't seen a lot of evidence that it is a dialect in itself. In order for something to be a dialect it needs to be quite stable, it needs to have features that have been shown to be very stable” [1, p. 1].

To a large extent, these opinions are rather subjective, which is not the drawback in the authors' arguments; rather it is a deficiency in the theory. This discussion would be unnecessary if the relevant characteristics could be measured and calculated. The circumstances surrounding formation of dialects vary; they can be characterized as being unique for each particular case.

“... individuals adapt and modify English to suit their needs on a local and global scale, and, in the process, are paving the way for new varieties of English ...” [1, p. 2].

It would probably be sufficient to compare historical, cultural, linguistic, etc. backgrounds of the formation of American or Indian English; with other variants of the English language the situation being similar. It is, therefore, can reasonably be assumed that the qualitative and quantitative characteristics of such variants would vary considerably. The circumstances surrounding the formation of European English have a number of specific features, namely

1. The speakers of the new variant are not L1 speakers, which was the case with American, Australian and some British dialects (according to M. Modiano's terminology [6] L1 speakers are native speakers whereas L2 speakers are individuals who acquired the ability to communicate in the language through the process of education);

2. The European continent does not belong to the “outer circle” countries. According to the B. Cachru [11] classification, the outer circle countries are those that experienced British colonization and where English continues to play an important role in the spheres of administration, judiciary and culture. Rather, the European countries, in fact not only EU members but all European countries should be viewed as the countries of the “expanding circle” where English is learned in the secondary and higher education institutions;

3. Unlike the situation with *Vinglish* (Vietnamese English) and *Chinglish* (Chinese English), the European English speakers do not share one L1. In case of the above mentioned variants, English has experienced the phonetic influence of one language in each case. The first and most notable changes occurred in the phonetic sphere. Indian, Chinese or African variants are readily distinguishable both from the standard (British or American) variants and from one another. European English is being influenced by many phonetically diverse languages. In order to be understood by all participants of communication, the speakers have to find a “neutral” variant of pronunciation and the most logical way is the correction against the standard.

In India, however, with its “multilinguistic” society, the situation closely resembles the one accompanying the formation of Euro English. The L2 speakers in that country do not share the single mother tongue; English is used not only for external, but also for internal communication; and English is important in political and judicial spheres.

The fundamental questions to be answered in the course of attempts to understand the nature of European English is whether

L2 speakers are “entitled” to form their own variant of the language given it is not their mother tongue and how “legitimate” this new variant would be. It appears that theoretical speculations in this respect should not govern; rather, the reality should take precedence. Presently, few researchers doubt the legality of Indian and African variants of the English language. Chinese and Vietnamese variants are joining this group receiving the similar recognition as the Australian variant. The major difference between these variants is the period of their evolution: the longer this period is the more distinct the features are, which differ them from the basic – British or American – variant. Among the above mentioned variants European English is the youngest, enjoying the shortest period of independent development. It is, therefore, can be reasonably predicted that it is going to acquire the growing number of individual features.

With account of the above said, the following **conclusions** may be drawn:

– Although the existence of European English has been recognized by European academic, educational and, partly, political circles, its nature remains disputable. The final solution of the issue and precise definition of European English may have a profound and lasting effect in political, cultural and educational spheres.

– The growing number of examples of the peculiarities of European English appear largely to the efforts of enthusiasts. There appears to have been no traces of “centralized” or official attempts to research into the phenomenon, obviously due to the lack of the official position on the issue. Even the initiation of such a study will undoubtedly throw more light on the problem.

– The basic current concepts view European English as: a) a set of learners' mistakes; b) professional jargon of European bureaucracy and judiciary; c) the combination of the first two variants; and d) a new variant (dialect) of the English language.

– English in Europe at large including the countries outside the EU has notably consolidated its position as the medium of communication, given the additional advantage of the possibility to communicate practically worldwide.

– The problems with the definition of European English include the facts that it has no native speakers and cannot, therefore, be presently recognized as an official dialect; it is still too diverse to be fixed as a single dialect; without the recognized standard it cannot be used for educational purposes.

– The basic difference between Euro English and other recognized variants of the English language is the duration of their evolution. Even the short period of research into the phenomenon provides the growing number of examples of its specific features.

– It may, therefore, be reasonably assumed that European English is an emerging new dialect (variant) of the English language at the initial stage of its formation and may be regarded as one of the “world Englishes”. The political recognition of this position will inevitably require more time and more notable changes in the new dialect, which should foster further study of the issue.

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**Алексєєв М. І., Алексєєва Л. І., Синьова Т. В.**  
**Європейський англійський підхід до визначення**

**Анотація.** У статті йдеться про феномен європейської англійської мови, який протягом останніх кількох десятиліть був і залишається предметом активних дискусій і досліджень як в академічному середовищі, так і серед широкої громадськості. Хоча факт європейської англійської мови рідко оскаржується, її природа залишається предметом суперечок. Опис його природи і його визначення, таким чином, набули особливої актуальності. Крім того, вирішення цієї проблеми, безсумнівно, матиме глибокий і тривалий ефект для європейської комунікаційної, політичної та освітньої сфер.

Враховуючи особливе значення, яке надається вивченню англійської мови в Україні та останні важливі урядові ініціативи в цій галузі, це дослідження має особливе значення для освітньої сфери цієї країни.

У статті досліджено роль англійської мови в галузі європейського спілкування. Це дозволило зробити висновок, що англійська стрімко стає основною мовою спілкування на політичному, діловому, освітньому та повсякденному рівнях. Сучасну європейську політику щодо мов та мовної освіти було проаналізовано на основі «Загальноєвропейських рекомендацій з мов: навчання, оцінка викладання». Відзначено певні неузгодженості в документі.

У статті наведено низку прикладів використання європейської англійської мови, які демонструють особливості лексики та нові моделі граматики. Багато з останніх прикладів стосуються розмовного використання, тоді як старіші належать переважно до професійної сфери європейської бюрократії та судової системи,

Сучасні погляди на природу європейської англійської мови, а саме: а) європейська англійська – це набір помилок учнів; б) європейська англійська – професійний жаргон європейської бюрократії та судочинства; в) європейська англійська є сумішшю перших двох варіантів; і європейська англійська є новим варіантом (діалектом) англійської мови. Проаналізовано аргументи «за» і «проти».

Оскільки основною відмінністю між європейською англійською та іншими визнаними варіантами мови є тривалість її еволюції, можна розумно припустити, що європейська англійська є новим діалектом (варіантом) англійської мови на початковому етапі його формування.

**Ключові слова:** європейська англійська мова, визначення європейської англійської мови, діалект (варіант), професійний жаргон, світова англійська мова, мовна освіта, система трьох кіл.