

Inglés como instrumento de comunicación, su influencia y variedades

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Público: Maestros de lengua extranjera. **Materia:** Inglés, lengua extranjera. **Idioma:** Inglés.

Title: Inglés como instrumento de comunicación, su influencia y variedades.

Abstract

El inglés se ha convertido en el idioma más extendido del mundo, siendo el idioma que tiene el mayor número de hablantes, ya que lo utilizan como lengua materna, segundo idioma o idioma extranjero. Podríamos decir que es el lenguaje común de comunicación entre personas con diferentes lenguas maternas, lo que llamamos lingua franca. El aprendizaje de diferentes idiomas enriquece a las personas y amplía sus horizontes culturales a medida que se familiarizan con las diferentes visiones del mundo, por lo tanto, aún más inglés.

Keywords: Lengua inglesa, variedades del inglés, influencia del inglés

Título: English as a communication instrument, its influence and varieties.

Resumen

English has become the most widespread language of the world, being the language, which has the greatest number of speakers, since they use it as mother tongue, second language or foreign language. We could say that it is the common language of communication among individuals with different mother tongues, what we call lingua franca. The learning of different languages enriches people and enlarges their cultural horizons as they get familiarized with different views of the world, so, even more with English.

Palabras clave: English language, English varieties, English influence.

Recibido 2017-11-01; Aceptado 2017-11-06; Publicado 2017-12-25; Código PD: 090002

1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays English has become the most widespread language of the world, being the language, which has the greatest number of speakers, since they use it as mother tongue, second language or foreign language. For this reason, we could say that it is the common language of communication among individuals with different mother tongues, what we call lingua franca.

In fact, it can be only compared with Latin during the Middle Age and Renaissance, as a prestigious language used for communication and exchange of ideas among people speaking different mother tongues.

However, we can point some remarkable differences between Latin expansion then, and English expansion nowadays:

1. Latin was then a dead language, whereas English has a great vitality.
2. We can say that only an intellectual elite knew fluent Latin, but English is spoken with different grades of fluency and correction.
3. English is very simple from the morphological and syntactical point of view, which never happened with Latin.

2. ENGLISH LANGUAGE INFLUENCE NOWADAYS

A) First of all, regarding the aforementioned considerations, English can be considered as scientific-technical lingua franca. In fact, since the Second World War took place, English has been considered as the language of scientific and technologic advances, moving German and French to a second and third place. The following examples show what we have just said:

- Eighty per cent of information stocked up in computers and more than a half of technical and scientific publications are written in English.
- Almost fifty per cent of business deals are negotiated in English.
- Computer advances in the United States have diffuse a great deal of terms connected with computerise, such as software, hardware, input, and so on).

B) Secondly, English has an important status in Asiatic, African and Caribbean Anglo-speaker's communities.

For instance, in countries like Nigeria, English has status of official language as the great variety of tribal languages (there are hundreds of them) will origin internal conflicts.

Another example is India, where English works as an element of unification, although it is not a homogeneous variety in India, but it covers a wide range that goes from *standard* kind, with similar characteristics to the British English, to the *pidgin* variety.

In western black Africa, in countries such as Sierra Leone, Nigeria...the phenomenon called *Pidgin English* happens, and has to do with the period of the slave trade and their removal by ship as far as America plantations, that's why it is also known by *slave lingua franca*. The function there is to cover the immediate necessities of communication, making easier trade relations or other kind of relations among speakers from different linguistic communities.

Those cases in which pidgin English variety goes on to be considered as the main language of a community are called Creoles, for example, Caribbean Creole and Sierra Leone Creole. The deviation grade of this variety from the English internationally accepted is so notable that becomes it practically incomprehensible for those ones that are not native from these areas.

In fact, it can be thought that English future will show the following varieties:

- International standard English, with slight differences depending on speakers' origin: its evolution will be probably uniform in all the countries where this language is used.
- A local variety with other languages influence: this type will be functionally valid for internal use among the members of a linguistic community that use it.
- Varieties coming from English; but they have reached such an autonomy grade that can be considered different languages.

C) As the third phenomenon of the English influence nowadays, I will point out anglicisms, I mean, the great amount of English loans that have been incorporated in other languages. Let's see some examples:

- **Japlish**, which is the term used to make reference to Anglicisms in Japanese language. There are some examples such as: mai-homu (my home) and man-shon (mansion), that show the changes they have suffered in their incorporation to Japanese language. (SEE PICTURES)
- **Russlish**, which refers to the group of English words and sentences incorporated to Russian language due to the mythical image that American culture has in postsoviet Russia. For instance, SEKAPIL (from sex appeal). (SEE PICTURES).
- **Français**, which is the incorporation phenomenon of English origin words in Franco-speaking areas. In fact, 5 per cent of nowadays French language is an Anglicism. Some examples are what Frenchs call "*la langue du Coca Cola*": le jean, le match, le meeting, le drugstore, and so on.
- **Spanglish**, which can be referred to Spanish language loans and to hybrid systems we can find in areas with linguistic contact between Anglo-speaker communities and Hispano-speaker ones such as Miami, Puerto Rico and Gibraltar.

D) Finally, another phenomenon we should take into account is English role in world institutions.

For instance, in institutions such as the NATO and the UNESCO, English is the most frequently language used, and politicians of countries in conflicts (Bosnia, Croatia...) make their public declarations in English with the purpose of getting a world-wide audience.

3. ENGLISH VARIETIES

In the first place, I would like to point out that the choice of the term variety instead of dialect is due to the pejorative connotations of the latter one. In fact, the unjust social considerations and the lack of a linguistic base that are usually assigned to dialects don't affect to the term variety that is connected with an objective classification.

The classification of English varieties is a difficult subject due to the geographic expansion and the number of this language speakers in the world. For this reason, we must start with a common core of linguistic-phonologic, morphologic, lexical syntactic and so on elements. We are going to concentrate our study on the varieties of Region and Education and Social standing, following Professor Quirk's classification:

- A. *On the one hand, we can find formal differences among English varieties, depending on the REGION, as for example, the varieties used in Australia, India, Scotland and Ireland.*

For instance, American English and British English, which are the two most well-known varieties, show differences in relation to syntactic, lexical, orthographic and phonologic point of view. One reason is that the American variety had clear influences of the languages of immigrants coming from Europe in the XIXth century.

Let's see some of these differences:

- Syntactic differences:
 - In British English we say the participle "got", whereas in American English we say "gotten".
- Lexical differences:
 - In British English we say "apartment", whereas in American English we say "flat".
- Orthographic differences: (SEE PICTURES)
 - In British English we say "theater" (T-H-E-A-T-E-R), whereas in American English we say "theatre" (T-H-E-A-T-R-E).

Another varieties of Professor Quirk's classification are:

- Hiberno-Irish and Irish English, which are both spoken in the Republic of Ireland. The former is the one spoken by those whose mother tongue is Gaelic, and the latter is spoken by those whose mother tongue is English.
- The Scots variety of English. It is practically the standard English variety spoken with Scottish characteristics in pronunciation.
- Australian variety. We can talk about three different varieties: broad Australian, General Australian and Cultivated Australian. The second variety has the greatest number of speakers, and more social prestigious.

And the latest one:

- English spoken in South Africa. The co-existence between two languages such as Afrikaans and English has been difficult for the second one. However, English is the language Blacks majority prefer using.

- A. *On the other hand, another possible consideration when you study English varieties is to take into account speakers' educative formation and social level.*

In general, English used by people who have had access to a high academic education or belong to an upper social class is more homogeneous than the English spoken by those belonging to the lowest social classes.

Nevertheless, this aspect is more important in Great Britain than in U.S.A., since British people use language as a social distinctive marker and a necessary requirement to social promotion. However, In the United States, the variety you speak doesn't mean any problem when you are talking about social recognition.

An example of an English variety considered decisive to belong to certain power circles is the educated variety, also called Standard English or Received Pronunciation (RP).

4. HUMANISTIC VIEWPOINT IN THE NEW APPROACHES OF LANGUAGE TEACHING

First, it is essential to get students familiarized with different ways of life and different social organization, because only in this way they will learn the languages following a communicative approach. For this reason, the English teacher must assess student's attitudes towards the language setting, showing comprehension and respect towards new cultural outlines.

Some examples of activities that can promote this approach among different cultures could be:

- Having pen-friends from schools of countries where English is spoken as main language (Ireland, Great Britain, The United States and so on).
- Interchanges with other countries, going with their English teachers. Although it will depend on children's economic possibilities.

But of course, this kind of activities change depending on the age of the students. For instance, these are thought for the third cycle of Primary School, as they require a certain maturity level and autonomy at work on students' side. Another aspect to take into account is children's economic possibilities.

5. CONCLUSION

Along article I have pointed out how important it is English in nowadays society because of its great expansion all over the world and the political importance of some countries where it's spoken as mother tongue.

For this reason, its learning with the purpose of communicating with other children whose mother tongue is not necessary English makes this language very attractive for Primary School pupils. Moreover, the learning of different languages enriches people and enlarges their cultural horizons as they get familiarized with different views of the world.

It should be one of our most important aims as foreign language teachers!

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