

English as a Lingua Franca in Russia

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This article discusses the World Englishes (WE) paradigm state of the art in Russia. The author argues that the WE ideas are to find their way to the minds of Russian linguists and educators. There is practical need for communicating with non-native speakers through English, which raises questions of the so called intermediary translation. This practical need will result in accepting Russia English identity required for spreading information about Russian culture in the world.

In Russia, English is the major foreign language at school and is considered to be a language for intercultural and international business communication. Its domestic functions are limited to some pragmatic usage and education. The pragmatic usage of English is mostly observed in advertising, as English-flavored trade names are associated with prestige and good quality and thus attract customers. English is an education discipline to study at a secondary and tertiary school, though more and more elementary schools and even kindergartens introduce English classes in their curricula. University English majors can use the language as a tool of instruction, which is not mandatory and depends on school requirements. English for non-majors is learned as an academic discipline, with the focus on developing students' communicative competences and ability to read professional literature.

There are mass media in English (for example, *the Moscow Times*, *St. Petersburg Times*, *Vladivostok Times*, *Sakhalin Independent*, and other newspapers, as well as magazines, some journals, and a TV channel); however, they are not generally addressed to the Russian readership but are intended for international businessmen, tourists, and other guests. Scholarly works are rarely published in English since the requirements for dissertations and a number of Russian grant-supported projects are that the results of research be published in Russian, which leads to a certain contradiction: Russian scholars want to be known abroad but they have to write their works in Russian, known to a comparatively limited academic circle in the world, rather than in English, the global language of intercultural communication.

Though restricted to international usage, English is indispensable for the purposes of intercultural communication where it dominates over other languages, even native languages of communicators. Thus, for example, Chinese-Russian or Japanese-Russian negotiations are not infrequently conducted in English, which is labeled as a *lingua franca*, or ELF (Jenkins, 2003, 2004-2005). This type of communication faces a number of challenges if communicators, each speaking his or her local variety of English, have strong accents and rely on their own pragmatic rules of communication. This situation has necessitated Russian scholars' embarking on the intensive study of World Englishes (WE) and intercultural communication which began not long ago.

In this article, I am going to outline the main directions of this research and its practical output for the so-called intermediary translation, i.e. translation from English as a *Lingua Franca*, as well as to describe the main effects of English and Russian interaction, resulting in nativization of English in Russia and Englishization of Russian.

Research of World Englishes

The awareness of the coming “lingual revolution” (Kabakchi, 2002a), stirred up by world Englishes, was stated in Russia in the late 1980s-1990s. The practical need for the new linguistic paradigm has developed in the Russian Far East where Russians have to communicate with neighboring non-native English speakers by means of English, with each speaker using a localized variety of English characteristic of a number of linguistic deviations not easily intelligible, comprehensible, or interpretable (Smith, 1992) for unprepared communicators.

Independently from the mainstream of the WE paradigm, there have been some achievements in this field of Russian linguistics. Linguistic interest of Soviet (at that time) researchers focused basically on the countries of the Inner Circle (Kachru, 1985): Canadian English lexis was studied synchronically and diachronically (Bykhovets, 1988; Popova, 1978), Australian English was described in Orlov (1978), and the comparison of British, American, Australian, and Canadian phonetics (Shakhbagova, 1980, 1982, 1992) and semantics (Oschepkova, 1989) was made. The New Zealand variety of English was also included in the research (Oschepkova, 1989). Later Victoria Oschepkova and Alla Petrikovskaya devoted their energy to collecting culture-loaded words related to Australia and New Zealand. Their effort resulted in the Dictionary of Australia and New Zealand, a dictionary of the linguacultural series (Oschepkova & Petrikovskaya, 1998). In 1999, at Moscow State Pedagogical University, S. Priadko defended his candidate dissertation on the cultural component of Australian English lexicon.

Until recently no detailed research has been conducted by Russian linguists on “new” Englishes of the Outer Circle, i.e. institutionalized Englishes functioning as second, official languages or, the more so, on Englishes used as performative varieties (EFL) in countries of the Expanding Circle. One of the first significant works—“English in Developing Countries: Problems of Sociocultural Varying”—was a doctoral dissertation by O. Semenets defended in Kiev in 1985. Another dissertation from a Candidate of Philology was also defended in Kiev in 1990 by Yu. Knurov. This work presented the research on English functioning in Ethiopia. In 2000, a book on divergence and convergence of regional varieties of modern English was written by R. Kritsberg and published at Kiev Linguistic University. The traditions of studying African Englishes were continued at Piatigorsk Linguistic University where in 2002 E. Krainyuchenko defended her candidate dissertation on contrastive analysis of the English language transformation in South Africa. In 2004, at St.Petersburg Pedagogical University, another candidate dissertation—on Ghanaian English—was defended by N. Siaka. So African Englishes were the main area of both Ukrainian and Russian linguists’ interests.

Moscow linguists lay emphasis on the idea of diversity of Englishes too. In 1998, the disciples of Professor O. Akhmanova, supported by David Crystal, published a collection of articles on World Englishes (Alexandrova & Konurbayev, 1998). In May 2001, Moscow State University hosted the international conference “Global English for Global Understanding” which proved to be a landmark in Russian linguistics. That conference highlighted very important issues of World Englishes: interaction of cultures and global understanding, globalization of Business English teaching, raising cross-cultural awareness, cultural aspects of the language, varieties of English and English teaching materials, and many others. The conference had a great impact on the English-language teaching in Russia. It stressed the

problem of World Englishes as a key issue. The Moscow conference was followed by the Saratov international conference, “English Unites the World: Diversity within Unity,” held by the Russian National Association of Teachers of English in January 2002; and in 2004 the Pan-Asian Consortium and Far Eastern English Language Teachers’ Association (FEELTA) held the 5th international conference in Vladivostok, where Larry Smith drew the attention of Russian educators to the topical issue of Asian Englishes and intercultural intelligibility in the region. Four years earlier, in 2000, FEELTA held the conference “People, Languages, and Cultures in the Third Millennium.” At this conference the concept of Far Eastern Englishes, meaning the use of English in the Asian setting, was substantiated (Proshina, 2001b). That conference turned Russian linguists to the interaction of Asian languages and English and the great role this interaction has for Russian communicators in English. Several dissertations on Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Vietnamese, and Singapore Englishes (Belonozhko, 2007; Bogachenko, 2003; Ilyina, 2005; Ivankova, 2007; Krykova, 2004; Lupachova, 2005; Pivovarova, 2005; Proshina, 2001a; Revenko, 2006; Uytova, 2004; Zavyalova, 2001) have been defended since, with many more still in progress. The defended dissertations were dedicated to the role of English in communication between East Asian and Russian people, Asian accents in English, and the history of Asian borrowed words in English.

The question of Russian English as a variety of world Englishes was not raised until 1987, when V. V. Kabakchi defended his doctoral dissertation, “The English Language for Intercultural Communication,” in Saint Petersburg. In his dissertation and later in his books, Prof. Kabakchi argues that translating Russian culture into English makes up a serious field of linguistics and ELF pedagogy. It should be specially investigated and taught. Luckily, Prof. Kabakchi is not alone in his theory and practice. About a decade ago, the School of Foreign Languages, headed by Prof. S. Ter-Minasova at Moscow State University, offered a new major to their students--Russian Studies in English. This can be considered as a great step forward in theory and practice – English as a global language will become a vehicle of our ethnic identity abroad, and we must work hard to facilitate this mission. Academic research in Russian English, however, is still languid as this variety of English is not unanimously accepted by Russian linguists and educationists. Little research is done in the field and, probably, future efforts will require collaborative effort of linguists from other countries.

In general, Russian research on world Englishes is being done in six major dimensions: a) lexicographic aspect (Bogachenko, 2003; Kabakchi, 2002b; Kuznetsova, 2005; Oschepkova & Petrikovskaya, 1998; Proshina, 2004; Shahbagova, 1993; Ul’tsiferov, 2003; Yuzefovich, 2000, 2003) – compiling dictionaries of ethnic cultures in English; b) phonetic investigations of Asian accents and speech rhythm (Belonozhko, 2007; Bondarenko, 2007; Pivovarova, 2005; Shakhbagova, 1982, 1992; Uytova, 2004; Zavyalova, 2001); c) description of lexical and grammatical features of World Englishes (Ivankova, 2007; Knurov, 1990; Oschepkova, 1989; Priadko, 1999; Siaka, 2004; Yuzefovich, 2006); d) sociolinguistic and linguacultural aspects (Ilyina, 2005; Kolycheva, 2004; Krainyuchenko, 2002; Krykova, 2004; Lupachova, 2005; Oschepkova, 2006; Proshina, 2006; Revenko, 2006; Semenets, 1985; Shveitser, 1963; Sychova, 2005), e) translation studies and intercultural communication (Ivanov, 1985; Kabakchi, 1987; Leontovich, 2005, 2007; Proshina, 2001a, 2005, 2007; Ter-Minasova, 2007); and f) Russian and English language and culture contacts (Aitmukhametova, 2000; Aristova, 1978; Averyanova, 1984; Beliaeva, 1978, 1984; Kabakchi,

1993, 1998; Karapetian, 1988; Larionova, 1993; Lebedko, 1999, 2002; Lovtsevich, 2005; Mangushev, 2002; Martinek, 1972; Mitireva, 2002; Obukhova, 1991; Pavlenko, 1999; Ponomarenko, 1965; Proshina & Etkin, 2005; Rivlina, 2005; Romanov, 2000; Seshan, 1996; Ter-Minasova, 2005; Yelizova, 1978; Yuzefovich, 2005).

Intermediary Translation

The requirement to follow rules of translation and interpretation from World Englishes is one of the essential practical results of the research. Since this type of translation is done from English as a *Lingua Franca* that serves two non-native English-language cultures and is influenced by the structure of native languages, this translation is regarded as indirect or intermediary and is contrasted to direct translation from native languages. For instance, Chinese-Russian translation is direct, while translation from Chinese-China English is intermediary, as in this case the English language is an intermediary between Chinese and Russian cultures.

The intermediary translation is more complicated than a direct translation for a number of reasons:

1. Non-traditional spelling and graphics, i.e. non-traditional correlation between letters and sounds, like in China English *qigong*, *Xianggang*, with Q pronounced either as *ch* (chair) or *g* (gym) and X sounding as *sh* (ship).
2. Non-traditional transliterations due to the domineering of direct translation laws that have a longer standing. Thus, the Chinese culture-loaded word *tai-ji quan* has two letters that are transliterated into Russian in an unusual way from the point of view of direct English-Russian correspondence. *J* is normally transliterated from English into Russian by two letters *ДЖ* (sounding as the beginning in *gym*), but in Chinese loans it should be rendered by the letters *ЦЗ* (sounding approximately like [ts + z]). The letter Q should correspond to the Russian *Ц* [ts] rather than to the traditional *К*, like in *Queensland* – *Квинслэнд*. So the word *taiji quan* should correspond to the Russian *тайцзи-цюань* [taitszi tsjuan], which is accounted for by long traditions of direct Chinese-Russian translation. A translator who does not know the rules of intermediary translation of Chinese words from English is apt to render this word in a wrong way. The same is true to transliterating the Japanese *sh*, which should be represented by the Russian *С* [s] rather than *Ш* [sh] like in typical English-Russian correspondences.
3. Concurrent Romanized forms in English texts. Chinese culture-loaded words, if used in the texts published in the US before the year of 2000, were frequently written in the Wade-Giles system, while today most texts contain Chinese loans in Pinyin (cf. *ch'ikung* and *qigong*). Due to typographic reasons, diacritics, including the apostrophe, were often missing, which caused more problems and resulted in a number of translation doubles (e.g., the Korean word *t'aekwondo* is rendered in Russian in several ways: *тхэквондо*, *тэжквондо*, and *таэквондо*.) Today, it is not only Chinese words but also Korean loans that occur in two concurrent written forms: McCune-Reischauer and New System of the Korean Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

4. Parallel forms due to native language phonological features influencing the loans. Thus, voiced and voiceless consonants are allophones (variants) of one phoneme in Korean; that is why Korean loans appear in English in several forms: *bulgogi* / *bulgoki* / *bulkoki* / *pulkoki* (“fried vinegared beef slices”).

Oral interpretation faces additional challenges due to cross-linguistic influences:

1. Epenthetic vowels appear in English words containing consonant clusters: *support* may mean *sport*. Additional vowels are also heard in the final position after a consonant: *but* sounds like *butter*, *love* like *lover*. These are phenomena of the so-called plus-segmentation of speech rhythm typical of Asian Englishes (Bondarenko, 2007).
2. Elision of consonants, or minus-segmentation, is characteristic of initial and middle consonant groups, as well as of final consonants: *spenid* < *splendid*, *relassing* < *relaxing*, *bes* < *best*, *nest* < *next*.
3. Sound substitutions: *l – r* (*flight – fright*), fricatives by stops (*Buradibosutoku* < *Vladivostok*) can be very confusing.

These and some more challenges of intermediary translation (interpretation) require special training of translators to be involved in the interlanguage and intercultural communication via English as a *Lingua Franca*.

Nativization of English

When used by communicators of other than English languages, a variety of English is necessarily adapted to a new context, which is found in all language levels. Usually we can easily see nativization of English in other varieties but not in ours. That is why Russian English is not unanimously accepted in Russia, speakers in this variety generally not being aware of their deviations and innovations that have become social and typical of many educated English-knowing Russians.

The most typical deviations result from the interlinguistic influence of the Russian language and can be noticeable on all language levels. On the phonetic level, Russian English is characterized by:

- lack of the intonation stepping scale
- rising tone in special and alternative questions
- lack of aspiration;
- devoicing of final consonants and regressive assimilation of middle consonants (*bag - back; absorption*) and
- confusion of long and short vowels.

Morphological deviations are represented by:

- substituting the Present Perfect with the Past Simple (*Such words had different spelling in their history* < *have had*) or by the Present Simple (*It means that the*

proper noun loses its lingual status; Since 1958 an official alphabet of China is Pinyin.);

- lack of articles (*efforts for **understanding** and interpretation of information; metonymic model PLACE FOR INSTITUTION is quite common; in most countries typical EFL curriculum includes...*) or misuse of articles.

Syntactical deviations can be traced in the following:

- avoiding attributive clusters, preferring *of*-phrases (*the form of the 19th century* instead of *the 19th century form*) (the Russian sentence places noun attributes to the right of the key noun);
- wrong word order in attributive clusters (*the problem “generation gap”* instead of *the generation gap problem*) (the reason is similar to that mentioned above);
- lack of link verbs, especially in the present-tense form (*At the moment the main subject I'm responsible for <is> American Culture*), which is accounted for by the lack of a link-verb in a Russian sentence describing a situation in the present;
- adverbial attributes (*PR in business have some peculiarities*);
- foregrounding the topic of the sentence: *This book I have read already*;
- word order in gerundial phrases (*birth giving* instead of *giving birth*)—there is no gerund in the Russian verb system, which is why this form is so problematic for Russians.

Lexico-semantic deviations are various and numerous. The most typical phenomena are as follows:

- new words and collocations are coined: *home task* (“home assignment”), *to enter the university* (“to be admitted to the university”), *foreign passport* (“a passport issued to Russians going abroad”), *Candidate of Philology* (academic degree in literature or linguistics, approximately equal to PhD);
- prepositions (*differences among cognate languages < between; interest to what they like < in*). To some degree, these deviations can also be accounted for by Russian language interference: *among* and *between* both correspond to the same preposition in Russian; the Russian noun *интерес (interes)*, very much similar to the English one, is used with the preposition *k* + Dative case, which usually corresponds to the English *to*;
- full-meaning words, cognate to Russian ones. In this case, “inner translation” (Kabakchi, 2002a, p. 81) from Russian into English is a reason for the deviation: e.g., the verb *realize* is used in the meaning “to achieve” (*...its acquisition may be realized only through active communication*), “to make use of” (*make it possible for the students to realize their own cognitive skills*)—the Russian word *реализовать (realizovat’)* is polysemantic and is able to express both these meanings;
- gender-species relations between corresponding English and Russian words are sometimes not taken into account: for instance, the words *science, scientific, scientist* are often applied by Russians to the humanities instead of the words *research,*

academic, scholar, etc. because the Russian word *наука (nauka)* can be applied to either field of studies;

- change of meaning is characteristic of some other words: e.g., *social work* implies “unpaid work” or “social service.” Change of meaning often results in semantic calques, or transference of a Russian word meaning to its English cognate: *pioneer* “a member of the pro-communist Russian children organization”; *the Thaw* “a period of loosening, to some degree, the Communist Party and Soviet Government control of culture in the 1960s.”

Pragmatic deviations are most persistent, for they are related to the source culture (Russian culture, in our case):

- masculine-oriented language (*The lexical units involved in our study concern man as social being, his activities...*), with *man* meaning “human being”—there is still no movement for so-called “politically correct” language in Russian culture;
- over-verbalization (*the issue concerned in both cultures; it becomes the result of an elaborate fraud; My major specialized interest within this field is...*);
- a great degree of categorical orders and requests, expressed by imperative sentences: *Open the door. Sit down, please.* Russian negative structures also sound too categorical due to the shift of negative positions: *I think I cannot do that* instead of *I don't think I can do that.*

As often as not the above-mentioned phenomena are considered to be mistakes. However, they are rather typical, occur in educated speakers’ production (our examples are picked from university scholars’ and teachers’ papers), and actually they do not interfere with successful communication. It is their typical character and systemic occurrence in the speech of educated users of English that makes it possible to consider these features as deviations peculiar to the Russian regional variety of English. These deviations are not codified yet; therefore, they cannot be regarded as innovations, which are new acceptable linguistic features resulting from language nativization and acculturation and accounted for contextually, formally, and logically. Culture-loaded words, borrowed by the English language, are true innovations, while the above-mentioned deviations are just linguistic tendencies manifest in English speech of many educated people in the Russian community, a kind of “linguistic price” (Kachru, 1992, p. 309) paid by English for being used in a new cultural setting.

Englishization of Russian

Like many other languages, today’s Russian is seriously affected by English and undergoes dramatic changes. Most evident Englishization of the Russian language is seen in the sphere of lexis (Kostomarov, 1999; Krysin, 2000; Romanov, 2000). Computer, business, and pop-music terms are probably the most penetrated domains. New English loans are replacing former French and German ones (*make-up* is now more frequent than *maquillage*; *sandwich* is used instead of *Butterbrod*, etc.). English has influence even on other language borrowings to Russian. Thus, it is under its impact that we have a number of Asian words pronounced in an English-like manner (*sushi, sashimi, shiitake, tamagochi*, etc.) in Russian.

Besides the direct function of naming a new thing or idea, English loans serve several stylistic functions (Romanov, 2000):

- creating an exotic flavor
- evaluative function, as an English loan is associated with greater prestige
- euphemistic function
- social and speech characteristics
- language game (Rivlina, 2008) and
- creating the effect of information emptiness of the text.

Culture-loaded loans used for an exotic flavor are typical of texts telling about other countries such as Great Britain, the USA, Australia, or others:

Хорошей во многих смыслах альтернативой гостиницам является английское же изобретение, называемое «**бед энд брекфаст**» (буквально «кровать и завтрак»), представляющее собой жилье в частном доме [In many senses a good alternative to hotels is an English invention called “**bed and breakfast**” (lit.), which is a type of accommodation in a private house]. (Pavlovskaya, 2004, p. 121)

High prestige of English words is revealed in a great number of Englishized words in advertisement (Ustinova, 2005; Ustinova & Bhatia, 2005), brand names, company names, and others (*All Hi-tech, Charmzone, Outhall, Pacific Tourservice*, etc.). English words are associated with elite style, success, and progress (*image-maker, gym, diving, weekend, shopping, engineering, consulting, training, player, high tech*). English loans are used as euphemisms, often due to their greater prestige (for instance, *office manager* instead of *secretary*). One can see or hear obscene English words instead of Russian ones because they seem to sound less insulting than similar Russian words. Certain English words are typical of various social groups. For example, the slang of young people, or the so called interslang (Kostomarov, 1999, p. 132), is abundant of English words. Journalists, who, through mass media, spread new Englishized words, and professionals (businessmen, financiers, politicians, scholars, etc) are also responsible for disseminating English loans. Krysin (2000) argues that there are certain tendencies in accepting loans: a) the older a speaker, the less patient she or he is towards loans; b) the more educated a speaker, the easier she or he accepts loans; c) professionals in the field of humanities are more tolerant towards loans than those whose profession is not related to language and culture.

Language game is used either for a humorous effect or for attracting a customer's attention. Thus we have books titled in a hybrid way: *Духless* (Spiritless) by Sergei Minaev; *Рублевка. Live* (Rublyovka. Live) by Oksana Robsky, *МультиMILLIONAIRES* (Multimillionaires) by Lena Lenina; and *Брачный контракт или Who is ху... (Marriage Contract, or Who is Who...)* by Tatyana Ogorodnikova.

The effect of information emptiness is achieved in over-sophisticated and seemingly scholarly texts full of words unknown for a reader—Morkovkin & Morkovkina (1997) label these words as agnonyms, i.e. hardly or little understood words, especially characteristic of a political and scholarly discourse:

При **позиционной дискретности** компонентов данной ЛСГ наблюдается **дивергенция** смыслов с последующей **экстраполяцией** на элементы ситуации... (Kiklevich, 2006, p. 89)

Besides the impact of the English language upon the Russian lexicon, other levels of the Russian language prove to be under the influence of English. For example, word building is characterized by new coinages made either like English compounds (*слухмейкер* – lit. “rumor-maker,” with the second root directly borrowed from English), or out of some English elements in a word (*беспрайсовый* – lit. “priceless,” with the Russian word containing a Russian prefix and an English root *price*-).

Traces of English are observable in Russian syntax (Aitmukhametova, 2000), which knows more and more N + N structures, formally not typical of Russian: *Internet café, web-administrator, office-manager, etc.* Grammarians notice the increasing analytical tendency of the Russian morphology, also influenced by English. Thus, Glovinskaya (2000) emphasizes that synthetic case forms of nouns are more and more being replaced by prepositional phrases: *человек доброй души* is substituted by *человек с доброй душой* (a person with a kind heart); *церемонность обращения* > *церемонность в обращении* (ceremonies in addressing); *Я купил вам / для вас хлеб* (I bought some bread for you).

Conclusion

Belonging to the Expanding Circle, Russia is open to English as a *lingua franca*. The internal linguistic situation is characterized by the processes typical of other countries: predominance of English in education, as compared with other foreign languages, nativization of English resulting in the appearance of Russian English as a variety of World Englishes, and great influence of English on the Russian language, which brings about calls for lingual ecology and, on the other hand, facilitates intercultural and interlinguistic communication. Communicants in ELF are challenged by specific requirements of the intermediary translation that is to be geared toward the traditions of direct translation from non-English languages. This new aspect of the World Englishes paradigm is being developed in Russia and can be boasted by Russian linguists as a contribution to both theory and practice.

However, a great number of problems are yet to be solved in this country. Some of them require administrative efforts in language policy, which should facilitate using English as a *lingua franca* and spreading Russian culture via English. Only this way our huge cultural heritage will become known to the global community.

Some problems are related to our English-language identity. Russians have to admit that they speak Russia English as they think Russian. They do not need to pretend speaking pure British or American English as, to this or that degree, they deviate from a native English standard. Innovations of Russia English should be included in school curricula as our students have to use the global language when speaking about Russia with other English-knowing speakers.

As the new linguistic paradigm, called World Englishes, is being established, it requires raising awareness among teachers and students regarding this powerful tool of communication, fostering the appreciation for World Englishes, preparing future interlocutors for speaking with non-native speakers who come from countries neighboring with Russia. I

am sure the WE paradigm has a great future ahead. It will revolutionize both Russian linguistics and pedagogy.

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