EU ENGLISH CURRENT STATUS WITHIN EU BODIES, ITS IMPACT AND SPREAD IN EUROPE

Teodora FLORICĂ DRAGOTĂ
University of Craiova, Romania

Abstract: While "Englishes" have continuously developed around the world with their own vocabulary and grammar particularities, Euro-English has made no exception. English is no longer the property of the traditional "natives" while the role of English as the continent's lingua franca meets the need for effective and efficient communication in and out the EU bodies. Although some (Eurosceptics) have predicted that Brexit would mark the decline of its use in EU institutions, EU English has also been subject to some pejorative labels such as Brussels language, Eurolegalese or Eurish. Others claim that communications in the EU is fairer in English, shaping into a more and more neutral language that serves as a catalyst one and that it has the chance to become everyone's second language.

Keywords: EU English; lingua franca; impact; spread.

1. Introduction

English has been affirmed the status of lingua franca not only in the EU, but also in the entire world. English is now the global language of communication, as well as between the EU and the rest of the world. Latin, Phoenician, Greek, French, Spanish have been lingua franca at some point, and then lost this status. How will it be with English? It is special because, unlike other linguae francae, it got its status at the very moment we all became connected to each other through the British and then American hegemonies of 19th and 20th centuries, becoming fitted for any communicative situation. "Almost every conceivable human opinion, almost any human sentiment, is expressed in English."(Abram de Swaan, 2001)

2. Whose English?

With a large number of the non-native speakers who outnumber native users, belonging to bilingual or multilingual communities the ownership issue of English is now being referred to as a language of individual impact rather than to its geographical spread. Spoken as a mother tongue by over 375 million people, and with more than 400 million who speak it as a second language, English is by far the most studied language by non-native speakers worldwide, some experts are predicting that this language will be spoken by 2 billion individuals by 2050.

With only 6% of word population who are native English speakers, it is a phenomenon growing out of its original borders. However, English as an emerging

European lingua franca has been largely interpreted as a component instance of individual, rather than societal bilingualism. (Cenoz 2000: 30).

Kachuru„s categorization of English varieties: the Inner Circle (belonging to native speakers in the UK, USA, Australia, New Zealand), the Outer Circle (where English is used as a second language alongside the vernacular(s) in postcolonial settings) and the Expanding Circle (where English is the language of choice, a foreign language not enjoying an official status in the country) regards normativity as dynamic in nature and with certain features for each category:

The Inner Circle being "normproviding", the Outer Circle is seen as "norm-developing" and the Expanding Circle is "normdependent" on the Inner Circle, (pp. 16-17) while the Inner Circle is not perceived as superior, but rather the "historical source" or "the starting point in Britain for the diffusion of the English. (p. 219).

The original Kachuru`s circles have a vivid life as more and more people use in the Outer circle use English as the first language, whereas immigration or global and European context have reshaped the linguistic form of English in the Inner Circle.

2.1. "European identity" versus "National identity"

In Europe English is currently a lingua franca that educated people are expected to know, in addition to any other European language. If we look back in European language history, the use of Greek the establishment of Latin as a lingua franca in most parts of the Roman Empire, its widely use throughout the Middle Ages and the Renaissance period, French domination in communication in the XIXth century communication, it can be concluded that Europe has a tradition in establishing lingua francas in a strong connection between the changing patterns of linguistic diversity and political power.

Various factors have lead to setting English as a lingua franca in Europe. Hartman (1996:26) remarks that: "The present hegemony of English in Europe is primarily due to the entertainment industry, and only secondarily to war, technological lead, science and political domination."

Nevertheless. the European Union political context is majorly contributing to the change of the status of English as a foreign language, being now the main channel of communication among European citizens becoming the EU's citizens second language. Translation of EU legislation is continuously shaped under the constraints of European multilingualism permanently finding a compromise between state and the supranational law with an effort which to lead to a cultural-legal convergence of all national legal traditions and bridging the cultural-legal gaps.

On the one hand, it can be said that English is no longer associated exclusively with the UK and people living in the United Kingdom and this thing has been proved in post-Brexit landscape, when English flourished and became a fertile ground for Euro-English which to make its own way freed to an extent from the domination of its parent language, to a "consolidated identity" (Heath Rose:2020).State or EU, a duality which still searches for its balance, as although the European nation-states remain powerful, their identities have been doubled by including 'Europe' as concept and vision. In the 1990s, English has increasingly developed into a universal asset while the individual speaker has become the locus of the interlingual transfer."

On the other hand, Euro-English seems to be something that exists more in reality than in theory, pertaining mainly to EU discourse, not easily met outside European

institutions, a language of drafting and legal documents of European institutions something to be heard during meetings.

More and more English currently used in European institutions is building its way to rather Euro-English. Since there are a lot of variations of English and people adopt them for their own purposes, the variety of the Euro-English might be a successful tool. The European variety of English (known as Euro-English, European English, Brussels-English, or even Continental English) supports the EU institutionally and the speech community within the EU. State or EU, a duality which still searches for its balance in legal discourse.

While some see it is a new variety of English in the process of its formation Hartman (1996) defines the term The Europeanness of English (1996: 4) and sees its dominance of English in different domains linked with the status of English as a world language and this, in turn, is due to England's intensive participation in what can be called the *Englishaization* of the World.

3. Has Brexit spelled The End of EU English?

However, English is now mother tongue for five million Irish and 460,000 Maltese (a total of 1% of the EU inhabitants), Even if Ireland and Malta would choose English as an official language, it will have fewer native speakers than Hungarian or Slovak 60 million English native speakers have left the Union, making the other official EU languages more valuable and significant.

Unexpectedly, even after the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the EU, continued its influential Way in European institutions and discourse.

While there has been a lot asking: *Will Brexit result in the weakening of the status of English within the Union?* as we can testify now, the power of English as the principal working language has been strengthened.

On the one hand, it can be said that" English is no longer associated exclusively with the UK and people living in the United Kingdom and this thing has been proved in post-Brexit landscape, when English flourished and became a fertile ground for Euro English which to make its own way freed to an extent from the domination of its parent language, to a "consolidated identity" (Heath Rose:2020)

There have been some tendencies of encouraging the use French and German as working languages or imposing of what purists would call the "proper" version that the European Union will create their own version of English, "Euro-English".

Modiano (2017) proposed that the EU should take the lead in defining and promoting what he calls Euro-English, complete with its own punctuation, spelling, grammar, and vocabulary. "One possibility here is that the exit of Britain from the Union will clear the sociolinguistic space for the emergence of an authentic European English, used by members of the EU as a 'second language' or (even) a quasi-Outer Circle English, serving the needs of the European Union".

More and more as a compromise between the promoted multilingualism of Eu and the increase use of English the term of working language has been used. (Mańko, 2017: 1) remarks that "Looking through the legal lens, multilingualism in the EU falls into three different categories: the original (authentic) languages of the Treaties, the official languages of the EU and the working languages of the EU."

Anne L. Kjaer (2007: 19) argues that translation in the EU is not translation in the strict sense of the word, but only "interlingual text reproduction." "The primary

concern when translating legislation in the EU texts is not the target language conventions and their recipient, but rather the reproduction of words and phrases that would assure coherence and cohesion across the 23 equally authentic language versions."

Furthermore, in EU translation the most important textual relation is not that of the source text and its translation but of intertextual relations among the individual texts within the institutional setting (Koskinen 2002: 114). Even though intertextuality as a concept originates in literary theory, EU texts are in fact intertextually more tightly knit than most literary texts. A strong intertextual interconnection of EU texts results from their co-drafting process, leading to 23 simultaneously elaborated translations, equivalent not only with the source text but also among one another. In addition, intertextuality is also manifested in the interconnection of the newly drafted documents with the previous ones by means of numerous references, direct and indirect citations, language clichés and by keeping the texts terminologically consistent.

4. An ongoing development

The policy of multilingualism started in 1958 when the European Council declared all languages of the Member States official and working languages of the European institutions being a unique example of fully democratic language policy. EU has continued as a context where multilingualism is encouraged to be reminded here the initiative from the year 2001 to be declared the year of Languages and the principle of the Action Plan 2004-2006: "mother tongue and two other languages". In 1993 Décsy in focused on the development of a European form from English and called it '*Eurish*'. Today, *Eurish* is a fusion of English with other European languages within the EU.

The term 'Euro-English' was originally used by Carstensen in 1986 [10, p. 832]. For Carstensen, the Euro-English phenomenon was an interesting one as English language spoken by European politicians was different from the real daytime English usage that was its original model. English is mirroring the socio-linguistic situation in the EU as the vast majority of EU citizens use English as a foreign language for modern communication.

"*However many complain the version used inside the Brussels bubble has developed into a type of "Globish" packed with non-native eccentricities.*" (Baume 2021). McCluskey perceives this process as an individualization of EU English (2002: 41) affirming that:

> "As in all enclosed systems, a special language has emerged inside the EU apparatus. It takes two forms, Eurojargon, a set of terms created by the need to name new things invented by the EU, and Eurospeak, the hermetic insider medium with its own idiosyncratic grammar and syntax."

The power of institutions is exercised through the discourse of their members, in a dialectical relationship, institutions are shaped by discourses and impose discourses. According to recent statistics of Commission officials 90 % of EU legislation now starts life in English although it is not officially declared a supranational language. But there is a tendency to make it so in the case of EU institutions despite genuine efforts to encourage plurilingualism. In European institutional cooperation bodies the use of it is regarded as automatic.

Euro-English or *Eurish* is still English, but it has its own features that are often common to both Roman and Germanic languages. *Euro-English* has become increasingly prominent, especially among EU civil servants in Brussels. This everyday, colloquial form of the language used by people working in the EU's institutions and frequently blends work-related jargon with British English.

Seidlhofer (2006:14) pointed out that ELF speakers appropriate the English language for their specific communicative needs having to be acknowledged as independent language users who appropriate the English language for their specific communicative needs."

German Greens MEP Terry Reintke told Euronews about her experiences with Euro English at the European Parliament:

> "It is a little bit of a messy use of English. It's people trying to express themselves but very often taking direct translations from their native languages and adding to that a kind of technocratic language that comes from the European institutions."
> https://www.brusselstimes.com/363403/english-still-number-one-eu-language-despite-lack-of-native-speakers

English is an open language, a generous host, continuously absorbing elements from other languages, we can remember words borrowed from Norman French, Latin and Ancient Greek and stop in recent times when we can say that European languages are remaking its vocabulary to better express their identities, cultures and everyday realities.

Gradually continental Europeans are developing their own variety of English.

Maybe one day, Euro-English could, like American or Australian English, even have its own dictionary.

Both processes of nativization and fossilization, happen where 'non-standard' structures become acceptable forms of language, as well as the existence of distinct English is going through an European experience is taking form.

The most obvious grammar changing patterns seem to be:
- plurals for uncountable nouns: *informations, advices, etc*. It I the most frequent feature of ELF lexicogrammar.
- not placing an article in front of nouns*; Award of the Erasmus accreditation confirms that the applicant has set up a plan to implement high quality mobility activities as part of a wider effort to develop their organisation.* (2022-erasmusplus-programme-guide, page 75)
- using just the verb stem in constructions such as *"look forward to see you tomorrow"*
- inserting redundant prepositions
- overusing certain verbs of high semantic generality (e.g. do, have, make, put, take)
- replace of tag question with the use an all-purpose question tag such as 'isn't it?' or *'no?'.*
- use of one or other of 'who' and 'which': "a paper who will be published
- the use of neutral English terms contributes to the goal of a distinct but common EU legal language
- modality plays a crucial role in the language used in the EU documents performing various pragmatic purposes and facilitating relationship between the

legal authority represented by European institutions and the addressee represented by institutions and citizens of the EU Member States.

Nevertheless, variously called "Eurospeak", "business English", "English for science and technology (EST)"Legal English"," English for Academic purposes (EAP)"(Allan :24)*Euro-English* or *Eurish* is still English, but it has its own features that are often common to both Roman and Germanic languages. According to Modiano (1996), continental Europeans are developing their own variety of English, a process that will accelerate when the United Kingdom leaves the European Union and continental Europeans pay less attention to British rules of what is right or wrong in the language rules [66, pp. 319–324].

The creation of English neologisms to express new EU institutions or to consolidate English equivalents of terms designating old institutions has become a necessity, as Mattila (2016: 36) concludes that:

"a new variant of legal English is being created which includes a number of terms which do not exist in common law English, along with a number of common law terms which are used with a more or less distinctive Continental meaning".

On the other hand, the situation reminds of Mahatma Gandhi warned that English represented cultural alienation. Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India (educated at Cambridge University and imprisoned by the British before independence) who was convinced that real progress in India can only be made through our own languages and not through a foreign language.

5. Conclusion

While some have considered learning a new language that could be useful post-Brexit, Euro-English has continued its progress. Sharing the ownership of English is now a fact that everybody can benefit from, on the other hand the phenomenon leads also to new groups of English ownership created by regional, political or working contexts around the world. To sum up, nobody should be surprised if they find themselves having trouble understanding some of the English spoken in Europe in a few decades' time!

References

1. Bolton, K. & D, R. Davis. *Brexit and the Future of English in Europe.* https://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/bitstream/handle/2027.42/139103/weng12263_am.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y.
2. Cenoz, J. 2000. *English in Europe: The Acquisition of a Third Language Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*. Multilingual Matters.
3. Dejica, D. & G. Hansen, P. Sandrini, I. Para (eds.) 2016. *Language in the Digital Era. Challenges and Perspectives.* Warsaw/Berlin: DeGruyter.
4. Howarth, D. & J. Torfing, 2005, *Discourse Theory in European Politics*, Palgrave Macmillan.
5. Kachru, B. "Standard, Codification and Sociolinguistic Realism: The English Language in the Outer Circle". In R. Quirk and H.G. Widdowson (Eds.), *English in the World: Teaching and Learning the Language and Literatures*, 1st ed., Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1985, pp. 11–30.
6. Kachru, B. *Asian Englishes. Beyond the Canon,* 1st ed., Hong Kong University Press, Hong Kong, 2005.
7. Kennet, L. 2019. *Discourse Analysis and European Union Politics,* Palgrave Macmillan.

8. Lynggaard, K. 2019. *Discourse Analysis and European Union Politics*. London: Palgrave MacMillan.
9. Mańko, R. 2017. *Legal aspects of EU multilingualism EPRS,* January, 2017. Available www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2017/595914/EPRS_BRI%282017%29595 914_EN.pdf .
10. Mattila, H. E.S. 2006. *Comparative Legal Linguistics.* Aldershot: Ashgate.
11. Seidlhofer, B. 2011. *Understanding English as a Lingua Franca*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
12. Swaan, A. 2001. *Words of the world. The global language system*. Cambridge: Polity Press and Campbell.
13. Truchot, C. 2003. "Languages and Supranationality in Europe: The Linguistic Influence of the European Union". In Languages in a Globalising World, ed. Jacques Maurais and Michael A. Morris, 99–110. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
14. Truchot, C., 2003. *Key Aspects of the Use of English in Europe*, Language Policy Division Directorate of School, Out-of-School and Higher Education DGIVCouncil of Europe, Strasbourg

Webography

https://www.theguardian.com/education/2001/apr/19/languages.highereducation.   Accessed 21 March 2021

https://englishlive.ef.com/blog/english-in-the-real-world/english-became-global-language/(Accessed in 28 February 2021)

https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-12017753(Accessed in 28 February 2021

https://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/fr/parliamentary-questions.html

https://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/fr/parliamentary-questions.html#sidesForm

https://www.euronews.com/2020/12/31/will-english-remain-an-official-eu-language-after-brexit

https://www.politico.eu/article/brexit-eu-official-language-english-should-stop-speaking-broken-clement-beaune/

https://www.politico.eu/article/brexit-eu-official-language-english-should-stop-speaking-broken-clement-beaune/

https://preply.com/en/blog/english-language-statistics/

https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/dec/12/english-words-world-global-speakers-language

https://lpc.halpet.eu/en/english-language-mother-tongue-world/