

ПЛАТФОРМА 3

Актуальні питання іноземної філології та перекладознавства

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THE FUTURE OF ENGLISH

Predictions have been made about the future of English. It is worth considering the bases for such predictions with respect to the various uses of English.

A single international language has long been thought to be the ideal for international communication. Artificially-constructed languages have never acquired sufficiently large numbers of adherents, although in principle such languages have the obvious advantage that they put all learners on the same footing (all are non-native speakers), thereby not giving an advantage to speakers of any particular language. During the last few decades English have achieved a greater world spread than any other language in recorded history. Yet in recent years, doubts have arisen whether it will ever reach the ideal of the single international language or whether its use as an international language will continue at the present level.

One reason for the doubts has been the fear that national varieties of English are rapidly growing further apart and will finally separate into mutually incomprehensible languages. Fears have also been expressed that justifiable sensitivity to the child's right to use his native dialect within a national variety might lead to the abandonment of a national standard dialect and hence to the further disintegration of English [2]. The diversity in English is greatest in countries where English is a second language and therefore has to be taught. Since in those countries students are usually taught by teachers who are themselves not native speakers of

English and who have inevitably acquired the language to varying degrees of adequacy, it is not surprising that the standards of achievement are variable and subject to change.

The future of English as an international language has also been said to rest on the practicability of teaching the language, especially on a mass scale, to the level required for international usefulness, given the enormous expenditures required for the purpose. It is possible that as developing countries become richer, they will be able to increase their expenditure on the teaching of English and raise their levels of teacher and student proficiency. At all events, programs have been devised to restrict the goals of language learning, thereby allowing a more realistic deployment of educational resources, as in the Teaching of English for Specific Purposes, for example for business or scientific communication [3]. Following earlier attempts (such as 'Basic English'), a proposal has also been made for constructing a simplified form of English (termed 'Nuclear English') that would contain a subset of the features of natural English [1]. The simplified form would be intelligible to speakers of any major national variety and could be expanded for specific purposes, for example for international maritime communication.

The long-range continuance of English as a second language is also questionable in some countries. The eagerness for rapid technological advancement conflicts with the demands for the establishment of authentic links with past native traditions: objections to an official status for English and calls for its replacement by native languages are expressions of national pride and independence. Since a good command of English is usually restricted to an elite, one may expect political resentment against a minority second language that brings benefits to those proficient in it. English is likely to be retained as an official language as long as no specific native language is politically acceptable to all, but one can expect that in at least some countries indigenous languages will become sufficiently dominant to acquire sole official status and eventually to displace English. In such cases English will gradually become recognized as a foreign language. However, irrespective of the degree of world influence exercised by the English-speaking countries themselves,

English is likely to be retained generally as the medium for higher education as long as the major English-speaking countries retain their economic and political status [1].

REFERENCES

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