

## **SINGLISH AS AN EXAMPLE OF THE VARIABILITY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN THE WORLD**

The variability of the English language in the world means the presence of varieties and variations in the language system and language use, which are determined by the conditions of language functioning, as well as socio-ethnic and territorial parameters of communication and its participants.

In the third millennium, English became the main language of international communication, a kind of lingua franca. As the first language, it is used by 375 million people, and the number of non-native speakers is almost four times greater than its native speakers [4].

The spread of the English language throughout the world led to the contradiction between such two concepts as internationalism and national/ethnic identity. Internationalism considers the world as a single whole, and national/ethnic self-awareness emphasizes the preservation of national/ethnic identity, which, in turn, is reflected in the process of interaction and mutual influence of the English language with national languages [1].

In this regard, in the second half of the 20th century, a new direction of research was formed in linguistics - World Englishes, which was developed by such leading world researchers as B. Kachru, J. Kachru, L. Smith and others.

The aim of this paper is to study the main causes of the formation of Singlish as the Singaporean variant of the English language, as well as to identify its most common features and deviations from standard English.

Colloquial Singaporean English (Singlish) is a post-colonial Southeast Asian version of English spoken in the densely populated city-state of Singapore. The population of Singapore is about 4 million people. The language situation in the country at present stage is characterized by the presence of a large number of nationalities and ethnic groups. The main nationalities living in

Singapore are Chinese, Malays and Indians.

Historical and socio-economic processes that took place in the country starting from the 20th century led to the formation of the Singaporean colloquial version of English. Singapore was a British colony for a long time. In the 19th century, very few schools for the local population functioned in the country, especially in which teaching was conducted in English. The local lingua franca was the Malay language (Pasar Melayu). National diversity was observed in the teaching staff of schools at that time. The largest group of teachers were Eurasians, there were also many teachers from Ceylon and India. European teachers never made up more than a quarter of the total number of teachers in a school, and they usually taught in the upper grades. These Europeans could be from Britain, the USA, Belgium or France. Children in these schools had the opportunity to get acquainted with many varieties of the English language.

Starting from the 20th century, more and more schools with English as the language of the educational process appeared in the country. By the 1950s, almost all children in Singapore had started going to school, and most were taught in English. In 1965, when the Republic of Singapore gained its independence, a course to implement the English-language educational process at all stages of education was taken. In the 80s, the educational process was already conducted in English. Nowadays, the process of active learning of English is being introduced in the preschool education sector in Singapore.

Due to the ethnic diversity of the country's population Singapore has a very unconventional language policy. There are 4 official languages, namely, English, Malay, Chinese and Tamil. At the state level, English is recognized as the language of official communication and of the educational process. Official communication and the educational process are conducted only in English. Malay, Tamil and Chinese languages are studied as a second, native language according to the nationality of a student. Students can also study other foreign languages, but in the form of extracurricular activity and only if they have high academic achievements. There is also one more way to learn foreign languages -

private language schools.

Thus, the multi-ethnicity of Singapore's population, several official languages in the country's communicative space, compulsory study of English for the majority of the country's population determined the interaction and mutual influence between the English language and the national languages of Singapore (Chinese, Tamil, Malay). In such a unique situation, Singaporean variant of the English language (Singlish) was formed.

Variability of the English language on the example of Singlish manifests itself at different levels of the language system. Among the most common features of Singlish, the following can be distinguished:

- Phonetic and phonological simplifications. For example, two vowels tend to merge into one phoneme. For example, *bit* and *beat* are both pronounced like /*bit*/ with no distinction between short and long vowels [2].

- Active use of pragmatic particles. Singaporeans place some words like *ah*, *lah*, *leh*, etc at the end of sentences. The most common particles are the following ones: *ah* (indicates *uncertainty*), *lah* (used when making *a statement or assertion*), *hah* or *mah* (*in questions, requests*). For example: 1) *Her dress is too long lah. (assertion)* 2) *Take this away, hah? (request)* 3) *The third door to the right ah? (uncertainty)*.

- Frequent use of the word *one* at the end of a sentence, for example: 1) *You don't know how to go there one.* 2) *I very fast one.* 3) *I get nothing but rubbish one, you know* [5].

- Optional use of the subject in sentences in cases when it is clear that the interlocutor(s) will understand it. This trend came from the Mandarin dialect of Chinese, in which shortened sentences are common. For example: 1) *(You) Go to the airport.* 2) *(I) I still have a headache.*

- Omission of conjunction in conditional sentences. In standard English, the use of conjunctions in such constructions is obligatory. For example: 1) *You sit there, then where I sit? (if)* 2) *Shout again, I go (if)* 3) *I stand here, can hear also (if)*.

- Omission of the verb **be**, which is also found in many Chinese shortened phrases. For example: 1) *She scared. (is)* 2) *Today, I am going shopping (am).* 3) *Your book there (is)* [5].

- Active use of borrowings from native languages (Chinese, Tamil, Malay, etc.). For example: 1) **Alamak**, a Malay word to indicate dismay or surprise e.g. «*Alamak! I already late!*»; 2) **Sian**, a Chinese word that shows a speaker's boredom e.g. «*This lecture is so sian.*» 3) **Susah**, a Malay word for «useless.» e.g. «*Fixing that spoilt car, susah lah*» [5].

Thus, we can conclude that Singlish was formed due to the historical and socio-economic prerequisites of the formation and development of the independent multinational city-state Singapore. The functioning of English as the state language, on the one hand, and the multi-nationality of Singapore's population determined the processes of mutual influence and interpenetration of the English language and the country's national languages. The main features of Singlish are the processes of simplification and omission, use of pragmatic language means, borrowings.

In Singapore, there is an ongoing debate over the spread of Singlish among Singaporeans. The government discourages Singlish in the media and schools, considering it a non-standard pidgin language that is difficult for people from other countries to understand. To encourage the use of standard English, the country's government launched the «Speak Good English movement».

However, in terms of social significance, Singlish plays an important role in Singaporean society, symbolizing the unity of Singaporeans. It is actively used in informal communication and considered to be a more comfortable means of interaction in daily conversations [3]. Many researchers believe that banning Singlish is impossible, because its unique features make it an important part of Singapore's national identity.

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