THE ROMANIAN VOCABULARY AS A RESULT OF GLOBALIZATION

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Abstract: The phenomenon of globalization is no longer prime-time news in people's life. It now comprises a bundle of factors whose influential force on languages is overwhelming. It seems that that linguistic factor corroborates with other factors and together they have an impact on minor languages worldwide.

Keywords: English, globalization, cause, tools, language

Globalization is a phenomenon which is differently perceived at an international level. "**Globalization** is the action or procedure of international integration arising from the interchange of world views, products, ideas, and other aspects of culture." (Martin A. and King E. (eds.) 1990 *apud* wikipedia.org[1]).

The phenomenon is not very recent, but since it was not attributed the name "globalization" from the very beginning[2], it did not become very common among people until recently: "Large-scale globalization began in the 1820s. In the late 19th century and early 20th century, the connectivity of the world's economies and cultures grew very quickly[3]". The term *globalization* managed to establish its current meaning around the 1970s.

Despite being triggered by historical, economic, political, military, educational, cultural etc. factors, when speaking about *globalization*, the linguistic approach should not be left to chance. Language is an important item in the course of *globalization*, or similarly said, it will always resort to language in order to achieve the desired objectives. This side of globalization is often referred to as *linguistic globalization*. It refers merely to English becoming more dominant over the rest of the languages, minor or not, on which English somehow puts pressure, willingly or not.

It is not that in the absence of a globally understood language, the phenomenon of globalization would have not emerged. Despite adopting different attitudes and behaviors, despite speaking different native languages, despite looking different, people are similar. And it is precisely this similarity that led to the occurrence of globalization. And without a common language for everyone, globalization would not have been complete. Reversely, "language has no independent existence, living in some sort of mystical space apart from the people who speak it. Language exists only in the brains and mouths and ears and hands and eyes of its users. When they succeed, on the international stage, their language succeeds. When they fail, their language fails." (Crystal 2003: 7)

[1] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Globalization.

[2] See "The English Language and the Globalization" by Danilo Corrêa.

[3] See James, P., Steger, M.B., *A Genealogy of globalization: The career of a concept". Globalizations*, 11(4): 417–34, 2014 *apud* www.wikipedia.org.

Arhipelag XXI Press, Tîrgu Mureș, 2017, e-ISBN: 978-606-8624-01-3

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In fact, all the above mentioned factors are somehow interconnected. If one is affected, they will all be, eventually. This is an idea also supported by Herve (2011) in his article entitled "Language and Globalization": "This endangerment of languages can have a drastic effect on the cultures that lose their identity".

The phenomenon of *globalization* strengthens the status of English worldwide, making it "especially important not just in universities […]. No language is currently being learned by more people – […] – and the desire to learn it reflects a desire to be plugged into a king of <<world brain>>" (Herve 2011).

English, or better said, the spread of English at an international level is perceived as both a good and deleterious thing to people and humanity in general. The benefits of using English worldwide, in all settings and environments, as the occasion arises, is still "hotly contested" (Sonntag 2003), remaining one of the long-lasting controversies that still await to be solved one way or another.

For those who see it as a positive or beneficial thing, English has now become a symbol of modernity and technology, of good education and welfare. It is seen as a solution in most cases, being "the key for international understanding and world regulation" (Corrêa). It is a fundamental request in communication, being in daily use online and offline (in the real world). People resort to English (or their knowledge of English) at work, when interacting with a foreigner (irrespective of his/her origin), when seeing a movie, when reading a book or a magazine, when sitting in front of the computer etc. Willingly or not, English is slowly but firmly becoming part of everyone's life.

Even though everyone learns English as a second or foreign language, on a beginner, intermediate or advanced level, there is still the pride of using the mother tongue in some cases, but when choosing between English and the mother tongue is the decision of the speaker. It applies to languages that have more native speakers than English has and also to those languages (like French) that could have become what English has now become: *a lingua franca* learned and taught on the entire planet.

A new concept has recently emerged, to which people have easily got used: *English as a lingua franca* (ELF). It refers to "the use of the English language as a Koiné language, <<a common means of communication for speakers of different first languages>>" (Vienna Oxford International Corpus of English [VOICE]: FAQ *apud* wikipedia.org.). However, ELF is a concept in which form is less important than function. The purpose of it is for the message to be correctly conveyed, without giving much importance to the correctness of the message itself. It is neutral, culture-free and, basically, it cannot affect the culture of the languages/ countries it comes in contact with. However, linguists insist on it being differently perceived from English as a foreign language.

Moreover, "many Asian and African countries even accepted it as the standard language to communicate with each other[4]". There is this spread awareness that no matter how proficient one is in the field of foreign languages, one should also master knowledge of English. This is what is now happening in Japan, for example, since the government "plans to drastically increase the number of English instruction in schools by 2020" (MEXT 2013a *apud* Adachi (2015: 326)).

There is a book called *The Language Wars. A History of proper English*, in which the author Hitchings (2011: 13) refers to language in general and to English in particular. "Language

[4] This idea belongs to Belcher. D (1994), and it occurs in an article entitled "Role of English Language in Globalization", whose author's real name is unknown (Suraj06). The article could be consulted at https://hubpages.com/business/Role-of-English-Language-in-Globalization.

Arhipelag XXI Press, Tîrgu Mureș, 2017, e-ISBN: 978-606-8624-01-3

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is biological", he says, and once practiced from early childhood, it becomes mechanical. He quotes an idea belonging to Chomsky: "Questions of language are basically questions of *power*", and argues that language has some characteristics that make it very potent in use: "Language is a potent instrument for promoting notions of togetherness and of discord" (Hitchings 2011: 14). Furthermore, it is also in the power of language that can influence a nation, making it rise or fall.

However, English could also be perceived negatively, as a destroyer of national identities and could also be held responsible for the likely extinction of some minor languages. It is possible for a language to become extinct or dead if it "no longer has any speakers" or "is no longer the native language of any community" (en.m.www.wikipedia.org).

English, known as "the language of globalization" or sometimes also referred to as "global English" could be defined and perceived as "part of globalization. It is part of the cause, the process, and the product of globalization" (Sonntag 2003: xii). It has become "the language of the century" mainly due to its acquisition as a second language on an international level and in a very short period of time, if we were to compare it to other languages, such as Latin or French (at present nearly extinct or dead). In his article, Hjarvard (no year: 77) resumes the same idea, which he quotes as "linguistic genocide".

Globalization is deleterious to languages. The supreme and exclusive use of English over other languages is detrimental to the latter. "As globalization increases, so does the loss of human languages." *Globalization*, the media and the Internet endanger languages and "speed the rate of language loss". These two ideas could be seen in an article by Elizabeth Malone entitled "Endangered Languages" consulted at https://www.nsf.gov/news/special_reports/linguistics/endangered.jsp.

Crystal (2003: 2) also increases awareness when it comes to using and overusing English in all situations and in all places. He claims that people have a two-fold attitude to such respect: they are proud of knowing and being able to use English as the occasion arises, but at the same time they cannot help being worried at the very thought that English might soon or eventually be used instead of their mother tongue and that people will try to change and adapt English to best achieve their goals in communication. There is this ownership feeling that non-native speakers of English might experience, soon referring to English as "our" language. It will eventually become disturbing for both native and non-native speakers of English, feeling that might co-exist with those of pride and power that the use of English seems to provide.

In an article by Seth Mydans (dated April 9, 2007) entitled "Across cultures, English is the word" published in *The New York Times*, the author highly contemplates and praises English: "Riding the crest of globalization and technology, English dominates the world as no language ever has". Moreover, "English has become the second language of everybody", opinion shared by Mark Warschauer (a professor of education and informatics *apud* Mydans 2007). Internet and technology somehow triggered and helped in the process of *globalization*, and since they both rely heavily on the use of English, they have also influenced the pathway that English is supposed to take.

It is not the number of people who speak a language what makes it international or global, but the power and authority of those people. The same happened to Latin:

"Why a language becomes a global language has little to do with the number of people who speak it. It is much more to do with who those speakers are. Latin became an international language
throughout the Roman Empire, but this was not because the Romans were more numerous than the peoples they subjugated. They were simply more powerful. And later, when Roman military power declined, Latin remained for a millennium as the international language of education,

Arhipelag XXI Press, Tîrgu Mureș, 2017, e-ISBN: 978-606-8624-01-3

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thanks to a different sort of power – the ecclesiastical power of Roman Catholicism." (Crystal 2003: 7).

In another article entitled "English as a Vehicular Language: a Case of Globalization or Linguistic Imperialism?" by Munat Judith (professor and researcher at the University of Pisa), English is attributed another characteristic, that of being "vehicular". Apparently, the definition of this term is a corroboration of two other definitions, and the result claims that English could be called "vehicular" since it serves "as a means by which thoughts are expressed or made known; a medium, a means of conveyance or transmission" (Munat no year: 144).

One of the disadvantages of using Global English for business purposes, for example, is that the message conveyed might be slightly distorted, given the difficulty for two non-native English speakers to resort to English for the benefit of their conversation. However, in the absence of such a last resort mechanism, the people involved in the communicative process would not have been able to have a conversation in the first place, and they would have by all means given up speaking to one another. Conversations in English might be difficult for non-native speakers of English and there may be some disadvantages[5], but the advantages and the benefits outnumber the drawbacks.

There have been many studies about English which compared it to Latin or French, since its current and official status is that of a "lingua franca". It is most likely that English will not die (as Latin did) since it is too widespread already and, moreover, since it has become part of most people's daily discourses (even if not their mother tongue). However, it might last and survive at an international level in its simplified form, i.e. *Globish* (*Global English*), *Global English(es)*, *World Standard Spoken English* or simply *World English(es)* (Mydans 2007), *English as an International Language* (EIL) or *International English*[6].

On a retrospective perspective, not many people would have thought of English as becoming so dominant and so much needed in all contexts and situations. "The rise of English" has now become a very enchanting topic to debate. English is now dominant in many fields; many English words and phrases have and will become part of the international vocabulary to be used all over the world.

Statements like "English rules" quoted in Crystal's book (2003: 1) also indicate that the use of English worldwide is not something temporary, but something that will have an impact on other languages in the long run.

In his article, Hjarvard (no year: 76) speaks about both English and the media, about their interconnection, about the media which facilitates the easy spread of English worldwide and he states that "English has become the lingua franca of the global network: where the TCP/IP protocol secures technical communication between computers via the internet, English is the <<protocol>> for oral and written communication across national frontiers".

In conclusion, due to its linguistic simplicity (compared to other difficult or impossible to learn languages), English is user-friendly, which makes it easily accessible whenever and wherever needed. It is not the last, but the first resort when it comes to choosing a language in which most people could make themselves easily understood. Since English spreads worldwide and *globalization* comprises the entire world, the two of them now go perfectly hand in hand.

However, there are still questions without an answer related to the future of English, i.e. what will happen to English and what will happen to the other languages? Will it be the dominant

[5] For more and thorough details about the disadvantages of using English in a globalized world, see an article by Ellinsky Galia, entitled "The Disadvantages of Using the English Language in the Global Business World". It was published on May 23, 2016 at http://www.relocationsrc.com/rsrcen-media-story-207329 (consulted on May 4, 2017).

[6] See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_as_a_lingua_franca (consulted on May 7, 2017).

Arhipelag XXI Press, Tîrgu Mureș, 2017, e-ISBN: 978-606-8624-01-3

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and official language worldwide? Will the other languages become minor and eventually die? Future will decide what we can at the moment merely predict. It is a likely prognosis regarding the future of languages. Nonetheless, the present article claims to have only approached some of the urging issues that should be discussed about languages and *globalization*, and there is much left for further approaches and discussions.

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