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The Social Role of ELF to Enhance Intercultural Communicative Competence and Intercultural Citizenship in ELT

Abstract
Contemporary studies in the area of English as a lingua franca (ELF) and in the area of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) have run parallel to each other, the reason being that the former is centred on the variability of English when it is used as a global language in intercultural communicative settings, while the latter is mainly concerned with the teaching of English as a foreign language (EFL). The aim of this paper is to explore the possibility of devising a blended approach to English language teaching (ELT) whereby the multilingual and multicultural reality of ELF, and the development of learners' ICC may converge within a comprehensive pedagogical framework. In this perspective, it seems appropriate to stimulate teachers' critical thinking about the nature of ELF in the highly controversial age of globalisation and consider the potential of English as a pedagogical lingua franca to enhance education for intercultural citizenship.

1. Introduction

When Anna Mauranen, one of the leading scholars in the field of English as a lingua franca (ELF), gave her plenary speech at the last national conference of the Italian association of English studies, AIA (Padua, 5-7 September 2019), she started off by saying, not without a certain nonchalance, that because ELF studies have become "mainstream" by now, she had decided to give a presentation on a different topic[1]. This statement came as a sudden revelation that had the power to overturn my long-held belief that ELF studies still represent the spearhead of research in the field of English linguistics, due to their non-canonical approach to the phenomenon of language variation in the era of globalisation and intercultural communication. What Mauranen's

[1] Mauranen's talk was given at AIA's national conference on Sept. 7, 2019. It was entitled: *The speech stream flows fast towards us as we listen - how do we manage to make sense of it?*

observation seemed to imply is that after more than twenty years since ELF has become an active research area, the once controversial issue of English as a lingua franca is now considered a well-established concept. Therefore, we may assume that it is no more looked upon with suspicion or even disregarded as nonsense in academia. Indeed, if this were really the case, this news would be greeted with enthusiasm by ELF researchers, who so far might have felt themselves perceived as an unorthodox minority within the greater community of English applied linguists. Nevertheless, it should be noticed that even though today we might presume that ELF is a far less controversial concept within the relatively restricted circle of scholars who study the plurality of English, we cannot exclude the possibility that it may still be the object of misunderstanding, prejudice, or simply indifference, within the larger circle of related research areas. Not to speak of non-academic environments like the world of education (i.e. public institutions, school teachers, international assessment boards, teacher trainers, publishers, language learners, etc.) where the notion of ELF is virtually unknown or merely neglected. Here is where 'native-speakerism' (Holliday 2005; Houghton and Hashimoto 2018; Leung, Harris and Rampton 1997) and a more traditional, monolithic conceptualisation of English tend to prevail.

On second thoughts, however, Mauranen's use of the term 'mainstream' may also allude to the fact that ELF studies seem to lack real momentum, for their approach to the variation of English on the world scene has lost its distinctive twist of originality, at least within the community of ELF experts. Hence, this idea raises a simple, albeit fundamental, question: is there any space left for further investigation after all that has already been said and written about ELF?

Naturally my answer is yes, not only because I am writing this paper now, but especially because there are promising fields of research where the academic debate may continue and still be thriving. I am thinking, for instance, of studies into two related areas: a) a critical analysis of the growth of globalisation in relation to the spread of English as the primary world lingua franca; b) the impact of ELF on English language teaching (ELT) and the development of L2-users' intercultural communicative competence (ICC) (Grazzi 2015b).

As we can see, these topical areas have a dyadic dimension, given that they focus on the complex interplay between ELF and two different fields, respectively. In the first case, the centre of interest is the present macroeconomic process of world development; while in the second case, the

notion of ICC turns attention to language education in a globalised world and to the concept of 'intercultural citizenship' (Byram 2008; Byram *et al.* 2017).[2] These two foci represent two lines of interdisciplinary research that constitute fruitful paths of investigation, whereby ELF is the catalyst that brings together diverse academic fields like linguistics, business, politics, sociology, and pedagogy, to name just a few. This is not to suggest that eclecticism should become the dominant paradigm in ELF research, but rather that it is reasonable to seek a common thread that runs through different spheres of knowledge, which could lead us to a deeper understanding of the multifaceted nature of English as a lingua franca. In line with Pennycook (2009, 9): "As with the notion of synergy as the productive melding of two elements to create something larger than the sum of its part, I am using here the notion of heterosis as the creative expansion of possibilities resulting from hybridity". Incidentally, this is also the guiding principle that is reflected in the design of this special issue on ELF of Status Quaestionis, the academic online journal sponsored by the University of Rome Sapienza.

Everything said, the aim of this article is to contribute to the ongoing discussion about relevant aspects pertaining to the two prominent research areas introduced above. For this reason, section n. 2 is dedicated to the relationship between ELF and globalisation, while section n. 3 deals with the convergence of ELF and ICC in English language teaching. These lead us to the final section, where general conclusions will be drawn.

2. ELF and globalisation

[2] In foreign language teaching, the concept of intercultural competence (Byram 1997, 49) is focused on the learner's development of "skills, knowledge and attitudes other than those which are primarily linguistic." On the other hand, ICC refers to the combination of intercultural and communicative competences, whereby learners develop a holistic approach to the foreign language. According to Byram (1997, 88), this incorporates four dimensions: "knowledge (*savoirs*) skills (*savoir comprendre, savoir apprendre/faire*), attitudes (*savoir être*) and critical cultural awareness (*savoir s'engager*)." Byram (1997, 110) concludes that the "cultural dimension of ICC – as opposed to linguistic, sociolinguistic and discourse competence – is inseparably linked with educational values, as well as having pragmatic and skill-based significance." This links ICC to the development of learners' intercultural citizenship in language education. For Byram (2008, 206) "the intercultural citizen is someone who acquires the competence to act in transnational communities." This requires a transnational policy in language education that involves "empathy and understanding of other perspectives and leads learners, under the guidance of teachers, to challenge existing assumptions in their own cultures from the perspective of the other." (Byram 2008, 210). The relevance of ICC and intercultural citizenship for an ELF-aware approach in ELT is discussed in section n. 3.

The reciprocal relationship between ELF and globalisation is the leitmotif of most studies into the contemporary diffusion of English worldwide. Crystal (1997, 5), the author of one of the first and most celebrated books on English as a global language[3], poses a number of key questions to investigate this phenomenon, and when at the beginning of his work he asks what makes a language internationally successful, he explains that:

> Without a strong power-base, whether political, military or economic, no language can make progress as an international medium of communication. 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.

With Crystal, we may therefore conclude that the reason of today's international spread of English is not intrinsically linguistic, but is the result of the unique combination of several extralinguistic, contextual factors. At issue here is the relationship between language and power, which constitutes the premise to understand the nature of ELF. This general principle is widely shared by ELF scholars who foreground the fundamental role of globalisation in determining favourable conditions for the development of an internationally shared contact language. Cagliero and Jenkins (2010, 9-10), the editors of the third volume that followed the University of Verona GlobEng conference (2008), observe that:

> The economic situation created by an ethically ambiguous global market has been extremely willing to recognize English as the globally dominant means of communication of our times. Even though globalization is one of the most discussed topics both in the Academia and outside, the connection between language policies and economic or political policies has apparently not been given enough attention so far. This might not be a strictly linguistic question, but certainly the lack of studies bringing together these two fields should call our attention.

[3] So far, the phenomenon of lingua franca uses of English has been referred to with different definitions, e.g. English as an International language (EIL), English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), English as a Global Language, English as a Multilingua Franca, etc. In this paper, I opted for ELF, which has become a widely accepted definition. In this case though, I have used Crystal's label English as a Global Language, for I have cited him here. Because of space constraints, I have not provided a synopsis of some of the current academic definitions of ELF in this paper. For a more detailed account on this topic, see for example Jenkins 2000; 2007; 2015; Seidlhofer 2011; Mauranen 2012).

In the same vein, Seidlhofer (2004, 213-214)[4] classifies four main features of the development of English as a global language:

1. Econocultural functions of the language (i.e., World English is the product of the development of a world market and global developments in the fields of science, technology, culture, and the media.)
2. The transcendence of the role of an elite lingua franca; (i.e., World English is learned by people at various levels of society, not just by the socioeconomic elite.)
3. The stabilization of bilingualism through the coexistence of world language with other languages in bilingual/multilingual contexts; (i.e., World English tends to establish itself alongside local languages rather than replacing them, and so contributes to multilingualism rather than jeopardizes it) and
4. Language change via the processes of world language convergence and world language divergence (i.e., World English spreads due to the fact that many people learn it rather than by speakers of English migrating to other areas; thus two processes happen concurrently: new varieties are created and unity in the world language is maintained.)

As regards point n. 1, we may add that the econocultural functions of ELF depend on a relationship of reciprocity between the unfolding of globalisation at the turn of the century and the consequent need for an internationally shared communicative affordance. As Mauranen (2012, 17) observes:

We can without hesitation place ELF among one of the most important social phenomena that operate on a global scale; it is on a par with things like global economy, mobility, and the Internet, and closely intertwined with them. […] The emergence of one language that is the default lingua franca in all corners of the earth is both a consequence and a prerequisite of globalization.

In order to avoid a mistaken understanding of Mauranen's use of the term 'emergence'[5], let me expand on this concept, which I (Grazzi 2013, 58) defined: "the progressive differentiation of the lexicogrammar system of ELF

[4] Quoted from Brutt-Griffler, Janina. 1998. "Conceptual Questions in English as a World Language: Taking Up an Issue." World Englishes, 17 (3), 381–392 Nov. 1998.
[5] See for example O'Regan's (2016, 205) misunderstanding of ELF. He claims that supporters of this concept conceive of ELF as "something fixed and stable" (i.e. ELF would be an 'hypostatization'), consequently he does not consider 'emergence' a dynamic process, but rather the opposite, the "sedimentation [of ELF] […] into some form of completeness and permanence" (Ibid., 206). Quite surprisingly, O'Regan seems to have completely disregarded Widdowson's (2015) fitting reply to his previous paper (O'Regan 2014), where the logical fallacy of O'Regan's contradictory argument had already been shown.

from other varieties of [native-speaker] NS English [...] within the *glocal* (Robertson 1995) dimension of today's intercultural communicative contexts." This concept follows from Hopper's (1998, 157) idea of emergent grammar:

The notion of Emergent Grammar is meant to suggest that structure, or regularity, comes out of discourse and is shaped by discourse as much as it shapes discourse in an on-going process. Grammar is hence not to be understood as a pre-requisite for discourse, a prior possession attributable in identical form to both speaker and hearer. Its forms are not fixed templates, but are negotiable in face-to-face interaction in ways that reflect the individual speakers' past experience of these forms, and their assessment of the present context, including especially their interlocutors, whose experiences and assessments may be quite different. Moreover, the term Emergent Grammar points to a grammar which is not abstractly represented, but always anchored in the specific concrete form of an utterance.

To conclude this quick rundown of some of the most influential scholars' stance on the main topic of this section, I would like to quote Kirkpatrick (2007) who refutes Phillipson's (1992) theory of linguistic imperialism apropos the international role played by English today. Kirkpatrick (Ibid., 179) contends that if we consider "English through a postcolonial lens", we would realize that this language has been nativized by former colonised populations through a process of participatory appropriation[6] -a case in point is Indian English-, so that today several varieties of English are spoken by younger generations who have had no direct experience of the colonial past of their home countries. Kirkpatrick (Ibid., 179-180) goes on to say that:

The globalization phenomenon of recent times has complicated the issue of language choice, so that other factors need to be considered. [...] Even during the time of colonialism, in certain places English was seen as a language through which people could mount their own resistance to colonialism. In some African countries, for example, it was seen as a language of liberation and it is still used as a language of resistance against indigenous regimes throughout the world. [...] English is also used for a range of pragmatic and personal reasons. It is used because the people see how useful it is for social and economic advancement. It is used because it is the language of international trade. It is

[6] Rogoff (1995, 150-151) defines 'participatory appropriation' as: "the process by which individuals transform their understanding of and responsibility for activities through their own participation. [...] The basic idea of appropriation is that, through participation, people change and in the process become prepared to engage in subsequent similar activities. By engaging in an activity, participating in its meaning, people necessarily make ongoing contributions (whether in concrete actions or in stretching to understand the actions and ideas of others). Hence, participation is itself the process of appropriation."

used because it is the major language of technology, education and popular culture. [...] This pragmatism is also evident in expanding circle countries, as we saw in the case of the extraordinary and increasing desire for English in the countries of the European Union, South-East Asia and China. [...] The argument that English has spread because of demand as well as hegemony appears powerful. However, this does not mean that the spread of English is always benevolent. The arrival in any linguistic setting of a language for which there is so much demand is likely to affect the role and status of the other languages.

As proof of Kirkpatrick's critical position against the ideological view of English as being essentially an elitarian tool in the hands of the world ruling classes (e.g. see O'Regan 2016), let us just mention the engaging example of disadvantaged groups of migrants and refugees who approach the Italian coasts and who often use ELF to communicate with cultural mediators and immigration authorities (Guido 2018), or the example of oppressed political minority groups in non-English speaking countries, who often use ELF to write their protest signs, and let the world know about the critical sociopolitical situation in their home countries via social networking (e.g. during the 2009 Iranian presidential election protests). It seems reasonable to say, therefore, that although the spread of English has been essential for the development of global markets in the age of imperialistic expansion of major, medium-sized and emerging powers, it may also represent a valuable resource to give voice and visibility to a growing international labour force that counts over 3,5 billion people to date, including half a billion unemployed or underutilised workers (International Labour Organization, ILO).

After having presented some of the most representative ELF scholars' observations about the reciprocal relationship between the spread of ELF and globalisation, the next subsection will take into consideration some official macroeconomic data to support a critical view of the events which have changed the social perception of the globalized world since the 2007-09 global financial crisis.

2.1. A closer look at globalisation

Today, some may consider Marx's (1848, 16) materialist analysis of capitalism an intellectual affectation or even an obsolete approach to reality. Nevertheless, we may still find the following extract very timely and illuminating in order to understand the essence of the macroeconomic cycle we are going through nowadays:

> The need of a constantly expanding market for its products chases the bourgeoisie over the entire surface of the globe. It must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connexions everywhere. The bourgeoisie has through its exploitation of the world market given a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country. To the great chagrin of Reactionists, it has drawn from under the feet of industry the national ground on which it stood. All old-established national industries have been destroyed or are daily being destroyed. They are dislodged by new industries, whose introduction becomes a life and death question for all civilised nations, by industries that no longer work up indigenous raw material, but raw material drawn from the remotest zones; industries whose products are consumed, not only at home, but in every quarter of the globe. In place of the old wants, satisfied by the production of the country, we find new wants, requiring for their satisfaction the products of distant lands and climes. In place of the old local and national seclusion and self-sufficiency, we have intercourse in every direction, universal inter-dependence of nations. [...] It compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production; it compels them to introduce what it calls civilisation into their midst, i.e., to become bourgeois themselves. In one word, it creates a world after its own image.

It goes without saying that Marx is not providing us with an apologia for capitalism here. In a historical period where the relatively new forms of industrial production and trade were rising and the working class was still a social minority in Europe, he was able to identify the underlying trends of the capitalist market economy and anticipate a future scenario that was partly realised during the first globalisation, between the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, and has finally come true today, in our globalised world. This, however, has not been a painless process, as the great financial crisis of 1929, two world wars in the 20th century, over forty years of Cold War, and the global financial crisis of 2007-09 show. Indeed, the consequences of the financial crisis of 2007-09, which started after globalisation had reached its peak in 2002, have changed the previous world order definitively, so that Western advanced economies like the USA and the EU are trying to cope with a relative economic decline, while emerging and quickly developing Asian countries like China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) are taking the lead (e.g. see the International Monetary Fund's World Economic Outlook 2020)[7]. As I pointed out in a previous publication (Grazzi 2018, 28): "Globalisation used

[7] Kirkpatrick (2010, 4) observes that: "English is also the working language of the extended grouping known as ASEAN + 3, which includes the ten states of ASEAN plus China, Japan and Korea."

to be a popular buzzword in the pre-crisis years; for many, it was the symbol of a new epoch, and English represented the key to a promising future. After years of economic instability and international tensions, globalisation has become a highly contentious process." And what is more, while I am writing this paper the virulent outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic flu is bound to have disastrous effects on the world economy, which might lead to unpredictable socio-political outcomes in the mid long term. Presumably, the general perception of globalisation and its socio-economic models will also be affected by the spread of this virus, which follows the pandemic flu H1N1 that started in the USA, in 2009[8]. Here is what Robert Webster and Elizabeth Walker observed about pandemics in 2003, in an article published by the magazine American Scientist (March-April 2003):

> If a pandemic happened today, hospital facilities would be overwhelmed and understaffed because many medical personnel would be afflicted with the disease. Vaccine production would be slow because many drug-company employees would also be victims. Critical community services would be immobilized. Reserves of existing vaccines, M2 inhibitors and NA inhibitors would be quickly depleted, leaving most people vulnerable to infection. The nations of the world spend untold billions on military equipment, stockpiling bombs and other weapons. But governments have not invested a fraction of that amount into stockpiling drugs for defense against influenza. The scientific community has a responsibility to convince nations to stockpile NA inhibitors and promote vaccine production. The cost to developed nations would be minuscule, compared with the social and economic disaster that will occur during a full-scale pandemic.

At the heart of the deep sense of social precariousness and in the climate of international insecurity that has replaced the initial optimism we find a major structural contradiction that is ingrained in globalisation: the more nation states and confederations of states are economically interdependent, the more they tend to be politically nationalist. This is an extremely dangerous combination of opposites, notwithstanding the majority of advanced countries have developed different forms of democratic systems and profess their belief in mutual respect, cultural openness and peace. Hence, it should not be surprising that military expenditure has increased steadily over the last twenty years, as SIPRI (2019, 6), the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, has revealed:

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[8] The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimated that: "151,700-575,400 people worldwide died from (H1N1)pdm09 virus infection during the first year the virus circulated." www.cdc.gov/flu/pandemic-resources/2009-h1n1-pandemic.html.

World military expenditure is estimated to have been $1822 billion in 2018, accounting for 2.1 per cent of world gross domestic product (GDP) or $239 per person. Total expenditure grew for the second consecutive year and exceeded $1.8 trillion for the first time; it was 2.6 per cent higher than in 2017 and 5.4 per cent higher than in 2009. The growth in total spending in 2018 was largely influenced by expenditure patterns in the Americas and Asia and Oceania, in particular by substantial rises in military expenditure by the United States and China. In Europe, spending grew by 1.4 per cent, mostly due to a rise in expenditure in Western Europe, where all but three countries increased spending.

As it seems, the main thrust for globalization comes from nation states that use their capital accumulation to reinforce their geopolitical power, rather than improve the unequal standards of living of their populations. If this is the situation, it seems to be highly unlikely that the controversial process of globalisation may be handled by international organisations like the IMF (International Monetary Fund), the WBG (World Bank Group), the WTO (World Trade Organization), and the BIS (Bank for International Settlements), which are supposed to support crisis-wracked developing countries through economic reforms, the so-called 'Washington Consensus'.

In conclusion, the aim of this subsection was to consider some relevant macroeconomic aspects of our age from a critical standpoint. Because the relationship between globalisation and the emergence of English as the world's primary lingua franca tends to be taken as a fact, my intention here was to suggest that notwithstanding the main foci in ELF studies are essentially linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pedagogic, a multidisciplinary approach is necessary in order to understand how the economic, political, social, cultural, and linguistic dimensions interact with each other. The integration of global markets, the large-scale labour mobility from poorer to richer areas, the uneven development of large parts of the world, and the concurrent emergence of a global language are unprecedented phenomena that require a fresh approach to research. Indeed, one of the fields where this view ought to be called in question is language education and the impact of ELF on English language teaching. In particular, the *transcultural* dimension of ELF seems to be the key to bridge the gap between a more traditional view of language and culture (i.e. based on a static, nationalistic cliché), and a more dynamic conception of language and culture that are emergent outcomes of globalisation. As Baker (2015c, 14) contends:

It might therefore be better to view ELF as transcultural communication rather than intercultural since it is not at all obvious what "cultures" communication through ELF is "between." Trans is thus a more appropriate prefix and spatial metaphor than inter as trans implies a less static view of cultures with transcultural communication occurring "through" and "across" rather than "between" cultures as implied in intercultural.

Nevertheless, in the remainder of this article I opted for the adjective *intercultural*, albeit within the meaning explained above by Baker, because it is more commonly used in language education (e.g. see Byram 1997). In the next section, therefore, we will be looking at the pedagogical implications of ELF, its intercultural dimension, and the role that ELF could play in the development of learners' intercultural citizenship.

3. ELF and the development of intercultural communicative competence

While the intent of the previous section was to highlight the dynamic relationship between ELF and globalisation, this part of the article is focused on the reality of ELF and its potential for how it could be used in the English classroom as a pedagogical language (Kohn and Hoffstaedter 2017) to help learners develop their ICC (Byram 1997; 2008). I am going to address this issue within the general framework of critical applied linguistics (CAL), the aim of which, according to Pennycook, (2001, 18), is to "[...] incorporate views of language, society, and power that are capable of dealing with questions of access, power, disparity, and difference and that see language as playing a crucial role in the construction of difference." The reason behind the choice of this approach is that CAL appears to be particularly appropriate to investigate Byram's (1997; 2008) notions of intercultural communicative competence and intercultural citizenship, which are claimed to enable the urgent and profound changes required for the innovation of second language educational policy. My intent here is not to present a specific school project on intercultural citizenship (e.g. see Byram *et al.* 2017), nor to provide examples of second language activities based on ELF and intercultural communication (e.g. see Grazzi 2013; Grazzi 2015a; Grazzi 2015b; Grazzi and Maranzana 2016), but rather to reflect on some of the theoretical tenets that inspire education for intercultural citizenship, and consider how possible it is to make studies in ICC and applied research in ELF converge in ELT.

Byram (2008, 28-29) makes a necessary preliminary distinction between globalisation, i.e. the macroeconomic integration of world markets, and cultural internationalisation, which is a consequence of the former. He observes that:

> Education policies are formulated as responses to globalisation, and usually suggest an increase in language learning as the best way to operationalise the policy. [...] When this

happens, it is a realisation of the relationship of foreign language learning with the second purpose of education, the investment in human capital for economic gain, rather than with internationalisation. [...] If language learning is to be part of a policy of internationalisation, it has to be more than the acquisition of linguistic competence, for such policy needs to counterbalance that socialisation into national identity which underpins national education and national curricula. Foreign language education has the potential to make a major contribution if it offers learners experience of 'tertiary socialisation', a concept invented to emphasize the ways in which learning a foreign language can take learners beyond a focus on their own society, into experience of otherness, or other cultural beliefs values and behaviours. That experience can and should give them a better purchase on their previous culturally determined assumptions.

In spite of the fact that Byram conceives of a second language in educational settings as being 'foreign', and although the concept of 'otherness' may reinforce the ideological divide between inclusion and exclusion that is normally associated with the misconception of a uniform language community based on territorial and cultural identity, the notion of tertiary socialisation seems to be relevant to ELF communicative contexts too, where the ownership of English is shifted from the native speaker (NS) to the international speaker (Widdowson 2003) within transnational and multicultural environments (e.g. on the Internet). Indeed, as Byram (2008, 68-69) goes on to say, the formative experience of tertiary socialisation allows the second language learner:

to see how different cultures relate to each other - in terms of similarities and differences - and to act as mediator between them, or more precisely, between people socialised into them. [...] To act interculturally, however, requires a willingness to suspend those deeper values, at least temporarily, in order to be able to understand and empathize with the values of others that are incompatible with one's own.

A similar concept was also introduced by Kramsch (1993, 233) who used the term "third place" to represent the dimension where the language learner experiences "a process of socialization" in a multicultural speech community. Later on, however, in the middle of the great socio-economic changes brought about by globalisation and the so-called digital revolution, Kramsch (2009, 199-200) reframed the notion of third place – which seemed to be too static to represent the dynamic dimension of ICC and the global cultural flows – as symbolic competence:

Symbolic competence does not replace (intercultural) communicative competence, but gives it meaning within a symbolic frame that I had earlier called 'third place' (Kramsch

1993) and that I propose to view now as a more dynamic, flexible, and locally contingent competence. [...] [T]he term 'third place' or 'third culture' too often ignores the symbolic nature of the multilingual subject – both as a signifying self and as a social actor who has the power to change social reality through the use of multiple symbolic systems. For all these reasons, I propose reframing the notion of third place as symbolic competence, an ability that is both theoretical and practical, and that emerges from the need to find appropriate subject positions within and across the languages at hand.

In the light of Byram's and Kramsch's ideas, it would not seem too far-fetched to suggest that an interculturally-based reorientation of English language teaching (ELT) should be the preferable option to respond to learners' linguacultural diversity. From this point of view, ELF appears to be the most appropriate mediational tool to implement tertiary socialisation and promote symbolic competence, given its intrinsic multilingual (Jenkins 2015) and intercultural nature. However, as Baker (2016, 80) observes, "Kramsch remains silent on the issue of languages as a lingua franca". In this respect, instead, it is both interesting and important to mention that Byram (Holmes and Dervin 2016, XIV-XV), who founded CultNet[9] in 1996, has attuned to the incorporation of ELF into the English curriculum by saying:

[...] At the same time, English teachers, wherever they are, are realizing that the subject, or 'object' they ought to teach is changing rapidly. They are faced with the change from the object 'English as a foreign language' to 'English as a lingua franca', and a change from the object of linguistic/grammatical competence to communication competence, a richer concept than 'communicative competence' as it has been understood hitherto. [...] I hope we can find a way through to a pedagogy which should be accessible and feasible for teachers of English or 'Englishes as lingua francas' but also be useful to all language teachers, whether the languages are labelled 'first', 'second', 'foreign', 'world', or whatever.

In the same vein, Holmes and Dervin (2016, 9) expand on the strong relationship between ELF and interculturality, although they suggest that the concept of culture should indeed be problematised in order to avoid its reification, i.e. the creation of stereotyped notions. As they contend: "[...] ELF users do not meet cultures, but complex subjects who 'do' identity and culture with each other." This critical point of view on culture, we may assume, should inform ELT and consequently be incorporated into the adoption of English as a pedagogical lingua franca (see also Baker 2015b, who advocates the development of learners' intercultural awareness ICA in ELT).

[9] CultNet is an informal network of researchers interested in a cultural approach to English as a foreign language (https://cultnetintercultural.wordpress.com/).

It follows that the development of students' ICC and intercultural citizenship ought to become a fundamental goal in language education, so that learners may reach a more detailed understanding of the complex problems deriving from the unequal socio-economic development of their home countries, as well as of the permanence of conflictual political situations in several areas of the world, and last but not least, of serious violations of human rights. In essence, the embracement of a critical approach to contemporary second language education entails taking political action on the world, i.e. promoting cooperative intercultural experiences whereby students from different linguacultural backgrounds may engage in activities that stimulate critical thinking regarding their social identities. Education for intercultural citizenship would therefore turn language teachers and learners into agents of change within an international discourse community. With Byram (2008, 146), "[...] Teachers should be developing in learners 'critical cultural awareness' or '*savoir s'engager*' that explicitly enables learners to question, to analyse, to evaluate and, potentially, to take action, to be active citizens."

However, in concluding this section, it should be pointed out that the important pedagogical change that is the desired objective of education for intercultural citizenship is not without criticality. Therefore, I will now focus on what appear to be unresolved issues surrounding the transformative power of ICC in second language teaching, which deserve further study and applied research.

First of all, let us look at the cultural role of schooling through a political lens. As Pennycook (2001, 121) remarks:

> By contrast with an optimistic liberal view of education that it provides opportunity for all (anyone can go to school, receive equal treatment, and come out at the end as whatever they want), more critical analyses have pointed out that schools are far greater agents of social reproduction than of social change. What we need, therefore, is an understanding of how schools operate within the larger field of social relations, how, as a key social institution, they ultimately serve to maintain the social, economic, cultural, and political status quo rather than upset it.

Consequently, it seems reasonable to wonder whether and to what extent educational institutions and language teachers operating in highly diverse national contexts would be willing to support a radical pedagogic innovation that is mainly geared toward the promotion of core intercultural socio-political values which, according to Byram (2008, 150), are subsumed under

the concept of "democratic citizenship". In practice, this would include the implementation of the following political practices: a) learners reflect critically, propose change and take action to instigate change in their own society; b) learners create with others a transnational community, propose and instigate change in their respective societies; and c) in a transnational community, learners identify an issue which they act upon as a transnational group (adapted from Byram *et al.* 2017, xxii). Besides, although we may presume that there should be a broad consensus on the benefit of urging internationalism in language education, it seems that a process of renewal in ELT that is based on the ideal of inclusive democracy is still lagging behind. This is true even within the EU, notwithstanding most member states share the Common European Framework of Reference in foreign language learning (Council of Europe 2018). As Byram (2008, 203) observes: "[…] Neither the European Union nor the Council of Europe yet has a policy for what I have defined as 'intercultural citizenship'." We may argue, therefore, that the possibility that there may be resistance to citizenship education in the English classroom should not be considered an unlikely hypothesis. One of the reasons may be the unresolved contradiction between the need to support international policies of integration and cooperation as part of the process of globalisation, and, on the other hand, the resurgence of assertive nation-state ideologies that are not immune to sovereignism, social discrimination, racism, and imperialist policies. The failure to establish a joint line of action to manage worldwide migration flows is a case in point.

Finally, another controversial point regards the integration of ELF into the English classroom to foster intercultural communication. This seems to be particularly problematic because research has shown (e.g. see Baker 2015a, 2015c; Grazzi 2013; Houghton and Hashimoto 2018; Jenkins 2007) that the exonormative native-speaker model is still dominant in ELT worldwide. Rivers (2018, vii) claims that: "[…] native-speakerism, recently rearmed as "a neo-racist ideology" (Holliday, 2014), continues to proactively contribute to the entrenchment of binary divisions as individuals scramble to document how *their in-group* should be seen as the legitimate victims of native-speakerist practices and pedagogies." In the same line, the results of an ethnographic survey on ELF and online communication conducted by Grazzi (2013, 142) has shown that Italian teachers of English:

tend to conform to the NS model and it seems that they have a rather vague and contradictory idea about ELF. This is hardly surprising, given the fact that ELF research is

still confined to the world of academia, whereas institutional English curricula for schools and universities, teaching materials, international testing systems [...], and international reference levels of language proficiency (e.g. the CEFR) are still considered the norm.

In this regard, Baker (2015c, 23-27) observes that:

there is a growing consensus around the role of education to be critical and challenge the status quo, making learners aware of other ways to conceive of the culture, communication, and language relationship [...] Alternative views of intercultural communicative competence, or rather intercultural awareness, emphasise the need for a range of skills, knowledge, and attitudes which can be employed in a flexible, fluid, and context-specific manner in intercultural communication. This approach recognises the complexity of intercultural communication through ELF (but not only ELF) and problematizes specifying a priori a particular set of linguistic, communicative, or sociocultural features that need to be learnt and then applied to intercultural communication.

Under the present circumstances, it seems reasonable to conclude that it is necessary to try and bridge the gap between advanced research in the fields of ELF and ICC, and the world of schooling. In order to avoid the further entrenchment of a more conservative approach to teaching English, it would be desirable to launch teacher development programmes, the aim of which would be to raise educational practitioners' ELF awareness (e.g. see Grazzi 2018; Sifakis 2018) and promote the intercultural dimension of second language education.

4. Conclusions

This paper has shown that studies in the fields of ELF and ICC may converge in ELT, since they both take a proactive stance toward second language education. Indeed, they share a common intent to help learners experience 'tertiary socialisation' within an international discourse community that extends beyond the physical space of the English classroom. Although these two areas have developed separately, as is often the case with coeval academic circles working on related lines of research, recent publications indicate that they now tend to complement and inspire each other. This, as I intended to demonstrate, is not a random phenomenon, given that the theory of ELF and the theory of ICC can be considered a direct offspring of globalisation.

Following a dialectic materialist paradigm, it was possible to comment on the intrinsic relationship between the macroeconomic process that has led to the integration of global markets and the concomitant development of English as today's primary international contact language. This unprecedented situation, it was argued, has had a significant cultural impact on the world population, across different social classes. More and more international speakers normally learn English in educational settings and use it as a mediational tool to carry out authentic communication in intercultural contexts, e.g. via the Internet and social networks. This way, a steadily growing number of L2-users tend to appropriate English as a mediational tool and, in so doing, adapt it to their linguacultural identity to cope with a gamut of immediate pragmatic goals. The performative nature of ELF is therefore the key to observe ELF speakers' agency and the communicative process that leads to the emergence of variable forms of English.

Over the last few years, ELF studies have had more of a focus on the pedagogical implications of the global spread of English in the age of globalisation. The same applies to research in education for 'cultural citizenship'. This suggests that ELT may represent a convergence point of two complementary perspectives in second-language development, as long as they pursue the general aim of a) enhancing learners' ICC; and b) promote the use of a shared language to make students learn how to mediate their different linguacultural identities in order to play an active role as citizens of the world outside the language classroom (see also Fang and Baker 2018). In the aftermath of the financial crisis of 2007-09, which has been characterised by global economic instability, warfare and lasting international tensions, it seems appropriate to suggest that second-language education and ELT should be reshaped along the 'political' goals mentioned above. However, it is claimed that in order for such deep change to take place it would be necessary to launch an international teacher-development programme to raise English teachers' ELF-awareness and stimulate their critical thinking on the social role of ELT, in the age of globalisation. This, I believe, would be a necessary step to commit language educators to supporting the strategic role of ELF in fostering learners' intercultural citizenship.

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